

Emerald Hollow Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc.

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering at Emerald Hollow Therapeutic Riding Center! Volunteers serve a vital role in the success of Emerald Hollow. As a volunteer, your support and dedication enable us to reach a diverse population of riders. Your compassion and gift of time add an important dimension to their lives.

Most volunteer opportunities at Emerald Hollow do not require special skills. Emerald Hollow provides the necessary training and guidance to make your volunteer experience safe and enjoyable. This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Emerald Hollow and serve as a guide and resource regarding the various aspects of the program and your volunteer service.

We welcome you as a member of the growing family of individuals whose lives have been enriched by their efforts to help others. Your service of volunteerism is a valuable asset and you will always be appreciated.



The mission of Emerald Hollow Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. is to enrich the lives of children and adults with special needs, throughout Cape Cod, by providing opportunities through Therapeutic Riding and Equine Assisted Activities.

Our Story

In spring of 2001, Emerald Hollow Farm began as a small boarding and rescue farm, taking in older and unwanted horses who needed a forever home. After a few years we added a horseback riding lesson program for children and adults. In the spring of 2010 we were contacted by Latham Centers and began a weekly therapeutic riding program. It was then that the magic happened as we watched the horses we loved so much bring such joy and self-esteem to individuals with special needs. In addition to learning to ride, the students also learned how to safely handle and care for their mounts and we watched the bond between student and horse grow even deeper. Shortly after Latham Centers began riding with us, we were contacted by Cape Abilities to run a similar program for them. In addition, we began to be contacted by families and individuals who were also interested and in need of a therapeutic riding and horsemanship program.

Due to the wonderful results and the tremendous response from the riders and their families, by 2014 the therapeutic program had grown to the extent where additional staffing, volunteers, and equipment was needed and we began to pursue the dream of finding like-minded and like-spirited individuals to help us form a separate, nonprofit corporation that would allow us to assist countless other riders with special needs. Six wonderful men and women stepped up to the challenge and volunteered their time and talents to serve as Board of Directors and in May of 2015, "Emerald Hollow Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc." was established.

Programs & Services

Therapeutic Riding is recreational horseback riding lessons adapted to children and adults with disabilities. The therapeutic qualities of horseback riding are numerous and recognized as beneficial by many medical professionals. A horse's gait, which is similar to human walking patterns, provides neuromuscular and sensory input through movement for the rider. Taught by a certified therapeutic riding instructor and assisted by volunteers, the focus of each lesson is skill development and progression while improving the rider's physical, cognitive, emotional and/or social skills. The benefits of therapeutic riding can include improvements in the following areas:

- Balance
- Muscle strength
- Physical endurance
- Range of motion
- Circulation
- Respiration
- Sensorimotor integration
- Help to activate weak brain areas
- Confidence
- Motivation
- Human Animal bonding skills
- Social skills
- Responsiveness and adaptability
- Flexibility

Unmounted Horsemanship activities provide students with the opportunity to interact with horses in a variety of ways as they learn equine care and basic stable management skills. Activities such as grooming, leading, and working with and around the horse, are taught in a safe and supportive environment. No riding is involved in this program.

Equine Assisted Learning is an experiential learning approach which promotes the development of life skills. This focus on life skills can be related to academic achievement and classroom behavior, personal growth and exploration or professional pursuits such as leadership development and team building. The experiential approach integrates horse-human interaction that is guided by a planned learning experience to meet the identified goals or desires of the participant(s). Working with horses provides opportunities to teach critical life skills such as trust, respect, honesty and communication. Horses use mostly non-vocal communication and are in-tune with human behavior. This can help participants to better understand and learn how our non-verbal communication might be impacting or influencing others in their lives. Horses ask people to be aware of their surroundings at all times. Through interactions with the horses, participants learn a heightened self-awareness. Self-awareness is important in order to reveal patterns of behavior and gives participants the opportunity to think in a new way. Furthermore, participants gain self-esteem and self-confidence while learning how to work with such a large and powerful creature. In all, horses provide us with a way to see our internal landscape and modes of operation exposed. They offer us the opportunity to experience humility, compassion and challenge - all critical elements to supporting self-growth and self-awareness

About the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International

Since 1969, PATH Intl. (formerly NARHA) has provided Equine Assisted Activity and Therapy (EAAT) programs in the United States and Canada through its network of nearly 800 member centers. Each year, dozens of new centers initiate new programs and more than 38,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from these activities which include therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine assisted psychotherapy, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, and competition.

PATH Mission

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, PATH's mission is to "change and enrich lives by promoting excellence in equine assisted activities." To accomplish this mission, PATH Intl. fosters safe, professional, ethical and therapeutic equine activities through education, communication, research and standards. The association ensures its standards are met through an accreditation process for centers and a certification process for instructors.

Path assists individuals and centers in several ways:

- Center Accreditation/Instructor Certification
 - These programs ensure the high quality and safe instruction offered by PATH intl. therapeutic riding centers across the U.S. and Canada.
- Education
 - Through workshops and conferences, PATH provides information to those interested in equine facilitated therapy and activities. PATH's annual national conference brings experts from the fields of physical therapy, horse care, fundraising, business management and volunteer training—to name a few.

