



*Therapeutic
Riding Program*

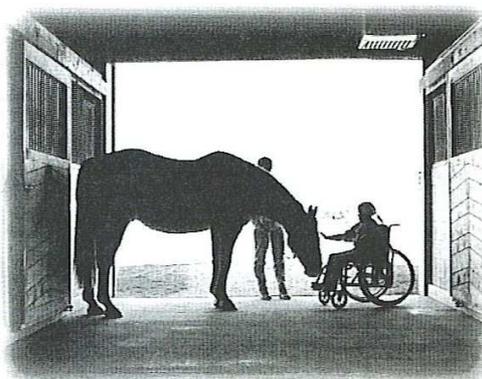


Creston and District Society for Community Living

THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER MANUAL

*“Together, they’ll go places you never
dreamed possible.”*



Glenn Hall

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THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

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Welcome to Therapeutic Riding !

Thank you for your interest in Creston's Therapeutic Riding Program. We believe strongly in the benefits of therapeutic riding and are always thrilled when we discover people who share our passion.

Therapeutic Riding is a unique, holistic therapy – it works on many levels for many disabilities - and we believe the results of using horses in this manner are unmatched by any other form of therapy.

It is a volunteer intensive program and without a dedicated and trained group of people it simply can't operate. We plan on offering ongoing training opportunities and will never ask you to do something that you don't feel prepared to do.

Please let us know if you feel uncomfortable in any way with your assignment, or if you have ideas as to how we can improve our program. As Program Director and Instructor, I only have one set of eyes and ears – observant volunteers are a HUGE help and often pick up things that I don't.

I hope that you enjoy your experience with our horses, riders, staff and fellow volunteers. I know that I have learned and grown from my involvement with therapeutic riding and hope that you will as well.

On behalf of Creston & District Society for Community Living, our riders and their caregivers, our horses and myself, welcome and thank you for your time and commitment.

Michelle Whiteaway
Program Director



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MISSION

To provide equine programs in the Creston Valley offering therapeutic riding & driving, hippotherapy, equine assisted learning, education, recreation and sports opportunities.

- To improve the quality of life for people in the Creston area with physical, mental, behavioral and/or emotional challenges
- To alleviate stress on their caregivers and families
- To foster understanding of the needs of the disabled community by the able-bodied community
- To broaden and expand the base of people that CDCSL supports
- To provide an opportunity for people to participate in their community

The Creston Valley Therapeutic Riding Program is committed to helping people with disabilities from all cultural and economic backgrounds improve their quality of life through the physical, psychological, social and recreational benefits obtained from therapeutic riding. These benefits are derived from both the use of the horse's movement as a physiotherapeutic tool, and from the interaction with the instructor, physiotherapist, occupational therapists, doctors, volunteers and other riders. Self esteem and independence are greatly enhanced by working together toward attainable goals

COMMUNITY NEED

- People with mental, physical and emotional disabilities face challenges on a daily basis that the able-bodied can only try to imagine. Simple, routine activities can become time-consuming, frustrating events. Access to recreational and social activities is limited and fitness is only a dream for many disabled people. Many people with disabilities "look different" and are constantly aware of being pointed out, stared at and ridiculed. Isolation can be a major factor for a person with a disability. Anger and frustration can take over when faced with the uphill struggle of life as a disabled person.
- Caregivers and families of people with disabilities not only share these frustrations on behalf of the disabled person, but have the added burden of the responsibility of caring for someone with a disability. Their lives can become marvels of organization and sometimes the magnitude of the task can be overwhelming.
- A common theme today is that of isolation and disconnection of the individual from any type of "community" --the extended family has given way to the nuclear family and the face of that is rapidly changing, people think nothing of picking up and moving across the country -- the factors contributing to this alienation are too numerous to identify here.



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WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC RIDING?

“More Than Just a Pony Ride,” therapeutic riding is a unique program that uses horses as therapists. While learning riding and horsemastership skills, people with mental, emotional and/or physical disabilities gain a host of benefits.

Riders may participate for a variety of reasons: rehabilitation, skill development, fun, recreation, and may even compete. In order to meet each rider’s individual needs, their program is specifically designed for them. Therapists, the instructor and the rider him/herself are involved in customizing a program. Sessions may include games, trail rides, physical therapy, riding lessons, or lessons in horsemastership skills such as grooming, leading, feeding etc.

There are three aspects to Therapeutic Riding:

Sports – The riding instructor teaches the disabled rider how to ride in as “normal” way as possible. The students develop riding skills, go on trail rides and compete in horse shows. They also develop their recreational and social experiences.

Education – Horse and riding skills are used as a means of teaching vocabulary, spelling, reading, problem solving and increased attention span.

Medicine – Therapists can use the movement of the horse as a means to relax tight muscles and improve strength, coordination and motor skills.

WHAT IS HIPPO THERAPY

Hippotherapy also uses horses as physical therapists for people with disabilities. Hippotherapy clients are often more seriously physically disabled and may not have enough control of their head or trunk to sit forward. Sessions are one on one with a physiotherapist who may use manipulation both on and off the horse. In Therapeutic Riding the Instructor is in charge of the lesson and the physiotherapist acts as a consultant. In Hippotherapy, the physiotherapist is in charge and the Instructor acts as consultant.



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THE PROGRAM

Riders are recommended to the program by their physician, who is given a description of program activities and a list of contra-indications. They are then screened by a panel consisting of the instructor(s) and appropriate medical personnel. Upon acceptance to the program, a customized plan is developed in consultation with the instructor, therapists, caregivers, family and the rider (when possible).

Riders sign up for a session (8 week Winter Session, 10 week Spring Session, 10 week Fall Session) and pay a rider fee. This fee does not necessarily reflect the true cost of the lesson which is subsidized considerably by fundraising efforts. A Rider Scholarship program will be developed for riders who are unable to pay the rider fee.

Riders are assigned horses, tack and sidewalkers, as well as a suitable group. All attempts are made to keep these assignments consistent.

Lessons may consist of physical therapy, games, riding instruction, horsemastership instruction, trail rides – or any combination of these. The goal of the program is for the rider to be as independent as possible, however volunteer sidewalkers are there to assist in interpreting the instructors wishes and helping the rider carry them out. The level of this assistance obviously is different for every rider. Volunteer horse handlers lead the horses for those riders unable to ride independently. If necessary, there may even be a fourth volunteer walking behind the rider to ensure they stay centered on the horse.

At the end of each lesson, a lesson summary is completed by the instructor and progress is evaluated on an on-going basis, incorporating information from the rider, caregiver, therapists and volunteers, with adjustments to the program being made where necessary.

HISTORY OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

- Therapeutic Riding dates back to the ancient Greeks
- Therapeutic Riding was used extensively in England after World War I to rehabilitate returning veterans
- The results achieved by using horses as therapists were so amazing that the program expanded to include the mentally and emotionally disabled and spread around the world



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BENEFITS/OBJECTIVES OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

For anyone with a disability, therapeutic horseback riding is *more than just a pony ride*. It's a way to discover a whole new world of adventure, freedom, responsibility, dignity and excitement. It is also a way to improve balance and coordination and strengthen muscles. Most importantly, it provides an overwhelming sense of accomplishment for everyone involved – riders, volunteers, caregivers and instructors.

