How Grooming a Horse in Different Areas Affects the Heart Rate

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Horses can get pneumonia if they are not cooled down properly after exercise. This experiment tested how grooming different areas of the horse reduced the heart rate after exercise, for a more efficient cool down process. Four horses were used in this experiment. Each horse's starting heart rate was taken before exercising with a stethoscope. Initially, there was no grooming after exercise to establish a control. The horses were exercised for three minutes. The heart rate was taken immediately after, and the horse was groomed in the area currently being tested for one minute. After one minute, the heart rate was taken again. The three testing areas included were neck/withers, body area, and back hips/rump. Repeated testing showed that the neck and withers most significantly decreased the horse's heart rate after exercise, dropping the heart rate by over 10% more than the other areas. A proper cool down redistributes the blood in the body, loosens muscles, helps prevent pneumonia, and provides better health to horses over their life span.

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