

Low plantar (Six-point) Block (Figure 3.70)

Quantity of Local Anesthetic: 2 to 4 mL

Needle Size: 5/8 or 1 inch, 22 to 25 gauge

Injection Technique: The plantar and plantar metatarsal nerves in the distal metatarsus are blocked in a similar manner to the corresponding nerves in the forelimb. One difference in the neuroanatomy between the forelimb and the hindlimb is that lateral and medial dorsal metatarsal nerves from the deep peroneal (fibular) nerve course over the dorsolateral and dorsomedial surfaces of MTIII and digits. Anesthesia of the dorsal metatarsal nerves is performed by injecting 2 to 3 mL of local anesthetic subcutaneously, lateral and medial to the long digital extensor tendon using a 5/8-inch, 25-gauge needle. Blocking the dorsal metatarsal nerves together with the plantar and plantar metatarsal nerves will effectively anesthetize all structures innervated by the nerves distal to the block.

Pitfalls:

1. Resentment by the horse if the periosteum of the metatarsus is contacted with the needle.
2. Inadvertent injection into the fetlock joint or digital flexor tendon sheath
3. Difficulty in assessing the success of the block