The Rider

Physical

- Improved balance, coordination & posture
- Increased motor control
- Increased muscle strength & flexibility
- Prevention of contractures
- Increased joint mobility & range of motion
- Improved overall endurance
- Reduced spasticity
- Improved coordination
- Faster reflexes
- Improved cardiovascular function
- Improved circulation
- Improved appetite & digestion
- Provision of sensations to non-weight bearing lower extremities
- Strong symmetrical stimulation for asymmetrical problems (ie hemiplegia)
- Experience a gait similar to that of man
- Increased sensory input to touch and smell

Educational

- Increased communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, through increased motivation to acquire vocabulary and express needs
- Increased adaptive skills through practical experience with grooming, feeding, and caring for the horses
- Increased cognitive skills through learning to follow instructions, categorize information and conceptualize
- Increased attention span & concentration
- Increased body awareness & improved body image
- Increased spatial awareness
- Improved memory
- Sequencing, patterning & motor planning
- Increased ability to learn structures & organization
- Language skills/word recognition
- Improved speech (vocalization & articulation)



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Behavioral

- Increased self esteem through skill mastery
- Increased sense of responsibility
- Increased social skills both individually and in groups
- Increased independence, self discipline and confidence

Psychological

- Increased self esteem, self confidence & self respect
- Increased motivation
- Greater emotional control
- Increased interest in own & external world
- Increased patience & self discipline
- Sense of achievement
- Opportunity to actively participate in and upon the environment
- Feeling of elation, joy & euphoria
- Development of courage & experiencing the feeling of risk and danger
- Experience of “normality” (being mobile, independent & free)

Social

- Taking part in an activity associated with the physically fit
- Developing new friendships & relationships
- Adjustment to disability
- Development of respect for & love of animals

Recreational

- Fun
- Experiencing nature & the outdoors
- Riding skills

Caregivers & Families

- Benefits to the riders spill over to their caregivers and their families:
 - As a rider develops physical skills and self reliance, the burden is eased for the caregiver
 - As a rider's anger and frustration is eased, the lot of the caregiver is also eased
- Meeting other caregivers in similar situations allows opportunities to share information and support
- Stress reduction



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Community Members & Volunteers

- A sense of belonging and “community”
- A feeling of being needed and contributing to one’s community
- New friendships and relationships are made – networking opportunities
- Physical fitness is enhanced for horse handlers and sidewalkers
- Increased self worth, self confidence and self esteem
- An opportunity to be with horses, which for many is a life long dream
- Skill development in a wide variety of areas including: horse handling, fundraising, event management
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WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THERAPEUTIC RIDING?

- Riders are recommended by their physician, who is provided with a description of activities and a list of contra-indications, and are screened by a panel including program instructor(s) and appropriate medical practitioners.
- Disabilities that are appropriate for horseback riding include but are not limited to:
 1. **Neurological conditions**
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Poliomyelitis/Post Polio Syndrome
 - Spina Bifida
 - Muscular Dystrophy
 - Developmental Delays
 - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
 2. **Sensory Deficits**
 - Blindness
 - Deafness
 - Perception problems
 - Speech difficulties
 3. **Cognitive Deficits**
 - Developmentally delayed
 - Learning disabled
 4. **Mental Disorders**
 - Psychiatric conditions
 - Behavior problems
 5. **Behavioral Disorders**
 - Psychiatric conditions
 - ADD/ADHD
 - Behavior problems
- Volunteers come from all walks of life and represent a broad spectrum of the community
- While horse handlers and side walkers must be a minimum age of 16 and physically fit enough to handle the job, there is no age limit to other volunteer positions



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THE TEAM

Therapeutic riding is a team sport!! Every member of the team has a vital and indispensable role. Here is a brief introduction to the Team Members:

THE HORSES

- The therapy horses are at the core of any therapeutic riding program. As our riders come in all shapes and sizes and have a variety of disabilities, we need horses in various shapes and sizes with differing skills. However, all of our horses share one thing – a calm and gentle disposition.
- Our horses have been lent to us by incredibly generous horse owners and we are extremely grateful.

THE VOLUNTEERS

- If the horses are the heart of the program, the volunteers are the soul.
- Without volunteers, there is no therapeutic riding program.
- Volunteers work in the arena with the horses and riders, they work on projects such as building equipment, they organize special events, work in the office, raise money.....they keep therapeutic riding going in the Creston Valley.

CDSCL

- CDSCL provides support for individuals with disabilities in the Creston valley.
- CDSCL offers four programs, all emphasizing community inclusion.
 - Community Housing
 - Supported Living
 - Community Integration – Yard Maintenance Crew, Clear Blue Recycling Program, Maintenance Program, Woodshop & Therapeutic Riding
 - Day Programs

THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

- Michelle Whiteaway has been involved with therapeutic riding as a volunteer since 2003 and with this program since 2006.

THE INSTRUCTOR

- Christine Ross is certified by Equine Canada and is working towards her CanTRA instructors certification.

THE RIDERS

- Our “raison d’etre”
- Our riders come in all shapes, sizes and ability levels.
- Their goals are as diverse as they are.



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VOLUNTEERING WITH THERAPEUTIC RIDING

- Without people who choose to make a difference, there would be no Therapeutic Riding program in the Creston Valley.
- For most areas of the program you won't need any special skills—just the desire to give your time. You don't need to have experience with horses to work with them—we will train you. However, you do need to feel comfortable and safe with them.
- CDSCL is committed to the ongoing education and training of its volunteers and offers a variety of training opportunities.
- Be assured that you will not be asked to carry out any responsibilities until you are comfortable with your duties.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS work with the students. They may lead horses, walk beside the horse offering assistance to the rider or set up the ring for the lessons.

PROJECT VOLUNTEERS help in many areas—building projects, newsletters, hospitality, website design & updating.....

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS plan and put on various events throughout the year such as end of session BBQ, volunteer recognition events, fundraising events

FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS work hard raising the money necessary to keep the program alive!

RESOURCE VOLUNTEERS offer their professional expertise in areas such as medical, therapy, marketing, promotion, fundraising, graphic design.....



