

Equine Health Centre Walkers

Seawalker®: Overview



The Seawalker® has been developed in consultation with, and with vital input from, a number of leading vets, equine physiotherapists, physiologists and equine podiatrists with the intention of creating an ideal exercising environment both for horses in training as well as those recuperating from injury. The result is a horse walker containing chilled, filtered and sanitized natural seawater.

The Seawalker simulates all the benefits of exercising your horses in the sea by bringing the sea to your yard and has the added advantages of being riderless and providing a controlled environment. Horses can be exercised at varying speeds from a slow walk to a brisk trot.

Our standard model is 15 metres in diameter with four bays and a wide number of tailor-made options are available.

The key Seawalker features are:

- Natural seawater (added in sea salt crystal form), rich in minerals and trace elements, to ensure a restorative, invigorating training or warm-up/cool down session and also for therapeutic purposes.
- Water chilled to 2-4°C to reduce inflammation of sore joints and tendons and to promote good circulation through the legs.
- Chilling, filtration and sanitation system to keep the water fresh and free of contaminants.
- Option of variable depth of water to provide optimal workout routines.
- Patented, lightweight Belebros design to make the Seawalker a unique, safe and appealing installation.

Standard model description:

Diameter of walker	15 metres
Width of track	2.35 metres
Number of horses	4
Direction control	Manual
Speed control	Manual
Duration control	Manual
Separator barriers	10 per arm
Depth of water	Up to 500mm
Temperature of water	Down to 2°C
Filtration	Primary and secondary system with manual backwash controls
Sanitation	Oxygen purification system
pH control	Manual
Holding tank	n/a
Roof	n/a

Custom options:

Diameter	15 – 40 metres
Width of track	Increments of 500mm from 2.35 metres
Number of horses	From 3 to 16
Computer control	Programmable direction, speed and duration
Separator barriers	14 or 28 per arm
Variable water depth	Up to 1200mm (holding tank required)
Filtration	With automated backwashing facility
Sanitation	Oxygen purification system with UV treatment
pH control	Automated sensor and doser
Holding tank	Either stand-alone or integrated to allow for variation in water depth
Roof	Available with Topspin walker (suspended from roof)

Seawalker®: Training & Recuperation



The Seawalker® is a unique and revolutionary installation, designed to be of maximum benefit both to horses in work as well as horses recuperating from injury. The Seawalker provides a safe, riderless and controlled environment in which 4 or more horses (depending on the specification) can exercise at one time.

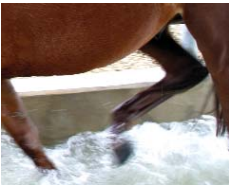
Training

The saline water creates an ideal medium to build stamina and improve general fitness. Wading in water is considered to be the most beneficial form of non-ridden preparation for the equine athlete. The water depth can be varied: shallow water adds minimal resistance, deep water adds maximal, or the level can be adjusted to target selected muscle groups. For example, in order to move forward, if the horse has to lift its limbs rather than utilising the natural swing, muscles in the loins and the base of the neck are recruited; these are essential stabilising muscle groups which are very difficult to build in the ridden animal.



A secondary effect, the result of abdominal splashing of cold water, is the instinctive contraction of the abdominal musculature. These muscles help to support the back and thus stabilise the main frame; a stable frame equals improved stride length.

The respiratory pattern is normal, unlike swimming, and therefore there is less risk when exercising known bleeders. Also, due to ground compaction forces, the skeleton is loaded normally which ensures skeletal maintenance.



Therapy and recuperation

Equine hydrotherapy spas have proved in recent years to be an invaluable therapeutic aid to the recuperation of injured horses through the use of highly chilled and salinated water. The Seawalker draws on the same principles but introduces the significant additional benefit of movement to prevent muscle stiffness through inactivity and to return the horse to fitness more quickly. Additionally, several horses can use the system at the same time with minimal staff involvement. This type of therapy may be used for numerous ailments including tendon & ligament injuries, sore shins, cuts/grazes and poor hoof growth.



