

# A Day in the Life of an Equine Chiropractor

## Martine Stiles

### ABOUT MARTINE

Martine Stiles is a qualified and regulated McTimoney Chiropractor. She qualified at the McTimoney College of Chiropractic and is a member of the McTimoney Chiropractic Association ([www.mctimoneychiropractic.org](http://www.mctimoneychiropractic.org)). She runs her own clinic near to Newbury, Berkshire.

I must have been 10 years old when I saw a demonstration by a McTimoney Chiropractor at my local Berkshire Downs Riding Club, I decided then that was what I wanted to do!

In 2004, after more than four years of hard work and training at the McTimoney College in Abingdon, I qualified as a human chiropractor. I built up my human practice while training for the next two years as an animal McTimoney Chiropractor. During this time, I was amassing a waiting list of clients wanting to bring their animals along.

I have always been a keen horse rider with both my mum and I being long term riding club members. I have competed for the Berkshire County Riding Club in eventing, showjumping and dressage. I liked the fact my work as a McTimoney Chiropractor could be as flexible as I needed it to be, and it gave me time for my own riding. I can offer people evening, weekend and emergency appointments which usually fit in better with their own routines. My riding has taken a back seat as now it is family life with two young children that I have to fit my work around.

My day normally starts at around 7am when I have to get both my children up, dressed and fed before going to their Grandma's near to Newbury, Berkshire where I have my clinic room.

My mother normally takes the children to the stables to ride and muck out our horses whilst I see my human patients. Many of the patients I treat are connected with the horse world; a riding club team manager, a side saddle rider, vets, a horse dentist, racehorse trainers, a female farrier, a dressage judge and a Paralympic selector to name a few.

Treating my own family and animals also has to be squeezed in at some point, whether it is my daughter's 22 year old pony that is a bit stiff behind, the dog that has jumped awkwardly off the sofa or my husband who has hurt his back. Today is a fairly normal day. I see humans all morning, and after I have seen my morning patients it is time for a quick lunch, then off to



Thoroughbred gelding, Hamish



Martine treating Pip

see any animals in the afternoon.

Some days I have a mix of horses and dogs, but today I am seeing just horses. First it is off to Wickstead Equestrian Centre to Paul Tapner's event yard for a pre-season check. I will be seeing Inishmor, known as Hamish. Hamish is a nine year old grey Thoroughbred gelding. Paul got him from 'Heroes', the re-homing organisation for ex-racehorses for riding club and competition use. When I first saw Hamish last year, he had a very asymmetrical pelvis in both standing and dynamic assessments. Georgina, Paul's wife, to whom I also give regular treatment, stated that after just one treatment he had improved all round.

On the first occasion I see a new patient, I take a full case history and perform a full examination to assess the condition they have presented with. This is usually followed by a McTimoney Chiropractic treatment. It is a legal requirement that I obtain permission to treat any animal from its own vet. I also accept referrals from vets, doctors

and insurance companies. In Hamish's case, I can look back at my past notes and add to these following each treatment, noting changes and improvements.

Next, I move on to treat Buddy and Pip. Both belong to Berkshire County Riding Club member and AI instructor Teresa Faretra. Teresa started coming to me for McTimoney Chiropractic after a bad fall that caused her lower back to spasm, leaving her unable to do simple everyday tasks. She walked into my clinic room with the help of a walking stick and walked out unaided. Teresa visited my clinic for several treatments until she was feeling less pain and her body was realigned. She has continued to visit me for regular maintenance treatment ever since as working with horses can be quite hard on the body. I treat Teresa's two horses which compete in riding club dressage and also hunt. Buddy is a 12 year old Thoroughbred chestnut gelding who has maintenance checks to prevent him from getting stiff. Pip is a nine year old grey Irish sports horse mare. She often has tension in the poll region with misalignment of the atlas and pelvis which causes her to lean on one rein and become reluctant to bend.

Whenever I treat a rider, I also recommend that their horses get treated as riders can have an adverse affect on their horse and vice versa. One more horse to see today! KBIS Zavir is owned by another long term horse and rider combination I treat. The owner, Jennie Lambert-Gibb is now aged 26. I have treated Jennie since she was 19 and working in a race horse yard, riding lots of different horses. She came to me originally because she felt unlevel and crooked, but had no pain or discomfort when she was riding her own horse Josh. She has come for regular maintenance



Martine treating Buddy



## MARTINE STILES (NÉE WILKIE)

BSc(Hons)(Chiro) PGDip(Animal Manip) MMCA MMAA

Health and harmony for human, horse and hound

McTimoney Chiropractor McTimoney chiropractic treatment is used to treat conditions including those relating to the spine, the whole back and the limbs.