- Advocacy
 - PATH's efforts to increase awareness of therapeutic riding and other equine facilitated therapy and activities result in more than 31,000 phone calls every year to their toll-free number. The rising popularity of the email has seen a slight reduction in telephone calls this past year, but has resulted in an increase of PATH communication via the World Wide Web.
- PATH Strides
 - All members of PATH receive PATH Strides Magazine four times a year. This engaging magazine is a non-technical, yet accurate journal that focuses on the work of PATH Intl. Rider profiles, how-to articles, editorials and instructional columns which seek to educate a general readership of the diverse aspects of equine facilitated therapy and activities. Each seasonal issue carries a specific theme.
- PATH News
 - Each month PATH news reaches the membership with internal information such as board updates, committee and region reports, accreditation issues and classified ads through an electronic newsletter which helps in keeping costs down.

Show your support for therapeutic riding and become a PATH member!
Go to pathintl.org to learn more.

A Brief History of Therapeutic Riding

References to the physical and emotional benefits of therapeutic horseback riding date back to writings in the 1600's. However, when Liz Hartel of Denmark won the silver medal for dressage at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games despite having paralysis from polio, medical and equine professionals took active notice. It wasn't long before therapeutic riding was being used for rehabilitation in Europe and then in North America. The first centers for therapeutic riding in the United States began operation in the 1960's. The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH), formerly known as NARHA, was established in 1969 and today there are over 800 PATH Intl. affiliated centers internationally.

Benefits of Therapeutic Riding & Non Mounted Equine Activities

There are five main beneficial aspects of therapeutic riding and unmounted equine activities:

- Physical

The horse's movement has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. The movement of the horse causes the rider's pelvis and trunk to move in a manner that very closely resembles the normal gait of a human. This movement can produce physical changes in the rider including improvements in posture, balance, coordination, increased endurance and normalization of muscle tone.
- Sensory

Both the horse and the riding environment offer a wide variety of input to participants. The overall sensory experience is benefited by movement exploration on the horse combined with the many other sights and sounds encountered in the riding environment.

- Emotional
Individuals realize self-worth and increase self-esteem through the success of overcoming fear/anxiety and the ability to achieve riding and other related skills. The relationships that develop between participants, volunteers, horses and staff are an integral part of the positive emotional experience provided by a therapeutic riding program.
- Cognitive & Educational
The horse provides a strong motivator for focusing on educational goals. Activities and games on horseback are designed to help achieve specific goals such as following multi-step directions, staying on task, color and number recognition and reinforce existing skills as well as teach new ones.
- Social
 - Therapeutic horsemanship programs provide an excellent opportunity for participants to interact with their peers, program volunteers and staff in a positive and enjoyable environment.

Emerald Hollow Program Participants

Emerald Hollow serves individuals over the age of 4 years. Staff conduct an assessment and screening process to determine eligibility into the program. The assessment process provides an opportunity to determine if our program activities would be safe and appropriate for the individual and what resources would be needed, such as horse, riding equipment, volunteer and staffing needs. Once accepted into the program, individual goals are established for each participant and their progress is documented. Most participate in one 30-60 minute session each week for the length of the semester, with the majority continuing from one semester to the next. Lesson activities may include developing basic riding skills, exercises, playing games on horseback and riding the trails.



Purpose of Volunteer Orientation & Training

To assist in providing the safest and most enjoyable environment possible, new volunteers are required to attend General Orientation and Role-Specific Training sessions to orient them to the facility, to introduce them to therapeutic riding and the population the program serves, as well as to experience hands on training, including safety and emergency policies and procedures, and general rules & regulations regarding all aspects of the program.

Volunteer Sign in

Upon arrival, volunteers are required to sign in the log book, put on a name badge, and check the daily schedule for their assignment. After completing their volunteer assignment, name badges are returned and volunteers are asked to sign out, noting the number of hours and the area in which they worked.

Volunteer Cancellations

Volunteers are vital to the success of the program. When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed in order to effectively serve our participants and care for our equine friends.

- **Please reserve canceling your scheduled day and time for emergencies only.**
- **If you must cancel, we ask that you call Emerald Hollow as soon as possible so a replacement may be found.**
- **Please attempt to make up for your absence by volunteering another day.**

Volunteer Opportunities

The **Horse Handler** is responsible for the preparation prior to, handling during the lesson and care following the lesson for the program equine.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to lesson start time
- Groom and Tack their horse for lesson
- Warm up horse in hand 10 minutes prior to lesson
- Safely and effectively lead horse during lesson
- Untack and groom horse following lesson (may include hosing/sponging horse in warmer months)

Required Criteria:

- Has horse experience
- Safety Awareness
- Willingness to learn and demonstrate Emerald Hollow policies and procedures
- Able to walk and jog for at least ½ hour
- Has attended an Emerald Hollow Volunteer Orientation and Training
- Demonstrates awareness of horse behavior
- Able to tack, groom and untack horse independently

Sidewalkers are responsible for the safety and well being of the participants during the lesson. They assist the instructor in relaying instructions, provide physical support and serve as a role model for the participants

Primary Responsibilities:

- Arrive 15 minutes before lesson start time
- Assist participant with helmet fit
- Walk next to participant during lesson providing physical support when necessary
 - A variety of sidewalking techniques are used according to rider's needs. The instructor will indicate which type of support should be used.
- Relay instructions to participants
- Assist with communication between participant and instructor
- Assist with safety procedures when necessary

Required Criteria:

- Willingness to learn Emerald Hollow policies and procedures
- Kind and tolerant
- Safety awareness
- Able to walk and jog for at least ½ hour
- Has attended an Emerald Hollow Volunteer Orientation and Training

Barn Assistants: help keep the barn clean, safe and operating smoothly during program hours. Tasks include cleaning stalls, sweeping, dumping water buckets, and cleaning tack.

Office Volunteers: Office volunteers perform a variety of duties including general clerical duties such as filing, data entry, making copies, assisting with special mailings etc.