The Seawalker also acts in a preventative manner to reduce the incidence of many of these ailments.

Some of the many key benefits of the Seawalker include:

- Safe, loose exercise.
- Superb training method to improve stamina and general fitness.
- Exercises muscles of locomotion naturally against resistance.
- Works the abdominal musculature to support the back and stabilise the main frame, leading to improved stride length.
- Improves muscle tone.
- Exercises the heart and lungs.
- Stimulates circulatory flow.
- Effective in enhancing recuperation following tendon and ligament injury.
- Beneficial for sore shins, joint problems, bruising and inflammation in the limbs.
- Promotes improved hoof condition and growth.
- Enhances healing of superficial cuts and grazes.
- Osmotic effect thought to reduce the occurrence of tendon injury.
- Beneficial to brood mares who have developed slack abdominal musculature.

Belebro Horsewalker: Health & Wellbeing

A Belebro horsewalker, if used correctly, will play a significant role in maintaining and enhancing your horse's health, fitness and wellbeing.



In the wild, a horse may be on the move for around 16 hours a day, covering a distance of as much as 20 miles. 98% of this distance would likely consist of walking, 1.5% trotting and 0.5% cantering or galloping. As a result of this, the physiology of the hooves has developed to function as a form of supplementary blood pump for the heart by way of pressure applied to the frog through movement. This essential pumping action assists with good blood circulation and respiration. No walking means no pumping means inadequate circulation. Research at the Testing Station for Horse Husbandry in Lelystad, The Netherlands, has shown that exercise and nutrition are the two presiding influences on the horse's health and especially on the strength of the legs.

In the design of our horsewalkers, we have placed key emphasis on creating a calm, relaxed and safe environment for the horse in order that it moves naturally, as it would in the wild, with its nose close to the ground as if to graze. This ensures that all the important muscle groups are worked in a stress-free and correct manner.



We are able to achieve this by using a very lightweight design, incorporating our unique and patented separator barriers and unobtrusive, safe fencing which prevents the horse from feeling hemmed in and permits clear visual points of reference all around to help the horse maintain good balance. The lightweight design also enables us to make much larger walkers up to 40 metres in diameter, in which up to 16 horses may be exercised at a fast canter.

Regular, riderless exercise in this safe and controlled environment enables you to maintain and enhance your horses' fitness all year round, to ensure healthy blood circulation and to keep their hooves in excellent condition.

Belebro

Some of the many benefits of the Belebros horsewalker are:

- Bones: stronger, better defence against pathogens and cancer cells.
- Back: better development of the back muscles.
- Muscles: improves blood supply to muscle cells keeping them healthier and slowing ageing.
- Lungs: better blood saturation and thus improved supply of oxygen and removal of carbon dioxide.
- Heart: strengthening of the heart muscles enabling more efficient functioning resulting in lower pulse rate and blood pressure.
- Brain: better blood saturation resulting in improved alertness and brightness.
- Reflexes: faster, improved reactions in the case of a false step or imminent fall.
- Colic: highly effective for prevention and recovery.

With a TRC Computer equipped horsewalker, the five factors that most determine performance can be developed*:

- Character: focused tempo training, whereby horses sometimes go to their utmost.
- Quality of the legs: short and intense stimulation (interval training) improves the bone tissue.
- Coordination: varying movements by applying different speeds.
- Suppleness: less stiffness.
- Reflexes: improvement to a great extent: considerably less risk of injury.

* According to research by the Testing Station for Horse Husbandry in Lelystad, Netherlands.

Research shows that a good horsewalker, used correctly, can help to achieve:

- Fewer health problems.
- Significantly fewer leg and hoof problems.
- Better muscle development, especially the back muscles.
- Improved suppleness and reflexes.
- Significantly fewer injuries.
- Less risk of atactic defects (free walk).
- 60% less risk of osteochondrosis dissecans (OCD).
- Less risk of arthrosis.

