

## FORELIMB ABDUCTOR AND ADDUCTOR STRETCHES

*Visual clip can be found on You Tube under Equinology*

### RELAXATION

Always stretch a new region such as the forelimb by beginning with the relaxation technique. Stand next to the shoulder and face the tail end of the horse. Pick up the front leg of the horse as if you were cleaning the hoof. Make sure he squares up behind for all of these forelimb stretches. Allow your outside elbow or arm to rest on your outside knee or thigh. This is what we refer to as the **stretching support stance (SSS)**. Your outside hand should be underneath the fetlock or pastern. Let your other arm remain on the outside allowing your forearm to rest on the cannon bone. This will provide support across the carpal joint (knee)

Make small gentle circles horizontal to the ground with the limb both directions. As the horse relaxes allow the limb to move forward (protract) and then backward (retract).

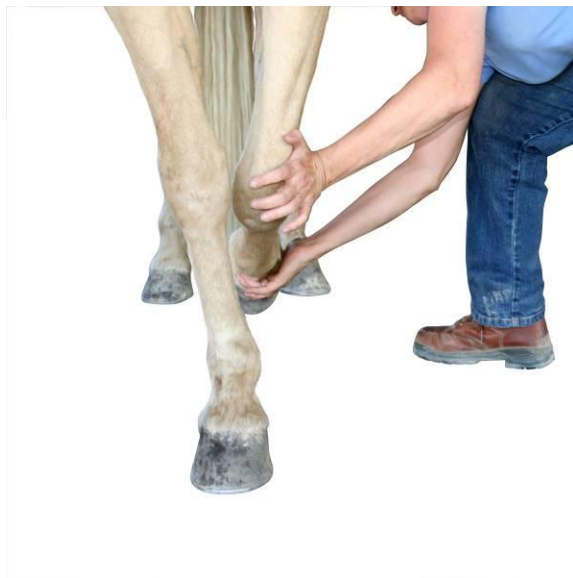
If at any time the horse tenses while performing any stretch, resume the relaxation techniques for that area. If the horse tenses you are actually working against him since he'll tighten the very muscles you are trying to release.

#### **Common Errors Performing This Technique:**

- *Bending the carpus (knee) less than 90 degrees. In this photo we are almost less than 90 degrees. Keep it as open as possible*
- *Lack of some type of support for the bodyworker; meaning one arm or shoulder is not resting against your body where comfortable*
- *Deviating the limb outward placing torque on the joints*
- *Gripping the tendon*
- *Holding toe creating a bend in the fetlock*
- *Horse is not somewhat squared up behind*
- *Reaching across the front of the limb with the inside arm*



### ABDUCTOR FORELIMB STRETCH: DELTOIDS and LATERAL SHOULDER MUSCLES



Let the leg relax back to a neutral position. Position your stance so your toes are facing the horse's shoulder. Assume the **SSS** as you did with the relaxation techniques with your elbow or arm still resting on your knee. Place your forward (cranial) hand on the outside of the limb but above the carpus (knee).

Use the hand over the carpus to direct the limb inward and slightly behind the other limb. Meet the resistance, wait a second and see if it can go a bit further without forces. Count for your hold time. Note that the hand on the fetlock is a loose and open so the limb can rest in its natural line of movement.

### **Common Errors Performing This Stretch:**

- *Bending the carpus (knee) less than 90 degrees*
- *Gripping the fetlock which discourages the natural line of movement of the limb*
- *Allowing the addressed limb to be too far forward of the other limb*
- *Lack of some type of support for the bodyworker; meaning one arm or shoulder is not resting against your body where comfortable*
- *Deviating the limb outward placing torque on the joints*
- *Gripping the tendon*
- *Directing the stretch below the carpus*
- *Horse is not somewhat squared up behind*

### **ADDUCTOR FORELIMB STRETCH: PECTORAL or CHEST MUSCLES**

Leave the one hand under the fetlock or pastern to support the limb as done in the abductor stretch. Make sure the cannon bone is at least parallel to the ground. Avoid closing the limb any further to avoid over flexing. Let the horse's leg relax so the carpal joint (knee) is not in front of the opposite limb. Bring your hand to the inside of the leg above the carpus and direct the motion towards yourself. Keep your hand which is supporting the fetlock or pastern open so the horse's leg can pivot naturally.

This is a good stretch for green horses, and young horses, as well as any horse over loading the front end. Reining, cutting, jumping, eventing, and polo are just a few of the disciplines that really use the pectoral muscles.



### **Common Errors Performing This Stretch:**

- *Bending the carpus (knee) less than 90 degrees.*
- *Gripping the fetlock which discourages the natural line of movement of the limb*
- *Allowing the addressed limb to be too far forward of the standing limb*
- *Lack of some type of support for the bodyworker; meaning one arm or shoulder is not resting against your body where comfortable*
- *Gripping the tendon*
- *Directing the stretch below the carpus*
- *Horse is not somewhat squared up behind*

