

Holistic Horseworks Talks

Blog Sample #1

Is it Really a Training Problem or is Your Horse in Pain?

Listen to the podcast: <https://youtu.be/8BBEc2RciLg>

If your horse bucks, resists the canter, or just feels off under saddle, the first thing many people assume is that it's a training issue. Maybe the horse is being stubborn, or maybe it just needs more groundwork. But I want to let you in on something I've seen over and over again—those **“training problems” are almost always your horse trying to say, “Ouch, that hurts!”**

When Behavior is Really Body Pain

Back when I was training horses, I was told that if a horse didn't want to canter to the right, it was just weak on that side—and to make them do more circles that way to build it up. But what I learned through hands-on work is that **it usually wasn't about strength at all**. That shoulder couldn't move properly. And making a horse work through pain only causes them to compensate in other areas, leading to bigger problems.

Think about being asked to paint a ceiling every day when your neck and shoulder are already hurting. That's what it's like for your horse.

Your Horse is talking, But Are You Listening?

Horses speak with their bodies. If they pin their ears when you brush a certain spot or flinch when the saddle pad touches down, that's not attitude—it's **communication**.

Those reactions are often signs that the spine, ribs, or muscles underneath are out of balance.

Muscle spasms cause the body to tighten, bones get pulled too close together, and things like kissing spine can develop. **The earlier you notice these signs, the easier it is to help your horse before it becomes a chronic issue.**

One of the first things I tell people to check is their horse's hooves—but not just from the front. Stand about 10 feet behind your horse on a flat surface and take a look. **You might see:**

- Crushed heels and flares in the front feet
- No inside heel and flare in the hind feet

These clues tell me that deeper postural issues are happening. Tight muscles in the pectorals, hocks, or psoas can pull the whole body out of balance. You can literally see the compensation in how the feet grow and land.

Common “Training” or “Behavior” Problems That Might Actually be Pain Symptoms

Here are some signs people often blame on bad behavior—but that usually point to pain or restriction in the body:

- **Won’t pick up a lead canter** → Could be a first rib misalignment, knee or fetlock pain, or bruising in the sole
- **Resistant to the bit / heavy on one side** → Check the TMJ, atlas, and axis vertebrae
- **Pins ears when saddling or grooming** → Possible misalignment in ribs, withers, or spasmed muscles
- **Bucks at the canter or under saddle** → Crooked pelvis, kissing spine, roach back, or saddle pressure on an uneven back
- **“Lazy” or unwilling to move forward** → Hoof landing imbalance, tight psoas, or pain in the hips
- **Head tossing / jaw clenching** → TMJ or poll restrictions, stuck atlas and axis vertebrae, or uncomfortable dental wear
- **High/low front hooves or shoulder size difference** → Structural misalignment from a young age (often stemming from the first rib)
- **Hard to shoe / won’t stand still** → Pain in the hocks, stifles, or lower back

What You Can Do to Help Your Horse

You don’t need to be a professional trainer or bodyworker to start helping your horse feel better—you just need the right tools and guidance. That’s exactly why I offer two

foundational resources: the [Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding online course](#) and personalized [Equine Distance Readings](#).

The [Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding online course](#) is designed to be simple, empowering, and effective. No confusing anatomy terms—just straightforward instructions like, “If your horse reacts here, here’s how to fix it.”

You’ll learn how to bring your horse back into alignment from nose to tail and hoof up—so they can feel good, move freely, and actually enjoy being with you. These techniques are gentle, easy to learn, and totally safe to do at home.

An [Equine Distance Reading](#) is like an intuitive blueprint of your horse’s current physical condition. You’ll receive a **10–15 page PDF report** detailing what’s really going on with your horse, including:

- Joint misalignments and muscle spasms
- Pain points from old injuries or misused movement patterns
- Bacterial, viral, or emotional imbalances
- Cranial sacral restrictions that affect behavior and rein contact
- Environmental stressors and chemical toxicity that could be impacting health

It’s like a medical intuitive scan—asking the body what it needs to release pain and move better. This report helps you get clarity on the root issues so you can take informed action. When you enroll in the [Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding online course](#), your first [Equine Distance Reading](#) is **included for free**.

Listen to the podcast: <https://youtu.be/8BBEc2RciLg>

Ready to Start Helping Your Horse?

Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding

Home Study Program



Start with April's foundational training, Equine Musculoskeletal Unwinding, available to learn online with live 1:1 support. This step-by-step course teaches you how to release deep patterns of imbalance and pain—so your horse can move, feel, and live better.

Whether your horse is showing signs of discomfort or you simply want to deepen your connection and care, this program puts powerful tools in your hands.

Includes video lessons, downloadable workbooks, and a personalized distance reading from April herself.

Enroll Now

Rather learn in-person?

[Check out our hands-on equine remedial therapy clinics, available all over the globe →](#)