Belebro Technology

General Design

Belebro is the pioneering world leader in equestrian exercise technology. Founded in 1987, the company has sold more than 1400 horsewalkers worldwide and has patented technologies that contribute to stress-free and healthy lives for horses. Equine Health Centre Walkers is the sole supplier of Belebro products in the UK.



The unique lightweight construction is sturdy, enabling exercisers to be built up to 40 metres in diameter, whilst maintaining emphasis on providing a comfortable and relaxing environment.

Belebro walkers carry the CE and CSA quality marks. The CE mark means that the manufacturer declares that the machine meets the guidelines laid down for it and that the electrical installation is in accordance with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Compatibility) guidelines. Both of these guidelines are concerned with the safety of the operators and those in the immediate surroundings of the walker. The CSA mark means that the specific device complies with the standards for technical and electrical safety in the USA and Canada.

The key benefits of Belebro walkers are:

- Safe to use and appealing to look at due to Belebro's patented and lightweight design.
- Smooth, quiet drive mechanism which requires low maintenance.
- Exercise programmes to suit your horse's needs can be programmed into the walker with varying speeds and alternating directions.
- Horses encouraged to drop their heads into the optimum position for ultimate muscular training thanks to the Beo-band® open fencing. Also helps horses stay calm and unstressed.
- Horses safety ensured by Safeguard® lightweight flexible separators between each bay.
- Fully customisable for your needs: size (up to 40 metres), dual tracks, roofing with top hung motors so central area can be used for free schooling.

The Belebro logo, featuring the word "Belebro" in a stylized, red, cursive font with a red underline.



Drive Mechanism

The simple design of the drive mechanism means fewer wearing parts, keeping maintenance to a minimum. For example, an automatic battery-powered lubrication system has been devised to regularly grease the drive ring; all the user has to do is to check the level occasionally and replace the cartridge when it runs out (once or twice per year, on average, depending on use).

The motor is connected to the central drive wheel by three V-belts which, if overloaded, will slip to minimise the risk of injury to a horse. This method has been used by Belebros for more than 10 years and, to date, a V-belt has never had to be replaced because of wear and tear.

Walkers up to 20 metres in diameter are driven by a 0.5 - 1.1kW electromotor with a reducing gear mechanism. For larger walkers, the motor will be custom made to suit your individual needs. With good maintenance and care, the average life expectancy of a motor is around 15,000 hours.



Manual/Automatic Operation

There are three options for the control unit which operates the equipment:

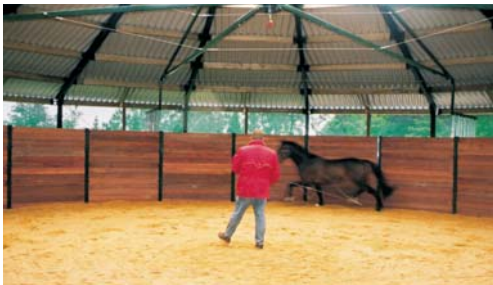
- Standard (ST) – basic 'plug-in' model which provides manually adjustable direction and speed.
- Advanced (TR) – manual speed and directional control as well as limited automatic facilities.
- Computer Driven (TRC) – programmable computer control, which allows storage of up to 99 bespoke exercise patterns, as determined by the user. The time, speed and direction can all be altered several times for each program. This system comes as standard for all walkers over 20 metres in diameter.

Sprinkler System

Keeping the floor dust-free is very important for the horses' bronchial health as airborne dust particles can be potentially damaging. All Belebros walkers can be equipped with a simple but very effective water sprinkling system which will keep the floor damp, thereby preventing dust.

Automatic Lubrication

The automatic lubrication system automatically greases the drive ring, thereby preventing the overloading of the drive. This system contributes to the reliability and durability of the Belebros walker. Depending on frequency of use, the cartridge must be replaced once every 6 to 12 months.



