

EMA

Equine Massage Academy Ltd

Therapy Education Research

The Water Treadmill - Is Your Horse Really Benefiting?



Water treadmills are becoming increasingly popular for:

- Rehabilitation
- Fitness
- Conditioning
- Injury recovery

And they can be incredibly effective.

But only when they are used correctly.

The Missing Piece

The common assumption is:

👉 “If my horse is on a water treadmill, it must be helping.”

But the reality is:

👉 The way the treadmill is used matters more than the treadmill itself.

⚠️ Unfortunately many centres operating this equipment aren't trained beyond the manufacturers equipment course – what they need is in depth training on water treadmill protocols so they can create a plan for each horse – one size does not fit all.

What Many Owners Don't Realise

Not all water treadmill sessions are the same.

Differences in:

- Water height
- Speed
- Duration
- Frequency
- The horse's posture and way of going

...can completely change the outcome.

What Actually Matters

1. It's Not Just Exercise—It's Targeted Work

Water treadmills can be used to:

- Build strength
- Improve range of motion
- Support rehabilitation
- Encourage correct movement

But they can also:

- Reinforce poor posture
- Overload the wrong structures and cause damage
- Create fatigue without benefit

👉 It all depends on how they are used.

2. One Setting Does Not Suit Every Horse

Every horse has different needs based on:

- Injury history
- Fitness level

- Conformation
- Stage of training or rehabilitation

Using a “standard” approach can mean:

- The wrong muscles are being worked
- The horse compensates
- Progress is limited—or even reversed

3. You Still Need a Plan

Even when using water treadmill facilities, your horse needs:

- A clear goal
- A structured programme
- Adjustments based on progress and stages of the programme

Without this, the treadmill becomes:

👉 Movement without purpose

⚠️ The Risk of Getting It Wrong

If water treadmills are used incorrectly, you may see:

- Lack of improvement
- Increased stiffness
- Repeated issues
- Delayed recovery
- Frustration and wasted investment

A Smarter Approach

Instead of asking:

👉 “Can I put my horse on the treadmill?”

Ask:

👉 “What exactly do I want this session to achieve for my horse?”

Where You Come In

You don’t need to run the machine.

But you *do* need to understand:

- What your horse needs
- What settings are appropriate
- What correct movement should look like
- When something isn’t right

Because when you understand this...

👉 You can work *with* the centre, not just rely on it

Want to Get the Most Out of Water Treadmill Work?

Inside our **Equine Water Treadmill for Training and Rehabilitation** course [LINK](#) you'll learn:

- How water height, speed, and duration affect your horse
- How to tailor sessions to your horse's specific needs
- What correct vs incorrect movement looks like on the water treadmill
- How to avoid common mistakes
- How to use the treadmill safely and effectively

So you can:

- Make informed decisions about your horse and not rely on others who might not be adequately trained
- Guide your horse's programme and work with the centre
- Maximise results
- Avoid doing more harm than good

Make sure you always ask if they have completed professional training such as the course we recommend!

The right equipment doesn't guarantee the right outcome...

👉 Understanding how to use it does.

Our courses are approved by:

