

# Why Massage?

The equine body, like ours, is a fascinating creation made of many interlocking systems. The musculoskeletal system, providing the basic shape and support for their structure, might be the most obvious system that massage will influence. However, because of the very nature of how the body works, there are many other systems that body manipulation will affect and will ultimately result in the improvement of the horse's overall health. Massage will also increase the effectiveness of the circulatory, cardiovascular, digestive, immune, and respiratory systems, to name a few.

With more than 700 muscles involved in the support and movement of the skeleton, some of the more common issues we may notice with our horses are caused by the inefficient movements of these muscles. This will often occur when they have tight, strained or sore muscles. Their discomfort can lead to shortened strides, difficulty picking up leads, resistance to training, bad attitudes and more.

## Massage can...

- Relax the muscular system
- Increase range of motion and muscular flexibility
- Increase circulation and speed recovery from muscle injuries
- Remove muscle spasms and adhesions
- Enhance muscle tone
- Increase overall performance and acceptance to training
- Assist in preventing muscular injuries
- As well as improve the overall health of various body systems: such as the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and nervous systems.



## So, what about calling a chiropractor?

By the very nature of the musculoskeletal system, the muscles and bones cannot function properly without the complete support of the other. Though chiropractic work can be an essential partner to massage, ultimately the health of the muscles themselves will determine the proper structure of the bones. With tight and cramped muscles, bones are stressed and can be pulled “out of place” from their appropriate position. Chiropractic work can manually place these bones back in their proper positions, but without the assistance of massage to assist the healing of the muscles, it is common for the bone to eventually be pulled out of place again. This is why it is beneficial to have a quality health team including a veterinarian, massage therapist, farrier, and chiropractor available for your horse.