Roofing

There are two roofing options, Gallery and Pagoda.

Gallery is the more basic option, covering the walking track itself whilst leaving the centre exposed. This ensures good ventilation and retention of natural light whilst providing an excellent shelter for exercising horses. This style of fencing does not require any wind bracing which keeps the design simpler and cheaper.

With the pagoda roof, the walker mechanism is suspended from above, freeing up the central area for other uses, such as a lungeing arena.

Colour Selection

The Belebros walkers can be sprayed with a colour coating in any RAL colour. The process uses powder which is applied as a lacquer under heat and thereby is as durable as galvanising the metal.



Fencing

The importance of good fencing for a walker cannot be overestimated. It is essential to provide a secure environment in which horses can be exercised safely, but this need not mean the unsightly closed-in fencing which is so often seen.

A good walker must encourage a horse to **relax and walk in its natural way, with its head down, to optimise the exercising of all relevant muscle groups**. This in turn will lead to better digestion, blood circulation and metabolism. In order to walk in this relaxed manner, horses simply need to be able to see what is going on around them as they move.

Belebro fencing incorporates three bands of Beoband® strapping, supported on a choice of hardwood or galvanized steel posts. Beoband is a 100mm wide strap manufactured from a combination of nylon mesh and rubber in a choice of three colours (black, white, green). It serves the simple purpose of delineating the walking area for the horse without restricting its vision. In the unlikely event that a horse tries to escape, the strapping is designed to stretch and then to snap, to ensure the safety of the animal.

Safeguard® Separators

As with the fencing, the design of the bay separators plays a vital role in ensuring that horses feel relaxed in the walker. Instead of solid rubber sheets or steel mesh which are so often seen in walkers, Belebro has designed a simple, effective and safe method of bay separation. Safeguard® Separators are formed of synthetic rods that hang next to each other on the arms. Though tough, these rods remain flexible even in sub zero temperatures and have a conductive aluminium layer through which a light electrical current can be passed to keep the horse in its bay.

Unique benefits of the **Safeguard® Separators** include:

- Flexible yet firm.
- No risk of being hit by a solid separator kicked upwards or backwards.
- No risk of horses' hooves getting caught in a separator, or of horses being injured by a damaged separator.
- No risk of injury from pointed ends, or of being speared by a broken rod, as with metal or other synthetic rods.
- Keeps your horse safely in its bay with a light electrical charge.
- Reduced wear and tear on the drive and low running energy because of the light weight of the Safeguard® Separators.
- No agitation caused by horses striking out against separators.
- Safeguards the entire exerciser mechanism because the force of any blow is not transferred to the construction and the drive.

Surfaces



Equine Health Centre Walkers has developed some pioneering surfaces, including the Softwalker, the Pebblewalker and the Seawalker®. More traditional surfaces include rubber, sand, woodchip, astroturf and concrete. We can advise on and install any surface to suit your specific requirements.

The Softwalker

The Softwalker is designed for horses recuperating from injury, transitioning from shod to barefoot or in regular training. The compound rubber surface provides enough cushion for the hoof to sink in, stimulating the frog itself and promoting strong growth.

The track has a customised compound rubber surface which provides a remarkably durable yet forgiving porous, anti-slip surface. Horses, shod or barefoot, take to this surface instantly, walking, trotting and even cantering silently and beautifully. Various compounds were trialled by painting the soles of a typical barefoot horse and walking it across sample areas until we achieved a good overall footprint. The Softwalker is available in a range of 15-40 metres in diameter.



The Pebblewalker

For horses transitioning to barefoot, the Pebblewalker's unique track provides a perfect mechanism for exfoliation and stimulation of the sole. Horses can gain months of improvement in a few weeks, significantly strengthening the entire foot and providing a good foundation for optimum fitness.

