

How to Help a Lamé Horse

Noticing your horse has a slight limp can be concerning, and it's important to act quickly. What starts as a minor issue can sometimes turn into something more serious, so keeping a close eye on your equine friend is key.

How Can I Tell If My Horse Is Lamé?



When your horse is limping, you might notice them bobbing their head while they walk. Here's a simple checklist to help you assess the situation:

1. **Check Their Feet:** Start by picking up each hoof. Look for any stones or debris stuck in the gaps, as these can cause discomfort. While you're at it, check for cracks or dark spots that might indicate bruising or injury.
2. **Feel Their Lower Legs:** Gently run your hands down your horse's lower legs. Feel for any heat or swelling, and keep an eye out for cuts or wounds that may need attention.
3. **Gently Move Their Joints:** Assess how easily your horse can move their joints. This can give you insight into whether they might be in pain.
4. **Watch for Limping:** Observe your horse as they walk in a straight line on a hard surface. If limping isn't obvious, try lunging them. This will help you see if they are dropping a hip or struggling with any specific gaits, which is often a sign of hind limb lameness.
5. **Check Their Neck and Back:** Don't forget to run your hands along your horse's neck and back. Look for any signs of flinching or discomfort, and feel for any swelling or heat that could suggest inflammation.

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If you suspect your horse is lame, it's best to contact your vet as soon as possible. They can help identify the underlying issue and recommend the right treatment. In the meantime, here are some steps you can take to support your horse:

- **Clean Their Hooves:** Use a hoof pick to carefully clean out any debris. If you find something that's causing the issue, you might not need to call the vet right away.

- **Keep Them Stabled:** If the cause of lameness isn't clear, it's a good idea to keep your horse stabled until a vet can assess them. This helps prevent any further injury.

- **Avoid Riding:** It's important not to ride your horse while they're lame. Adding weight to an injured area can worsen the problem, so hold off until your vet



gives you the green light.

What Causes Lameness?

Lameness can stem from a variety of issues, and only your vet can pinpoint the exact cause and provide appropriate treatment. Some common culprits include:



- **Laminitis:** A painful condition affecting the hooves.
- **Bruises or Injuries:** Damage to the hoof can lead to lameness.
- **Sprains or Fractures:** Any joint or bone injury can cause discomfort.

- **Degenerative Diseases:** Conditions like arthritis can impact mobility.
- **Back and Neck Issues:** Problems in these areas can also manifest as lameness.
- **Infection:** Infections can lead to swelling and pain.

By keeping an eye out for these signs and taking prompt action, you'll be doing your best to support your horse's health and well-being. Always trust your instincts, and don't hesitate to reach out to your vet for guidance!