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VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

- To be treated as a co-worker
- To be given a suitable assignment
- To know as much about the organization as possible
- To receive training for your job
- To receive continuing education for your job
- To have regular evaluations of your volunteer performance
- To be given sound guidance and direction
- To be given promotion and a variety of experience
- To be heard
- To be recognized

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To give as much notice as possible if you can't make your lesson time – if we can't find a replacement, a rider may not be able to ride. (Call Michelle at 402-6793 or 402-3400 cell)
- To be on time – if you are late a student could lose valuable riding time
- To be willing to learn and participate in an in-depth orientation and attend continuing education seminars, workshops etc.
- To continue to learn on the job
- To ask questions if you are unsure of anything
- To have a clear understanding of the needs of the student(s) you are assisting
- To respect confidentiality when assisting a person with special needs
- To be sincere in your offer of service, and believe in the value of the job to be done
- To be loyal to the organization you work with
- To maintain the organization's dignity and integrity with the public
- To carry out duties promptly and reliably
- To accept the guidance and decisions of the Program Director/Instructor
- To understand the function of the paid staff, maintain a smooth and harmonious working relationship with them and other volunteers, and to stay within the bounds of volunteer responsibility



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A DAY AT THERAPEUTIC RIDING

BEGINNING OF THE DAY

- Instructor writes schedule on the board, including rider, horse, tack, type of mount and volunteer assignments
- Horse Handlers arrive and groom, check for lumps & bumps etc. and tack up horses (Riders may assist where feasible)
- Sidewalkers arrive and familiarize themselves with their assignments
- Coffee and goodies and a good chat ensue
- Volunteer Coordinator panics when 3 volunteers don't arrive
- Volunteer assignments totally re-arranged
- Instructor panics as horse is found to be lame
- Horse and tack assignments hurriedly changed
- All is calm again
- Rider's arrive with caregivers and hats and belts are put on – either by caregiver or assigned volunteer (mild panic, while these are located – the belts, not the volunteers)
- Horse's are led into the ring by horse handler and/or rider and lined up
- Horses are brought one by one to the appropriate mounting area – ramp, block or from the ground.
- Instructor does tack check
- Assigned volunteer or caregiver brings rider to the appropriate mounting area
- Rider mounts with whatever assistance is necessary
- Rider then rides around the ring, or is taken back to line to wait depending on ability level
- All riders are mounted and the lesson begins

THE LESSON - May consist of:

- Riding instruction
- Games
- Exercises
- Trail ride
- Horsemastership instruction
- A combination of the above
- The goal is for the rider to be as independent as possible
- That said, the sidewalkers help to interpret the instructors wishes and help the rider carry out the tasks at hand. Level of assistance depends on the riders' needs.

END OF THE LESSON

- Riders line up
- Riders dismount to the ground unless absolutely impossible
- Riders dismount one at a time under instructor's supervision
- Riders thank their horses and their volunteers
- Horses are led out as a group by either the horse handler or the rider, depending on ability level
- Riders who are not leading their horses out are escorted out of the arena by an assigned volunteer
- Debrief with the Instructor and enter comments in the log book



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TIPS FOR PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

- Please remember that you are here to assist the class. This means adhering to the job descriptions outlined. Please do not chat while the class is in progress – the extra noise distracts the rider
- Please leave pets and children at home
- Please don't leave valuables at the barn
- Please ask permission before taking any pictures or doing any videotaping
- CONFIDENTIALITY is extremely important in a therapeutic riding program. Riders' conditions, progress, behaviors etc. are not to be discussed with anyone beside the Instructor, Program Director or Physical Therapist
- If you are not happy with your volunteer assignment, please let the Program Director know. We want you to derive satisfaction from your work and we value your time, dedication and enthusiasm

Remember

- Progress is measured over months or years
- Don't demand too much. Relaxation, enjoyment and learning go hand in hand. Otherwise fatigue may occur, producing negative results both physically (increased tightness of muscles, tremors, poor balance, etc.) and mentally (tears of frustration or irritability)
- Keep to the basics. The student must gain balance and confidence. Listen to the Instructor and reinforce her instructions. Do not "overload" the student with information
- Encourage and praise the effort just as much as the action
- Treat each student, regardless of disability, in a friendly, respectful manner and expect appropriate behavior in return.



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WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

- Please remember that he or she is a person just like anyone else
- The “person” isn’t disabled – if they were they would be dead!
- Be patient
- Only offer assistance if you are asked to help
- If the person is unable to ask for help, always make sure you offer first
- Try to meet the disabled person as an equal. This will help to build their confidence – avoid being too sympathetic
- Do not move wheelchairs or other assistive devices unless asked to do so – they may be needed later
- A wheelchair is an extension of personal space – do not touch unless asked to do so
- Address questions and conversation to the student – caregivers/parents will fill in the blanks if required, but in the meantime, you have given the student the opportunity to speak and make decisions for themselves.
- Some of our riders may be overly affectionate. This is not appropriate as it reinforces behavior that may put the person at risk in other situations.
- Use “people first” language ie “a person with autism” not “an autistic”

WHAT TO WEAR FOR PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS – SAFETY FIRST!

- Loose flapping clothing can startle a horse and get caught on things. Please wear short jackets or sweaters that can be buttoned or zipped
- Scarves should be kept tucked in your jacket.
- CAUTION – Long earrings and necklaces may get caught in equipment or be grabbed by a rider
- Hard soled, fully enclosed shoes or boots must be worn at all times
- The trails can be muddy – so be prepared – a little rain doesn’t stop us from heading out!
- Gloves (preferably leather) not mittens must be worn to protect the hands when leading horses
- Many people are allergic to perfumes and the horses are extremely sensitive to scents so no perfume please
- Please turn off your pagers and cell phones



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SIDEWALKER

REPORTS TO: Instructor

PREREQUISITES FOR SIDEWALKERS

- Minimum age 16
- Comfortable with horses
- Completion of therapeutic riding orientation session
- Completion of therapeutic riding sidewalker training session
- Able to walk briskly over uneven terrain in all weathers while supporting a rider for an hour
- Able to run beside horse for brief periods while supporting a rider

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of the student. The degree of assistance from the sidewalker will depend on the balance and the ability of the student. Sidewalkers can also help the Instructor in many ways ie keeping the student's attention on the lesson, assisting in left/right directionality, spatial orientation, understanding the Instructor's direction. Any unnecessary interference should be avoided. Offer feedback to instructor and/or program director either in the lesson log book or verbally.

Before Mounting

- Introduce yourself to the rider and help him or her put on their belt and helmet if they require assistance
- The Instructor will check the tack and tighten the girth before the student mounts, but may ask you to check it during the ride. The Instructor will make any adjustments.

Mounting

- The left sidewalker escorts the rider to the mounting area (riders may mount from the ground, ramp or mounting block). This is done at the request of the instructor, not before. Stay with the rider until the Instructor takes over
- The right sidewalker acts as "post", standing on the right side of the horse as it approaches the ramp or mounting block, preventing it from swinging its body away from the block or ramp. As the rider mounts, the "post" holds the stirrup leather on the right side to counterbalance the rider's weight

While Mounted

- Keep conversation to a minimum during the lesson
- NEVER LEAVE THE RIDER UNATTENDED WHILE MOUNTED
- Sidewalkers may be required to actually support the rider or simply act as "spotters", depending on the needs of the rider. The Instructor will tell you what hold is appropriate for each student (See "Holds" section of the Handbook)
- If the student starts to lose his/her balance gently push him/her back into position. Try not to grab the rider, rather, give just enough support to help him/her regain the proper position in the saddle.
- Sidewalkers who accompany poorly balanced riders need to change sides occasionally to relieve the stress on their arms.



