

Healing Horses with



by Sophie Love

A straightforward yet highly effective remedial treatment, the hill therapy technique developed by Linda Parelli helps to overcome the postural, muscular and movement problems many horses experience as a result of being ridden.



Photographs by Coco

The hill therapy technique is all about letting a horse heal and that's not going to happen to any great extent while the rider and the saddle are still acting as restrictive influences.

Ridden horses often look very different from those that have never been ridden but, unfortunately, they don't always look better! Often, the damaging combination of a rigid rider and ill-fitting saddlery leads to major issues with posture, muscle use and movement - the end result being a horse that not only appears unbalanced and travels heavily on the forehand, but is also at a higher risk of sustaining injuries to areas such as the stifle, back, suspensory ligaments, hocks and knee joints.

This scenario is one that has concerned Linda Parelli, in her role as a teacher of natural horsemanship principles, for many years. This concern led her to carry out extensive study into equine posture, musculature and movement and, subsequently, to come up with a non-invasive, owner-friendly method of remedial treatment called Hill Therapy.

While the concept of using hills is not new to horse training, Linda presents a complete package that aims at either reviving or enhancing a horse's ability to move fluidly, comfortably and harmoniously and she explains the principles behind using sloping ground as a tool to facilitate naturally balanced posture and muscle development.