

The Equine Balance Equation:

What it is and why it's important to you and your horse.

By Beth Brown, Equine Dentist
BB Equine Dentistry, llc
Cochranville, PA.

This is an introduction to a four part series concerning equine balance. Where there is balance, there is harmony. In this text, harmony refers to the horse moving freely and naturally, without compensating for any discomfort or pain. The Equine Balance Equation consists of four basic elements that when added together, will produce a well-balanced horse and rider. Balance is a key aspect in successful horsemanship, no matter what your chosen discipline. Realize that obtaining balance does not replace the need for training and practice. It does, however, provide the necessary foundation for you and your horse to work together as a single unit and pursue your dreams.

The Equine Balance Equation:

**Balanced Teeth + Balanced Feet + Balanced Muscles + A Balanced Rider
= A Balanced Horse**

Balanced Teeth or effective equine dentistry, will be covered in part one. As a horse owner, you should have a basic idea of what a horse's dental needs are, what is required to maintain these needs and what to expect from your equine dentist. A horse plagued with mouth discomfort will not eat properly, won't efficiently digest food and will fight the bit and his rider looking for an escape.

Balanced feet is the topic of part two. To balance hooves, or recognize balanced hooves, one must first have an understanding of how the hoof functions. What the purpose is of each part of the hoof, how these parts work together and what they should look like after being trimmed. Also, owners should be aware of the consequences a horse may suffer, due to improperly maintained hooves.

Balanced muscles, is the topic for part three. In order for a horse to be balanced, his muscular structure must be symmetrical. If his left side is over-developed, compared to his right side, the horse is either compensating to avoid discomfort or he is not equally exercised in both directions. Asymmetrical muscle development can be a result or a cause of imbalance. Owner recognition of muscular imbalance is the first step toward equine muscular symmetry.

A balanced rider, will be discussed in part four. If the horse's rider is unbalanced, (ex. more weight in one stirrup then the other), the horse is forced to compensate for this imbalance. Stiffness and muscle soreness may result, which produces an unbalanced horse. A horse's reluctance or inability to bend, extend or collect may be a direct result of the rider's poor posture.

A balanced horse, is a free-moving creature, which is unhampered by the outside influences he is subject to due to domestication.