



All images courtesy Leona Reinhold; Horse model: Bell Valley Yank

Exercise 1: Place your horse's hind leg in a resting position, slightly further back than usual. With one hand on the hock, the other on his stifle, gently wiggle his leg by using hand on the stifle as a fulcrum. Any resistance or forced movement is counter-productive. Watch your horse's responses and continue as long as he relaxes into it.

Technique 2: Once your horse's leg is in the relaxed position, place one hand gently on his stifle and lightly rest your other hand above his 'point of hip', the bony widest part of his hind end. Gently search

around until you find a spot your horse enjoys. Look for signs of relaxation and an increased tilt of the hip. Your goal is to encourage an exaggerated pelvic tilt and complete relaxation in the entire hip apparatus and stifle area.

To learn these and 25 additional techniques that horse owners can safely perform on their horse, see Jim Masterson's DVD, available at www.mastersonmethod.com

Replace 'training' with gymnastics

- Until your horse is physically fit for his job, stop training. While he is dealing with a catching stifle, he doesn't need to learn how to side-pass. You can pick this up later, once he's completely sound. Develop a gymnastics program of targeted exercises and engage your horse in a daily fitness routine, if possible. Minimum program: 1 hour, 3 times a week.

Get out of the stall - If at all possible, get your horse out of the stall and into an outdoor environment 24/7. This will make him move about on his own and every step taken will strengthen his quadriceps (the largest muscle in the stifle apparatus) and the ligaments around the patella.

Get moving - Incorporate hill work into your gymnastics routine. Look for a hill or an incline where you can lunge your horse in both directions at a good working trot (when the hind legs step somewhat beyond the footprints of the front legs).

Pick up those feet - Use cavaletti and ground poles to get your horse to lift his legs and strengthen the quadriceps. PVC pipe from the hardware store works nicely, as do old beams from your house or barn.

Create forward movement - Your horse may be wary of the fact that his stifle could lock at any moment. He has every right to be worried, but he needs to move energetically if the gymnastic exercises are to have any effect. Encourage forward movement and work at a good working pace. Give the horse a break when he is physically or emotionally strained. Watch for changes in breathing or a worried facial expression.

Go swimming - This may be easier said than done ... if you do have the ocean or an accessible lake or stream nearby, explore swimming with your horse. This is an excellent exercise to strengthen all muscles without impact.

Most of all, don't give up on your horse! A horse with a tendency to have locking or catching stifles will need constant maintenance to remain sound and fit for riding, but chances for recovery are very good.

Stefanie Reinhold is a certified Masterson Method(TM) practitioner and instructor in Madison WI. She is co-authoring a book about the Masterson Method™ with Jim Masterson (Trafalgar Publishing, release date Summer 2011). Contact Stefanie at stef@reinholdshorsewellness.com, (608) 513 8777 or visit www.reinholdshorsewellness.com

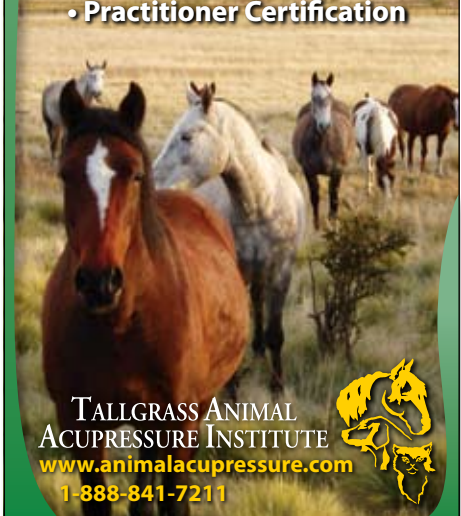
Learn more: DVD of "Integrated Equine Performance Bodywork™ - The Masterson Method™" is available at www.mastersonmethod.com.

*For more detailed explanation of the anatomical elements involved in Locking Stifles, see an equine anatomy book such as *Horse Anatomy: A Pictorial Approach to Equine Structure*, by Peter Goody. For gymnastic tips, a great resource is *Ingrid Klimke's Cavaletti: The Schooling of Horse and Rider over Ground Poles*.*

Equine Acupressure

Learn Equine Acupressure

- Books
- DVDs
- Meridian Charts
- Online & Hands-on Training
- Practitioner Certification



TALLGRASS ANIMAL ACUPRESSURE INSTITUTE
www.animalacupressure.com
1-888-841-7211

Mention this ad to receive \$2.00 discount on a Book or Chart