



# Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine September 07 issue 26



[www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)

## Heart rate changes in Equine Breathing sessions – observations on Merlin

If you have a heart rate monitor you may be interested to record what happens to your horse's heart rate before, during and after an Equine Breathing session especially if you start a fitness program.

[www.horsehrm.com](http://www.horsehrm.com)

Below is a set of such readings taken over a couple of weeks using a Polar Equine Heart rate monitor. This is easy to use and gives the average heart rate and the maximum and minimum for the period.

Merlin is a lively 12 year old Connemara who started Equine Breathing two weeks earlier. The technique used was UN which is more variable than 1N and can be adapted to the horse's changing needs.



Merlin

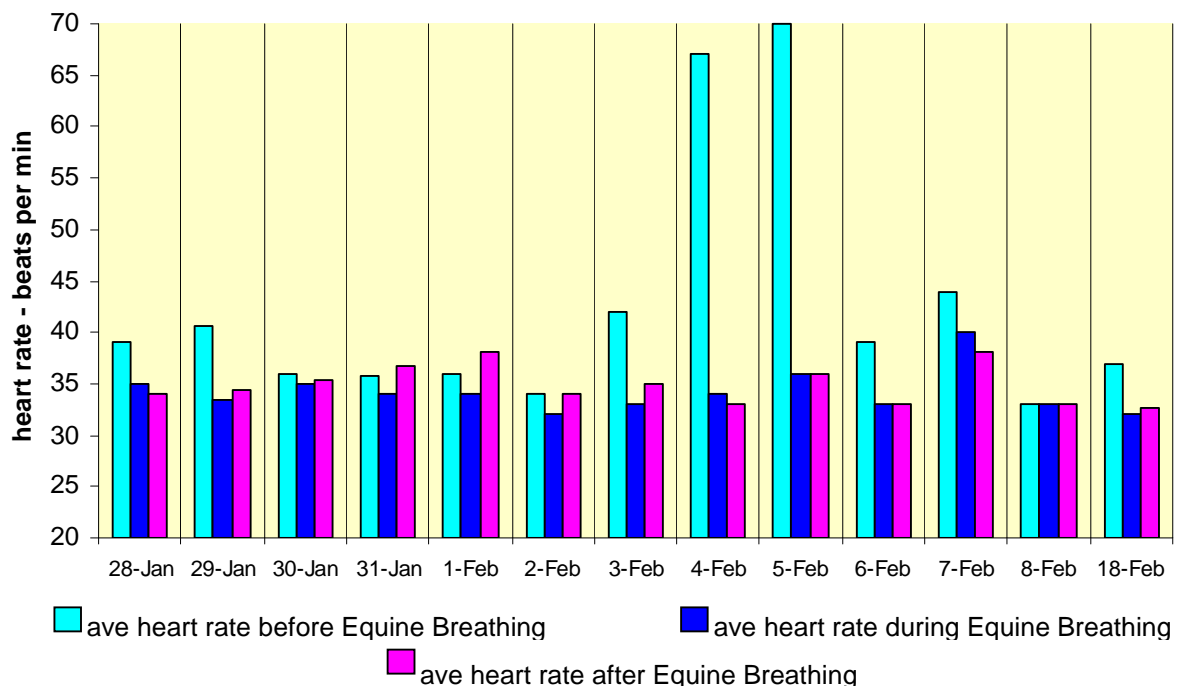
The recordings were made in an open barn. The heart rate was monitored for 3 minutes before starting Equine Breathing and the average recorded. The heart rate was monitored for 10 minutes while Merlin did UN and the average, maximum and minimum recorded. After the 10 minutes of UN the heart rate was recorded for 3 minutes and the average recorded.

Heart rate at rest is known to be unreliable because the horse's emotional state can cause huge changes as demonstrated by Merlin on 7 Feb (see below).

Having said that, a glance at the chart below shows that the heart rate always dropped during Equine Breathing (except on 8 Feb when there was no change). The heart rate tended to stay lower than the initial reading after Equine Breathing ended.

From 28 Jan to 2 Feb plus 18 Feb Merlin was in a resting state before the Equine Breathing. Therefore the heart rate before and during Equine

### Merlin - Heart rate and Equine Breathing (UN)



Breathing might be expected to be the same if there was no effect from the Equine Breathing. But there was an average reduction of 10% in the heart rate in these sessions which is consistent with the more relaxed demeanour during Equine Breathing.



