



Is your horse suffering from Sacroiliac Pain ?

By Dr. Ellis Traywick

The sacroiliac or “SI” region is the part of the horse’s spine corresponding to the location of the croup, where a part of the pelvis called the ilium overlaps the sacral vertebrae.

The sacroiliac “joints” are low motion and function to absorb the shock as the hind legs land and transfer the force over the back.

The sacroiliac joints depend on the surrounding muscles for stability. Instability causes pain and can lead to damage to the ligaments in the region, which can eventually result in arthritis.

One of the telltale signs of a problem in this area is bunny-hopping in the canter, with the back legs moving together.

Ultrasound can detect damage to the sacroiliac ligaments or arthritic changes of the bones.

SI injections reduce inflammation around these joints.

Keeping this area healthy requires exercise and proper nutrition. These are both equally imperative for a horse to reach its full potential of topline development.

Building strength of the support muscles of the back and croup is accomplished by strengthening the **core** because anything that causes the horse to engage its belly causes him to use his back muscles.

Horse owners can play a very important role by working on carrot stretches and belly lifts with their horse and practicing ground poles, cavaletti and repetition of gait transitions in succession to improve the upper hind limb strength.

This combined approach of **pain relief in conjunction** with **rehab** and diet is the best way to ensure long term comfort of the SI area.