

- If your horse or pony remains lame after the nerve or joint block then we will perform the next nerve block further up the limb and continue until we have an answer.

Once we have localised the lameness we may:

- Let the nerve block wear off, so your horse or pony is lame again, and perform a more specific block (into a joint, tendon sheath or bursa). This helps to provide us with a more accurate localization of the site of pain
- Take x-rays to look for bony abnormalities
- Perform an ultrasound examination to look for soft tissue abnormalities

How long does a lameness work-up take?

Often 3-4 hours but it can vary dependant on;

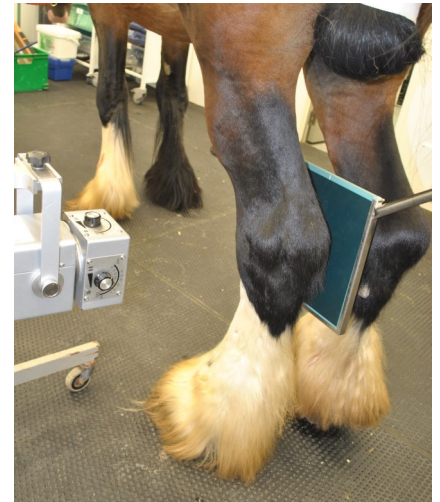
- How quickly we localise the lameness i.e. how many nerve blocks we need to perform
- If we need to wait for the initial nerve blocks to wear off before we perform more specific blocks
- If we need to take x-rays and if so how many
- If we need to perform an ultrasound examination

Sometimes it may be necessary for your horse or pony to stay with us overnight if a work-up is complex or we want to perform treatment the following day. If this is the case, we will discuss how your horse or pony is normally managed to ensure your horse receives the same care as at home.

What might we advise following a lameness work-up?

The vets at Summerleaze always discuss the outcome of a lameness work-up with you before giving any treatment. The type of treatment advised is dependent on the diagnosis but can include:

- Medication of a structure (ie Joint) with an anti-inflammatory drug such as steroids
- A careful controlled exercise regime
- Remedial farriery
- Systemic treatment with an anti-inflammatory drug such as phenylbutazone
- Surgical procedures to treat specific conditions and to provide us with more diagnostic information
- We may also advise more advanced diagnostic tests such as MRI, CT or a bone scan (nuclear scintigraphy)



How much does a lameness investigation cost?

An estimate will be provided for each case but this varies depending on how many nerve blocks and which diagnostic tests we perform.

- Insurance companies generally cover lameness work-ups, unless you have a current exclusion. It is sensible to notify your insurance company before your horse or pony comes into the clinic for a lameness work-up

When wouldn't we do a lameness work-up?

We may elect to perform x-rays or an ultrasound evaluation in the following instances:

- If there is an obvious cause of lameness that does not require nerve or joint blocks.
- If your horse or pony is so lame that we are concerned about making matters worse by walking or trotting.
- If there is a history of trauma and there are concerns about a possible fracture

We hope this helps to explain the lameness investigation at Summerleaze but if you have any queries then please contact the clinic on 01297 304007 or summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk

Next month's newsletter will focus on hock related lameness's which we hope will be of interest to our clients.

Equine Newsletter

November 2020



Lameness Work-Ups at the Equine Clinic

When a horse or pony is found to be lame with no obvious cause, we often advise a lameness investigation to identify the reason for the lameness.

In this newsletter, we explain what a lameness work-up at Summerleaze Equine Clinic may involve. Hopefully this will allow you to prepare your horse and pony and address any concerns that you may have about bringing your horse or pony in to us.

What are the stages of a lameness investigation?

The first step in the lameness investigation is for the vet treating your horse or pony to take a history from you regarding your horse or ponies background if not already known.

- What is your horse or pony used for?
- How he or she is managed
- When he or she was last shod and who your farrier is
- Any previous medical issues that we need to know about

We will also ask questions about the nature of the current lameness:

- How long have they been lame
- How severe has the lameness been and has this changed
- Has any treatment been administered by you or another professional or para-professional
- Has there been a response to rest or treatment

We will then perform an initial lameness examination which may include:

- Careful examination of the neck, back and limbs
- Application of hoof testers
- Gait analysis at walk and trot in a straight line
- Flexion tests of the lower and upper parts of the limb
- A lunge evaluation on our clinic surface
- A ridden examination

If, following this examination, the site of lameness is apparent, we may elect to perform relevant diagnostic imaging procedure straight away including

- X-rays
- An ultrasound examination

If there is no obvious cause of lameness, then we commonly start performing a series of 'nerve and/or joint blocks' from the bottom of the limb:

- We will place small volumes of a short acting local anaesthetic, using small needles, in specific places on the leg to temporarily desensitise the nerve supply to a specific area
- If the lameness is abolished after a nerve or joint block then we know that the cause of lameness is coming from the desensitised region.

