

# INTRODUCTION TO USING MATS

*An easy everyday exercise to improve and maintain your horses balance, and engaging the cybernetic muscles.*



For prehabilitation and rehabilitation, using rubber therapeutic mats can assist in improving your horses balance and co-ordination.

Working on your horses balance and improving co-ordination are important for injury prevention and also to minimise the risk of re-injuring existing conditions.

Using mats each day can be an invaluable tool in helping your horse to better manage everyday problems such as floating, or balancing on three legs for the farrier. It is also beneficial for pre and post exercise neuromuscular balancing. Any high density, non slip foam mat will do. We recommend EVA75 in 25mm thickness from Clark Rubber, however most people will have something at home they can use, such as an old yoga mat. Don't overthink it, if you have nothing suitable you will be able to find something at a hardware store or Bunnings. Cheap is good! Just ensure the mat has no holes for safety reasons, especially if your horse is shod.

We suggest placing the mats in a dry flat area where the horse either eats or is groomed/tacked up. This way you can encourage the horse to stand on the mats on a regular basis.

## WHY USE MATS

Balance and co-ordination are essential for your horses health and wellbeing. This information sheet is to explain why and how using mats can assist with the general health and wellbeing of your horse, while also being extremely helpful in Prehab and Rehabilitation.

## BALANCE

Using mats helps the horses co-ordination and balance, by inducing slight movements in the horses tissues and joints, muscles, joint capsules, tendons etc. (similar to standing on a wobble board).

**There are already some products available on the market, if you decide to use these pre-designed products, we suggest doing the available sessions on how to use them to get the most out of the product, and get the most suitable/appropriate one(s) for your horse.**

To start with, get your horse to stand with either one, or both front feet on the mat. The horse will adjust its posture and balance, depending on how difficult he/she finds it. If they step off straight away, that's fine, just ask them on again. Without using force, encourage the horse to stand calmly with both front feet on the mat. Once the horse will happily and calmly stand on the mats for a period of time with the front feet (a few minutes), you can then progress to the back feet. This can take days/weeks for some horses to be comfortable enough to progress to the back feet. Don't be disheartened if your horse doesn't stand on the mats for long, or won't stand on the back feet. Patience is key!

Have fun experimenting!

