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PBEC's Tips for Keeping Your Performance Horse Cool in the Heat

Looking after horses and keeping them safe, happy, and healthy in extreme heat presents a unique set of challenges. With summer temperatures reaching record highs in recent years, there are crucial signs that owners need to watch out for and key steps to take when caring for horses in sweltering conditions.

How do you know if a horse is in distress, and what can you do to help them cool down? Horses are all individuals, but there are some common warning signals to monitor on hot days, and there are ways to keep performance horses fit while the weather is hot.

"In the first instance, see if the horse has shallow, labored breathing, whether their breathing is catching, or they are panting like a dog," counsels Dr. Scott Swerdlin, a Florida native and President of Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC) in Wellington, FL.

"Check if they are breathing from the mouth, because if they are mouth breathing, you're in trouble.

"Stop what you're doing and immediately cool the horse down. Take the tack and any boots or bandages off — horses can retain a lot of heat in their distal extremities — and hose them down, including rinsing out the mouth, the legs, and under the tail. The neck and body are the most important thing to rinse and keep hosing until they cool off."



There are some common warning signals to monitor on hot days and ways to keep performance horses fit while the weather is hot.

Read the full article on "The Plaid Horse" to learn more about what equipment you need, anhidrosis, deciding when to exercise, water and electrolytes, and managing horses' environment.



To cool off a horse, hose them down, including rinsing out the mouth, the legs, and under the tail. The neck and body are the most important thing to rinse and keep hosing until they cool off.

[Read More on The Plaid Horse](#)

PBEC Vets in Paris

Two veterinarians from Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC) in Wellington, FL, are preparing to attend the 2024 Olympic Games this summer in Paris, France. Dr. Weston Davis and Dr. Christopher Elliott will be on-site supporting equine athletes across disciplines.

This will be Elliott's third Olympic Games. His first was in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016, where he was a volunteer treating veterinarian for the Olympics and treating vet Team Leader for the Paralympics. He has worked in more than 20 different countries on behalf of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), the international governing body of equestrian sport, in a variety of different roles since graduating from the University of Queensland in his native Australia in 2007.

"The Olympics are magic, and they hold a very special place in my heart," enthused Elliott. "I love all Olympic sports. I was a kid back home watching the 2000 Sydney Olympics when I discovered that there were vets who worked at the Olympics. That's when I decided it was what I wanted to do. Three years later I started vet school, and 16 years later — after many sacrifices and hard work — I made it to Rio 2016. The magic of the Games is indescribable."

Tokyo was Elliott's second Olympic Games, held in 2021, where he was appointed by the FEI as the Veterinary Services Supervisor. For the 2024 Olympic Games, the FEI veterinary department selected Dr. Elliott as an International Technical Official (ITO), where he will work as one of two Limb Sensitivity Examining Veterinarians.



Dr. Christopher Elliott of PBEC at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games and 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Photos courtesy of Dr. Elliott.

They will examine the legs of all the jumping horses prior to competition to ensure the horses do not have altered sensitization. This veterinary examination not only helps to ensure fair, equal, and clean sport, it also bolsters equine welfare by checking that every horse is fit to compete.

"Working for the FEI is always in addition to my normal daily role of an equine veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation specialist," explained Dr. Elliott. "My main passion is helping equine athletes and their riders achieve their goals. Keeping horses fit and healthy is my day job; it's why I wake up in the morning. I love helping my clients, and the FEI work is the icing on the cake."

Another key aspect of Dr. Elliott's role in Paris will be to implement the FEI heat management protocol, as the 2024 Olympic Games have the potential to be very hot. Veterinarians will closely monitor horses during training, warm-up, and competition for the early signs of heat stress. The veterinarians will use a thermal imaging camera as a remote monitoring tool to identify horses potentially at risk of heat stress. Once identified remotely, a horse can then be examined by a veterinarian, have its temperature taken, and undergo active cooling if required.



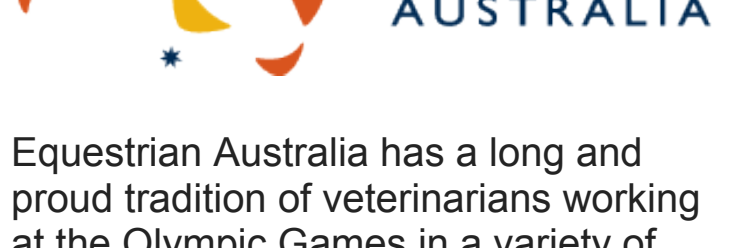
Dr. Weston Davis will attend his first Olympic Games in Paris this summer. Photo by [Jump Media](#)

Dr. Davis will be attending his first Olympic Games as the private veterinarian for Heidi Humphries of Zen Elite Equestrian Center of Fort Lauderdale, FL, who owns the two dressage horses Bohemian and Helix. Helix, with his rider Adrienne Lyle, has been named as one of the three horses on the team, while Bohemian and Endel Ots are the traveling reserve combination. Davis will work alongside the U.S. dressage team veterinarian Dr. Laura Faulkner to ensure optimal care for the horses.

Dr. Davis said, "I am extremely grateful to be a small part of this team; the kind of horses that a veterinarian is lucky to get the chance to work with once in a lifetime. I feel very blessed to have this opportunity and so excited to go to my first Games."

Palm Beach Equine Clinic is proud to have Dr. Davis and Dr. Elliott as part of the team supporting the U.S. athletes in Paris. To learn more about PBEC, visit www.EquineClinic.com.

PBEC in the Media



Equestrian Australia has a long and proud tradition of veterinarians working at the Olympic Games in a variety of roles.

Dr. Christopher Elliott is one such veterinarian who often works at FEI events internationally and has recently been appointed to work at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

[Read More on Equestrian Australia](#)

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