

## **TENDON REHABILITATION INFORMATION**

**A 2007 paper reports a prognosis of 20-60% of thoroughbred race horses with a superficial digital flexor tendon returning to racing, with 80% sustaining a repeated injury. Sport horses have a better prognosis for successful return to competition, largely affected by the severity of the original injury.**

**Regarding treatment of tendon injuries:** one study showed that 16 of 50 horses treated with pasture rest alone before returning to work had a successful return to competition, where 20 of 28 horses managed with a controlled active rehabilitation program had a successful return to work. Most current literature suggests that an 8 to 9 month period of controlled exercise rehabilitation is effective for resolution of most tendon injuries. Compared to just rest alone, an active rehabilitation program has been shown to resolve residual inflammation, maintain gliding function, and promote optimal collagen remodelling. An example of such a program has been inserted below. Bear in mind that this program can be adjusted (shortened or lengthened) depending on periodic progress checks.

**WEEKS 0-2: Box rest, NSAIDS (Bute), Ice 10 minutes twice daily**

**WEEK 3: commence 10 minutes hand walking daily**

**WEEK 4: 15 minutes walking**

**WEEK 5: 20 minutes walking**

**WEEK 6: 25 minutes walking**

**WEEK 7: 30 minutes walking**

**WEEK 8: 35 minutes walking \*\* Ultrasound tendon to check progress.**

**THEN.... Increase work slightly if all going well:**

**WEEK 9-12: 30 minutes walking, 5 minutes trotting**

**WEEK 13-16: 25 minutes walking, 10 minutes trotting**

**WEEK 17-20: 20 minutes walking, 15 minutes trotting**

**WEEK 21-24: 20 minutes walking, 20 minutes trotting \*\* Ultrasound tendon to check progress**

**THEN.... Increase work if all going well:**

**WEEK 25-29: normal warm up, cool down, walk/trot and add 5 minutes of canter**

**WEEK 30-35: add 10 minutes of canter**

**WEEK 36-40: add 15 minutes of canter, and begin to add fast work 2-3 x weekly**

**WEEK 41+: slowly resume regular training.**

**IF AT ANY TIME THERE IS A RECURRENCE OF SWELLING, HEAT, PAIN ON PALPATION, STOP AND SCAN.**