

Equine Hanna Somatics - Part 3

Kinetic Mirroring of the Rib Cage

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Photos By Eileen Johnson

In this article we are using the technique of Kinetic Mirroring to assist your horse to relax the small muscles between his ribs, the Intercostals. Encouraging these small muscles to relax allows more oxygen to enter the lungs and bloodstream. Kinetic Mirroring begins the process of muscular relaxation by shortening the muscle portion between your hands.



The three hand placements for Kinetic Mirroring of the ribcage. The hands are on a slight diagonal following the line of the ribcage.

Relaxation of the Intercostal Muscles assists in:

- Maintaining a centered saddle,
- Lateral flexion of both sides,
- Clean canter departs,
- Deep full breaths.

To perform Kinetic Mirroring (KM), while working specifically with the rib cage, stand facing your horse's torso. Place your hands on a slight diagonal following the line of the rib bones.

Standing on the left side of the horse, place your left hand close to the spine near the withers with your right hand near the end of the ribs toward the sternum/belly. If your horse is large, or if it is more comfortable for you, place your left hand near the spine with your right hand in the center of the ribcage. When you finish working with the top portion, shift your left hand to the center of the ribs place your right hand to the bottom of the ribs, near the belly.

Very gently and slowly move your hands toward one another to the count of 3 - 5. There is VERY little movement, only a few millimeters. It is almost a thought of the movement. Repeat two more times. You may wonder if you are performing this technique correctly, there is less action and more intent involved. Your horse's reactions and responses will confirm your success.

Many horses will take a bigger breath when the tension is released. Some horses may voluntarily create a slight bend in their spine toward you. A few horses will not respond until you walk away from them; especially during the first time they experience the ability to have their body relax in this way.

Complete each hand position three times before changing the placement of your hands to the middle position, then the last. When proceeding to the right side, your hand position will shift. Your right hand will become the high hand while your left hand takes a lower position on the ribcage.

Use the length of your hands as a guide to determine where they will rest each time you complete a section of his ribcage. Generally, you will position your hands along the ribs between three and four times. Small ponies and minis will require fewer hand placements, perhaps two to three positions; with larger horses you may move your hands to a new position four to five times.

EHS® is very gentle and slow. There is no stretching, pulling or pushing involved in any of the movements, including Kinetic Mirroring. Be aware of your own breath as you perform this technique. Practice inhaling as you move your hands toward one another, exhale as your hands move apart. Your horse will begin to breath with you. As this occurs, take deeper louder breaths with long full audible exhales. You and your horse will relax and become centered together.

Continue taking before and after photos of your horse, front, back, each side and from behind down the spine. Compare the first sets of photos you took after the first article, May/June issue, and the second article in the July/August issue, to the ones you take with this exercise. As you do this, think about how your horse responds. How is your relationship improving/changing? Is the way your horse moves different? Has his posture shifted? What additional ways has your horse changed? Be observant and have fun.

Note: This is a wonderful technique to use when a horse is experiencing a bout of gas colic. Offer your horse KM along his rib cage and see how he responds. If you feel he is benefiting and relaxing, you may use KM along the spine and abdominal muscles on both sides of the body, in addition to his ribs. In a relatively short time period, your horse may be able to expel gas lessening his discomfort. Continue to offer Kinetic Mirroring of his muscles as long as he finds benefit and comfort from the process.

Continued...

This is a wonderful technique to use when a horse is experiencing a bout of gas colic.



Hand position for Kinetic Mirroring the ribcage for a large barreled horse. The top hand is near the spine, the bottom hand is near the center of the ribcage.



When the top of the ribcage Kinetic Mirroring is complete, move your hands down. The top hand is in the center of the ribcage while the lower hand is at the bottom of the rib bones, near the belly.

Trish Hechter grew up riding and working with her mother in Maryland who was renowned for working with "problem" horses. In the mid 90's Trish earned her Reiki 1 and 2 certificates becoming a Reiki Master in 2020. After meeting Ryan Moschell, a Certified Hanna Somatics Educator® (for humans), In 2015, Trish turned her focus to Hanna Somatics and will be EHS fully certified in 2023.

For more information about Trish's work, please visit HechterEquineMobility.com. Trish offers clinics to educate people how to work with their horses using Equine Hanna Somatics®. 2022 dates are available, www.HechterEquineMobility.com/ehs-clinics.

To purchase a video introduction of EHS® please visit, www.HechterEquineMobility.com/video.

To learn more about Equine Hanna Somatics®, and to find an equine educator near you, please visit EquineHannaSomatics.org

Trish Hechter and Ryan Moschell, CHSE have created a partnership to work with equestrians and their horses. Dates are available for their workshops and clinics in 2022.

To contact Ryan Moschell and learn more about his work, please visit, www.GetOutOfShape.com.

