

Bodywork for the Neck for Trainers, Riders and Owners with Debranne Pattillo, MEEBW

These are great moves that are safe to use on your own horse.



Loose fist glide on serratus ventral cervicis

Include all the muscles above the brachiocephalicus (the large strap muscle of the neck)

Gravity /slide (2 fists): Set your relaxed fists above the brachiocephalicus just in front of the shoulder. Wait for the horse to lean into you and allow your fists to slowly glide upward. Move to the adjacent area moving towards the head and repeat. In the photo a particular muscle is target but this move can be done starting just above the neck bone and glide up until you hit the magenta muscle (rhomboids). Move forward adjacent to the previous starting point and repeat. Stop before you are at the first neck bone.

The glides can move at a constant gradual pace or you can approach more like a myofascial release technique by waiting around 90 seconds and then follow the tissue upwards taking your time to move to the areas of tension.

Melt: Stand facing the neck and place the palms of your hand cupping the bottom edge of the firm muscle just below the (rhomboideus cervicis) for the melt. This is the magenta muscle in this picture. It is best to try this around the middle neck. Try to keep as much bend out of your wrist as possible pointing keeping your elbows downward. Put a slight bend in knuckles to take the tension out of your hands. Lean into the just enough so he meets the pressure without stepping. If possible hold for at least 90 seconds and continue as long horse is working with you. As he relaxes you will notice your lower his head and neck to ask for more stretch.



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The “Forearm Press” on the Neck

Rest your entire arm just above the brachiocephalicus which is the green muscle in this photo. Think about sinking inwards offering the horse to counter the pressure. Once the horse offers some pressure on your arm, meet his lean and lift upwards towards the mane, still keeping contact with entire forearm. Try to avoid slipping across the skin. You will notice he will lower his neck for more pressure. When he does, hold for 90 seconds and maintain as long as the horse wishes (or what you can manage!)

