****

**Following Your Horse's Massage**

* The minutes immediately following your horses massage offer a valuable time of neuromuscular repatterning.  Get him moving—gently!  Hand walk him for 10-20 minutes, or enjoy an easy hack.  **Ideally, your horse will be turned out for the rest of the day.**
* Encourage your horse to drink plenty of water in the hours following his massage. Offer special minerals or salt during especially warm weather.
* While some massage techniques help prime your horse to follow up with outstanding performance, generally, your horse will not be raring to go immediately after his massage.  Always avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours.  If your horse is new to massage, please schedule his session at least a week ahead of any competition.  Horses used to massage should be permitted 3-4 days to adjust to their new "shape" before being brought into the ring or onto the course.
* Post-massage soreness is normal up to three days following your horse's session.  Be mindful of his signals and please be in touch with any questions about what you observe.
* Note that, once newly addressed, areas of muscular tension often feel worse before they get better.  While some freshly-massaged horses run bucking off into the field apparently five years younger, it is more common for horses to need a few days to process the changes.  If your horse is sound but seems to flounder a bit during your next ride, be gentle and patient!  That's a good indication that he's finding new ground.
* If we discussed a homework plan, give it a try.  Your own explorations into a gentle stretching routine or targeted massage technique can extend the benefits of your horse's regular massages exponentially.