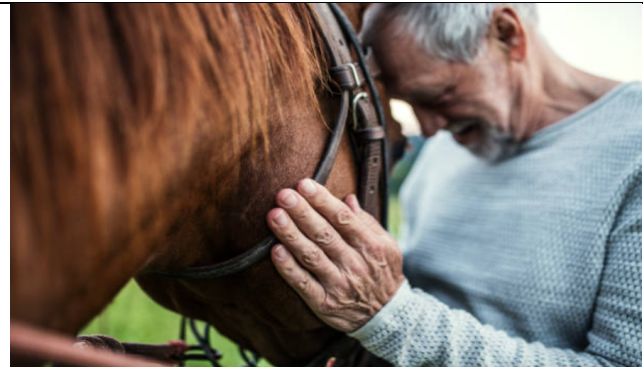


## Psychological and Physical Benefits of Interactions with Horses

**Have you hugged a horse today?** The premise of equine therapy is that interacting with a horse under the supervision of a mental and physical health professional can complement traditional treatments to best support recovery. Such interactions may include riding or **assisted riding**, in addition to **feeding, grooming, and providing other kinds of care**. Just interacting with a horse has shown improve perceived abilities such as **demonstrating patience, exhibiting confidence, obtaining goals, expressing/using verbal techniques, remaining calm, focusing on tasks and demonstrating assertiveness** per a [2019 study conducted by JOE.org](#). Having horses around is simply good for people who live near them. Try hugging a horse and see how it makes you feel.

**For older adults:** According to [researchers](#) who studied the perceived benefits of equine-assisted psychotherapy in older adults with cognitive or functional impairment, most who tried equine therapy reported gains extending beyond their interactions with horses. These included increased human social interactions and positive influences from peers.



**For veterans:** [Researchers](#) found that veterans [experiencing trauma](#), stress, and anxiety showed fewer physical signs of stress when participating in an equine therapy program.

**For at-risk youth:** In a [2011 study](#), seven young people considered “at risk” of harming themselves or others were introduced to equine therapy. They reported positive effects on their resilience and reduced risks of crime, self-harm, and other issues. They reported benefits to their empathy, confidence, self-esteem, mastery, and self-efficacy.





**For mental health:** Equine therapy may also be useful for some autistic people. A [2018 research review](#) reports beneficial effects on behavior and social communication skills.

**For emotional health:** For people who find it difficult to open up to others, working with horses may provide a more relaxed environment to facilitate trust and build a therapeutic relationship.



**For physical health:** There are numerous physical benefits to horseback riding, including increased cardiovascular and [core strength](#), reduced blood pressure levels, and reduced stress.



**For coordination:** There's a lot of anecdotal evidence to support horseback riding as a therapy for people with cerebral palsy or other neurological disorders. It may help people strengthen their balance and overall coordination, but additional scientific studies are needed.

(Source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com))