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- If you need to change sides, ask the horse handler to go off the track and halt. Once stopped, switch sides ONE AT A TIME if two sidewalkers are present. If only one sidewalker is present, get assistance – do not leave the rider unattended.
- Let the Instructor know if the rider is uncomfortable or having any type of difficulty
- Help the rider carry out the Instructor's directions, allowing the rider to do as much of the work as possible (check with the Instructor re how much help to give if unsure)
- If appropriate, remind the student to maintain correct posture – check with Instructor if this is appropriate
- Assist with exercises
- Be careful not to get so excited during games that your rider doesn't get to use his/her skills because you are doing it all!
- In an emergency, use a medium hold (see "Holds" section) OR remove the riders foot from the stirrup and assist in dismounting the student quickly and safely (see Seizure Procedure/Emergency Dismount)
- In the event of an accident, stay with the rider

Dismounting

- Riders are dismounted to the ground whenever possible
- Assist as directed by the Instructor
- Assist rider to run up stirrups if he/she is able
- Escort rider out of ring if he/she is not leading the horse out
- Assist rider to remove their helmet and belt before returning to the supervision of the caregiver/parent
- If the rider you are assisting uses a wheelchair or other assistive devices make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the dismounting procedure for that rider. Bringing the chair or devices at the wrong time can scare the horse. They may also be in the way during the procedure. When possible, the rider will be dismounted, the horse taken away and then the chair or devices brought to the rider.

Sidewalkers are the volunteers who get the most hand-on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the student. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. In the ring, the sidewalker should help the student focus his/her attention on the Instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the student or the other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing for anyone, and to students who may be dealing with perceptual problems as well as physical limitations, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with a student, one should be designated "talker" to avoid this situation.

It is important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back makes it difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

Please don't lean on the horses or pull on the belts – it is extremely hard on the horses and the riders.

Mounting and dismounting are the most dangerous times of the lesson – please pay extra attention during these times.



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HOLDS

Spotter

- Simply walks beside horse and rider paying attention, perhaps helping with comprehension of instructions and being ready in case of emergency

Minimum

- Used for riders with good balance
- Sidewalker cups the rider's ankle with the hand closest to the rider
- Just maintain contact – do not squeeze or pull on the leg

Medium (arm over thigh)

- Sidewalker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse's size) with the hand closest to the rider
- The fleshy part of the forearm rests across the rider's thigh
- Do not put any pressure on any joints
- Be careful that your thumb is not in a position to be jammed and sprained if the horse stops or turns suddenly
- In the event of an emergency, the medium hold is the most secure

Maximum

- Used for very unbalanced riders
- Sidewalker does a medium hold with the OUTSIDE arm, while supporting the riders trunk with the inside arm
- Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider's waist (it is tempting with a young or small rider, but will offer too much and/or uneven support)
- Be very careful not to pull down or push up on a waist belt. Rather than grip the belt, "cup" your hand around the rider's body
- Belts are a safety device for helping a rider who has lost their balance, NOT to provide constant support to the rider or sidewalker



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HORSE HANDLER

REPORTS TO: Instructor

PREREQUISITES FOR HORSE HANDLER

- Minimum age – 16
- Familiar and comfortable with horse
- Completion of therapeutic riding orientation session
- Completion of therapeutic riding horse handling training session
- Able to walk briskly over uneven terrain in all weathers
- Able to run beside horse for brief periods
- Able to control horse

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Primary responsibility is to lead the horse and keep him under control at all times. A good handler anticipates problems and acts in such a way as to avoid them. While your priority is the horse, you must also stay aware of the rider, the Instructor, sidewalkers and your environment.. Offer feedback to instructor and/or program director either in the lesson log book or verbally.

Before Mounting

- Assist with grooming and tacking up
- Check that horse, tack and equipment are as indicated for the rider you are assigned to. List will be posted.
- Lead horse into ring and line up if rider is unable to
- Assist rider to lead horse into ring if he/she is able

Mounting

- Make sure you are familiar with the mounting procedure used with the rider you are assigned to. Rider may mount from the ground, ramp or mounting block. If appropriate, the rider will lead their horse in
- Move the horse into position as straight and as close as possible to the block or ramp if being used
- Hold the horse as still as possible, stand “toes to shoulders” to the side of the horse and gently contain him – do not be too restrictive as this will cause the horse to toss his head and move around
- **NO RIDER WILL MOUNT OR DISMOUNT UNLESS THE INSTRUCTOR IS PRESENT AND REQUESTS THEM TO DO SO**
- After the rider is mounted and balanced, the handler will be directed by the rider or the Instructor to move off at a walk. **MOVING THE HORSE WITHOUT THE RIDER BEING INFORMED AND READY CAN CAUSE A SUDDEN LOSS OF BALANCE.**
- Leave the ramp as straight as possible allowing the Instructor to get off the ramp without having to jump for it!



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While Mounted

- Lead from the left side of the horse most of the time.
- Exceptions – during some games and when on the right rein in the arena.
- NEVER hit a horse while a rider is on
- Keep both hands on the lead rope. Place your right hand on the lead approximately 6 – 12” from the halter. The remaining portion of the lead is held folded in a figure of 8, neatly and safely in the left hand.
- Never put your fingers through any rings on the halter or bridle – if the horse throws its head, you could break a finger
- Do not wrap the lead rope around any part of your body as you could be dragged if the horse spooks
- It is necessary to keep the lead rope between the reins otherwise it will interfere with the “aids” given by the rider and could confuse the horse and cause him to resist. Please ensure that the reins do not hang down to one side. Horses can step through reins that are dangling down and an accident could result.
- To move a horse forward, give the verbal command “and walk on” or “and trot” or cluck, move your right hand forward, then step forward yourself. Do not look at the horse as you lead it forward.
- Be aware of the rider’s ability to control the horse. If the rider is controlling the horse, give him/her enough time to process information and attempt to direct the horse.
- When handling a horse while a rider is controlling the horse with the reins, allow more slack in the lead (move further away from the horse’s head) so you don’t influence the horse unless it becomes necessary for safety reasons. If you are both sending strong signals the horse will become confused and will not attend to the rider’s signals as he should
- Avoid sharp turns with an inexperienced rider or a rider with poor balance, this may cause loss of balance and possibly a fall..
- Lead at an even pace. The handler must be alert to the speed, quality and direction of the horse’s pace. A regular rhythmic pace is necessary for the rider to feel and learn the gaits and for the rider’s body to benefit from the movement
- Always leave enough room for the sidewalkers along the fences and around obstacles
- If you must stop to make tack adjustments or talk to your student, move off the track to the center of the ring to do so. Remember to warn your rider and sidewalkers of your intentions
- Be sure to keep at least one horse length between horses in a small area and two when possible
- Once the lesson has started it is important that the horse handler be alert and pay close attention. The Instructor will address the student by name rather than the name of the horse or volunteer
- When halted, stand “toes to shoulders”, slightly to the side of the horse, using the “quarter system”
- When leading with sidewalkers, position yourself by the horse’s head to allow room for them
- When going from walk to trot, move from a walk to a fast walk into a trot, then from a trot to a fast walk then to a walk. This will make the transition smooth and will not throw the rider off balance
- Pulling the horse will distort his gait and will cause him to move crookedly
- Never trot the horse unless requested to do so by the Instructor. Check to see that the student and sidewalkers are prepared before roaring off! When trotting, keep the horse in as straight a line as possible and at an even pace.
- Do not trot around corners unless specifically told to do so by the Instructor