Special Skills Volunteers: Volunteers in this area are encouraged to share a special skill or technical experience that may benefit the program. Areas of special skills/experience may include—graphic design, public relations, photography, computer knowledge, etc. If you think you would fit into this unique and creative role, please contact the program director for more information.

Special Events Volunteers: Throughout the year Emerald Hollow has events at the farm and in the local community to raise money and awareness. Volunteers are needed to plan, organize and run these events.

The following policies & guidelines should assist you in having a positive volunteer experience.

General Guidelines/Policies:

Communication & Questions

- If at any time, you are unclear regarding your volunteer role or responsibilities, please direct questions to the instructor. During lessons, the instructor is responsible for each rider, horse and volunteer. All directions from the instructor should be followed including the assignment of riders, horses and volunteers, mounts/dismounts and lesson structure. To ensure everyone's safety, it is important to adhere to the instructor's decisions. If you have additional comments, concerns or questions please contact the program director, executive director or member of the board of directors.

Commitment & Availability

- Adequate support is critical in serving our participants and equine friends. Therefore, Emerald Hollow requests that volunteers must be willing to commit to a minimum of one (1) hour each week (same day and time) for the length of a semester. We understand there are times when emergencies arise, so please notify Emerald Hollow as soon as possible if you are not able to make your scheduled time and please make every attempt to volunteer another day to make up for your absence.

Physical Considerations

- Some volunteer roles such as leading, sidewalking and assisting in the stable can be physically demanding at times. It is important for you to inform Emerald Hollow staff if you have a condition that may prevent you from lifting or working a full hour in the arena at a walk or a jog. If you feel being a riding program or stable volunteer is too physically demanding, you may want to consider volunteering in another area at Emerald Hollow.

Confidentiality Policy

- At Emerald Hollow, we place great importance on protecting the confidential information of our clients, our staff and our volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as surnames, telephone numbers, addresses, e-mails, etc., as well as the non-public business records of Emerald Hollow. In particular, medical information about clients, and information about their disabilities or special needs, must be protected as Confidential Information. Volunteers shall never disclose confidential information to anyone other than Emerald Hollow staff. Volunteers must seek staff permission before taking any pictures or videos.

Conduct & Behavior

- Individuals involved with the program are expected to conduct themselves in a cooperative and appropriate manner at all times. Examples of inappropriate behavior would include – any form of harassment, aggressive or abusive behavior to self, or others (including horses). If you are subject to any type of inappropriate behavior, please do not approach the individual. Notify staff immediately. Individuals exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be requested to leave immediately and if determined necessary, additional assistance may be called for (911). Inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the program.

Reassignment & Termination Policy

- Emerald Hollow policies have been developed to serve the best interests of the entire Emerald Hollow community. Safety, confidentiality, respect for each other – human and equine – and the preservation of an optimal environment for beneficial therapeutic riding are the primary reasons for strict adherence to these rules. Individuals who are not able to perform their volunteer role, or maintain a reasonable level of commitment, or fail to observe the rules and procedures of the program will be given an opportunity to discuss any situation that is perceived to be a violation of Emerald Hollow policies and may be provided with job re-assignment. However, Emerald Hollow reserves the right to determine at its discretion, that it may be in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

Injuries

- All injuries must be reported immediately to Emerald Hollow staff and a Risk Management Report must be completed by all involved. Please request a Risk Management Report form from staff.

The Facility

- Please respect posted off-limit areas. Unless approved by staff, all volunteers should leave the facility at the close of program.

Visitors

- Emerald Hollow enjoys having visitors. Please make an appointment and a staff member will be happy to show you the farm.

Horse Behavior

- Please notify staff immediately of any concerns regarding the behavior of program horses such as biting, kicking, etc

Helmet, Clothing & Footwear Policies

Helmets

- All participants and personnel (staff & volunteers) of Emerald Hollow are required to wear protective headgear that is ASTM-SEI approved for horseback riding while taking part in any mounted activity. Instructors are responsible for ensuring proper helmet fit for participants. Helmets are disinfected and inspected on a regular basis. Volunteers need only wear a helmet if they are riding.

Safety Stirrups

- Stirrups with safety features that reduce the chance of foot entrapment are required on all Emerald Hollow saddles. Approved safety stirrups include "S" shaped and Peacock style.

Footwear

- Riding boots or sturdy hard-soled shoes with a ¼ inch heel (no loafers, sneakers, open toed shoes or sandals) are required to be worn for all equine related activities. Volunteers are required to wear shoes or boots that are comfortable yet offer foot protection. Alternative footwear may be acceptable under specific circumstances which will be considered on an individual basis by Emerald Hollow staff.

Clothing & Accessories

- Participants, volunteers, and staff should dress suitably to the weather and season in clothing appropriate for equestrian activities. For example – clothing, hats or jewelry that restrict movement or vision are considered unsuitable.

Additional Emerald Hollow Policies ...

- Emerald Hollow is a NON SMOKING facility.
- Cell Phones & Car Alarms must be turned off as they disrupt class and startle horses.
- The consumption of alcohol prior to and/or while at Emerald Hollow is prohibited, except for events approved by Emerald Hollow. The use of illegal substances prior to and/or while at Emerald Hollow is strictly prohibited.
- Please use a quiet voice while in the barn and working around the horses.
- Please refrain from offering food to participants without permission as they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- Hand feeding Emerald Hollow Horses is Strictly Prohibited. To avoid nipping, we never hand feed the horses. Please place treats in the “treat” bucket located outside the tack room door.
- Please leave your pets at home where they will be safe and comfortable while you perform your volunteer role.
- Please do not perform a volunteer role you have not yet been trained for.

