

The Animal Rehab Division  
The Canadian Physiotherapy Association  
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## **DIPLOMA IN EQUINE REHABILITATION**

(Dipl. Equine Rehab)

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### ***Course Work***

Candidates will be required to take both the introductory and advanced equine rehabilitation courses. The prerequisite for both courses is a license to practice physical therapy in their province (or equivalent). The Independent Learning Course: 'Introduction to the Equine Patient' has been created as an additional prerequisite and pre-reading material for the Introduction to Equine Rehab Course.

The Animal Rehab Division courses are designed to augment PT knowledge and constitute 100 hours of classroom work (plus 100 hours of self-directed study). A description of the courses is found below:

#### **Introduction to the Equine Patient**

This course is required prior to engaging in the Equine Rehab series of courses. Course content includes an introduction to horses, anatomy, orthopaedic and neurologic conditions of the horse, gait patterns in the horse, occupation health considerations, common equine medications and nutraceuticals, legal, political and practice issues.

There is a home study open book exam at the end of this course. The pass mark is 85%.

#### ***Introduction to Equine Rehabilitation Therapy***

This is a three-day course that introduces physiotherapists to the field of large animal rehabilitation – focusing on the equine. Instruction will include the topics of comparative anatomy, equine behavior, handling skills, and identification and treatment of many common musculoskeletal and neurological problems. This course will be both lecture and practical. Upon completion of the program, the participant will be able to recognize gait abnormalities, recognized conditions within their scope of physiotherapy skills, have an ability to execute a rudimentary physical examination, gain an appreciation of key anatomical/musculoskeletal/biomechanical differences between the human and the animal, gain an enhancement of problem solving skills in regards to treatment planning for the equine patient, and have a comprehension of the legal, political, and ethical considerations pertaining to the practice of animal rehabilitation in Canada.

### ***Advanced Equine Rehabilitation for Physical Therapists***

This evidenced-based four-day practical course is intended to build upon the information presented in the Introductory to Equine Rehabilitation Course. Topics included in this course are musculoskeletal joint by joint physical assessment and physical therapy diagnostics (including all peripheral joints as well as the temporomandibular joint, spine and pelvis). Advanced manual therapy techniques (i.e. joint and spinal mobilizations) are covered. Additionally, students are instructed in neurological evaluations. Further information is presented regarding equine-specific therapeutic exercise, research-based application of modalities to the animal patient, neurologic rehabilitation, equine confirmation as it relates to biomechanics, function and sporting equine injuries.

### ***Examination***

Upon completion of the course work above candidates will be eligible to take the examination pertaining to those courses. The take-home exam is based on the Introductory course and the Advanced course. A passing grade of 85% must be achieved.

### ***Case Study***

All candidates must submit a case study (an example will be provided) that follows a case through from referral to discharge. It will be two parts, the first based on the veterinary information provided and/or surgical report and referral and the second will be the rehabilitation portion. Cases will be graded on sound rationale for treatment choices, use of outcome measures, timely communications with the referring veterinarian and professional appearance of the report.

### ***Veterinary Clinic Observation***

All candidates will be required to complete 40 hours (5 days) of veterinary clinical experience. This is intended to give the candidate an appreciation for the veterinary side of animal healthcare and provide an opportunity to gain animal experience and see many different conditions and diagnostic procedures. Candidates will provide the Animal Rehab Division with information on which veterinarian/veterinary clinic they will be completing this experience with and the Division will provide the appropriate forms for the veterinary clinic to fill in and sign off on. Past experience will be accepted, but must be verified and signed off on.

### ***Animal Husbandry and Handling Skills***

Perhaps most important to successful entry into equine rehabilitation for the physical therapist is the possession of good animal husbandry and handling skills. This category requires the candidate to be "checked off" on a list of skills. Persons qualified to witness and check off the candidate are veterinarians, veterinary technicians, equine trainers or practicing equine

rehabilitation practitioners (PTs) with 4 or more years of equine experience. The persons checking off the skills must be someone other than the candidate him/herself! The horses used to test the candidate must be other than the candidates own animal(s). Each skill must be signed and dated and the candidate must provide a contact phone number or e-mail for the Animal Rehab Division to be able to verify authenticity if needed. The Division will provide the necessary forms to be checked-off.

The following skills will need to be demonstrated and witnessed:

- Demonstrate the ability to lead 5 horses who are not one's own (not all at the same time)
- Identify the presence of a hind limb lameness or gait abnormality
- Identify the presence of a forelimb lameness or gait abnormality
- Identify body condition score
- Demonstrate an ability to calm and restrain an overactive horse
- Demonstrate an ability to halter a horse
- Demonstrate an ability to perform full range of motion of the forelimbs and hind limbs in standing position
- Demonstrate ability to tie at least two of the following knots:
  - Weaver's Knot
  - Manger tie
  - Bowline
  - Clove hitch
  - Ring knot
  - Double half hitch
  - Quick release tie

### ***Safety Issues***

All candidates just provide a short written assignment that answers the following questions. Please use references to justify your answers. A combination of literature and/or personal communications is acceptable. (Answers are worth 3 marks per question)

1. What are the common signs of aggression and warning signals displayed by horses?
2. How would you deal with an aggressive horse?
3. What are some of the common triggers for aggressive behavior?
4. How would you handle a horse in excessive pain?
5. What are some of the calming signals used by horses when stressed?

### ***Expectations and Assumptions***

The process to complete the requirements for the Diploma in Equine Rehabilitation is estimated to take 200 hours inclusive. Completion of the necessary course work, veterinary

observation experience, written examination, case-study treatment and write-up, animal husbandry and handling requirements, and behavioral short answer questions must be completed within 4 years from the time of taking the Introduction to Equine Rehabilitation Therapy course. A fee of \$500 must be submitted along with all of the required documents.

Animal Rehab Division reserves the right to modified and amend the diploma requirements over time as deemed necessary by emerging and evolving standards within the profession and practice of animal physiotherapy.