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- If the horse should shy or suddenly pull, release the lead in the right hand, but maintain your hold with the left hand and go with the horse's movement. If you go with the horse's movement and THEN ask him to halt, you will have a better chance of bringing him under control.
- NEVER TOTALLY LET GO OF THE LEAD IF A RIDER IS MOUNTED
- Falls may happen. If a rider, the horse handler must take care of the horse – a horse left unattended is an added danger

Dismounting – See Mounting

After Dismounting

- Ensure that stirrups are run up and the reins are secured out of the way before removing horse. The rider may or may not do these themselves.
- Assist rider to lead horse away if he/she is able
- Assist rider to untack and groom horse if he/she is able
- Remove horse and tie up safely in designated area
- Untack if horse is not being used again, or if a tack change is required



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SAFETY RULES

- ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING
- No one is allowed to enter the riding ring once the lesson has begun without the permission of the instructor
- All students must wear riding helmets when they are around the horses
- Students must be supervised at all times when they are around the horses
- NO running or shouting
- If you see anyone with a camera, please ask them to check with the Program Director BEFORE they start taking pictures or videotaping. Some of our students do not have photo releases and a flash may not only startle a horse, but a rider or volunteer as well.
- Horses are NOT to be fed anything without the permission of the Program Director. If permission is given, put the food item in a bucket or on the ground – NO HAND FEEDING. Horses soon learn to associate fingers with food and sometimes can't tell the difference!
- All conversation between horse handler, side walkers and student during the lesson should be relevant to the lesson. (General conversation is welcome on the trail)
- A relaxed and confident volunteer encourages the student to be relaxed and confident too. However, never be OVERCONFIDENT and forget to pay attention – this is when accidents happen.
- DO NOT LEAN ON THE HORSES. This distracts and annoys them.
- Please TURN OFF CELL PHONES & PAGERS



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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Instructor is responsible for students and horses in the ring and on the trail. Volunteers and caregivers **MUST** answer to the Instructor. Please follow all instructions as quickly and safely as possible, especially in an emergency situation.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS – are located outside the tack room and in the lounge

CELL PHONE – is with the Instructor

EMERGENCY PHONE LIST – is posted outside the tack room and in the lounge

PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH LOCATION OF ALL EXITS AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

FALL OF RIDER

- **HORSE HANDLER** – removes horse from immediate area and stays with it.
- **SIDEWALKERS** – stay with the rider but **DO NOT** attempt to lift or move the student without direction from the Instructor in charge. The Instructor will make decisions regarding the disposition of the rest of the class and attend to the fallen rider. The Instructor may dispatch a volunteer to phone for an ambulance. If the rider is unconscious or if back or neck injuries are suspected, the rider **IS NOT TO BE MOVED**. The ambulance is to be called.
- We do not have a stretcher or a spine board and rely on paramedics to move students in this case
- If the fall is not serious, the Instructor may decide to mount the student for the remainder of the class or wait until a later date. In any case, the Instructor must complete an Incident Report with any additional information added by the volunteers involved.



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FIRE

- Evacuate all participants
- All horses will halt
- Left sidewalker will assist with dismounting the rider
- Sidewalker(s) will escort riders out the nearest accessible door to designated meeting area (see map) TBA
- Once all riders and sidewalkers have left the arena, horse handlers will walk the horses out to the designated area (see map) TBA
- If possible, try to take the horses out as a group, as if one horse is left behind we may have real difficulties dismounting the rider.
- Staff will assign someone to call the fire department.
- Volunteer sign-in sheets and rider attendance sheets will be taken to the meeting area to assure everyone is accounted for.
- When evacuating horses, they may become frightened and not want to leave – talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. It may be necessary to cover their eyes.
- If a horse is unmanageable, untie it and move to the next horse.
- Once horses are safely away or it becomes dangerous to continue, report to the designated meeting area to be checked in

HUMAN SAFETY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE



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LOOSE HORSE

IN THE ARENA

- Riders will halt on the rail
- Horse handlers should take firm control of their horse
- Sidewalkers remain with rider and go to a medium hold. Be prepared to assist with a dismount upon request
- If necessary, horse handlers will be asked to lead horses out of the arena. Sidewalkers will exit the riders to a safe location.

RETRIEVING A LOOSE HORSE

- Alert others by calling out “loose horse”
- If the horse is excited, you may need to conceal the halter and lead rope behind your back. You may also need to use a small amount of grain in a bucket to tempt him.
- Do not chase the horse
- Move calmly toward his shoulder, talking in a low, soothing voice
- Put the lead rope over the horse’s neck first, then put halter on
- The main thing to keep in mind is to stay calm and quiet.



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EMERGENCY DISMOUNT

1. Alert the Instructor IMMEDIATELY of any emergency situation
2. HORSE HANDLERS – stop the horse, stand “toes to shoulder”, controlling the head
3. SIDEWALKERS – remove the feet from the stirrups; lift the rider off the horse on the side he/she is falling. (NOTE: If the rider is not falling, or in immediate danger, waits for the Instructor.) The other SIDEWALKER walks around the horse and assists in moving the rider away from the horse. Call out “CLEAR’ to the horse handler when the rider is safe. Try not to use clothing or rely on the belt to remove a rider – they may slip or break
4. HORSE HANDLER – move the horse away to a safe distance and halt.
5. SIDEWALKERS – Remain with rider, keeping him/her still. If rider is seizing, stand back and wait. When seizure is over, turn the rider on his/her side and place in Recovery Position. Instructor will usually have taken control of the situation by this time



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ABOUT HORSES

- Horses are prey animals
- Horses are claustrophobic – they don't like to be confined
- Horses are herd animals – they like to be with their buddies
- There is a distinct pecking order within the herd
- Horses are uncomfortable with “grey” areas – indecision on the part of the alpha horse gets them killed!
- Horses don't have terribly effective weapons so their response to danger is generally a “flight” response
- If the “flight” response is not an option, they may revert to the “freeze” option or the “fight” response and may kick, strike or bite
- Horses tend to be nearsighted with minimal depth perception and fine visual acuity
- Horses' eyes are set on the sides of their head so they see two different pictures
- Horses can't see directly behind them, directly in front of them, or under their neck
- Horses hear, smell and sense vibration very well
- Horses are protective of their jugular area and underbelly – predators attack those vulnerable areas
- Predators lurked in trees to jump down on horses' backs
- Horses are creatures of habit and learn by repetition
- Horses move away from pressure and resist force
- Horses generally try to please if they understand what you want
- Horses can be trained to respond to certain movements or noises and to ignore other external stimuli (desensitization)
- Horses reflect their environment
- Horses pick up on our moods and emotions and reflect these
- Horses are individuals with different personalities and moods



