

Bandaging Basics



There are many reasons your horse could need a bandage; either because of wounds or surgical procedures. Whatever your horse is recovering from, being able to change your horse's bandage properly is a vital step in their recovery process.

Materials Needed:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| • Proper Restraint | • 2 Sheets of Cotton |
| • Gloves | • Brown Gauze |
| • Telfa | • Vet Wrap |
| • Cast Padding/Rolled Gauze | • Elastikon |

Step 1: Covering the Wound

After cleaning and medicating the wound per your veterinarian's instructions, place a non-adhesive absorbent pad (Telfa) over the affected area. Secure it in place with the use of rolled cast padding. For wounds of the carpus (knee) wrap the cast padding in a figure 8 pattern to best conserve range of movement of the joint. Repeat this pattern 2-3 times or until the Telfa pad is securely in place. Hold the wrap in a way that it easily unrolls as you wrap around the leg. Wrap this layer to several inches above and below the Telfa pad. This layer should be snug enough that it does not slip, but not pulled too tight.



Apply the Telfa over the wound.



Wrap the cast padding over the Telfa. Note direction of the wrap, figure 8 pattern, amount of overlap, and that the roll is held in a way to be easily unrolled.



A completed cast padding layer.

Step 2: Adding Support Below the Joint

The next step in placing a bandage is to use sheet cotton. This layer helps to provide support to the limb.

Wrap the cotton around the limb, from lateral (outside) to medial (inside) and cranial (front) to caudal (back). The 1st piece of cotton should start from the top of the hoof and extend to mid carpus (knee). Try to smooth out any large wrinkles in the cotton before proceeding to prevent it from being uncomfortable against the horse's leg. Next, wrap brown gauze over the cotton. Beginning about ½ inch below the top of the cotton, wrap the brown gauze down the limb, again from lateral to medial, and cranial to caudal, overlapping each successive wrap by about 50%. Be sure to hold the roll of gauze in a way that it easily unrolls as you wrap around the leg. Stop wrapping about ½ inch from the bottom of the cotton. Once you reach the bottom, continue to wrap with this layer, climbing up the limb. Be sure to pull this layer tight by pulling the gauze until it is taut across the front of the limb and then laying it across the back of the limb.



A finished cotton layer. Be sure to smooth any large wrinkles.



Start at the top of the cotton layer and continue wrapping all the way down the limb. Note the tension when applying this layer. Once the bottom is reached, wrap back up the limb.



A completed layer of brown gauze.

Step 3: Adding Support Above the Joint

The next step in placing a bandage is to use a second piece of sheet cotton above the wound. This layer also helps provide support to the limb and will help keep the bandage in place in this high motion area. This 2nd piece of cotton should overlap two inches over the top of the 1st sheet of cotton and extend to mid antebrachium (forearm). Try to smooth out any large wrinkles in the cotton before proceeding to prevent it from being uncomfortable against the horse's leg. Next, brown gauze will be wrapped over the cotton. Beginning about ½ inch below the top of the cotton, wrap the brown gauze down the limb, again from lateral to medial, and cranial to caudal, overlapping each successive wrap by about 50%. Be sure to hold the roll of gauze in a way that is easily unrolls as you wrap around the leg. Be sure to wrap all the way down to the first piece of cotton so the final look is one complete bandage. Once the 1st layer of cotton is fully incorporated into the bandage, you can continue to wrap with this layer, climbing up the limb.



A finished cotton layer. Be sure to smooth any large wrinkles.



Start at the top of the cotton layer and continue wrapping all the way down the limb. Note the tension when applying this layer.



A completed layer of brown gauze.

Step 4: Wrap it Up!

After the brown gauze is in place, the next layer is Vet Wrap. Starting at the bottom of the limb and working up, wrap the Vet Wrap from lateral to medial, from cranial to caudal, overlapping by about 50% on each successive wrap and holding the roll of Vet Wrap in a way that it easily unrolls as you wrap around the leg. Be sure to cover the brown gauze with this layer and once the top is reached, continue to wrap the limb with this layer by going back down the limb. Try to avoid wrinkles in this layer by pulling the edge of the vet wrap slightly up or down to help lay it smoothly across the leg. This layer should be snug, but not overly tight. Be sure to firmly press the edge of the Vet Wrap onto the bandage to ensure that it does not come unwrapped.



Start at the bottom of the limb and continue wrapping all the way up the limb to cover the brown gauze.



Once the top is reached, wrap back down the limb. Note direction of the wrap, amount of overlap, and that the roll is held in a way to be easily unrolled.



A completed layer of Vet Wrap.

Step 5: Secure the Bandage

The final step is to use the Elastikon to help secure the bandage in place and to help keep dirt and debris out of the bandage. Lay the Elastikon so it is over both the bandage and the horse's hair, sticky side facing the horse. Again, wrap from lateral to medial, cranial to caudal, in 2-3 layers over the ends of the bandage only. This layer should not be applied under tension. This process is repeated at the bottom of the bandage and placed over the horse's hoof. Next use a scalpel to make an incision an inch long in the vet wrap layer on the caudal (back) aspect of the carpal joint. This will allow for a greater range of motion.



Placing elastikon on the borders of the cranial and caudal edges of the bandage



Make a 1-inch incision through only the vet wrap on the caudal aspect of the carpus (knee)



A completed bandage.