Excessive body weight also predisposes horses to OA, just like in humans and other animal species. In humans, an extra 10 pounds of body weight adds an estimated 15-50 pounds of pressure on stifle joints, according to The Arthritis Foundation. Now imagine a horse that has one to several hundred pounds of excess body weight, which is not uncommon these days. In fact, several studies recently reported a prevalence of obesity as high as 51% in some equine populations.

Any horse can develop OA at any age

At-risk horses are those with a history of joint infection or trauma. Such trauma can be as mild as the repetitive concussion during weight-bearing while training and competing or as severe as a fracture, dislocation, or blunt trauma (during a fall, for example). Essentially any insult to a joint can incite the complex cascade of events that causes inflammation and cartilage breakdown.

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60% of equine lamenesses are due to OA. It is a progressive disease and has no cure.
Feeding oral joint health supplements. Studies support the administration of products containing:

- Glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate;
- Hyaluronic acid;
- Avocado soybean unsaponifiables (ASU); and
- Omega-3 fatty acids.

Other supplements that might also benefit arthritic horses include green tea extracts, green-lipped (perna) mussel, turmeric/curcumin, lubricin, and more.

Your veterinarian will perform a lameness exam and use imaging (i.e., X rays, MRI, CT, etc.) to diagnose OA.

Preserving your horses' joint health will optimize their athletic careers and keep them comfortable as they age.