



# Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine Dec 2012 issue 60



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

## Replacing bad behaviour patterns with good ones

Equine Breathing can be used directly on detrimental and stubborn behaviour patterns such as windsucking and crib-biting (chewing), to replace them with good feelings, recuperation and health. It seems likely that adrenaline is involved in driving bad behaviours. Equine Breathing reduces adrenaline production and enables the body to go into the relaxed 'anabolic' state of rest and recuperation.

To get rid of bad behaviour patterns it's essential to reduce adrenaline production. While in some cases it may be possible to **train** a horse out of bad behaviour patterns, if the owner has tried everything they can think of without success, then directly reducing adrenaline may be the key.

The driving role of adrenaline in bad behaviour may not be recognised and therefore may not be addressed. For example, reprimanding a windsucker for windsucking, doesn't reduce adrenaline levels (make the horse relaxed) and is quite likely to **increase** adrenaline levels. The horse may well want to comply with the owner's request to stop, but is driven on by the powerful urge to windsuck.

Use of an anti cribbing collar may physically prevent the horse from windsucking but doesn't remove the urge or adrenaline (make the horse feel relaxed); so when the collar is off the horse may still windsuck.

Here follows an illustration of how to use Equine Breathing to reduce adrenaline and replace feelings of tension, anxiety and restlessness with feelings of calmness, relaxation and wellbeing.

Weanlings commonly chew fences etc. I feel this may be related to the prohibition of suckling when the foal is taken away from its mother. The urge to suckle must be very strong because foals without a strong urge would tend not to survive and so evolution would favour strong suckling instincts.

It also seems likely that the suckling urge is strongest early on and gradually reduces as the foal nears the natural weaning age of about a year old. If the foal is weaned artificially early as is so often the case, the foal will still have a very strong craving to suckle. Perhaps similar to someone craving food when on a diet.

The inability to relieve the strong urge to suckle gives rise to tension and the weanling chews wood to try and assuage it. Perhaps like someone on a diet chewing gum.

Salsero was a newly weaned 5 and a half month old foal. He chewed the fence. Not desperately badly. It was mostly just in one place and mostly just at night. First I provided fresh cut branches for him to chew, as a more natural and healthy alternative to the fence. Then I looked out for times when he was chewing and went over and gave him 1N (an easy to do Equine Breathing method).



windsucking / cribbing –  
distressing for horse and owner

I continued with the 1N until he fell asleep or walked off and started grazing. If he went back to chew again, I did another set of 1N. I made absolutely sure that I did not physically prevent him from chewing in any way. He could continue to chew if he needed to.

On the first occasion I found him he was chewing quite badly and a short while after each of his first 2 sets of 1N he started chewing again. After the third set of 1N he stayed asleep. The session lasted about 10 minutes.

On the second occasion I found him chewing he started again after the first 1N but after the second he followed me away from the branches and started grazing.

On the third occasion it took 5 sets of 1N before he gave up chewing completely. However, the following day I saw him standing in the chewing location looking dreamy and relaxed instead of chewing. The Equine Breathing sessions had made the location a place of calm and relaxation rather than a place of tension.

There followed a couple of other occasions when he was chewing but only needed a very brief set of 1N to stop. Then 3 weeks after our first 1N chewing session he was chewing in an unusually desperate way which even made me want to chew too! And this time he continued to chew during the 1N sets even though his eyes were often sleepy. After some time he would stop and sleep so I stopped the 1N but repeatedly he started chewing again. Even if he had wandered off, he came back to chew again. So I just repeated the set of 1N each time and eventually after about 40 minutes he fell asleep for nearly 10 minutes then went off to graze

I think the increase in strength of the chewing in this session was probably a 'return of symptoms'. This is widely recognised in holistic healing as being a healing response. And sure enough, I have not seen him chewing again since then (three weeks).

If you would like to try and replace bad behaviour with good these are the key points:

Have enough time, stay calm and enjoy it  
When the horse gets dopey stop the Equine Breathing  
If the horse resumes the bad behaviour then just start EB again  
If possible do as many sets of EB as it takes  
If you run out of time and the horse has still not fully stopped, don't worry, the session will still be helpful  
It helps to keep in mind that the horse cannot help doing the bad behaviour any more than you can suppress a cough. The horse is not being 'naughty'  
You can use 1N or a Breather  
You probably need to augment these sessions with routine (daily ideally) Equine Breathing sessions  
Be prepared to persevere for as long as the horse needs it.

Windsuckers are obvious candidates because they have specific windsucking locations but it's also helpful with other bad behaviour. For example when riding, as soon as the bad behaviour starts, the rider can get off and do EB and remount once it has abated. The rider may have to hop on and off several times in the first few sessions.



The chewing location is now a place of rest and relaxation

**Free instructions for 1N are at [www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)**