

natural **HORSE**

M A G A Z I N E

Healing the Spirit:

REIKI

for Peace and Calm

7
TIPS

for a
Trouble-Free
WINTER

**SLOW
FEED
SAVVY:**

How Your Horse & You Benefit!

Barn Cats:

**NEW IDEAS FOR
LITTER CONTROL**



Typical responses to Reiki include relaxation and even falling asleep.

Equine Reiki:

PEACEFUL HEALING FOR YOU AND YOUR HORSE

by Kathleen Prasad

Learning Reiki for your horses is learning to meditate with your horses for healing. But in a bigger sense, Reiki is a spiritual system cultivating compassionate intention, which in turn brings about healing transformation. The name Reiki, pronounced “ray-key,” comes from the Japanese words “rei” meaning spirit and “ki” meaning energy. It is usually translated as “universal life energy.”

While we often hear about the surface practices of Reiki as a “hands-on healing” modality for helping our horses heal bumps and bruises, the deeper teachings of Reiki are about healing of the spirit. Reiki helps us meet our horses’ healing challenges with grace and surrender, while we learn to listen to and be present for them in a compassionate space. It is the cultivation of what I like to call “the Reiki space” – an openhearted mindful “presence” with our horses – that brings with it amazing healing responses.

Reiki starts with you. It is about being able to hold a space of balance within yourself, even in the midst of a chaotic or troublesome situation. Reiki practices help us learn how to maintain an inner balance and calm while we meditate, which will, in time and with practice, gradually spread out into a peaceful state of mind in all that we do. I call it the “Reiki ripple effect” – when we open our hearts to balance, clarity and harmony, then healing, contentment, transformation and renewal will follow.

Below: In this photo, students at Remus Memorial Horse Sanctuary are practicing a Reiki meditation in the pasture. Within a few minutes, the horses began to join the students and relax deeply into the space.



Because horses are so sensitive to our inner states, when we learn to create an inner state of balance, we can see them almost immediately respond by also becoming calmer and more peaceful. Self-healing can most easily happen when we ourselves are truly at peace. In addition, learning to connect with our horses from this calm inner space will also help our relationship with them to go much deeper.

The System of Reiki

The system of Reiki has five elements that work together to help us learn how to create this kind of peaceful, healing presence:

- 1 Mindfulness of the five precepts (explained later in this article)
- 2 Daily practice in meditation techniques
- 3 Hands-on (or off depending on the horse’s preference) healing practice with others
- 4 Meditation with symbols and mantras (taught in advanced Reiki classes and used for mental focus of the practitioner)
- 5 Initiations or “Reiju,” meaning “spiritual blessing,” or a kind of energetic conversation between teacher and student

Reiki Exercise to Try:

BEING AT PEACE WITH YOUR HORSE

Open yourself to the energy of peace and calm. Stand outside your horse's paddock or pasture in a comfortable position, spine straight, shoulders and arms relaxed. Eyes remain open and in soft-focus. Place your hands over your lower belly. Relax your entire body as you breathe deeply a few times. Imagine there are roots growing down from the base of your spine, deep and wide into the earth. Imagine that the powerful, grounding energy of the earth can flow up these roots into your lower belly giving you stability and peace. Take 10 breaths, and on each inhale, feel peaceful earth energy coming up into your lower belly. On each exhale, release any emotions, fears or worries you may have out your roots, easily dissolving them into the peacefulness that is earth. With each successive breath, feel more and more stillness and stability within you. Once you have completed the 10 breaths, allow yourself to relax in the space of earth energy and stability that you have created with your breath.

Once you feel yourself fully calm and connected to the earth, simply invite your horse into the peaceful space you have created with your breath. Imagine that within this space, all is perfect and balanced and that your horse can join you. Feel harmony enveloping both you and your horse. Let go of your expectations (along with any worries about what needs to be healed) and continue to breathe the calm and strength of earth energy into your belly as you share this space with your horse.

Notice if your horse comes closer or stays farther away. Place your hands gently on your horse if he approaches, or keep them on your belly if he chooses to remain at a distance. Signs of relaxation and stress relief in your horse will indicate that he is sharing your peaceful healing space with you. Post-treatment: Note any healing shift, even something subtle, as an indication of the self-healing work your horse is accomplishing with your support.

All five elements of the system of Reiki, when practiced together, focus on helping us remember our inner wisdom or "True Self." In Japan, this is known as "Anshin Ritsumei," or enlightenment. When we remember our True Self, we realize that we are deeply connected to one another, and a strong sense of compassion naturally arises. How does this relate to healing? Compassion is the ultimate healing power.

Why Reiki is Ideal for Horses

Reiki's effectiveness is not dependent upon physical contact. The practitioner does not manipulate or direct the healing process: the horse connects and accepts Reiki in the ways that are most comfortable, either hands-on or from a distance, or a combination of the two. Because Reiki is essentially a meditative practice, it is easy for anyone to try and can do no harm, even when practiced by a novice. The stronger our own peaceful state of mind is, the deeper responses we will see in our horses. Reiki is about connecting to the subtlest of energies - our energy of mind and heart - and thus it touches the deepest source of our essence and always supports a path toward balance and harmony. Even if we don't know what is specifically wrong with our horse, by meditating and creating a space of peaceful connection and compassion, profound healing shifts toward balance on all levels of being can happen.

I'd like to focus on the heart of the system of Reiki: the five Reiki precepts for balanced living, taught by the founder of the system, Mikao Usui:

Just for today...

