**Types of Bandaging**

Bandages tend to offer better support than any alternatives as they conform well to the leg, they do, however, take practice to put on correctly.

Types of bandages include:

* **Exercise bandages:** these require a layer of padding underneath them, eg gamgee, foam or pads. The bandages are made from a stretchy crepe-like material for support and protection of the leg from the fetlock up to the knee. Care must be taken not to apply these too tightly.
* **Stable bandages:** these are slightly wider than exercise bandages and are usually made of thicker wool-type material. They have some give but are not stretchy like the exercise bandages. They are also designed to support and protect the leg from the coronet up to the knee or hock.
* **Tail bandages:** these are made from similar material to exercise bandages. Tail bandages are mainly used to protect the tail while travelling. They can also be used to smooth the top of the tail before a show.
* **Bandaging for Travelling:** Bandages can also be used for travelling. Application and type of bandages (and padding underneath them) used for travelling are similar to the ones used for stable bandaging. It is really important that they are put on correctly and that they protect the coronary band. Too loose bandages won’t protect horse’s legs and might be dangerous when they fall down. When applied too tight they will restrict the blood flow and possibly damage the structures of horse’s legs.
During transportation another type of bandage can also be used – a tail bandage as protection of horse’s tail. Tail bandage is made of elastic material but is applied without any padding underneath. It should not be left on for too long as it restrains the blood flow. For journeys longer than 1-2 hours a special designed tail guard is a better and safer option.
* **Wound Bandages:** Wound bandages facilitate healing by keeping wounds clean to minimize the risk of infection, protecting the area from further injury, and reducing inflammation and swelling. When bandaging a wounded or injured leg, be conscious of the amount of tension you are applying. Wound bandages should be snug enough to remain securely in place but not so tight that they will exert too much pressure on the injured limb in the event that there is natural inflammation and swelling from the injury.

Most wound bandages tend to consist of roll, sheet, or combine cotton for padding and a flexible cohesive bandage, or vet wrap, for the outer bandage, although in some cases pillow or quilted wraps and stretchy knit bandages may be suitable alternatives.

Before bandaging a wounded leg, make sure the leg is clean and dry, and the wound has been cleaned, rinsed, and treated as recommended by your veterinarian. The specific bandaging technique may vary depending on the location of the leg wound (e.g. cannon bone, knee or hock, or forearm or gaskin), but the general procedure for applying a wound bandage is as follows:

1. Cover the wound with a sterile, non-adherent gauze pad or other dressing, and secure it by loosely wrapping roll gauze around the leg two or three times.

2. Wrap roll, sheet, or combine cotton around the leg, making sure to cover the wound and dressing completely, until the layer of padding is at least one inch in thickness.

3. Apply the bandage, starting an inch below the top of the padding and wrapping down the leg in a spiral pattern with each wrap of the bandage overlapping the preceding layer by about 50 percent. Wrap down to within an inch of the bottom of the padding, then spiral up again to finish near the top.

4. Use an adhesive bandaging tape, such as Elastikon®, or masking tape to secure the end of the bandage, and wrap the tape loosely around the top and bottom of the bandage to seal out dirt and debris.

Check the bandage several times throughout the day to make sure it hasn’t slipped or become tighter or looser. The bandage should be changed at least every other day, unless your veterinarian indicates otherwise or the bandage becomes wet or soiled, in which case it should be changed immediately.

References:

1. <http://www.vetstream.co.uk/hampdenvets/html/Factsheets/Horse/24_269860.asp>

2. <https://www.selwood.com/blog/wrap-it-up-types-and-uses-of-horse-bandages/>

3. <https://www.horsejournals.com/horse-care/illness-injury/prevention/equine-first-aid-bandaging-horse>