



Horse Care Info Sheet

That's a Wrap

There are many reasons to bandage a horse's legs:

- Protection
- Support
- To reduce the chance of swelling post work-out
- Hold a wound dressing in place and guard against infection

What you will need:

- Clean dry legs
- Clean dry Cotton bandages which provide good cushion
- Clean dry wraps (non-elastic unless applying a pressure bandage)

If a wound is involved, you will also need:

- Gauze pads or a sterile, absorbent dressing
- Product to clean the wound with (as recommended by your veterinarian)



It is recommended that bandages are at least an inch thick and wraps are at least four inches wide and non-elastic. This, along with good wrapping technique will help reduce the chance of restricted blood flow, uneven tension and bowed tendons. Thinner cottons are recommended if you need to control severe bleeding (pressure bandage) just until the veterinarian arrives.

How to wrap:

- Practice bandaging with a veterinarian or an industry professional as incorrect wrapping can cause injury.
- Start with tightly rolled wraps and bandages. This will make it easier to wrap neatly.
- Never kneel down! Crouching enables you to move quickly should your horse move unexpectedly.
- If wrapping a wound make sure it is cleansed and your sterile dressing is big enough to cover the entire wound then secure in place.
- Start the stable cotton on the side of the leg (not on the tendon). It should measure from just below the knee to just below the fetlock joint.
- Always wrap tendons in (clockwise on the right side of your horse, counter-clockwise on the left)

- Cover the cotton with your wrap starting above the fetlock joint. Work your way down in a spiral pattern with each wrap covering 50% of the wrap above.
- Work with even tension making sure no lumps or ridges form while you are wrapping.
- Leave a ¼ inch of cotton showing below the fetlock joint and work your way back up the leg in the same spiral pattern, neither too tight nor too loose.
- Leave a ¼ inch of cotton showing at the top and secure the velcro on the outside of the leg (velcro can be brushed open if it ends on the inside).
- If you add tape to secure your velcro closed it should not be applied tighter than the wrap.

Unwrapping

- Check legs daily
- Remove velcro
- Unwrap swiftly from hand to hand (never try to re-roll a wrap on your horse's leg)
- Give the leg a quick rub to increase circulation
- Assess if re-wrapping is required (use clean bandages and wraps)
- Sanitize wraps so they are ready for their next use

Other Guidelines and Tips::

- Wrapping too tight can cause pressure points and injury.
- Wraps should be free of wrinkles and have a stove pipe appearance.
- If you wrap one leg, wrap the opposite leg for support.
- To ensure even tension, the same person should wrap both legs.
- Do not begin or end a wrap over a joint – movement will tend to loosen the bandage and can endanger the horse if it becomes unwrapped.
- If wrapping to protect a wound on a joint – use a figure 8 or spider bandage to allow movement. A stable wrap can be used below these first aid bandages to stabilize it.
- Shipping bandages should completely cover and protect the coronary band and bulbs of the heel.
- If unfamiliar with the horse, make sure the horse becomes accustomed to moving in the bandages before leaving them alone or loading them in a trailer.
- Practice makes perfect – if you are new to wrapping have a professional check your work.

See Equine Guelph's [Why Bandage your Horse Video](#)

For more information on horse health care register for Equine Guelph's next [Equine Health and Disease Prevention](#) online course.