- Do not anger.
- Do not worry.
- Be humble.
- Be honest.
- Be compassionate.

These precepts are not only the foundation for self-healing in the system of Reiki, but can also be used as guides when working with our horses.

1 Just for today do not anger. Horses can live long lives, and as such may see many homes and guardians. We may sometimes see the results of past abuse or neglect when working with horses who may have come to us later in life. We can begin to feel ourselves becoming very angry about how our horse was previously treated, what he had to go through and so on. This anger will merely distract us from our primary goal, which is to help our horse. If we are angry, our horse will sense this and not want to connect with us.

Reiki meditation helps us to see deeper into the heart of our horse and see his potential for healing, which will make it easier to work through any difficulties we face with patience and calm. Approaching our horse with inner peace rather than anger will help everything flow toward healing much more easily.

2 Just for today do not worry.

Over the years in working with horses, we might find ourselves dealing with many health problems, both physical and emotional. As we nurture horses toward healing, we may find ourselves worrying: worrying about other problems that might manifest, expenses of treatments, how and if the horse will be able to fully heal from illness and injury and so on. Worrying about things beyond our control is not helpful.

Reiki practice helps us to connect deeper into the heart and spirit of the horse and to see him as already healed – as a bright, beautiful spirit with limitless potential. When we begin to look at our horse from the heart, he will immediately sense this and trust can deepen. And in that deepening of trust, the healing of the heart begins. When healing of the heart begins, all else will follow.

3 Be humble.

Working with our horses can bring us back into humility. In many ways, horses are so much more sensitive than we are to the lessons of healing and life, and we have much to learn. Our horses can become some of our most profound spiritual teachers. Reiki practice helps us to open our hearts to hear them.

4 Be honest.

Horses require absolute honesty, as they just won't accept anything less. We must learn to be completely present with them in the moment, because this is how they live. Reiki practice supports us in meeting them

in that mindful place; it is there that we can most easily be who we are with a truthful heart.

5 Be compassionate.

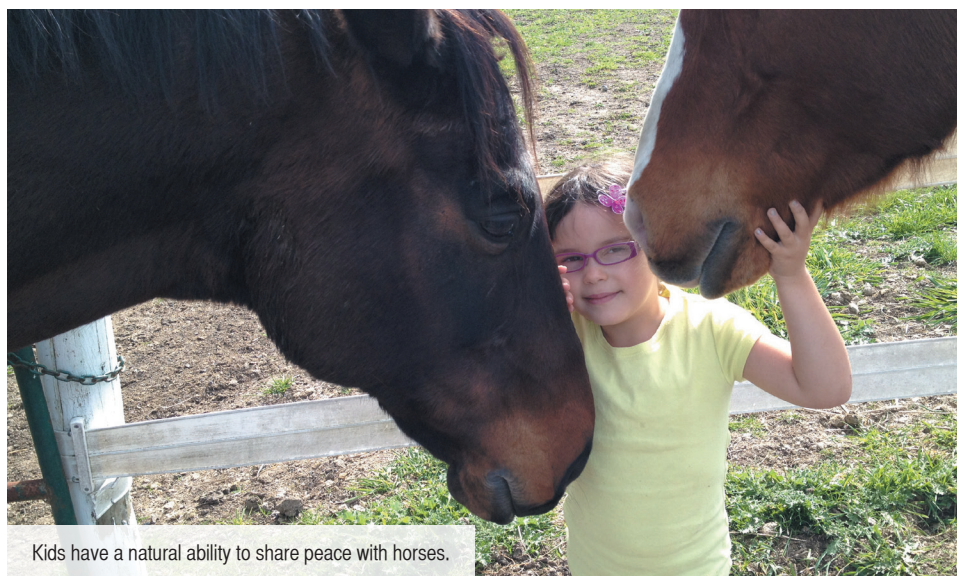
Developing a relationship with a horse teaches us to dissolve the boundaries of separateness. It teaches us to work together and develop a partnership that transcends species and language. This partnership may begin with groundwork and riding, but at some point will also encompass a health challenge. Through this we will learn that in reality we are not so different and compassion will grow.

Reiki techniques help to bring balance, calm and a sense of deep connectedness and open-heartedness with our horses. When we realize this connection, the automatic by-product is an overwhelming sense of wellbeing and compassion. It is this compassion that is the heart of meditating with horses. To be able to stand with our horses, who may be suffering, in this deep, peaceful and compassionate space is the most profound kind of healing we can ever offer to them, or ever experience ourselves. True lasting healing is about peace of mind and heart, and this is what sharing Reiki with our horses is all about. ♡



About the author: Kathleen Prasad is a global leader in teaching Reiki for animals and founder

of Animal Reiki Source (www.animalreikisource.com), as well as president of the Shelter Animal Reiki Association (SARA). She has taught Reiki to the staff and volunteers of organizations such as BrightHaven, The CARE Foundation, Remus Memorial Horse Sanctuary, Best Friends Animal Society, The San Francisco SPCA, and Guide Dogs for the Blind, as well as to thousands of animal lovers around the world.



Kids have a natural ability to share peace with horses.

ANIMAL
Reiki source

EDUCATION IN
ENERGY HEALING
FOR ANIMALS

Kathleen Prasad
Animal Reiki Teacher

www.animalreikisource.com

(415) 420-9783

369B Third St., #156
San Rafael, CA 94901

info@animalreikisource.com

Below: In this photo, students lined up against the fence and began Reiki meditation, inviting the horses to join them. Within minutes, the horses crossed the large pasture to stand close to students in a quiet meditative space.

