

## What to expect when presenting your horse for a lameness exam?

Lameness exams can be quite a complex and lengthy process. With this in mind, booking your horse for a morning appointment is preferable. You can also drop your horse at the hospital for the day and we can work on it while you are away. We also have ample parking for floats.

It is always appreciated for the horse to be presented as clean as possible, in particular the horse's legs and feet should be cleaned. This helps our vets assess the horse and reduces the risks associated with nerve and joint blocks.

Please do not administer any *Bute* (phenylbutazone) or other non-steroidal medication for at least 48 hours before presentation (unless under advisement from a vet).

If farriery needs to be done, please do this at least a week prior to presentation. Please do not remove your horse's shoes or trim their feet immediately before presentation as this can make them foot sore and potentially make it difficult to assess any lameness.

On arrival;

- Please let our staff at the reception desk know you are here before you unload your horse. They can then inform you of where to wait and arrange for a member of staff to meet you.
- One of our staff members will ask you about your horse's history. We aim to get as much information as we can so that we can help the attending vet see the whole picture.

Important history may include;

- When did you first notice your horse become unsound?
- Did anything different occur (was there an accident/trauma?)
- Has the horse received any treatment?

Your horse will be taken to our specialised lameness area where your horse will be assessed at the walk and trot, in a straight line and on a circle (lunged), on a hard and sometimes, on a soft surface. Once we begin to assess your horse, depending on the possible cause of the lameness, our vets and team may perform different diagnostic tests to identify the problem.

At GVEH we use a combination of flexion tests, nerve blocks and joint blocks to identify and/or rule out specific regions of the horses limbs so that we can be certain of the area causing the lameness.

Once a nerve/joint block is placed, we wait between 10-15 minutes to assess if the block has helped the horse.

If the horse "blocks" out, there are other diagnostic tools we can use to more specifically show us what might be causing the lameness. Our vets may choose to use radiographs or ultrasound to further confirm the cause.

Please note: X-rays and ultrasonography and nerve blocks are an extra expense on top of the lameness consult. If budget is a constraining factor, please talk to the vets at the start of your consult.

Any enquiries please phone Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital on 03 58299566