As a volunteer, you play a critical role in preparing horses for sessions and assisting with their daily care. We encourage volunteers to gain additional knowledge of our equine friends through a variety of opportunities. This includes additional training opportunities to increase your volunteering abilities and a variety of complimentary horse related educational opportunities offered throughout the year to encourage volunteers to spend hands-on time working with barn staff and seasoned volunteers.

Things to Remember for General Horse Safety: - Always think safety first!

- Never wrap a lead line around your hand or yourself.
- Hold the lead with the hand closest to the horse, and fold the excess in your opposite hand.
- Walk beside the horse when leading, not ahead or behind.
- Horses are led on the near (left) side, unless otherwise indicated by staff.
- Approach a horse from the side, avoiding quick movements, and speaking in a low voice.
- Pat horses on the shoulder, not on the nose.
- When on cross-ties, have horses facing the indoor arena.
- Please do not allow horses to pass each other while on cross ties.
- Walk under the cross-ties to switch sides. Do not duck under horse's neck or walk behind.
- Never let reins or lead lines hang to the ground.
- Always call "horse" or "gate" before entering the arena with a horse.
- Maintain a safe distance between horses.
- Shouting and/or running may startle horses. Try to use quiet voices and avoid quick movements.
- Avoid walking around the back of the horse or approaching a horse from the back end.
- When working near the hindquarters, stay close and keep one hand on the horse.

EQUINE SENSES

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse's senses, instincts and implications is a step towards predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

Hearing

- The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response. When working with horses, note the position of the horse's ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, in-attentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet, calm and reassuring voice. Watching your horse's ears is an excellent way to increase communication between you and your horse.

Sight

- Horses' eyes are geared to finding danger. They don't have very accurate vision close up, but they can detect tiny movements from a distance. The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; this design lends itself to good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. Unlike the human eye, the lens of the horse's eye does not change shape. Instead, a horse focuses on objects by changing their head position—raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate and due to the large size of their eye, horses are thought to see quite well in the dark. There is still some controversy as to whether or not horses see in color and what colors they may or may not be able to detect, but horses can and do notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different or has changed. Because of this, allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects and introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with. Taking into consideration that the horse has better peripheral vision, consider a slightly looser rein which enables him to move his head when taking a look at objects. Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider his two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is at his shoulder. Approaching from directly behind or in front may startle the horse.

Touch

- The horse's sense of touch is incredibly sensitive. They can detect even very light touches or amounts of pressure. All horses have sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas). Touch is used as communication from horse to horse and from horses to people. Horses may also use touch to examine strange objects by looking, sniffing and feeling an object with their muzzle. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, so we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in his mouth. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure, this means that they may be sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Riders may need assistance to reduce squeezing a horse with their legs. Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique for the horse you are leading.

Smell

- The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute which gives him the ability to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate new situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling. It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.

Taste

- Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

Sixth Sense

- Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses are often hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times, there may be a personality conflict between handlers and horses. Because of this, it is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you're having a difficult time relating to, or getting along with a particular horse.

Flight As A Natural Instinct

- While most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee; if frightened, horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. If the horse appears anxious or frightened, speak to the horse in a calm tone. A frightened horse being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back, so relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area such as a stall. If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful alert program staff as soon as possible.

Herd Animal

- Horses prefer to stay together in a herd or a group with one or two horses being dominant and with a pecking order amongst the rest. Because some horses may not like being alone, this is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter. Similarly, if one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect each horse's space and pecking order.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following all safety rules, emergency policies and procedures as indicated. This includes supporting all efforts to promote safe working conditions, making full use of safety equipment, immediately reporting any unsafe working conditions or behaviors, and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and emergency plans.

Emergency Policies & Procedures

- Emerald Hollow's intention is to provide a safe environment for all individuals involved with the program. Being prepared in the event of an emergency is part of providing a safe atmosphere. Please review the following policies and procedures on how to handle specific emergencies. It is important to remember in any emergency situation to remain calm, reassure riders, and take direction from Emerald Hollow instructors. While Emerald Hollow instructors are responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required, volunteers may be called upon to assist.

Medical Emergencies

- Emerald Hollow staff must be notified of any injury or medical emergency and are responsible for managing the emergency including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. A Risk Management Report form must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident.

Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance

- In the event of an emergency, volunteers may be asked to call for emergency medical assistance. Cell phones are the primary means of communication. A list of emergency contacts is located at the entrance to the both barns.

Location of First Aid Kits

- A human first-aid kit is located in the dresser by the tack room.
- An equine first aid kit is located in the dresser by the tack room.

Handling Bodily Fluids

- It is good policy to treat all bodily fluids as infectious. To protect volunteers and participants we recommend: washing hands before and after class and use a protective barrier should you come in contact with bodily fluids, e.g. runny nose, saliva, blood, etc.

Fire

- Call 911 requesting emergency vehicles turn off sirens as they approach. All individuals should evacuate the barn and meet in the arena at the front of the farm. The staff on duty will take roll call from the volunteer log in book and lesson assignment sheet.

Severe Weather

- In the event of severe thunder storms, high winds or threat of hurricane – program activities will be discontinued. Please take direction from the instructor regarding escorting participants to a designated safe meeting place and safe placement of horses.

