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Outlaw Equine: Six Laps Ahead of the Rest



When Outlaw Equine first opened its doors in 2007 Dr. Josh Harvey, DVM probably didn't expect it to become the landmark it is today. In eight years Outlaw Equine has become the premier equine veterinary clinic in the rodeo community and Northeast Texas. Regular clients come from as far away as Tennessee, Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The new office and hospital building came to formation in 2014 and Outlaw Equine expanded its hydrotherapy and rehab program. The whole building was designed with the hydrotherapy and rehab program in mind, and a state of the art facility was built, "The whole process centered around the hydrotherapy program and the best facilities we could provide for our clients", states Ashley Rice, head of the hydrotherapy and rehabilitation program.

The rehab facility offers clients, new, visiting, and regular, several options when it comes to rehabbing their horse. Theraplates, swimming, exercise, cold salt water therapy chambers, and laser therapy are all options. Dr. Josh Harvey, DVM and Dr. Don Lee, DVM work directly with the rehab program. Each horse has their own customized plan, whether that is for rehabilitation purposes or just the goal of overall fitness, "On average we have about 40 horses here all the time for rehab purposes. Our barn is never full", explains Ashley. Outlaw Equine averages about 20 equine swims a day in addition to their other therapy options.

Doubters be warned, the positive affects of hydrotherapy and rehab cannot be ignored, "My assistant rehab manager Margo and I both came from the thoroughbred world and saw how these kinds of rehab options could improve their overall performance

or help a horse recover from an injury and be better than he was prior to it. Every performance horse, any horse really, can benefit from our rehab program.”

Where swimming allows overall fitness, topline strength, greater range of motion, and is excellent for soft tissue injuries and arthritis, the cold salt-water chambers offer something else. Horses stand in the chambers for 15 minutes, a combination of epsom salt, dead sea salt, pool salt, and cold water fill the chamber to roughly a horse’s chest. The combination of salts helps with soreness, inflammation, soft tissue injuries, open wounds, and arthritis as well.

“Every horse is a little hesitant or scared when they start. Most of them have never had to walk down a ramp into a body of water or swim period. We try to keep everyone as relaxed as possible and take it slowly, sometimes they can just swim one lap and they’re exhausted. But I assure you, each horse grows to love it and I think some even look forward to it.”

Water is one of the most natural forms of rehab available to athletes, both human and equine. Combined with natural salt, theraplates, and exercise many horses go through the program

without having any oral inflammatories administered or joint injections, "It's just the most natural, organic way to take care of an athlete that needs to be at their prime on a regular basis. It doesn't stress them out, we try to make it the most relaxing part of their day." It's easy to see this is true, most horses patiently stand waiting for their turn to swim, a few even dozing off.

While hydrotherapy is beginning to grow in popularity Ashley stresses the importance of finding a facility that has properly trained staff and knows exactly what they're doing, "We are so lucky that we have clients who regularly recommend us to other people. Our business has doubled based on word of mouth recommendations. We have the added bonus on have two vets available to help create the ideal program for each horse and be there to evaluate every step of the process." It's a large part of the reason that Outlaw Equine sees multiple lameness exams every day, clients know this is where to bring a horse that might need alternative treatment options.

With clients such as Shane Hanchey, Clint Cooper, Tuf Cooper, Trevor Brazile, Dustin Bird, Paul Eaves, and more, Outlaw Equine's reputation speaks for itself. "We have some of the best roping horses and barrel horses in the world come here for rehab and fitness purposes. Our clients know that their horses are in the

best hands, they receive 24/7 care, and both Dr. Harvey and Dr. Lee are actively involved on a daily basis," adds Ashley. The rehab program is growing so rapidly that plans for expanding the program are already whirling around. Outlaw Equine hopes to add an aquacizer to the mix, an eight-horse underwater walker.

The future of the hydrotherapy and rehab program is nothing but bright, the popularity of hydrotherapy is growing and the idea of affordable, drug-free treatment options appeals to many. With Ashley Rice at the helm of the hydrotherapy and rehab program, the ability to work directly with two of the nation's best veterinarians, and clients continuously pulling in the driveway, there is no doubt that Outlaw Equine is an unbeatable combination of talent and heart, all firmly rooted with a horse's best interest in mind.