

# Body wraps for YOU!!

For years we have seen the drastic affects that can be brought on by body wraps in our beloved animals. Body wraps, in practically any combination you can dream of, help to; enhance body awareness, increase proprioception and passively release tension patterns in the body, reminding the nervous system of postural habits that have become normal – in our animals and in humans. For handlers, riders, or anyone struggling with ongoing physical habits or limitations, applying bodywraps with the same intention as with our animals can make remarkable changes.



Photo left: chin forward which is a common habit,



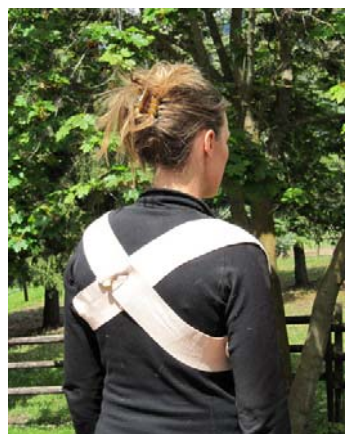
Photo right: Just wearing the wrap often brings the head in a better alignment

**Head Wraps** have been widely used in the Companion Animal work for some time and have recently become commonplace in our equine work to help anxious, overly emotional, or distracted animals ground and settle.

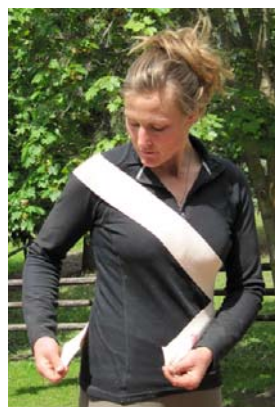
With humans we can see similar affects with head wraps, although the placement is slightly altered as most of us do not have ears as prominent as our four legged counter parts. In humans specifically we have found that head wraps can help with **headaches; dizziness, and postural habits;** as in bringing the head back over the spine; which is especially useful in riders to help them find alignment. Some people wear it under their helmet but can also find benefit in wearing the wrap while getting your horse ready, taking it off to put your helmet on, and still have the ‘feeling’ of the posture from the wrap.



Lightly placing a wrap around the head, covering the temples and cradling the Occipital bone can provide great relief to head ache sufferers or those experiencing upper neck pain. While it may have the unintended effect of causing wearers to resemble the Karate Kid, the benefits usually outweigh the feeling of ridiculousness.



**Shoulder wraps** are excellent for those suffering from mid-back pain. The old postural mantra of “shoulders back” may have had good intentions, but in practice usually create an opposite bracing posture that just changed the tension to the lower back. Wearing a should-wrap allows the wearer to feel a sense of opening through the front of their shoulders and chest, without feeling as though they are holding the position. This often has the added affect of a lengthening through the neck and a release along the deltoids.



The “**Crossing Guard**” is a useful wrap if the Shoulder Wrap alone is not helping. For those who tend to hollow their back and lift their sternum, this wrap helps to fill the lower back while opening the shoulders, releasing the sternum. It is also a helpful wrap for asymmetry and unevenness through the shoulders and rib-cage, bringing new self-awareness to the left and right.



Riding in this wrap gives the rider ‘feedback’ about what her body which helps change habits from the inside out.

If you have a sore back walking your dog you may find this wrap helpful and it can be worn under your jacket.

Those suffering anxiety when in new places or driving have found more confidence while wearing the wrap.

A few years ago Kathy Cascade, who is a Physical Therapist and TTouch Instructor found an interesting website [www.theratogs.com](http://www.theratogs.com) that has special 'wraps' for children and adults to help with sensory integration. Their configurations are very similar to what we had been using. It is interesting validation from the physio-therapy world.

Here is what Kathy Cascade has written about the body wrap:  
*"To understand how this works, let's take a very oversimplified look at the sensorimotor system. Our bodies take in information from our senses, including the well-known senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch (tactile system). We also have another sensory system that provides information about the position of our body parts which is known as the **proprioceptive system**.*

*The proprioceptive system is triggered by movement. Information from the tactile and proprioceptive system is sent along nerves to the spinal cord and on to a part of the brain that registers the information, which is known as the somatosensory cortex. What is interesting about this area is that some parts of the body have a greater representation than others. For instance, the face and mouth have a much greater number of sensory nerve endings, and a larger area of the somatosensory cortex is devoted to those body parts. For people, the hand and fingers are also more prominent, and it is no surprise that we are way better at using our fingers than our toes!*

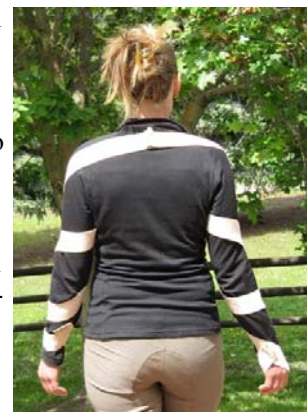
*Once the sensory information is processed, the brain then sends signals back to the muscles for postural control, and movement. This constant two way exchange of information is what allows both people and animals to make coordinated movements, and perform complex physical tasks. By using a body wrap, we simply intensify the sensory information going to the brain from the parts of the body the wrap contacts (through the touch system) and the proprioceptive system when the animal moves while wearing the wrap. The response to this enhanced sensory information is often improved balance, coordination, and/or movement. Occasionally lameness or asymmetrical movement may also be altered."*



**Leg Wraps**, worn on either one leg or two, can be very useful for individuals who suffer from vertigo or have severe balance issues, with remarkable changes happening almost immediately. These wraps have also been shown to improve restless leg syndrome, as well as help those with uneven legs walk and stand more in balance. The wrap can go under the foot as shown above, or just to the ankle.



**Arm Wraps** are extremely useful for riders to become aware of their connection to reins, and how evenly, or unevenly, they use their left and right. These wraps can also emphasize how the rider keeps rein connection through elbows, and prevent habitual postures in the wrists. In addition to being helpful in the saddle, Arm Wraps are excellent for those who partake in activities common to repetitive stress injuries.



As with our four legged friends, the variety and combination of how we can wrap ourselves is only limited by your imagination. Be sure to only place the wraps lightly on the body, a gentle contact, and take them off if they start to be agitating.

As with any part of the TTouch work, if one thing is not working, try some other type of wrap, you may be surprised what a difference a wrap makes!



For the brave of heart, the very stylish "**Full Wrap**" can be incredibly beneficial for rehabilitating post hip replacement and can greatly improve balance and coordination.

The wrap can end just below the calf or can be continued down under the foot. Each gives a different feeling and should generally be left on 10-15 minutes unless it is uncomfortable, in which case you would remove it sooner.