

# That's a Wrap!

Follow a top barn manager's technique for applying this useful stable bandage.

**By Viv Munden**

**Photos by Nathan Welton**

**T**here are times in your horse's life when his legs experience more than the normal amount of stress. Maybe you worked him a bit harder than you usually do. You could be competing at a multi-day show. Perhaps you moved from a cool, dry climate to a hotter, more humid one. You may want to have a way—with or without liniment—to provide his legs with warmth and promote circulation. Or maybe you just feel that he needs a little protection against a stall injury.

Whatever the problem, the solution is a standing wrap—a dry bandage that can provide warmth and support to tendons and ligaments, cushion against dings and bumps and help to prevent “stocking up”—the accumulation of fluid due to inactivity, often following work. In this article, I'll show you how to put an effective, safe and secure standing wrap on your horse. But first, let's look at ...



## Rules to Wrap By

- Use a “no-bow” wrap. With a soft exterior and a thin foam lining, it's much easier to handle and wrap correctly than the bulkier “pillow” wrap. You're far more likely to end up with a snug fit that's not too tight or wrinkly, especially if you don't wrap on a daily basis. You can get this kind of wrap in a 30-inch length and heights that range from 10 to 18 inches. To find the correct front leg size for your horse, measure from just below the back of his knee to about an inch below his fetlock. Behind, measure from just below his hock.

- You'll also need a tightly knit cotton or acrylic “European style,” “stable” or “track” bandage with Velcro® fastener. This kind of bandage has less stretch than a polo wrap, but more than a flannel. It comes in 3-, 4- and 5-yard lengths, and in general, I say “the longer the better,” because you want to start at the top, wrap all the way down to the bottom and come all the way back up to the top again. Unless you're wrapping a pony, it's very hard to do that with a 3-yard bandage. While a 4- or 5-yard

bandage may be a bit long, you can always overlap a little closer and come out fine.

- Roll both wraps and bandages so that the side that will be closest to your horse's legs is on the outside, so you can unroll against his legs.

- When rolled, the bandages in particular should feel firm and solid—not so tight that they lose their stretch, but not so loose that you're halfway down your horse's leg and the unused portion falls apart on you.

- Always kneel down next to your horse with only one knee on the floor. If he spooks, you'll be better prepared to jump out of the way.

- Wrap near-side legs in a counter-clockwise direction and off-side legs in a clockwise direction.

- It isn't necessary to wrap all four legs, but always wrap both the front or both the hind.

- Practice, practice, practice. It's the best way to be sure you'll do a perfect standing wrap when and if your horse needs one.

Now, turn the page to learn how to safely and effectively apply a standing bandage.



*Viv Munden perfected her standing wrap skills during many years grooming on the European circuit. Sixteen years ago she came to the United States to groom for Joe Fargis and Conrad Homfeld. She subsequently moved to Eric Hasbrouck and Trelawney Farm, where she is currently barn manager. Viv has served as a mentor groom during the George Morris Horsemastership Training Programs.*

# Wrap It Up



**1** With the roll on the outside, I position the leading edge of the wrap to the inside front of George's cannon bone, just below the back of his knee. The wrap may seem a bit high, but it will settle as George moves around in his stall overnight.



**2** I unroll the wrap around George's leg—here, on the near side, in a counter-clockwise direction—smoothing the fabric carefully to prevent folds or wrinkles, which can be irritating.



**5** I start to spiral the bandage down George's leg, overlapping evenly and using my left hand to make sure the bandage doesn't wrinkle or fold. Each time around, I firm up the bandage by pulling smoothly across the front of George's cannon bone.



**6** When the bandage is just down to the bottom edge of the wrap—but not below it—I circle the fetlock once to give a little bit of support to the back of George's ankle, then start to ...



**3** With the roll of bandage in my right hand, I use my left hand to secure the wrap and over it, the end of the bandage at a slight angle.



**4** Leaving about an inch-and-a-half of wrap showing, I bring the bandage around once, then turn down the angled end and wrap around once again to firmly "lock" it in place.



**7** ... spiral evenly back up to the top, where I secure the Velcro. I check to make sure the wrap feels smooth and solid from top to bottom, with no wrinkles, lumps or sagging ...



**8** ... and that it's loose enough for me to comfortably insert two fingers behind George's knee. 🐾