

Online HorseCollege



Student Workbook
2.R.02 Prepare to Ride

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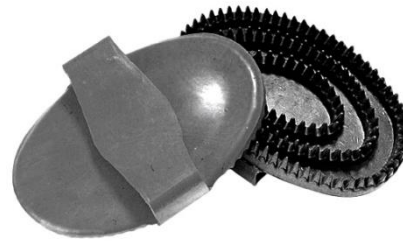
How to Prepare to Ride Introduction

This workbook is an overview of how to prepare your horse for riding including basic grooming, saddling and bridling. How to mount and dismount and personal equipment needed for riding.

Grooming Equipment

Curry comb

Used in a circular motion to lift and loosen mud, dirt and hair from the coat. Not used on the head or bony/delicate areas of the legs. Usually made out of rubber or plastic.



A metal curry comb is used to clean brushes, such as the dandy and body brush.



Dandy brush

A brush with firm bristles. Used to remove mud, dirt and scurf from the coat. Often used after the curry comb. This type of brush can be used on the legs but not the head.



Body brush

Is the softest of the brushes and is used to remove dust, hair and scurf that has been lifted from the curry comb/dandy brush. It is suitable for use on the legs and head, use in long strokes following the direction of the hair.



Grooming Equipment (cont.)

Bot knife

This object is used to scrape bot eggs from the hair. Bot knives have a serrated edge along one side but are not sharp enough to cut the skin.



Bot eggs are small, yellow and difficult to remove with fingers/fingernails.



Grooming block

This tool has numerous names but all do the same thing. Made from fibreglass this tool removes loose hair, dust and dirt effectively. Whilst they are low in cost, they need to be replaced because to clean the block you scrape or tap it on a solid surface which reduces the size of the block.



Hoof pick

Used to clean mud, dirt, stones etc from hooves.



Grooming Equipment (cont.)

Comb/brush

Used on the mane and tail to detangle knots. Come in metal and plastic. Metal combs last longer. Tail combs are very similar to a hair brush.



Sponge

Use dampened to clean around the eyes, nose and around the dock. Different sponges should be used to do the head and dock.



Towel

A cloth (also referred to as stable rubber) use to dry the horse, in particular the legs.



How to Groom

Basic Method of Grooming:-

- 1) Starting with the curry comb brush the horse in a circular motion from the neck back along the body to the hindquarters. Pay particular attention to where the saddle and girth area. It is a good idea to clean out the curry comb after every couple of strokes on the horse.
- 2) If the horse is particularly dirty you should use the dandy brush next. Use the dandy brush on the legs especially if you plan to put boots on the horse. If the horse is already fairly clean you can move straight onto using the body brush. Like with the curry comb, the body brush should be cleaned after every couple of strokes on the horse.
- 3) Moving onto the hoof pick, clean out the horses' hooves starting with a foreleg. You should use the hoof pick in a flicking motion directed away from your body, starting at the heel of the hoof and picking to the toe. Once you have cleaned both hooves on one side move around to the other side starting with the foreleg again.
- 4) The mane and tails can be combed and detangled. When combing the tail stand to the side of the horse and bring the tail around to you. To avoid discomfort to the horse and excessive hair loss, start combing from the bottom of the tail and work your way up.



Picking out Hooves

Regularly cleaning the horses feet is important as often stones or small sticks will become wedged in them, particularly if the horse is wearing shoes. Its also important as cleaning the hooves will allow you to check for any injury or conditions in this area.

Front legs

When picking a front hoof stand beside the horses' shoulder, facing the hindquarters. Pat the shoulder and run your hand down the back of the horses' leg. As you reach the fetlock slide your hand to the inside of the leg and apply a gentle but firm pressure to the back of the fetlock in an upwards, pulling motion. Alternatively you can gently squeeze the tendons at the back of the leg. Whist doing this use your shoulder to help push the horses' weight off the leg.

Once the hoof is off the ground support it with your and by holding around the pastern/coronet region of the leg. With the hoof pick in your other hand, clean the hoof starting at the heel and picking away from you to the toe. Then place the hoof gently onto the ground, do not merely drop the hoof when you're finished.