“Emergency” Dismount

- During riding sessions, the instructor performs rider mounts and dismounts. However, in certain situations, the instructor may ask volunteers to perform an emergency dismount as follows:
 - When an instructor calls for an emergency dismount, the horse leader halts and heads off their horse. Sidewalker(s) inform the rider of the emergency dismount and make sure the rider has removed their feet from the stirrups. To perform the dismount, place your arms around the rider’s waist and gently guide the rider off by bringing their hips to your hips while bringing them safely away from the horse. Horse leaders must keep the horse a safe distance from rider. Once the rider is dismounted, please await further direction from the instructor.

Fallen Rider or Medical Emergency

- Should a rider fall from a horse, become injured or have a medical emergency during a session—all activity will stop. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident, including applying any first aid needed. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), and/or locating the rider’s emergency medical form. In the event of a fallen rider, the horse leader will move the rider’s horse away from the rider, then halt and head off the horse. All other horse leaders are to halt their horses and head them off. Sidewalkers of the fallen rider remain with the rider until directed otherwise. All other sidewalkers are to apply “arm over thigh” support and stay with their riders, waiting for further direction from the instructor. No one, including riders’ parents, should enter or leave the arena without direction from the instructor.

Spooked Horse

- Should a horse become frightened or overly nervous, sidewalkers are to apply “arm over thigh” support to the rider. The horse leader should attempt to halt the horse and head it off if able. The horse leader should always stay with the horse, being aware that the horse may move quickly forward or side step in either direction. As the horse moves, sidewalkers need to continue their support to the rider, staying close to the horse’s side and following its movements. Both the sidewalkers and horse leader should continue to follow directions from the instructor.

Loose Horse

- To retrieve a loose horse—whether in the arena, stable or on the facility grounds—one person should approach the horse from the side and using a quiet voice, place a lead rope around neck, followed by putting on the halter. Do not chase the horse. If needed, a small amount of feed in a bucket can be used to encourage the horse to come to you.
- Should a horse become loose in the arena while a session is in progress, all activity immediately stops. Horse leaders are to halt and head off their horses, sidewalkers should apply “arm over thigh” support and await further direction from instructor. If a horse is loose in the barn; bring any participants to a safe area, remove any horses from cross ties, close open doors and attempt to herd the loose horse into an empty stall.

WORKING WITH A SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take the time to get to know your participant and direct any questions to the instructors. Physical or mental impairments may be present at birth, or may be due to injury, disease, or aging. Often, a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being both considerate and sensitive to their needs.

Sidewalk support techniques include:

- “Side-walk” The sidewalker walks beside the rider (lined up with the rider’s shoulder) and is prepared for “hands on” when/if indicated by instructor.
- “Arm over thigh” The sidewalker places the arm closest to the rider over the rider’s thigh and grasps the front edge of the saddle.
- “Ankle support” The sidewalker cups the rider’s ankle to stabilize the rider’s lower leg.
- “Arm over thigh & ankle support” Occasionally, a rider needs support provided by doing both an arm over thigh, and cupping the ankle.

(Please use caution never to force movement or use excessive pressure when applying any of these techniques.)

Additional Information for Sidewalkers

- When a rider requires two sidewalkers, only one sidewalker should be communicating with the rider at a time as too much input can confuse a rider.
- If a rider has only one sidewalker, the leader and sidewalker should walk on opposite sides of the horse.
- The role of the sidewalker varies greatly between riders. It is important to have an understanding of your rider’s needs and knowledge of his or her goals. Please ask the instructor to provide this information to you.
- The sidewalker needs to be aware of the rider at all times. Even when the rider is not mounted, the sidewalker should be conscious of the rider’s safety.
- Sidewalkers - Never place your hand or fingers in any of the saddle’s rings or buckles while sidewalking.
- If a rider or a horse behaves inappropriately or in an unsafe manner, please notify staff immediately.

Wheelchair Etiquette

- Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind: always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help. Be respectful—people’s wheelchairs are an extension of their body space, don’t hang or lean on them unless you have permission. Speak directly—be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, it is appropriate to sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment

- If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance, so be respectful of this as well. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written/posted. If you’re uncertain of what to do, ask your Instructor how you can be of further assistance.

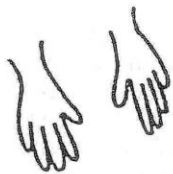
General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language Impairment

- Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. See your instructor with any questions. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc). Alert the Instructor if the participant is having difficulty with a hearing aid (i.e., ringing).

Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression

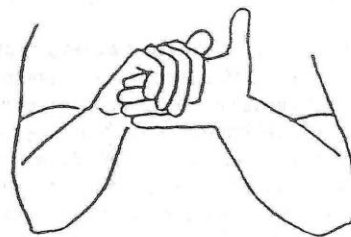
- Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL). Below are some common signs used in therapeutic riding.

SIGN LANGUAGE



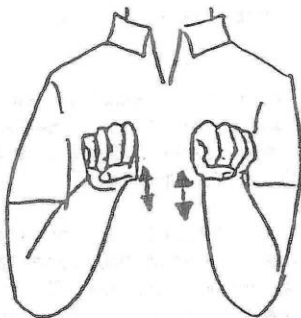
Walk-on

Hands are palm down, wrists go up & down



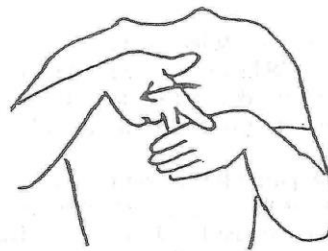
Saddle

Fingers of right hand hook over flat, palm-in left



Trot

Close fists with thumbs across fingers, motion up and down from wrists



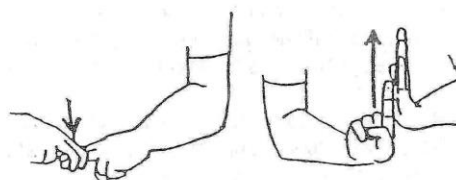
Ride

Straddle palm-in left hand with first two fingers of hand, slide



Halt/Stop

Side of right flat hand strikes left flat palm



Sit Tall

Sign "Sit" and "Tall"

GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants that one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability, rather it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

Arthritis:

- Inflammatory disease of the joints.
- Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.
- Characteristics: Pain; lack of mobility; loss of strength.
- Benefits of therapeutic riding: Gentle rhythmic movements to promote joint mobility and to relieve pain; increase strength.