The Pebblewalker consists of smooth, rounded granite river pebbles laid loose to a depth of 100mm. It is the only one of its kind in the world allowing controlled exercise on a 'river stone' surface. Many horses will start out for just a few minutes on the pebbles but once they become used to the surface and their feet become conditioned they can increase to up to 20 minutes a day. The results are immediate and clearly visible as the hoof is exfoliated.



Services

Construction

We offer a full supply and installation service including preparation for all associated ground works and alteration of utility services (water, electricity). Providing a one-stop solution dramatically reduces the time you have to dedicate to installation, as well as preventing any misunderstandings that might arise where a local ground worker is employed. We believe that our experience will almost inevitably reduce the overall installation time.

A project manager will be assigned to your installation to provide a single point of reference throughout the works as well as to ensure that everything is done to your full satisfaction.

In order to price the groundworks, a site survey is essential. The cost is offset against a confirmed order. The survey includes assessing the viability of the site (electrical supply, soil type, slope, drainage, etc) as well as access and accessibility to services.

Training

When the installation is completed, all users of the equipment will be given free safety and training induction.

Maintenance

The Belebros system has been designed to minimise the number of working parts and therefore the associated maintenance.

We can provide an annually renewable maintenance contract via Equitech. Details are available on request.

Testimonials

Robert Dacombe, owner of racehorses Kavi & Etendard Indien

"The Seawalker was instrumental in getting Kavi back to full health after injury and it continues to be a key part of his training regime."

Mary Bromiley, internationally renowned Chartered Physiotherapist

"Water wading is probably the most beneficial form of non-ridden preparation for the equine athlete. To improve muscle function you need resistance and the Seawalker provides this; the horse is working naturally as over ground, with the salinity not only adding to the density of the water thus increasing the muscle work load, but also activating an osmotic response in the distal limbs. This ensures removal of excess fluid, if present, following exercise or injury."

Amanda Sutton, Equine Physiotherapist, Olympic team

"The Seawalker clearly provides a benefit from immersing the horses' legs in chilled salt water which is particularly helpful after fast work. In addition to the therapeutic benefits the movement through the water, particularly of the hind legs, is helpful in building and strengthening horses without putting them under too much pressure."

Simon Earle Newsletter – More world class facilities come on line at Simon Earle Racing

"We are absolutely ecstatic at the new 82 foot double track horsewalker that have now been completed. Within just a few weeks of use we are seeing superb results. The outer track has a special soft track, it cushions every stride, provides good pressure up through the frog and produces almost no wear for barefoot horses. The inside track is even more unusual - designed exclusively for barefoot horses the horsewalker is filled with smooth round pebbles and greatly speeds up exfoliation inside the foot."

KC Le Pierre, Equine Podiatrist, on the Softwalker

"You'll have indestructible feet in 8 weeks on this horsewalker."

Racing Post, February 18th, 2005

"...a seawalker, a conventional horsewalker with a pool of chilled water mixed with raw sea salt. Horses splash round in it for up to an hour every day. He (Simon Earle) believes it has been a useful tool in promoting the growth of the foot cavities and also in assisting circulation."

The Guardian, February 17th, 2005

"There is another aid for healthy feet at The Beeches stables – The 'Seawalker'. The use of chilled salt water is not a new concept. But Earle's 50ft circular seawalker enables his horses to walk and trot in these conditions. "The vets say movement is good for injury prevention and it speeds up foot growth," added the trainer."

Channel Four News, March 19th, 2005

Ran a report on Simon Earle Racing methods and successes, featuring our Seawalker.

Trainer Magazine – Spring 2006 Water Treatments and Exercising Options, by Mary Bromiley

"The Seawalker brings the benefits of the sea to the yard... Results, osmosis, improved circulatory flow, resistance, which like sea wading, increases muscle loading. As over ground the frog pump is activated... and the tendons are subjected to their normal stretch and recoil."

