

# Getting Your Horse 'Right'

Jenny Paterson B. Sc, Horsemanship NZ Ltd

This seems to be a never ending project for many people. It is very easy to spend a lot of money trying a lot of different things and never quite get there. The key is to understand whether you are just temporarily **relieving symptoms** or whether you are really fixing the **root cause** of the problem.

Change your thinking from 'Getting Your Horse Right' to "Getting it Right for Your Horse"

- ✓ Horses are designed to consume a constant trickle of coarse fibrous material 18-20 hrs/day  
(Not high sugar/low fibre green grass especially that which is fed to dairy cows. The greater part of your horses feed should consist of mature horse friendly grass, hay, chaffs, cubes, beet products)
- ✓ Their livers can't cope with floods of myco-toxins all year round. A healthy horse can handle a few toxins here and there but not the constant barrage from rye/clover pastures. Take steps towards 'toxin-free': **change to horse friendly grasses**)
- ✓ Only add sugar (as in green, growing grass or molassed grains) to suit the work requirements. One -two light rides/ week is classed as 'idle' and they will get sufficient energy from fermenting the fibre portion of their feed. The quieter you want your horse the less green grass and grains you feed.
- ✓ Add **top quality** vitamins & minerals that are for **New Zealand** horses. This is **the most natural** thing you can do next to supplying water. The body malfunctions as soon as there is an imbalance of these nutrients, leading you to think your horse is sore in various parts of his body, the saddle doesn't fit, you'll think you've got a really sensitive horse, you'll think he's a 'right brained introvert', a 'nutter', has 'attitude', it goes on and on.  
**Major Point:** you can't fix mineral deficiencies with anything except minerals. Therefore it is logical to **start** with getting this aspect of the diet right, then treat what's left. There won't be much left. You will save a lot of money and heartache.
- ✓ Do everything you can to encourage **movement**. For great physical health and good mental attitude. Horses are designed to move. They **love** to move, so give them the freedom to move. Look into setting up a track system which turns a small area into a long distance.  
Keeping horses in the confinement of yards/stables/pens is akin to keeping a sea-lion in a bath-tub!  
It is counter-productive to peak performance and to their well-being.
- ✓ Give them company. They were never meant to live alone. One day I saw a recently weaned foal on its own! What are people thinking?? If people understood the horses' psyche they wouldn't dream of doing such a thing.
- ✓ Check your approach: Upskill by joining in on some Horsemanship lessons

The good news is more and more people are getting things 'right' for their horse. Their horse's true personality emerges! They **can** be consistent all year round. They **can** be energetic and well behaved and they **can** cope with the pressure of competitions, strange places or race-day.

If you find yourself 'blaming' your horse in any way, and this is so easy to do (now we look back we used to do it all the time!), then consider this: **It's not that your horse isn't 'right', it's that you haven't got things right for your horse.** The following is a list of conditions which will become distant memories when you get it 'right' for your horse or pony:

Mud-Fever  
Sun-burn  
Head-Flicking/Shaking  
Ear Shyness  
Allergies/ rhinitis (ulcers of the nasal membranes)  
Respiratory problems  
Tooth grinding/lip popping  
Girthiness  
Out of the blue spooking and/or bucking  
Wanting to run off  
Inability to bend on circles

Ill-thrift (can't keep weight on, no topline)  
Obesity  
Lethargy  
Falling asleep on their feet (like narcolepsy)  
Laminitis caused by metabolic syndrome or fructans  
Weak, cracked hooves  
Seedy toe/abscesses  
Staggers  
Spooking  
Hyper-sensitivity/ don't like to be touched  
Moody mares  
Aggressive geldings  
Heat stress, sweating with little exertion  
Over reacting to noise  
Inability to cope with pressure at events/races  
Excessive claustrophobia/ flying backwards out of floats  
Excessive herd-bound behaviour  
Belligerence/nappiness  
Bolting around the paddock for no reason (sometimes bolting thru fences!)  
Many reproductive issues  
Many musculo-skeletal issues  
Fence walking/ wood chewing  
You not feeling safe on or around your horse

Feel free to contact anyone at Horsemanship NZ so we can help you get things just right for you and your horse.

## **FOR FREE ADVICE:**

### **South Island**

Jenny or Val	03 327 2942	<a href="mailto:horsemanshipnz@xtra.co.nz">horsemanshipnz@xtra.co.nz</a>
Geraldine	03 201 6242	<a href="mailto:geraldineedgar@woosh.co.nz">geraldineedgar@woosh.co.nz</a>

### **North Island**

Ash	06 762 4154	<a href="mailto:alleviate@clear.net.nz">alleviate@clear.net.nz</a>
-----	-------------	--

### **Northland**

Marie	09 434 6027	<a href="mailto:equinemassagetherapy@paradise.net.nz">equinemassagetherapy@paradise.net.nz</a>
-------	-------------	--

### **South Auckland**

Emma	09 235 9445	<a href="mailto:emmakay@ps.gen.nz">emmakay@ps.gen.nz</a>
------	-------------	--

### **Taranaki**

Marlene	06 765 7620	<a href="mailto:marlene.mason@nbnz.co.nz">marlene.mason@nbnz.co.nz</a>
---------	-------------	--

### **Gisborne**

Colin	06 868 6443	<a href="mailto:gillco@gisborne.net.nz">gillco@gisborne.net.nz</a>
-------	-------------	--

### **Rotorua**

Wendy	0275 325 702	<a href="mailto:highplain@xtra.co.nz">highplain@xtra.co.nz</a>
-------	--------------	--