Autism & Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD):

- A broad spectrum of disorders ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention.
- Characteristics: Impairments in social interaction and communication; restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities; impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions; lack of social or emotional reciprocity; delays in, or lack of the development of spoken language; impairments in ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others; abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell, taste, reaction to pain; deficits in gross and fine motor skills.
- Benefits: Provides sensory input and promotes sensory integration. Promotes communication skills (expressive and receptive). Develops strength, coordination, muscle tone and gross and fine motor skills. Promotes socialization.

Cerebral Palsy:

- Brain damage occurring before, during or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.
- Types and characteristics: Spastic: increased muscle tone, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes. Athetoid: Extensor muscle tension, involuntary movements, difficulty maintaining upright posture. Ataxic: weakened muscles, poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements.
- Benefits: Normalization of muscle tone, muscle strengthening, development of posture, balance and motor coordination, opportunity for promoting expressive skills, socialization and confidence.

Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA) – Stroke:

- Brain hemorrhage or brain emboli, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.
- Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of the body. May impair thought, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.
- Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech, socialization and confidence.

Developmental Disabilities (DD):

- A diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory and speech impairments that can begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age.
- Characteristics: Varied, but can include processing delays, and delays in physical, motor and social development.
- Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, stimulates processing, speech and body awareness, provides opportunity for sport and recreation, promotes socialization.

Down Syndrome:

- A genetic disorder in which a person is born with an extra chromosome (chromosome 21).
- Characteristics: Mild to severe learning disabilities, low muscle tone, speech impairments.
- Benefits: Promotes expressive and receptive language skills. Increases gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination, posture and muscle tone. Promotes social skills. Increases confidence and self-esteem.

Emotional Disabilities:

- Social, emotional or behavioral functioning which is not age appropriate and affects a child's academics, social relationships and self-care.
- Characteristics: Difficulty coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations, inappropriate affect or behavior responses, depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, difficulty learning, withdrawal, and aggressiveness.
- Benefits: Increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities for accomplishments, promotes positive socialization.

Hearing Impairment:

- Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.
- Characteristics: Difficulties in communication or communication through sign language, lip reading or finger spelling.
- Benefits: Increases confidence, self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Provides recreational activity with opportunity for socialization. Stimulates balance, posture and coordination.

Learning Disabilities:

- Neurological disorders that interfere with a person's ability to store, process or produce information.
- Characteristics: Difficulties with reading, writing, speech, and computing math. May affect development and social skills.
- Benefits: Promotes processing, language skills and attending skills, increases confidence and self-esteem, provides opportunity for success, increases balance, coordination and posture, provides opportunity for socialization.

Intellectual Disability (ID):

- A disorder in which a person's overall intellectual functioning is below average with an IQ of 70 or less. Impaired ability to cope with common life demands and daily living skills.
- Characteristics: Impairments in learning, communication, social interaction, self-care.
- Benefits: Increases balance, coordination, strength and posture, improves gross and fine motor skills, promotes socialization, increases confidence, reinforce life and vocational skills.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS):

- Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation.
- Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.
- Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles, maintains balance, increases confidence and self-esteem.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD):

- Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.
- Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes.
- Benefits: Provides opportunity for recreational, physical, and social activity. May help slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, allows for movement free of assistive devices.

Scoliosis:

- Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S shape with rotary component.
- Characteristics: Shoulder, trunk and waistline asymmetry. May have back pain and postural fatigue.
- Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

Spina Bifida:

- Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure which results in spinal cord damage.
- Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. May also be associated with hydrocephalus, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations.
- Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, increases strength, balance and coordination, promotes confidence and self-esteem.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI):

- Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.
- Characteristic: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.
- Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, provides opportunity for recreational and social activity.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

- Accidental injury to the head resulting in impairment of cognitive, emotional and/or physical functioning.
- Characteristics: May include deficits in gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination and strength. May have deficits in language, communication, processing, memory and perceptual skills.
- Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, coordination, and gross and fine motor skills. Stimulates speech and perceptual skills. Increases confidence.

Visual Impairment -Moderate to Total Loss of Sight.

- **Characteristics:** May include insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity and fearfulness.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, balance and coordination. Provides opportunity for socialization, structured risk-taking and freedom of movement.

DEFINITIONS

Aids – signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural—hands, legs, voice, seat; or artificial—crop, spurs.

Bay – color term for deep brown to blackish colored horse with black mane and tail.

Bit – used to control the horse and generally made of metal, bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the horse's mouth.

Bridle – The complete outfit of headstall, reins, and bit used to guide the horse when riding.

Canter – A three beat gait of the horse, faster than a trot, a bit slower than a gallop.

Cantle – back of the saddle behind the seat.

Chestnut – color term used for a horse with a reddish-brown coat color, mane & tail are usually the same color.

Conformation – the structure and general make up of the horse.

Double ended lead – a lead line with two ends, each end with a snap, to be placed on each side of the bit or halter while leading.