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ever since and says she feels "instantly centred and balanced after a treatment". As her career has changed, so have her symptoms. Jennie is now in a full time office job and finds that she has neck stiffness which I find is common in people that sit at a desk all day. I used to treat Jennie's horse Josh before he retired. He competed in the riding club area dressage finals. Josh suffered from stiffness in the hocks which made his pelvis drop on one side because he was compensating for the restricted hock movement. I now treat KBIS Zavir, who is a nine year old Dutch warmblood whom Jennie acquired when he was three years old and just broken. Jennie took him from riding club level to competing in the under 21s section, and now, very shortly, he is off to an advanced medium British Dressage competition. Zavir generally has very little wrong with him and I see him to help keep his movement free and straight to ride. Other equines that I treat range from Badminton winner 'Inonothing' to the riding school faithful schoolmaster pony. As well as horses and dogs I also regularly treat Alpacas.

Late afternoon, it's either home to prepare dinner or back to the clinic to do a few more evening human patients, then finally home to put kids to bed and catch up on paperwork.

Most people and animals come to me for a curative treatment where they have pain, restricted movement and poor performance. As a McTimoney Chiropractor, I am looking to restore normal range of motion to all the joints within the body using fast, accurate and gentle adjustments. When the normal range of motion of a joint is lost and the joint becomes fixated, it puts stress on the surrounding nerves and muscles causing them to change how they are working and sometimes spasm, which can be very painful. McTimoney Chiropractic is a great preventive treatment as well as curative.

People often enquire about what I do and how I work with their horse and I always ask them to check me out! All chiropractors are qualified to treat humans and will be registered with the General Chiropractic Council, [www.gcc-uk.org](http://www.gcc-uk.org). In addition, chiropractors with an animal qualification will be members of either the McTimoney Chiropractic

Association's Animal Group, [www.mctimoneychiropractic.org](http://www.mctimoneychiropractic.org) and/or the International Veterinary Chiropractic Association, [www.ivca.de](http://www.ivca.de). You can check these registers on line to confirm any chiropractor's credentials and I recommend my clients do so. Every animal and person that I treat is totally different which makes for a very interesting day! Since that first demonstration many years ago, qualifying and now seeing the amazing results that I get from McTimoney Chiropractic, I truly am "living the dream".

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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#### ABOUT THE MCTIMONEY CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION:

The McTimoney Chiropractic Association (MCA) is the only chiropractic association to have a specific group of chiropractors qualified and trained to treat animals. All members of the MCA Animal Group have graduated from the McTimoney College of Chiropractic, the only chiropractic college in the world to offer a two year post graduate academic course which leads to a Masters degree in chiropractic for animals.

Whether treating animals or humans, McTimoney chiropractic involves checking the whole body and where necessary performing gentle adjustments to help realign the individual bones of the skeleton. This technique allows the nervous system to work as well as it possibly can, bringing about optimum health and wellbeing in the body.

McTimoney chiropractic is precise, gentle and effective technique, used regularly by many to help manage back, neck and joint pain. The technique is suitable for the whole family: from newborn babies and pregnant women to grandparents – and even your pets.



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For further information please contact Harry Hall on 01274 711101 or visit [www.harryhall.co.uk](http://www.harryhall.co.uk)

At this year's Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials, competitors and grooms will be travelling around in Harry Hall branded buggies.

Harry Hall is steeped in equestrian heritage; established in 1891, the brand has remained at the forefront of rider fashion. A trusted name in essential equestrian clothing and leisurewear, the Harry Hall collection is stylish whilst still retaining its practical, functional and traditional look.

To celebrate being the supporters of the competitors and grooms buggy service, Harry Hall would like to giveaway tickets to Badminton Horse Trials so you can experience the action at the event first hand.

Two lucky winners will receive a car pass and tickets for themselves and a friend for Saturday 4th May.

Each winner will also receive the new Harry Hall Charlston. This is a short sleeve polo top with a mock shirt hem. A knitted ribbed collar and a checked shirt pattern under the collar and down the trim of the three button neck with Harry Hall embroidery on the sleeve. The mock hem and different colour options make the Charlston a really unique top to brighten up your wardrobe this Spring. Available in sizes S, M, L, XL in dewberry, navy and teal and is priced at £31.99.

The winners will be able to watch the dressage phrase of the event, and have a look around Badminton's huge shopping village. With this season's latest trends and the practicality of long lasting everyday riding wear, you can't go wrong with the new Spring/Summer 2013 range from Harry Hall.

