

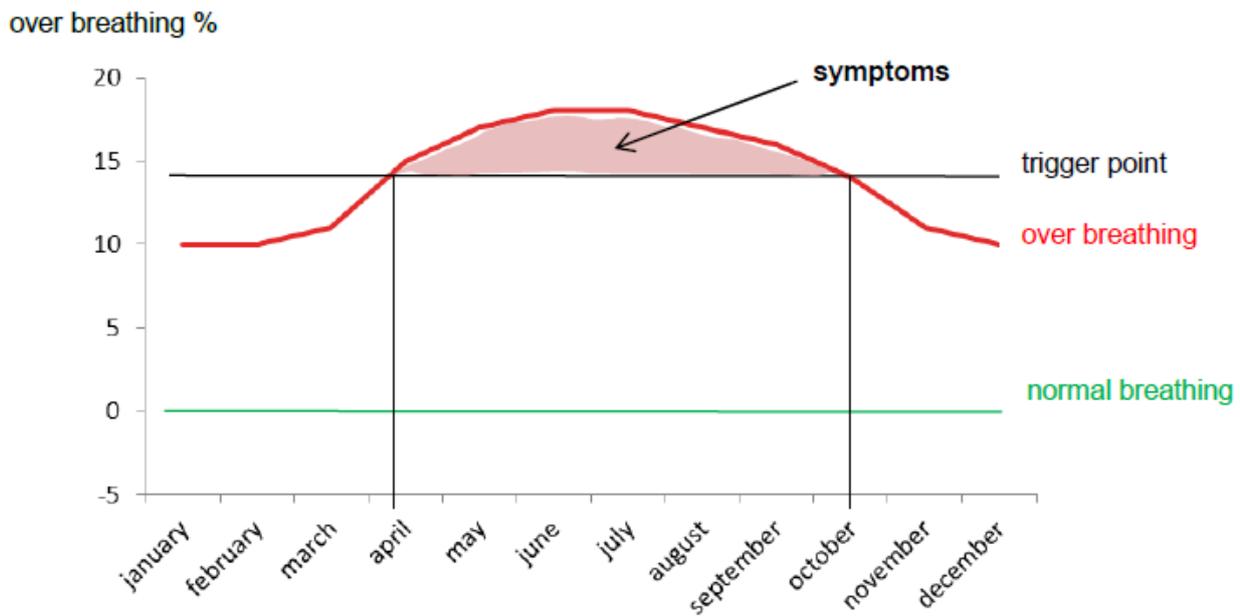


Autumn/winter - a good time to start Equine Breathing

People with horses suffering summer symptoms (eg sweet-itch, headshaking, hay fever or allergies etc) often say that the horse is ok in the winter with the assumption that the horse doesn't need help during winter. This may make sense in terms of treating symptoms with drugs or other treatments – if the symptoms are not active or causing a problem then there is no need to do anything about them. However Equine Breathing has a different approach.

The aim of Equine Breathing is to bring the chronic over breathing that underlies ill health and symptoms, back down towards normal levels. This enables the physiology to recover and at some point it functions well enough to avoid symptoms even under conditions that previously caused symptoms.

Due to factors such as warm weather, pollen, UV, fly worry etc breathing tends to increase in spring and summer. This diagram represents a hypothetical typical case in the northern hemisphere. In the southern hemisphere the months would start with July instead of January.



We can see that the horse is actually already over breathing by about 10% in winter from November to March but this is below the trigger point for symptoms so the owner probably doesn't realise there is a problem.

In spring factors such as warmth, pollen, fly worry etc cause the over breathing to increase further until in April the physiology is so compromised that it can no longer cope and symptoms arise and persist through the summer.

more on how the physiology is damaged by over breathing at <http://www.equinebreathing.com/how-it-works.php>

At the end of the summer the over breathing reduces enough for the physiology to cope once more and symptoms disappear. But the horse is still over breathing by about 10%