Dressage Pad – the largest of the cotton pads which goes under the saddle.

Farrier – profession of trimming and shoeing horses hooves.

Gaits – the various movements of the horse at different speeds; e.g. walk, trot and canter.

Gallop – the fastest of the horses gaits; a three beat gait.

Gelding – a male horse that has been castrated and is incapable of breeding.

Girth – a long strap with buckles on each end, attaches to saddle's billet straps and holds the saddle in place.

Girth Cover – a soft fabric tube that slides over the girth to help prevent the horse from getting girth sores.

Gray – color term used for horses with a coat color from white to dark gray.

Ground poles – wooden poles placed in the arena that are used to school the horse and/or practice rider's two-point position.

Grooming – caring for horse's coat, includes: currying, brushing, and picking feet.

Half Circle & Reverse – change of direction by turning horse toward the center of the ring and back to the rail.

Halter – a leather or nylon bitless headstall used to control the horse when leading in or out from the paddock.

Half seat or Two-Point Position – rider places hands on horses neck and stands up in stirrups.

Hand – a standard unit of measure equal to four inches; used in determining the horse's height from the ground to the point of the withers.

Hoof or hooves – the horse's feet.

Lead line – used to lead the horse, often a cotton or nylon rope with snap on one end which attaches to halter.

Long line – use of long reins which run from the bit, through the sides of the saddle or surcingle, and used to steer the horse from behind.

Long side – the longer side of the arena

Lunging – exercising the horse by placing it on a lunge line, and having the horse go around in a circle.

Mare – a female horse

Mounting ramp – the area used to mount the rider onto the horse.

Near side – refers to the left side of the horse.

Off side – refers to the right side of the horse.

Off side block – square block used to keep the horse next to the mounting ramp during the mounting process, sidewalker stands on block to assist rider onto the horse.

Posting – a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot, may also be practiced/taught at the walk.

Rail – the outside area of the arena along the fence line or wall.

Reins – long leather straps that attach to the bit and are held by the rider, used to steer and control the horse.

Saddle – usually made of leather and placed on the horse's back for a rider to sit on.

Saddle pad – cloth pad used under the saddle to help protect the horse's back.

Stirrups – are often made of iron, they hang from the saddle and the rider places their feet in them to aid in balance.

Tack – the term used to refer to riding equipment.

Trot – a two-beat diagonal gait.

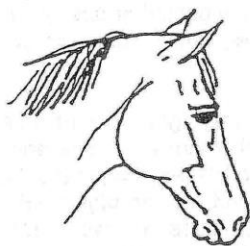
Walk on – command used to have the horse move forward into a walk.

Withers – the bony projection between on horse's back between the shoulders.

Whoa – command used to stop the horse from any gait.

READING HIS EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



Ears forward but relaxed
interested in what's
in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed
listening to his rider
or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward
alarmed or nervous about what's
ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right
relaxed, paying attention
to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back
annoyed or worried about what's
behind him: might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears
calm and resting,
horse may be dozing.



Ears flattened against neck
slightly angry, in a fighting mood.
May fight, bite or kick.

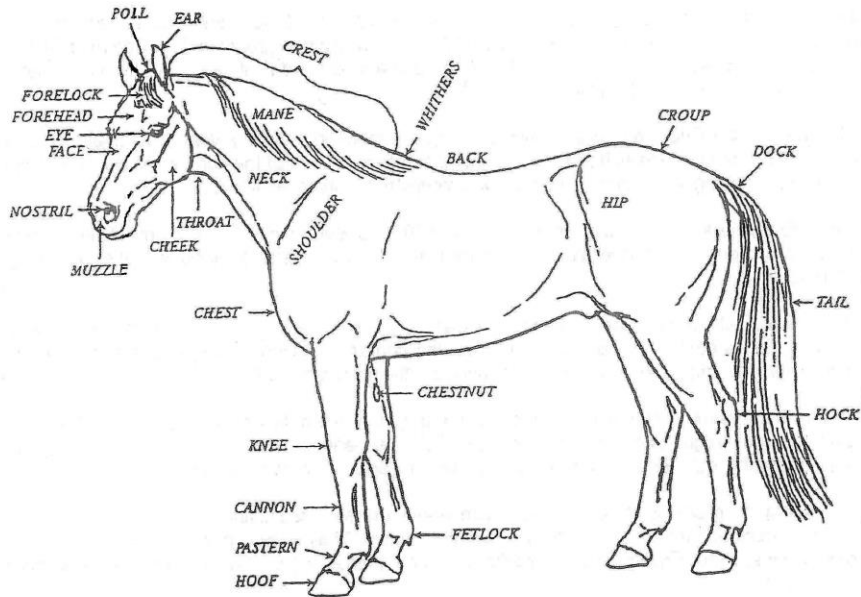
OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

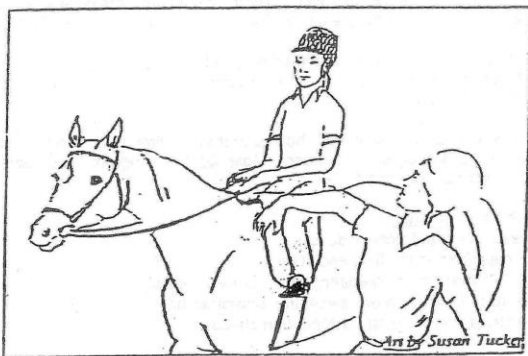
- Tucking the tail down tightly.
Danger to the rear.
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- Switching the tail.
Annoyance and irritation:
at biting flies, stinging insects or
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
Watch out for biting or kicking.

