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We recently had a young 4-yr old stallion come in as a boarder—actually a son of our stud and out of one of our best mares. A very aggressive youngster, white-eyed, head up, very thin with a rough coat and pretty frantic overall to the point of charging during feeding. In fact his owner was so scared of him, she would literally throw his feed (alfalfa hay and sweet feed) at him and run in the other direction. On top of that he had terribly swollen joints (epiphysitis) the size of cantaloupes. After only 2 weeks on the **DYNAMITE®** Program (which both parents had been on for years) of free choice grass hay, 4 free choice minerals of **NTM Salt, 1 to 1, 2 to 1, & Izmine**, 1 oz. of regular (yellow label) **DYNAMITE® Vitamin/Mineral** supplements per day added to his 2 quarts (3#) PGR with 1 cup extra **HES** added, he started to be a different horse. At that point, we added **Free & Easy** plus a half dose of **MSM** to get the swelling down. After about 10 weeks, we had people coming up to us remarking they could not believe it was the same horse since he had become so gentle, filled out and beautiful! By the way, this was without any more education than a loving voice and petting/scratching when feeding. He is now a sleek, gorgeous youngster who proudly prances (no more frantic racing) when mares walk by but who comes up to all and sundry just begging for loving. He collects naturally, his muscles are beautifully visible and growing, not a sign of joint swelling and his attitude couldn't be better if it belonged to a "bomb-proof" 15 yr. old gelding!

We have seen this, and similar things, happen so frequently over the years, that we have come to the personal conclusion that a horse who is balanced in minerals and other nutrients will be a horse who is balanced in hormones and nerves. The extra fat in the **HES** provided the boost this colt needed to both gain weight and to supply his gonads. We have found that some horses require the extra push of **Breeder Pac**.

Another boarder, a five year old mare, overall has a wonderful attitude but with her heat cycles, she becomes quite fractious to the point of seriously scrapping with the geldings on either side of her and paying no attention to her trainer. Adding **Breeder Pac** to her basic **DYNAMITE®** regimen seemed to do the trick and she now behaves more like a lady and even listens to both her owner and trainer despite monthly timing.

If the "attitude" only appears during handling/training, it could be a fear issue. Some horses have been handled in a way unsuited for that horse's temperament; especially the more intelligent or sensitive ones. Aside from more resistance-free techniques, many owners/trainers have found it helpful to add daily **Easy Boy** to the basic **DYNAMITE®** Program, giving oral **Relax** and spraying topical **Release** before each session.

Another reason for "attitude" during handling/training is pain especially if showing up in a formerly mindful horse. It is wise to always check hooves/legs before each session [see *Basics: Hooves*] and perhaps once a month, check your horse's mouth [see *Basics: Teeth*] yourself to see if you need to call in an equine dentist before the annual exam. Other areas that can cause extreme discomfort to a horse are back and neck pain, both of which can result in lameness issues.

The most common undesirable behaviors associated

with back pain include bucking during upward transitions, refusing to stand still during mounting, jumping mistakes/refusals, difficulty in negotiation hills, etc. The most common cause of back pain is an ill-fitting saddle [see *Basics: Training*]. Run your hands gently over your horse's back from withers to croup to feel for tender spots; do this a number of times with each time being deeper [see *Basics: Holistic Care*]. When a sore spot is found, spray **Release** on it and rub gently in small circles. If it foams, simply wipe the foam away and respray. Sometimes the soreness is so bad it cannot be massaged directly so then it helps to massage from more of distance spraying constantly and moving slowly toward the sensitivity. Another trick is to massage the opposite side in the same place and since the body is always trying to balance itself, it can start releasing the really sore area. If the soreness doesn't go away, check with your equine chiropractor and/or massage therapist.

Another common source of pain and thus unwillingness to pay attention or work, stems from the neck. Too frequently, horse's heads are jerked around either from improper riding (yanking the head up and to the side with the reins) or from tying and having the horse fight the tie both of which can affect C1 & 2 just behind the poll. Somersaults or collisions can affect C5-7 down to the shoulder area and the brachial plexus or nerve that feeds the forelimbs which can even cause lameness issues of undetermined origin. Mid-neck injuries usually occur from kicks and can involve the nuchal ligament which supports the entire neck. Such injuries are similar to whiplash injuries in humans and can end up affecting the entirety of the spine all the way to the croup.

The resultant injury can consist of either a strain, where muscles and ligaments are stressed and inflamed, or a sprain, where they are actually torn. All symptoms may take anywhere from hours to weeks to appear and can take weeks and possibly months to heal. If you know the injury occurred before symptoms show up, ice packs can reduce tissue inflammation and of course **Release** is always suggested for any and all injuries/wounds. If it's been a while, alternating heat and cold can then increase circulation to help draw off swelling. Never put heat on a new injury! Adding **MSM**, **Free and Easy**, and **Easy Boy** to the grain ration can encourage blood flow, feed ligaments/tendons for faster healing and the extra magnesium in **Easy Boy** can help to limit muscular splinting effects. Again, checking with your equine chiropractor, massage therapist, and/or acupuncturist can encourage more rapid results although time is ultimately the true healer.

If your horse has an "attitude" or gets one, there is invariably a reason for it even if it is simply confusion over what is being asked. The only recourse a horse has of telling us that something is wrong is to refuse to do as it is told in one way or another. Especially when your horse exhibits a new unlikely behavior, it is our responsibility to try to "get into its head" as Tom Dorrance used to say, to uncover the reason. "Attitudes" can definitely be worked with and usually overcome with awareness and sensitivity to the mind and body of the horse. ■