

Enhance your skills with XLequine

XLequine is a group of independent equine veterinary practices who work together to share experience, knowledge and skills, to deliver the highest standards of equine healthcare.

Member practices have developed a series of EquineSkills workshops – endorsed by the Association of British Riding Schools – to provide practical healthcare training to horse owners.

What are EquineSkills workshops?

These practical training courses are led in a friendly and informal environment. Each one takes place in an interactive and engaging learning environment to ensure attendees gain new, useable skills.

Who are the teachers?

Uniquely, our large team of equine vets and nurses deliver all of our workshops. This means you have peace of mind that the knowledge you receive is current and from a reliable, trusted source. All course leaders are accredited trainers, ensuring workshop standards are consistently high.

Who can attend?

The simple answer is – you! EquineSkills workshops cater for all levels of horse ownership, from new owners to experienced riders, coaches and equine paraprofessionals. Our trainers are experienced in teaching delegates at different levels of knowledge and experience, and tailor workshops accordingly.

If you love horses and want to increase your practical skills and knowledge, EquineSkills workshops are for you!

The workshops

Six workshops are currently available:-

- Understanding Your Horse's Back;
- First Aid for Your Horse;
- Old Friends and Saying Goodbye;
- How Do Horses Learn?
- Equine Foot Care;
- New – The Guts of the Matter.

All delegates receive a comprehensive workbook to take home, to consolidate new knowledge and skills learned, as well as a certificate of attendance.

Veteran horse advice

The 'Old Friends and Saying Goodbye' workshop was launched in Autumn 2015.

For horses and ponies in their senior years, providing the best quality of life is important. This workshop will teach you about the common problems we see in our older population, enabling you to recognise the signs of illness or disease earlier.

Saying goodbye can be hard – but getting the timing of euthanasia right is vital. It is important to objectively judge your horse's quality of life, to help you decide when it is the kindest option.

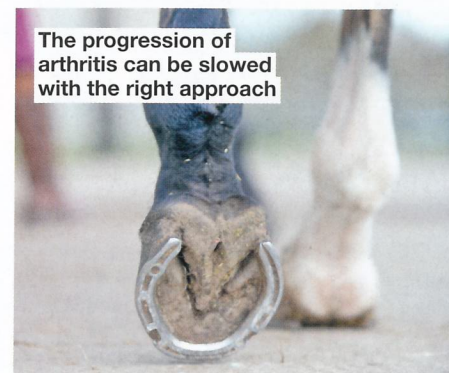
Whether you are a yard owner supporting your friends, or an individual owner, there is much to be gained from preparing for the scenario and we can help you to do so.

● For more information or to book a course, visit: equineskills.co.uk.



Learn essential equine first aid skills

equineSkills
GROWING EQUINE KNOWLEDGE



The progression of arthritis can be slowed with the right approach

management changes and starting medications (if appropriate), it is possible to slow the progression of joint degeneration.

Speak to your vet at your annual health check and ask him or her to assess the level of stiffness your horse is experiencing.

Hormone imbalance

Cushing's, or more accurately Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID), is a common disorder in older horses.

This disorder is caused by a decrease in the body's ability to down regulate hormones, and as a consequence a gland near the brain called the pituitary gland produces more of certain hormones than normal.

The result of this system imbalance is increased levels of hormones, such as ACTH and cortisol.

Common clinical signs of Cushing's disease are drinking and urinating excessively, increased appetite, weight loss, hirsutism (the horse is really hairy) and laminitis.

Many horses respond well to medication for Cushing's disease, so it is important to speak to your vet if you suspect your horse may be developing signs of the condition.

It is important to help your horse age gracefully, and this is best achieved by carefully monitoring his demeanour, food intake and his general attitude.

You should book an annual health check with your vet, where you can discuss any concerns you may have and together you can strive to improve the quality of your horse's life. ■



A curly coat – a common sign of Cushing's disease

Being the right weight will avoid putting strain on joints

OUR EXPERT

Sinead Kenna



Sinead is an equine vet at Calweton Veterinary Group, Cornwall, a member practice of XLequine. She qualified from Nottingham University.

Growing old gracefully

Vet Sinead Kenna reveals how to maintain an older horse's quality of life, and discover how you can improve your knowledge of equine health care on useful workshops

Caring for a horse as he gets older is a big part of the responsibility of being an owner. There are ups and downs but we all know that everything we do is worth it to keep our four-legged friends happy and healthy.

There are many disease processes that become more likely or more serious as your horse gets older, so it is important to check regularly that everything is working as it should.

The main areas in which older horses begin to feel their age are teeth, joints and body condition.

Dental care

It is important to get your horse's teeth checked at least annually, especially as he gets older.

Older horses become more prone to wobbly teeth, uneven wear causing a ramp or waved pattern and gaps between teeth (diastemata),

which can lead to food impaction and cause dental and gum disease.

Regular dental checks by a vet can help prevent these diseases from progressing and allow intervention if necessary.

Maintaining good dentition means your horse can eat comfortably and chew more efficiently, resulting in better body condition.

Important checks

As horses get older they are less able to withstand variable weather patterns, and are often not as good at maintaining weight.

If your horse is struggling to keep weight on, you should revise his available shelter, provide rugs and ensure you are feeding him adequate fibre.

It is a good idea to have an annual health check for older horses, where you can discuss

nutrition and dentistry as well as any other health concerns with your vet.

Ensure that your horse is not overweight, as this can put more strain on joints and tendons, which become weaker with time.

Joint support

Osteoarthritis (OA) is common in older horses, and is the result of 'wear and tear' on joints.

Anti-inflammatory medications are frequently used to alleviate discomfort in horses suffering from OA. These medications allow them to continue to lead happy and comfortable lives.

Clinical signs of OA vary from the more subtle signs of generalised stiffness after a period of stabling/rest, to more severe cases in which lameness in one or more limbs is detectable.

You should address this condition as it is a progressive disease and by applying