

Acute Lameness

Sudden refusal to bear weight on a limb.

Acute lameness can have a number of causes:

1. A nail punctured the foot.
2. A tendon, ligament, or other soft-tissue structure is strained.
3. A bone is fractured
4. Joint infection (septic arthritis)
5. Tendon sheath is torn
6. Sub-solar abscess

General First Aid

1. Carefully evaluate the lame leg
 - a. Look for swelling and obvious wounds.
 - b. Check for extra fluid in the joint.
 - c. Compare the limb to the unaffected limb.
 - d. Treat any wounds following the procedures for WOUNDS
 - e. Apply a support wrap, as directed below, as necessary
 - f. Treat fractures or suspected fractures as directed below
2. Carefully evaluate the foot.
 - a. Check foot for abscess, puncture, rocks and debris
 - b. Check the digital pulse. **POUNDING** pulse when there is an abscess
 - c. Treat any wounds following the procedures for WOUNDS
 - d. Treat sole bruises as directed below
3. Control inflammation and pain: Administer 10cc Banamine IV or 2 grams bute paste (refer to Equine Medications instruction sheet)
4. **SLOWLY** lead the horse back to the trailhead, resting every 15 minutes.

Sole Bruising or Abscess

Stones or hard ground can cause the tissues in the foot to bruise and can lead to abscesses.

Signs

- Reluctance to bear weight or lameness on the limb with no traumatic incident
- Increased digital pulse. **POUNDING** pulse when there is an abscess
- Jerk response when the foot is tapped with a hammer

First Aid

1. Rest
2. Clean the foot well.
3. Soak or poultice the foot:
 - a. Apply a sauerkraut poultice
 - i. cover with plastic wrap
 - ii. Pad sole or sound side of foot with 4X4's and cover with a duct tape boot
 - iii. Cover with a duct tape boot for
 - iv. Leave on 1-2 days

OR

- b. Soak the foot in Epsom Salts (1# per gallon of water) twice daily for 20 minutes
 - i. Dry
 - ii. Pad sole or sound side of foot with 4X4's
 - iii. cover with a duct tape boot
4. Administer 2 grams bute paste (refer to Equine Medications instruction sheet)
5. Seek Veterinary assistance as soon as possible if improvement is not seen. These can abscess or involve more severe problems with the coffin bone.

Swelling in the Leg with Acute Lameness

Can be caused from a puncture wound, fracture, bowed tendons and strains

Signs

- Reluctance to bear weight or lameness on the limb with no traumatic incident
- Entire leg may be swollen

First Aid

1. Apply support bandage until horse is seen by a veterinarian. Wrap counter-clockwise for left legs; wrap clockwise for right legs.

Layer 1: Supports the limb.

- a. Apply the sheet cotton roll padding wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back.
- b. Secure the padding with 6" brown gauze wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back.
- c. Keep pressure uniform and overlap each successive turn so that it covers half or the previous turn.
- d. IF NEEDED to add further stability for the injury, wood slats, branches, or other splint material can be taped to the outside of the padded wrap.
- e. If the flexor tendon is swollen, a wedge block or round branch section taped to the heel will relieve pressure off the flexor tendon and may prevent further damage until help is available.

Layer 2: Secures layer 1 and prevents environmental contamination.

- a. Using Vetwrap start about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch above the bottom of the padding, spiral the wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back up the limb firmly overlapping $\frac{1}{2}$ the material over the previous turn.
 - b. Work to top of padding, leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ inch uncovered.
2. Administer 2 grams bute paste (refer to [Equine Medications](#) instruction sheet)
 3. If the horse's temperature > 101.5 F, Administer Pen G (refer to [Equine Medications](#) instruction sheet)

Fractures

- Can sometimes only be found with radiographs
- Often very poor prognosis
- Most often the horse will need to be euthanized
- **Seek Veterinary assistance as soon as possible**

First Aid

1. Apply support bandage until horse is seen by a veterinarian
 - Splint the limb to immobilize fracture
 - Immobilize the joint above and the joint below the fracture site
 - If you don't the splint will act as a fulcrum and make the fracture worse

Layer 1: Supports the limb. Wrap counter-clockwise for left legs; wrap clockwise for right legs.

- a. Apply the sheet cotton roll padding wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back.
- b. Secure the padding with 6" brown gauze wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back.
- c. Keep pressure uniform and overlap each successive turn so that it covers half or the previous turn.
- d. Tape splint material to the outside of the padded wrap.

Layer 2: Secures layer 1 and prevents environmental contamination.

- a. Using Vetwrap start about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch above the bottom of the padding, spiral the wrapping the leg from inside out, front to back up the limb firmly overlapping $\frac{1}{2}$ the material over the previous turn.
 - b. Work to top of padding, leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ inch uncovered.
2. Administer **NO MORE THAN 2** grams of Butazoladin Paste as the horse may become comfortable and use the leg