

# Horse Massage for Horse Owners

*"I received a very positive response"*

I was so excited to read *Horse Massage for Horse Owners* and to get started on the techniques. However, I also approached it with a degree of trepidation, given that I do not fit the 'horse owner' category and my knowledge of equine anatomy is minimal! Just a few pages into the book, it became clear that I needn't have worried. Sue provides clear, precise tutorials and anatomical descriptions which are appropriate for all levels of experience and understanding.

The preparation work ensures that the reader feels comfortable and confident when they move on to the practical hands-on sessions. It is recommended that the reader finishes the book before they do any hands-on work, in order to gain a full understanding of the benefits, application of, and reasons for massage, as well as the contra-indications.

The techniques are explored using human subjects to begin with. This gave me invaluable feedback on the various methods and intensity levels of the strokes that might otherwise have come in the form of a disgruntled horse, or even a hoof in my direction; nobody wants to test something in a real life situation that could make a horse unhappy, or worse, cause injury.

Sue is clearly extremely passionate about the benefits of massage for horses and their welfare generally, and urges us to be acutely aware of the physical and mental demands we make of horses in their various roles. She encourages the reader to accept responsibility for assessing their

horse's fitness and physical and mental wellbeing at all times.

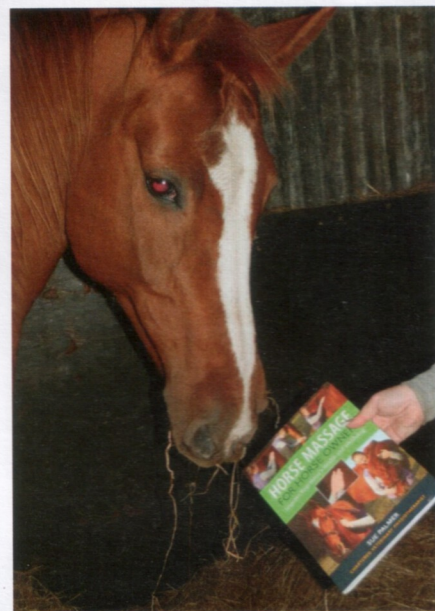
She acknowledges the gifts horses give us on a daily basis and the care and gratitude they deserve in return. Given that my own interest in horses comes primarily from a welfare perspective, it is rare and refreshing to come across educational material delivered by someone with significant expertise in their field who manages to marry 'functional' with 'feeling'. A minor issue to some, Sue identifies the horse throughout as 'he' because she cannot bear to hear a horse described as 'it'. This reflects the sensitivity and empathy in Sue's overall approach.

There is a great deal of factual information in the book, and the excellent

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photography and illustrations leave the reader feeling that they have fully understood each point. There is a useful prompt section at the end of the book which can be utilised in the hands-on massage sessions if required.

Above all the book is accessible and fun, and was a pleasure to read from beginning to end.



All photos courtesy of Meg Challinor

I received a very positive response from my helpful equine test subject, Amber Jazz. Jazz had a difficult past, suffering injury and neglect, but has recently been brought back into ridden work here at Shy Lowen. Her rehabilitation partner, Megan, was on hand for our session and we both agreed that at certain points, particularly when receiving massage on her back and quarters, there was an almost audible "ahhh" from in the stable! Just after Jazz's session we removed a bandage covering a small flesh wound on her hock (avoided during the massage session as per the contra-indications) and Jazz appeared far more relaxed about us doing that than might normally be anticipated. This alone gave me all the feedback I needed in terms of the benefits of horse massage in action!