



Ridgeway Hyoid

Hyoid

Your horses' jaw is a very sensitive area. We communicate with our horse here and we want them to be responsive. Restriction in the hyoid bone (the bone that hangs the tongue) affects the poll, jaw, and shoulder. This is due to the large shoulder protraction muscles that attach on the jaw and hyoid and make their way to the shoulder. Signs of hyoid pain include head shaking, resistance to the bit, problems with touching ears, head and poll, stiffness in flexion, head nod while the horse is moving, locking in the neck and lumbar, teeth grinding, TMJ pain and general jaw sensitivity.

To do this stretch, you are going to reach into the jaw where there are no teeth. Gently bring the tongue to the side of the mouth as shown. DO NOT pull on the tongue, simply hold it to the side and allow the horse to do all the work. The horse will maneuver the tongue in and out and fatigue the jaw muscles, at which point they will soften and release. The horse has to keep working the tongue - if they stop, encourage more labeling by putting your finger in the mouth and tickle the pallet. Do this tongue hold for 45 to 60 seconds, on both sides of the horse. It is recommended you do this before your ride. When we are trying to release this area use this stretch daily for 9-14 days, then 3 times per week for 3 weeks. After that, use this stretch at your discretion.



** Be safe when stretching your horse. Have a look around the area you are working in and ensure there is nothing that can catch him or he can trip on. Make sure the footing is safe so he doesn't slip and that you never stretch a horse that is tied up. Safety is our number one concern and we have to always make sure we don't put our horses in a dangerous position.**

****NOTE: Therapy is not a replacement for Veterinary Care.****