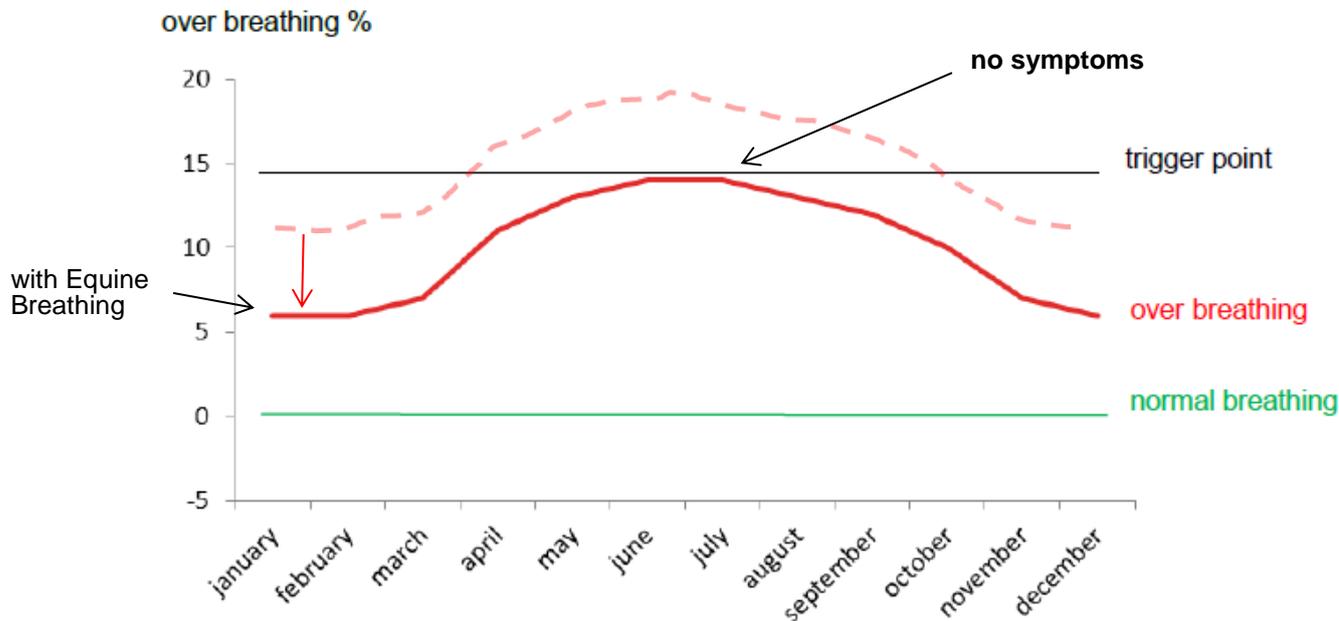
If drugs are used they may control the symptoms but they do not address the underlying cause which is damage to the physiology due to chronic over breathing. This is why drug treatment tends to need to be continued year after year.

The symptoms themselves cause irritation, discomfort and or tension and this causes a further increase in breathing, making matters worse. This

probably contributes to the experience of many owners that the symptoms tend to start earlier each year and to become worse.

The aim of Equine Breathing is to reduce the over breathing. The ideal would be back down to normal levels, although for various reasons this may not be possible for all horses.

But certainly the initial aim and key priority is to get the breathing good enough so that it does not rise above the trigger point for the horse so that s/he gets **no symptoms in the summer.**



In our diagram, reducing the over breathing with Equine Breathing in the winter by about 5% would mean that the horse didn't get symptoms in the summer (with continued Equine Breathing). Of course real life is not always this straight forward but it serves to illustrate why it is a good idea to work on reducing the over breathing in winter when there are no symptoms.

This makes sense because Equine Breathing is simply a training program to regain normal breathing and therefore health. In sports or other performance fields, the athlete or performer does not only train during the season in which they compete, they train all year round. Every day in the calendar is a valuable opportunity to further the training. The lower the over breathing in the winter, the less likely that symptoms will occur in summer.

In addition it is probably easier for the horse to get improvements in the breathing and physiology in winter. In summer, as mentioned earlier, factors such as warmth and pollen, but also the symptoms themselves cause irritation, discomfort and or tension and this tends to worsen the over breathing and work against Equine Breathing to some extent.

A further advantage is that the Equine Breathing training enhances fitness and stamina so if the weather is too bad to ride it is a good alternative and if they can't ride out most people are pleased to spend time with their horse doing something enjoyable and constructive.

If you've already used Equine Breathing to successfully get rid of seasonal symptoms then it is still essential to continue with the training through the winter. This is because any amount of over breathing tends to cause a further deterioration if it is not addressed;. It's very unlikely that your horse would have regained normal breathing in less than a year. Until the horse has regained normal breathing (which is likely to take many years, if ever) then you should continue Equine Breathing as part of your normal management routine. This can be at a reduced intensity once the symptoms have completely disappeared.



Delilah was un-rideable due to severe headshaking. She is now recovered and showing promise as a competition horse thanks to owner Lorraine's use of Equine Breathing.

Read her story in the November issue of Horsemanship Magazine