

Did you know we offer veterinary spinal manipulation therapy (VSMT)?

This form of manual therapy is performed by Dr. Melanie Pfeffer, who – after finishing vet school – took a course with the IAVC (International Academy of Veterinary Chiropractic) in Germany and has been treating horses since 2018.

What exactly is VSMT?

It is about the relationships between structure, primarily the spine, and function, primarily the nervous system, of the body. The spine and the nervous system play an outstanding role in proper mechanical function and in the overall health of the horse.

VSMT is a form of manual therapy to address spinal subluxations and restricted joint motion.

Using specific palpation and mobilization techniques, the treatment ultimately consists of an “adjustment” – which is a very specific, short lever - high velocity, controlled thrust, by hand. This helps restore normal joint motion and nerve function.

What type of horses can benefit from a VSMT?

Generally, the majority of horses will benefit from specific mobilization and adjustments, as it increases proprioception and overall range of motion. Horses with back-, neck-, and sacro-iliac pain, general poor performance, uneven gaits and lack of impulsion. Examples of horses we see are: performance horses, horses with a conformational deficiency, pleasure horses, geriatric horses, horses undergoing rehab, school horses, etc.

Think of it as a general management strategy for your athletic partner.

Is a VSMT treatment painful?

Typically a treatment is well tolerated by the horse. In an ideal scenario you will even see your horse going to sleep, licking and chewing or yawning throughout the process. If there are painful areas, we will address those separately and talk about options.

How long does a VSMT session take and how often does it need to be repeated?

An initial assessment usually takes between 45 and 60 min, while a routine adjustment afterwards takes anywhere between 35 and 50 minutes.

How often to repeat treatments will depend on the findings during the assessment – every 4 weeks for more acute situation and every 10-12 weeks for more chronic situations.

Do I need to prepare anything for the appointment?

Ideally you will have your horse groomed and inside. Treatment is performed on level ground.

Typically the horse should not be ridden the day after the adjustment.

For any questions or to book an appointment, please call our office at 519-318-3274 or send us an email at hendersonequineservices@gmail.com