

Shockwave Therapy: Helping with Healing, from Backs to Burns

Calabasas, CA—Calabasas veterinarian Dr. Jenny Johnson is bringing a new kind of healing to horses and other animals throughout California: shockwave therapy. A veterinarian with 20 years of experience and a competitive rider as well, Dr. Johnson understands the physical and mental demands placed on the equine athlete and has made a choice to focus her practice exclusively on shockwave therapy.

How the Therapy Works

Europeans have used shockwave therapy to treat musculoskeletal injuries in both humans and animals for years. It was brought to the United States to treat horses in the late 1990s. Shockwave therapy is noninvasive and can be performed on horses with mild sedation.

The shockwave is a pressure wave that stimulates increased blood flow to an injury. The shockwave causes the body's own cells to migrate to the injured area, assisting the body in healing itself. It can be used to treat arthritis, degenerative joint disease, navicular syndrome, sore neck or back, strained or torn suspensory ligaments or flexor tendons, ringbone, collateral ligament injuries, joint inflammation or pain and large wounds or burns that are not healing properly.

Treatment Success

"I recently treated a horse that had significant burns over his back, from his withers to his tail, sustained in a trailer fire," said Dr. Johnson. "By the time I saw the injury, there was already evidence of infection, and the horse was extremely sensitive to any contact with the area."

Within 24 hours after Dr. Johnson administered the first shockwave treatment, new capillaries became visible at the burn edges, the discharge was reduced and the horse's sensitivity to the injured area vastly improved.

Dr. Johnson added, "This horse has received four shockwave treatments so far and is on the road to recovery after a potentially life-threatening burn. The healing of the affected area has been accelerated, and the new skin already has hair coming in."

Treat a Variety of Injuries

With the advent of imaging technology such as MRI, it is now possible to identify a lesion or tear in a specific ligament in the foot and target it specifically with shockwave therapy. When treating conditions in the foot, shockwaves are directed through the bulbs of the heels, and in some cases the frog. Shockwaves do not penetrate the hoof wall.

Suspensory injuries, including strains, inflammation and tears also respond well to shockwave therapy. By increasing the blood supply and stimulating the growth of new blood vessels, thus drawing many healing factors to the injured area, shockwave therapy may help stimulate a more complete healing and higher success rate in return to athletic activity.

"I have relationships with veterinarians all over and work with them to determine the optimum treatment regime for each individual horse," Dr. Johnson explained. "This is all I do. I am a veterinarian that specializes in this modality, and I am the one performing the therapy. With this kind of treatment, if the shockwaves miss the target, the therapy is wasted."

Dr. Johnson provides a referral service to other equine veterinarians and their clients and is also expanding her practice to include small animals. She can be contacted at oakhillshockwave@hotmail.com or 818-809-7498. More information is available at www.oakhillshockwave.com.



Dr. Jenny Johnson focuses her practice exclusively on shockwave therapy.

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