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HOW TO ACT AROUND HORSES

- Calm not excited or nervous
- Deliberate – not cautious but no sudden movements
- Quiet not loud
- Always talk to them calmly when approaching them so you don't startle them
- Approach them at the shoulder
- When going behind a horse either stay in close, talking to him and keeping your hand on him at all times, or stay right out of range
- Never go between the horse and the object he is tied to if he is tied up
- Never duck under his neck
- Always wear sturdy footwear around horses –they often weigh over 1000 lbs

SIGNS A HORSE IS UPSET (ANGRY, NERVOUS, FRIGHTENED)

- Ears pinned back
- Head lowered or raised
- Squealing
- Swishing tail
- Stamping his feet



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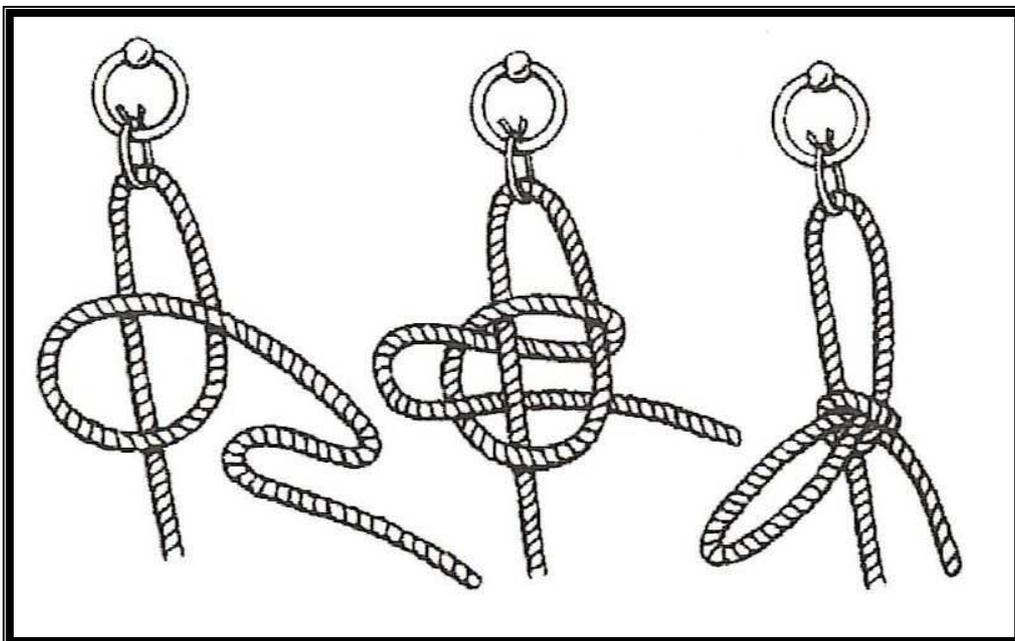
LEADING – with or without a rider

- The horse should be on your right except when in session when you need to be on the inside on the right rein, or during games etc.
- Never lead from the halter alone. The horse may pull free and you will lose control and may injure your shoulder or fingers
- Never lead from the bridle or halter, always use a lead rope or the reins
- When leading without a sidewalker, position yourself between the head and shoulder
- When leading with a left sidewalker, position yourself closer to the head to allow room for them
- Hold the lead shank or reins between 6 – 12” away from the halter or bridle
- Don't have a death grip – allow the horse's head to move in the walk and trot
- Fold the end of the lead shank/reins back & forth in a figure 8
- Never coil the end of the lead shank/reins around any part of your body
- When turning a horse, turn it away from you
- If you must turn it toward you, make sure you put your hand on the ribcage to push the hindquarters away from you
- When going through a gate or door, approach straight not at an angle
- Check back as you go through to make sure the horse doesn't catch a hip or stirrup on the gate or doorway
- When a horse is frightened by an object, let him stop, face the object, look at it and sniff it (don't let the horse spin and flee). Give the horse time to overcome his fear. Reassure him and help to calm him in a slow, soft voice
- To calm an excited horse, rub his neck and speak in a soothing voice
- REMEMBER TO BREATHE

HOW TO TIE A HORSE

- Make sure you tie to something solid that won't give if the horse pulls back
- Make sure the footing and surrounding areas are safe ie footing isn't slippery; horse can't bump into things propped up against a wall etc.
- Always use a quick release knot or quick release snap
- Tie at wither height
- Leave approximately a foot to 18 inches of rope between horse and the post – not so tight that the horse panics and not loose enough for the horse to get a foot over the rope

QUICK RELEASE KNOT





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GROOMING

Grooming is an important part of horse keeping. More than just keeping the horse clean, it promotes health, prevents disease, accustoms the horse to handling, is an opportunity to assess the horse's condition and a chance for us to be close to these amazing creatures.

It is extremely important that the therapeutic horses get a good brushing. They work very hard and most of them are older and subject to aches and pains. A good massage goes a long way to keeping them happy!

We will do a complete brushing prior to the first lesson and an abbreviated version prior to subsequent lessons. The riders may be involved in the grooming process with supervision by the Instructor.

How to Groom

There are many books that can give you more information on this topic. Here are the bare bones essentials of grooming:

- 1) Make sure the horse is tied correctly with a quick release knot to something solid.
- 2) Make sure you use the grooming kit that is allocated to the horse you are grooming.
- 3) Clean the foot with a hoof pick (using it from heel to toe, paying particular attention to the cleft of frog). Check for any chips, smell, risen clenches, loose shoes, bumps on the leg etc.
- 4) Use rubber or plastic curry comb or dandy brush for loosening surface dirt (or hair in the spring). Do not use on head or legs.
- 5) Use dandy brush (long stiff bristles) to "flick" the dirt off.
- 6) Use body brush (short, soft bristles) to spread the oil and "finish" the horse (do not use when horse has winter coat). Use in a circular motion, finishing with the lay of the hair.
- 7) Brush face with body brush.
- 8) Brushing the tail pulls the hair out, so keep it to a minimum and use a body brush or your hands on both mane and tail.
- 9) When weather permits, use a sponge and water to clean the eyes and nostrils (untie the horse when doing this). Make sure you sweep the debris away from the eye, not into it. Also, make sure you use the sponge allocated to that horse)
- 10) Fly spray/wipe may be necessary, check with Program Director.
- 11) In dry weather, put hoof dressing on the sole and wall of the foot.
- 12) When time is short, the essentials are picking out the feet and brushing the saddle, girth and bridle areas – or anywhere tack is going to be touching the horse or has been touching the horse.



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TACKING UP

- Make sure the horse is tied correctly with a quick release knot to something solid (ie the post, not the rail) and the surrounding area is clear of obstacles or debris.
- Check schedule re which saddle, bridle, reins, pads etc. to use, as well as any special equipment necessary.
- Make sure saddle, girth and bridle areas are clean and feet are picked out.