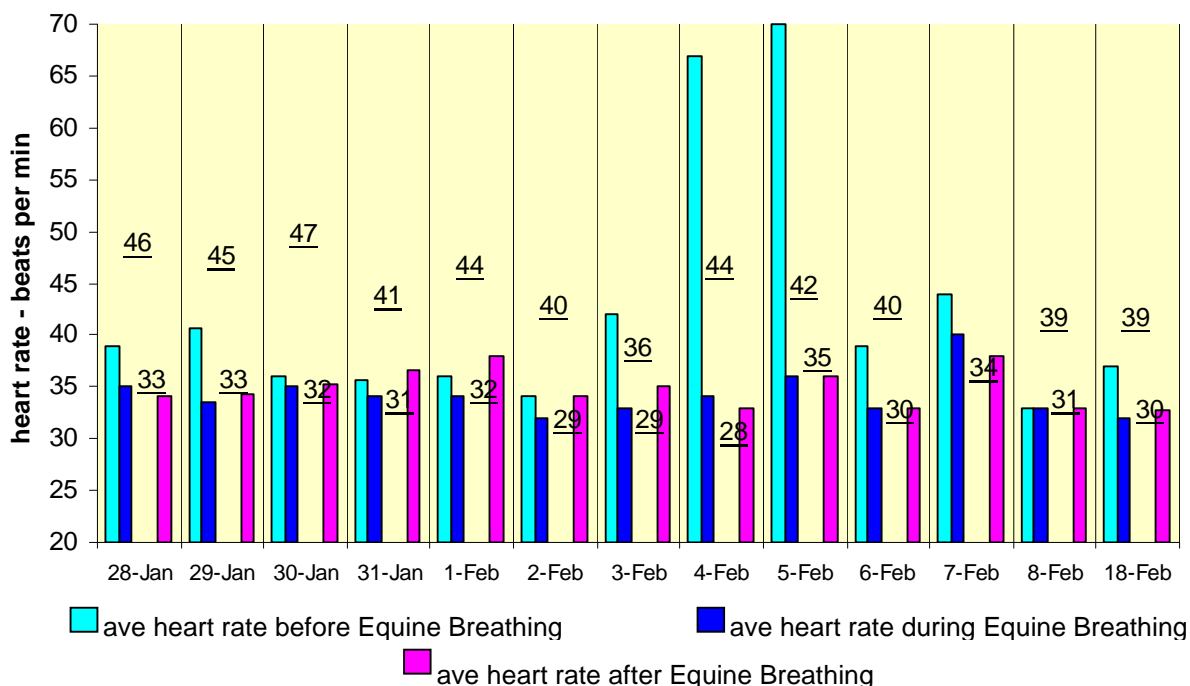
On 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8 Feb the heart rate before Equine Breathing was monitored during or after exercise (walk, trot and or canter – details available on request) whereas the UN was done at rest.

The chart below shows the same data but this time with the addition of the maximum and minimum heart rates during Equine Breathing. This shows the variability of the heart rate. On 7 Feb Merlin saw or heard something that was imperceptible to me and his heart rate shot up to 90bpm! A clear illustration of why heart rate at rest is deemed to be unreliable.

further reading

[www.aht.org.uk/fsheets/fsheets12.html](http://www.aht.org.uk/fsheets/fsheets12.html)  
[www.aht.org.uk/fsheets/fsheets9.html](http://www.aht.org.uk/fsheets/fsheets9.html)

**Merlin - Heart rate and Equine Breathing (UN)** <sup>90</sup>  
**including min and max HR in UN**



## Feedback on stretches in Equine Breathing (issue 25)

Pauline is doing a 1N trial with Sam the Man who has breathing difficulties and a weak immune system. She reports on another type of stretch favoured by Sam. She says;

“He stretches round me and his muzzle touched behind the shoulder when the left nostril was closed. Very slow movement round and back to the front. Its really odd as he wraps around my body to his shoulder and then returns to face front.

The neck stretches are very weird because he is in a trance when he does this with no other body movements, it is a really slow gentle turning of the head with neck following right across my body (good job I am quite small in build) and his muzzle is a fraction off his shoulder. Today I was ready for them and managed to duck under the neck arch whilst he continued to stretch. They are held for a few minutes each time and looking at his eyes there is no registering interest in anything around us. Sam then very gracefully turns back to face front.”

These stretches are not uncommon during Equine Breathing, with different horses having different variations.

If you have any queries or feedback I'll be pleased to hear from you at [info@equinebreathing.com](mailto:info@equinebreathing.com)

breathe easy, Clare