

Guide to Heat Stroke in Horses for Competitors

with Dr David Marlin

Risk Factors



01
cool weather followed by >10deg temp increase

02
training in the cool, competing in the heat

03
travelling to a hotter country

Symptoms after exercise

- Excessive sweating – horse completely covered in sweat and/or sweat running from the body
- Horse feels very hot to touch
- Ataxia (unsteadiness) – especially when stopping after exercise
- Blowing very hard (deep and laboured breathing)
- Panting (fast and shallow breathing)
- A high rectal temperature – above 40°C (104°F)
- Prominent blood vessels in the skin
- Horse may show little reaction to people or environment
- Horse may appear distressed

Less Obvious Symptoms

- May present in a similar way to a mild colic
- Horse more thirsty than normal
- If the horse has been exercising and exposed to high temperatures consider heat stress
- Take the horse's temperature

How to treat heat stress



#1

Cool horse with cold water all over body - put freezer blocks or cold drinks cans in the bucket if water is limited. If water feels hot on horse KEEP COOLING WITH WATER as long as possible



#2

Leave water on the horse
DON'T SCRAPE!
Scraping removes water needed for evaporation and reduces surface area for evaporation



#3

Walk the horse around to maximise evaporation once you've used all your cold water - ideally in the shade

Listen to the podcast for more details



www.hors.ly/podcasts/heat-stress-in-horses



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