SADDLING

1. Make sure the saddle pad is clean of shavings, twigs etc that could irritate the horse.
2. English – make sure stirrups are run up and girth is draped over the saddle.
3. Western – make sure the off stirrup and cinch are up over the saddle.
4. From the left side of the horse, gently place saddle pad on the base of the neck and slide back into place, smoothing the hair as you go.
5. From the left side of the horse gently place the saddle and any extra pads on the saddle pad, being careful not to bang the stirrups on the horse and that the cinch/girth is not caught under the saddle.
6. Go round to the off side of the horse and bring the cinch/girth down.
7. Pull up saddle pad at withers.
8. Do up cinch/girth just tightly enough to keep the saddle from slipping, not as tight as you would do to ride.
9. Check the cinch/girth again prior to leading the horse away, but don't "crank" it up tightly.



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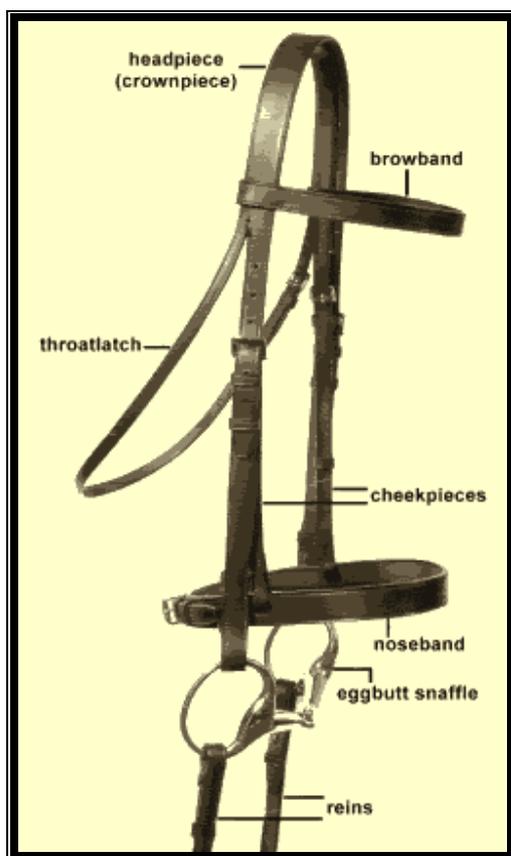
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BRIDLING

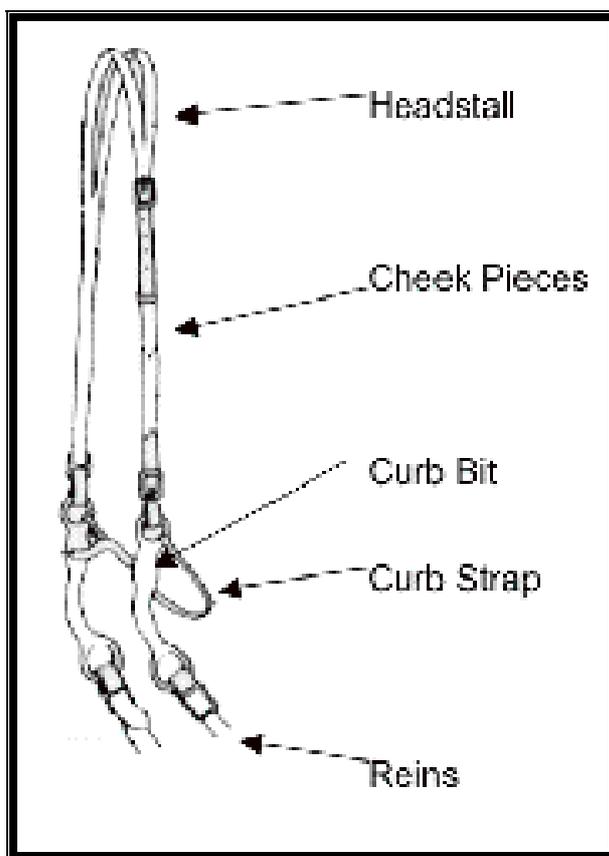
1. Undo the lead rope at the knot end.
2. Leave the halter on.
3. Put the reins around the horse's neck.
4. Take the crown piece in your right hand and the bit in your left.
5. Put your right hand over the horse's head, between the ears.
6. Put the thumb of your left hand in the gap between the horse's molars and incisors, asking him to open his mouth (Some horses are trained to open their mouths to accept the bit without putting your thumb in)
7. CAREFULLY lift the bit into the horse's mouth, making sure you don't bang the bit on his teeth.
8. GENTLY bring the crownpiece over the horse's ears – remember, ears are very sensitive
9. Clear the mane and forelock from under the bridle.
10. Do up throatlatch leaving the width of a hand between cheek and throatlatch.
11. There will be no noseband
12. Make sure all straps are in the runners and keepers and that the bridle fits properly (it may have been adjusted since the last time it was on the horse).
13. Check the schedule to see whether the reins should be attached to the bit or the halter.
14. If you are leaving the horse tied up, put the reins over the head and twist them several times, put them through the throatlatch and do the throatlatch up.

