

Bandages for Horses: Overview & Tips

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Bandages are a necessity in any horse barn. From traditional cotton to modern, [self-adhesive wraps](#), bandages are one of the most versatile tools in any first aid kit. They help keep wounds clean and protected against dirt and insects. When used correctly, bandages also apply pressure to help stop wound bleeding and support injured ligaments and tendons. They also work to keep medication in contact with wounds and hold veterinary liniments in position over sore and stiff muscles. In fact, when it comes to either wound or general horse care needs, oftentimes a suitable bandage should be the first thing you reach for.

The Ideal Bandage

Equine bandages come in multiple styles and materials. From [nylon-based](#) fabrics to [natural rubber latex](#), today's horse bandages are designed for strength, support, and versatility. Best of all, most are self-adhesive. This makes them suitable for use on virtually any area of your horse's body, legs, or tail. Unlike traditional metal fastener clips, pins, and tapes, self-adhesion helps keep the bandage in position when used on even the most active horses and ponies. Some, such as the [PowerFlex Bandages](#), are extra-strong to offer more support for the fetlock, cannon, and lower leg areas.

The type of bandage you choose should depend, in part, on your need. If you are using the bandage to apply a veterinary liniment, such as [Equi-Block](#), you may prefer a [lighter](#) design. If you need to ensure a topical ointment like [FuraZone](#) stays in position for a 24-hour period, a more sturdy [bandage](#) will be better. If you are using the bandage in cold therapy to hold flexible Ice Cells on a sore tendon, a stronger design, such as the SMB II Sports Medicine Boot, or the [SMB Elite Sports Medicine Boot](#), design is best. Regardless of the bandage you choose, however, the ideal bandage should be:

- **Flexible** - to support the leg but still allow movement and maintain circulation
- **Breathable** - to allow proper air circulation and help prevent bacteria growth
- **Stretchable** - to allow easy placement on any area of your horse's body or leg
- **Non-Slip** - to keep the bandage in position, regardless of how your horse moves
- **Non-Stick** - to allow use on any area of your horse's body without pulling skin or hair

Proper Bandaging Tips

Proper bandage use is essential, no matter how your chosen bandage is used. In fact, an incorrectly applied bandage can thwart any wound or injury care efforts you have made. Worse, bandages that are wrapped too tightly can actually cut off circulation, damage tissue, or injure muscles and tendons. Similarly, those that are too loose can easily get caught in the barn or pasture and cause your horse to stumble and fall. The key is to use bandages as directed by your veterinarian with the following tips in mind:

- **Keep them clean** - do not use dirty, wet, or torn bandages, as they can cause secondary skin problems or infect a wound. A new bandage is always best.
- **Change them frequently** - unless directed by your veterinarian, change each bandage at least once per day. If the bandage has become dirty or torn, put on a clean one.
- **Keep pressure equal** - as you wrap the bandage, apply from front to back, outside to inside (counterclockwise for left legs; clockwise for right legs). This helps prevent tendons from being pulled away from the cannon bone and blood vessels.

While your horse is bandaged, it is important to constantly monitor his progress. This is even more essential if you are bandaging an injured leg. Contact your veterinarian if:

- The lameness is severe
- Your horse is reluctant to move
- There is an open wound
- The injured area is warm to the touch
- Your horse has a fever
- Your horse has lost his appetite
- There is excessive swelling
- Your horse seems to be in moderate to severe pain