



## **RACING TWO YEAR OLD THOROUGHBREDS**

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Historically two-year old Thoroughbreds have raced in the United Kingdom. The equine skeleton becomes adapted to a gradually ascending exercise programme and in fact skeletal adaptation to exercise tends to be greater in an immature than a mature skeleton. A programme, sensibly designed, will reduce the incidence of orthopaedic injury. It has been shown that many of the common orthopaedic problems such as “sore shins” seen in two year olds also occur in four year olds commencing National Hunt training. This reflects skeletal naivety rather than chronological age. Indeed a recent survey showed that racing at two years old was actually protective against subsequent catastrophic injury for horses racing later in life. There may also be a beneficial effect on soft tissues such as tendons. BEVA recognises that two year old Thoroughbred racing is an integral part of flat racing in the United Kingdom. Provided training of such horses is appropriate we consider that this form of racing has no significant implications to equine welfare.

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