

I am often asked about injecting joints in our equine partners. When a horse has soreness or lameness in a joint it is due to inflammation. The cause of the inflammation varies. Inflammation in the joint can be caused by normal "wear and tear" from use, an injury or arthritis. Over time, inflammation may cause damage to the cartilage lining the joint. The goal in injecting a joint is to reduce inflammation, improve the viscosity of the joint fluid, decrease the risk of damage to cartilage, and help the horse feel better.

The following video shows synovial fluid coming out of a stifle joint. Sometimes the inflammation can be so great that pressure builds and when the needle is inserted into the joint synovial fluid and inflammatory cells are released. [Insert video link](#)

When injecting a joint I routinely use a corticosteroid and hyaluronic acid. The steroid decreases the inflammation and hyaluronic acid lubricates the joint and aids in production of synovial fluid. I follow up with stall rest and some NSAIDs.

Although joint injections do not "fix" the initial reason for injecting, they are beneficial to the relief and longevity of a useful joint. Each horse responds to them differently in initial response and length of time between injections.