PARTS OF THE BRIDLE

ENGLISH

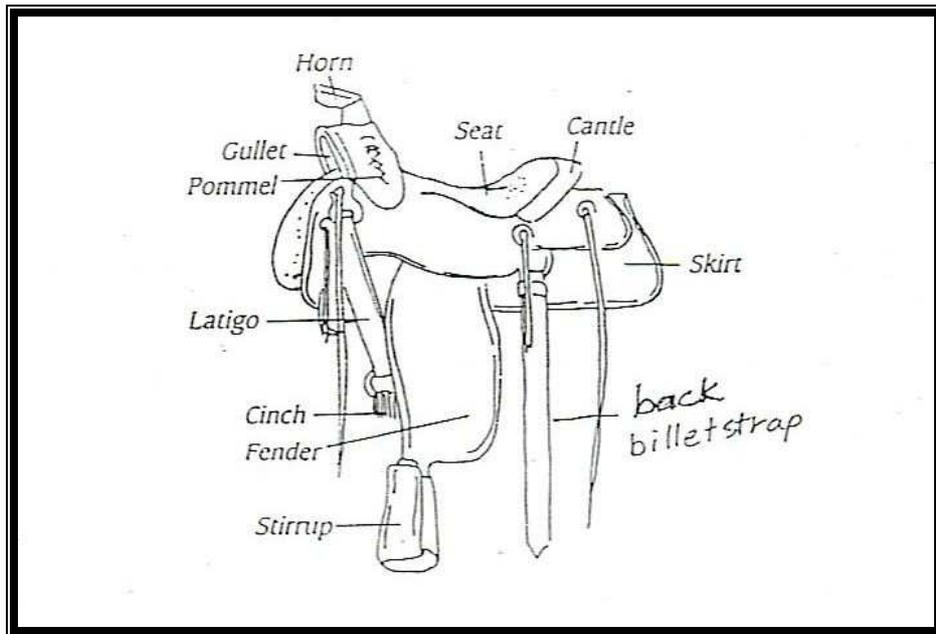


WESTERN

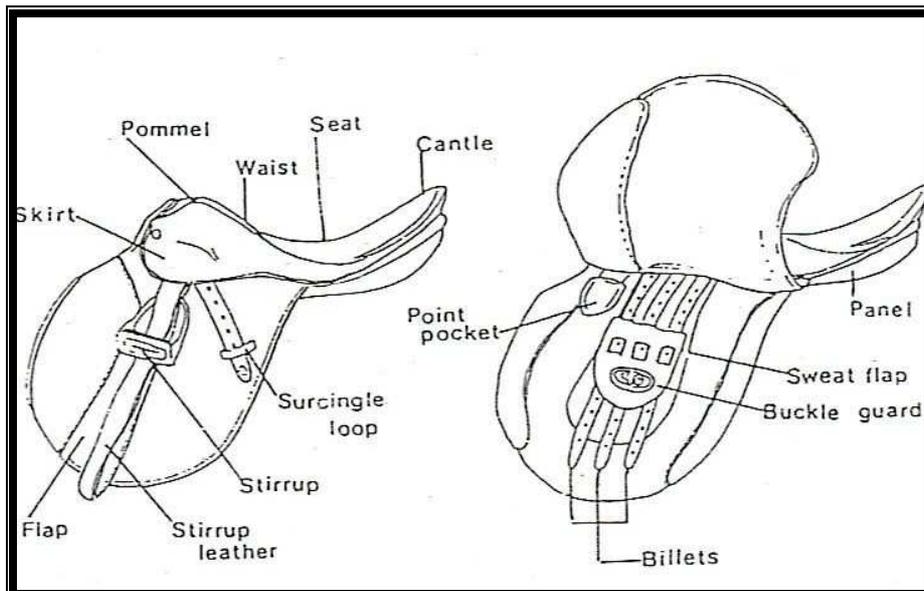


PARTS OF THE SADDLE

WESTERN



ENGLISH





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TACK CARE

Tack – equipment used when working with horses (as opposed to clothing ie blankets, bandages etc.)

COMPOSITION OF TACK

- Leather
- Metal
- Linen or Nylon Thread
- Wool, foam or synthetic stuffing
- Other – synthetic, nylon, rubber, fabric (saddle pads)

REASONS FOR CARING FOR TACK

- Lasts longer (better quality leather will last a long time if cared for, but will not last longer than poor quality tack that is looked after)
- Safety
- Comfort for horse and rider
- Easier to adjust

STEPS

- Clean – all
- Feed – leather
- Protect –leather, stitching
- Polish

LEATHER

- *Clean* with warm water (mild soap if necessary), let dry at room temperature
- *Feed* as needed with oil or other suitable product
- *Protect* with a generous coat of saddle soap or other suitable product (Bick 4, Kocholine etc.)
- Check leather for cracks, bubbles stretching, wear

METAL

- *Clean* – wash in warm water - use a toothbrush to get in the crevices
- *Polish* - with silver polish – do not polish mouthpieces of bits.
- *Protect* – if storing, coat with Vaseline or oil

THREAD

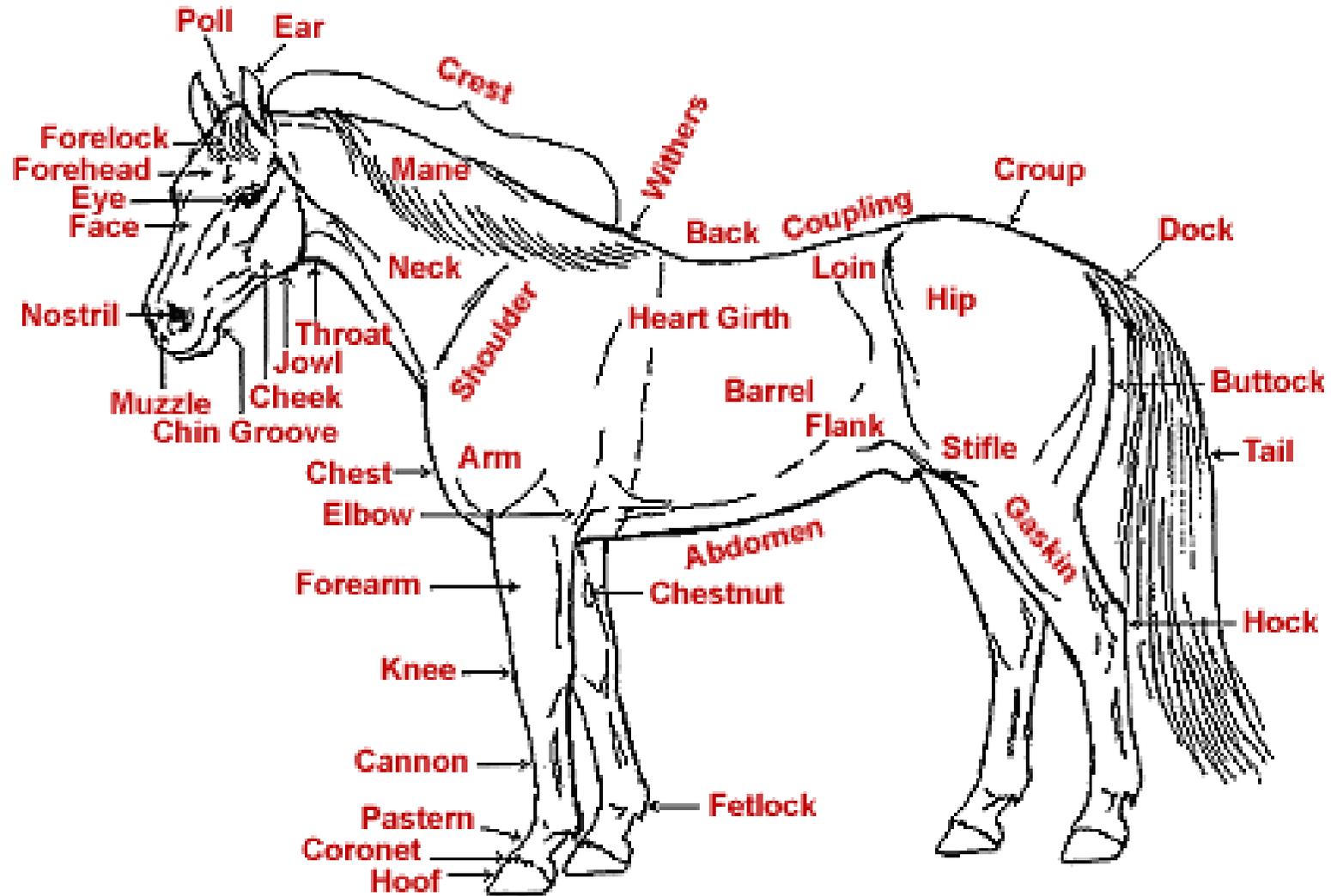
- Check stitching frequently – use your thumbnail
- Treated as per leather
- Oil can weaken stitching as it sets up an environment for bacteria which eat linen thread

STORAGE

- Put up properly
- Protected
- Clean, dry, rodent free



PARTS OF THE HORSE





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Add

Diagram of foot

Diagram of brushes

Seizure info

pics of facial expressions

Safety Seminar

Quarter System

Tack cleaning