



## ACCURACY IN OUR EQUINE TOUCH

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“What happens if I do the move in the wrong place?”

This is a frequently asked question on Level One courses, although I think the question that is really being asked is, “Does anything bad happen if I do the move in the wrong place?” We talk about the three principles of Accuracy, Integrity and Intent (A.I.I.) that we apply when we are ET-ing our horses. Our Integrity and Intent are important from day one of our ET career: we should all be performing ET to the best of our abilities, with the intention of rebalancing and helping our equine friends. But accuracy of placing our ET moves on the horses usually takes time to achieve and accuracy seems to be a hot topic of conversation on courses and revision days.

I remember being most assured on my Level One course when Jock said that Accuracy was the least important of the three principles and this aspect would come with practice – and let’s face it, by Level Three we need to be accurate! On my Level One course I was partnered with someone who obviously knew more than her sit-bone from her elbow when it came to horse anatomy and we had discussions along the lines of “Where?” “There.” “Here?” “No, left a bit, down a bit, there.” To my mind the bit of hairy shoulder I was now nervously prodding with my finger looked just the same as the bit I’d originally chosen – I’d try and remember this particular spot for the next horse, but seeing as the next horse was of a different size and confirmation we’d have the same confusion. It all looked like horse and it all felt like horse – my brain just wasn’t seeing the same horse that she was. In the last six years I’ve learnt a lot, practiced a lot and, hopefully, my ET has improved from those initial ‘inaccurate’ moves!

So please also be assured, if you do the move in the wrong place nothing ‘bad’ will happen: we have yet to find the quick release switch for the horse’s legs / head / tail and they don’t really walk in circles if you forget the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of butt shots / girth lift / or whatever. (Note: if you do discover any of these quick release switches please let us know!)



Let’s consider the ET move: it is vibrational and we speak of the vibrations moving through the muscle fascia and the soft tissue around the body to help rebalance it. So, surely it should follow that if you do a good move, the vibrations will radiate from whichever place you chose to do the move via this fascia and muscle and will encompass the place where you should have been making the move. Ask a Level Two student, who on the first day of the course is refreshing their Level One moves and says, “Oh, so that’s where the move is: I’ve been doing it here.” Despite this ‘wrong’ move they’ve been having lovely responses from the horses – so nothing ‘bad’ has happened from the inside-out popping of the cap, back-to-front foreleg etc. However, now we can make their ET more effective by improving accuracy and putting the move in the right place.

There is so much to learn on ET courses, particularly the Level One course, and we find that many students get hung up on accuracy and end up rummaging around on the horse attempting to chose a spot to do the move – their entire thought is at the end of their fingers (or thumbs – which was it again?). I’d far rather they stepped back, looked at the horse’s body (with their eyes not fingers) to chose a spot to do the move, then stepped up and did a move with the best coordination of body movement and breathing that they can muster. By doing good moves you’ll learn the feel of the body and will then start to feel the muscles that the manual is telling you are there.



So, if you can find on any horse's body the bony markers (point of hip, 'sit' bone, elbow, shoulder blade and atlas) you have the basis from which you can perform your ET in as correct a place as possible. By combining your knowledge of where the bony markers are on the particular horse in front of you with the muscle diagrams in your manuals you will learn which muscles are found where and ultimately improve your Accuracy.

All this takes time, so be patient with yourself and also considerate of your horse: try a move once, if it doesn't feel 'right' try again, if it still doesn't feel 'right,' for the sake of the horse, leave it until another ET time. Remember to bring your focus away from those finger/thumb tips – if all your concentration is at the end of your arms you'll miss your horse asking you to quit poking him as well as not being able to do any ET move with the necessary body movement or breathing. Remember too that we say that A.I.I. for the horse stands for the horse's Awareness of your Integrity and Intent – far more important than the horse worrying about your Accuracy.



Now having reassured you all that Accuracy isn't the be all and end all, those of us on Level Three, Level Four and Instructors' Courses this summer are of course frantically trying to get their moves as accurate as possible but if we miss the mark I'm sure Jock will be there to direct us to the correct place.