

Changing the Mind/Body Connection: *Equi-Bow for Gait Irregularities*

Julia Merritt acquired Ruby in July of 2014 as a 10 year old. She had raced for three years and been only lightly ridden since. Julia joked that she was on the “couch to 5k” plan - she had no muscle tone and you could see her “slouching”. As she got fitter, it became obvious there was a problem with the canter. She rarely picked up the right lead, and would drop into a cross-canter behind almost immediately.

Ruby already had a good daily care and nutrition program, with the farrier working to balance her hooves and regular guidance from an experienced instructor. Over the next 18 months, Julia tried a long list of strategies including: hacking on hills, Cavalletti, Massage, Chiropractic, Acupuncture, lameness exams, injected stifles, routine saddle fit, joint supplements, ulcer treatment, instructor rides, and lunging in a Pessoa rig.

Injecting the stifles was the only method that provided lasting results in helping her develop a true canter. Julia genuinely believed that Ruby was trying her best under saddle but that there was something else hindering her, so Julia kept searching.

A year earlier, Julia had heard of Equi-Bow but had not pursued it at the time. Now, being no further ahead, she decided to take another look. An introductory course was scheduled for two weeks later, and she signed up.



Above Left: Before - Ruby, April 10th, 2016. **Above Right:** After - Ruby, May 30th, 2016

The first Basic Body Balance had a big effect on Ruby. During the session, the horse was very expressive, sometimes seeming to feel very good through yawning, sighing, and licking her lips, and sometimes seeming quite anxious, mouthing the cross-ties and flinging her head. Two days later under saddle, she felt like a different horse, not physically, but mentally. Julia could put her leg on at the start of the ride without Ruby scooting off, and she seemed prepared to accept direction through her seat and the reins with less resistance.

Julia continued with the second Equi-Bow course which focused on hind end techniques and she tried them all on her horse. Julia describes the changes she witnessed. “After the second session, Ruby stopped cross-cantering. She’ll still pick up the wrong lead if she’s not set up correctly, but all the legs are in the right order and the quality of the canter is miles ahead of where it was. The photos show the significant change in how she stands in just 7 weeks.” Inspired by her progress, Julia is now looking forward to helping Ruby fully reach her athletic potential! Visit www.equi-bowcanada.com or Julia Merritt may be contacted at merrittj@alumni.uoguelph.ca.

See this story online - <http://www.therider.com/rider/changing-the-mindbody-connection/>

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