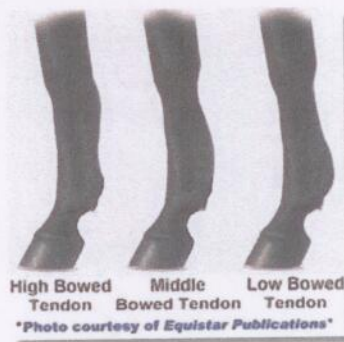


### Leg Protection and Support

There are many instances when our horses' legs require extra protection or support. Some of these times include during shipping, jumping, hard flatwork, and turn-out. They are also often used to avoid re-injuring old injuries, both during riding and turn-out.

All boots and wraps must be properly fitted and adjusted to avoid injuring the tendons and ligaments that they are supposed to protect. If boots or wraps are too loose, they can allow dirt to get under them or can move around, causing cuts or rubs. Boots and wraps that are too loose or too tight can also hinder (get in the way of) a horse's movement and possibly injure the tendons. It is also important that all boots and wraps be put on correctly. For example, a polo wrap that is put on backwards, too tight, or not neatly enough can cause a horse to bow its tendon.



### Splint Boots

Splint boots protect legs from blows from the opposite leg, or from bumps or bangs from other objects (such as a jump). They can offer some support, but are **more protective than supportive**. Splint boots are frequently used on horses who travel with their legs close together or who have popped a splint in the past. The splint bone is a small bone that runs down the inside and outside of a horse's leg. It is very easy to fracture or break because it is so thin. When the splint bone is damaged, it is called "popping" a splint.



## Open Front Boots

Open front boots are also designed to protect a horse's legs. Like splint boots, they offer some support as well, especially certain brands such as the Equifit T-Boots (which are lined with shock-absorbing memory foam). ***Open front boots are typically used in the jumpers because the front of the boot is open. This means that if the horse hits a rail, the front of their leg is not protected so they will feel it and not want to hit another rail.*** The splint bones are protected; the only part that is not protected is the front of the cannon bone, which is very strong.



## Bell Boots

Bell boots are used to protect in several ways. ***They help to protect the heel bulb and the coronet band from blows or injuries when a horse overreaches.*** Overreaching is when a horse steps on the back of their front feet with their hind feet. ***Bell boots also help to prevent a horse from pulling its own shoe off when they step on themselves.*** Horses who tend to step on themselves or who wear bar shoes (the circle shaped shoes which are easier to pull off by accident than regular shoes) usually wear bell boots.



## Polos

Polos support the tendons of the legs. They do offer some protection, but are **more supportive than protective**. Polos are used on horses whose tendons or ligaments need extra support, such as horses that have pulled their suspensory ligament or bowed a tendon in the past. Incorrectly applied polos can CAUSE damage!



## Standing Wraps

Standing wraps involve two separate parts: the quilt and the standing bandage, or overwrap. **Standing wraps are used to help reduce or prevent swelling and fluid build-up in the leg.** They are used after a horse has had a hard day of jumping in a lesson or a horse show. Alcohol, liniment and poultices help draw out heat from the horse's legs and are applied to the legs before wrapping. Standing wraps are also used while recovering from injuries. It is important that standing wraps are not too tight because they can cause damage, such as a bowed tendon. If the wrap is too loose, it will not give the support that is needed.

## How to Wrap Polos

1.



Make sure your horse is standing square before you begin, then start the polo wrap just under the horse's knee. Place the wrap edge on the inside of the leg. When wrapping a right leg, wrap in a clockwise direction; for a left leg, wrap in a counter clockwise direction.

2.



Wrap twice around the top of the leg and begin angling downward.

3.



Sling the wrap under the fetlock, applying slightly more tension for added support.

4.



When you come back around the leg, angle the wrap upward to create an inverted V on the front of the leg as shown; continue using slightly more tension.

5.



Begin wrapping upward at a slight angle; as you near the top, decrease the tension slightly.

6.



The end result! Notice how the wrap overlaps itself evenly down the leg. Also, while it's preferable to have the Velcro closure end up on the top of the leg just under the knee as shown