



## THERAPY – FOR HORSE AND RIDER!

**Award-winning therapist Helen Mary Perkins highlights the benefits of the Bowen Technique to help maximise health and fitness... for animals as well as their owners**

With the Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials around the corner, it seems an ideal opportunity to highlight the benefits of Bowen therapy, equally effective both for horse and rider.

While Bowen is now one of the more recognised forms of complementary therapy, especially helpful in relieving back, neck and shoulder problems, far fewer people realise there is a similar therapy for horses; even dogs and cats have been shown to respond to this gentle non-invasive treatment.

Known as Equine Muscle Release Therapy (EMRT), this specialism evolved around 20 years ago from the original Bowen Technique, which also began in Australia. I saw the benefits first-hand when called to treat riders who had fallen from their horse while herding animals on cattle stations, during a period when I worked with the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the outback. Often the horse needed treatment as well as the buckaroo!

EMRT works in a similar way to Bowen to rebalance the body after injury or trauma, or simply to maintain good health and fitness. The therapist uses a series of specific, gentle moves to realign muscles

and connective tissue (fascia) to relax the body and ease pain. An unexplained deterioration in the horse's performance, uneven shoe wear or a stiffness in one leg could well improve after EMRT which is used by growing numbers of equestrians.

EMRT is accredited both by the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia and Bowen Association UK, in the same way as Bowen Technique is approved by these professional organisations which oversee training to maintain practitioner standards.

Spectators walking the cross-country course at Burghley can find themselves exhausted at the end of the day, hopefully not with a twisted ankle, but may have throbbing, swollen feet and aching shoulders from carrying a heavy bag with the day's essentials.

All these conditions can benefit from a session or two of Bowen therapy, perhaps with a soak in Bexter's Bath Crystals to ease away any aches and pains after a tiring day outdoors. Using Bexter's crystals in a purpose-designed applicator wrap can also reduce swelling (for horses too!).

Autumn also sees the start of a new season of sports such as rugby, football and hockey, where injuries can occur after an

extended period of 'rest' or minimal training, especially for amateur athletes who run for fun or exercise sporadically.

Among my clients are rugby players, marathon runners, cyclists and triathletes who testify to the benefits of regular Bowen therapy to maintain peak performance levels. In addition to treating specific problems, they tell me it helps them in mind and spirit as well as relieving physical issues.

A Rutland-based triathlete, recovering from a knee operation, experienced prolonged swelling. After using Bexter's Soda Crystals at home the knee was less painful, enabling him to start a course of Bowen therapy to get him back into training. In the Bowen session, we helped support the muscles around the knee by improving the tone of the quadriceps muscles and helping align the muscles of the ankle and foot. In no time at all he said the knee was feeling more secure.

Adventurer Bear Grylls is on record as crediting Bowen with helping him recover from serious back problems after a climbing accident several years ago. You might like to follow his example and book a treatment to experience the effects for yourself! [www.helenperkins.com](http://www.helenperkins.com)