PARTS OF THE HORSE AND TACK

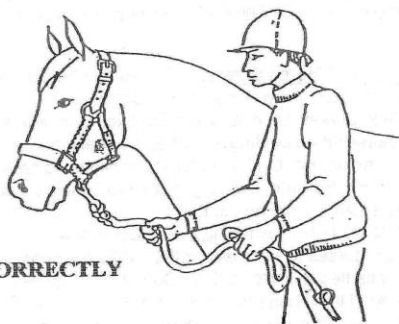
PARTS OF THE HORSE

When working around horses there are some special words and terms that you will need to know.
Some parts of the horse are shown below.

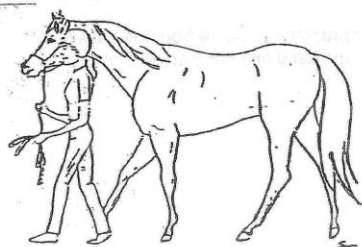




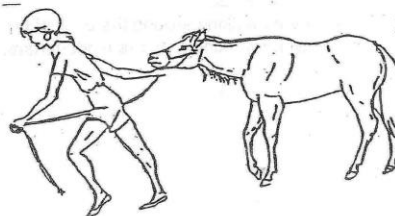
SIDEWALKING TECHNIQUE – "ARM OVER THIGH"



HOLDING LEADLINE CORRECTLY



CORRECT LEADING

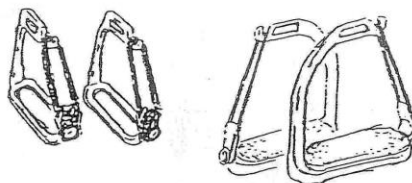


INCORRECT LEADING

RIDING EQUIPMENT (TACK) FOR THERAPEUTIC RIDING

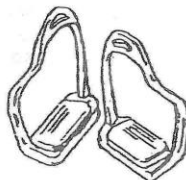
PEACOCK STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall. The safety feature should always face away from the horse when positioned on the rider's foot.



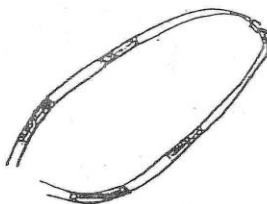
"S" SHAPED STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a safety feature of a curved outside bridge that will allow for the rider's foot to fall free from the stirrup if a fall should occur. The safety feature should be positioned on the outside of the riders



RAINBOW REINS

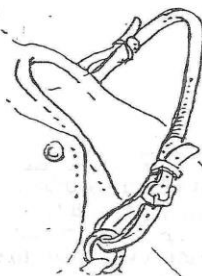
To teach proper use of the reins, the instructor can direct a rider to "hold in the green" or "hold in the red". The rider can then feel an appropriate response to their aids and have a guide for proper positioning.

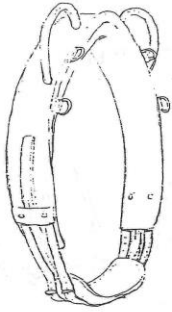


HAND HOLD - to channel reins

For a rider whose handling of the reins tends to be high due to spasticity or whatever, channeling the reins through a hand hold can maintain a more natural line from the bit.

Note: A completely natural line may not be feasible. The more acute the angle of channeling, the more severe the pressure on the bit.



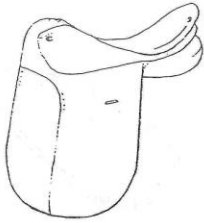
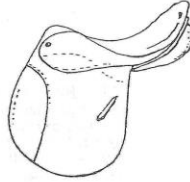


VAULTING SURCINGLE OR DOUBLE HANDLED SURCINGLE

Used over a bareback pad or over the pommel of an English saddle. This surcingle has two handles.

ALL PURPOSE JUMPING SADDLE

A saddle with a moderately deep seat and knee rolls. It will offer more support than a close contact saddle.

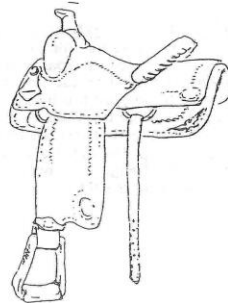


DRESSAGE SADDLE

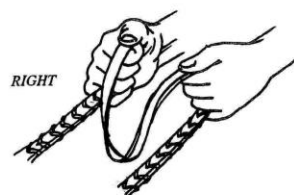
With the long flap and deep seat, this saddle will encourage correct, balanced position and offer more support to the rider than a close contact jumping saddle.

WESTERN SADDLE

A western saddle can give a rider more support with the deep seat, cantle and fork. It may be difficult to mount some riders with high tone because of the horn.



SINGLE REINS



RIGHT



SOFT BRUSH



MANE AND TAIL COMB



HOOFPICK

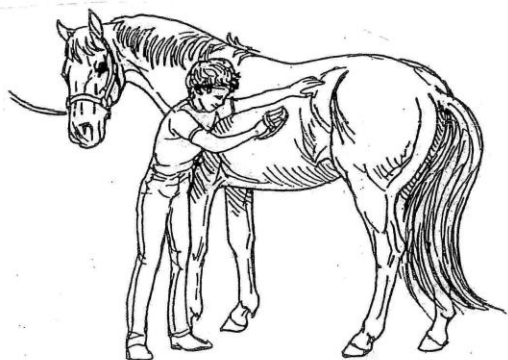
GROOMING TOOLS



CURRY COMB



HARD OR DANDY BRUSH



GROOMING • KEEP ONE HAND ON THE HORSE WHILE YOU WORK