Back legs

The procedure is the same for hind legs but once the hoof is off the ground it is necessary to bring the hoof/leg back a little behind the horse so you can see what you are doing. Be careful not to bring the leg so far back that it the horse has trouble keeping its balance. Because the hind legs are much heavier than the front (and many horse will tend to lean on you when a hind leg is picked up.) it may be easier to rest the cannon bone on your knee, still supporting the hoof with a hand, whilst you pick out the hoof.

When finished bring the leg back under the horses' body and place the hoof gently on the ground.



Saddling a Horse

After grooming your horse, the next step is putting on the saddle.

Saddle Cloth/Blanket/Numnah



This item goes on first. Once in place there should be an even amount on both sides of the horse. Some saddle cloths will have keepers to pass the girth thru to help keep it in place under the saddle.

It should sit over the horses wither/rib cage.

Above: Saddle cloth

Below: Numnah



Western pad



You can then place the saddle over the saddle cloth, once you have it on the horse you can slide it backwards slightly to smooth the hair (so there is no irritation) flat under the saddle. From here you can go around the other side of the horse (making sure to either walk in a wide circle around the hind legs or stay close, keeping a hand on the horse so it knows where you are when you pass thru its blind spot) and let the girth down.



Coming back around to the near side (left side) of the horse, reach under the horses belly- keep watching your horse as you do this as some horses will not like it- bring the girth up and fasten to the girth points under the saddle flap. At this stage the girth should be firm enough so that the saddle won't shift. If you had additional equipment such as a breastplate or martingale you would fit it prior to doing up the girth.

Saddling a Horse (cont.)



The saddle should be positioned so that it is sitting over the rib cage of the horse. If it is too far forward the pommel of the saddle will be much higher than the cantle and this will position you on the back on the saddle rather than the middle, it will also cause your horse discomfort and restrict shoulder movement.

If it is too far back your weight will be carried on the horses' loins. You may also find the saddle is insecure.

Check the saddle on the horse for:-

- For any twisted or looped straps
- Straps adjusted to the wrong buckle
- If the saddle cloth has shifted.
- If the saddle has shifted. Sometimes if the girth isn't adjusted firmly when the saddle is first put on it will slide back.

Unsaddling a Horse

To remove the saddle it is the reverse of the above procedure.

- 1) Make sure you have run the stirrups up (this involves pushing the stirrup iron up the back of the stirrup leather, all the way to the buckle at the top, the passing the end of the stirrup leather through the stirrup iron. The weight of the iron on the leather holds it in place).
- 2) Unbuckling the girth
- 3) Going around to the other side, either thread the girth up through the stirrup or folding it over the seat of the saddle so it is out of the way
- 4) Then heading back around to the near side and lifting the saddle off the horse
- 5) And removing the saddle cloth.
- 6) Depending upon your climate and how sweaty the horse has become from exercise, it may require hosing to cool the horse down and remove sweat. Care should be taken when hosing around the horses' head and ears. Alternatively the horse can be groomed to lift and help dry and remove sweat.



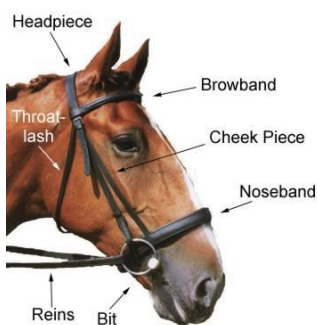
Bridling a Horse

Bridling can be quite tricky and may take a few practises to master.



- 1) Organise the bridle so it's ready to go. Hold the reins separately from the rest of the bridle, either over your shoulder or over the horses' neck. Never let the reins hang down on the ground, as if the horse steps on them it is likely to get a fright and not only break the bridle but also do injury to itself.
- 2) Start by moving the halter so that it is fastened only around the horses' neck.
- 3) You should always put your bridle on from the near side as this is the side all the buckles do up on.
- 4) Take your right arm around the horses' nose and hold the head piece (top) of the bridle. Alternatively you may find it easier, especially with tall horses, to keep your right arm on the near side of the horses' head to hold the top of the bridle.
- 5) With your left hand guide the bit (metal piece) into the horses' mouth as the horse opens its mouth take your right hand up so the horse doesn't drop the bit out again.
- 6) Now you can push the horses' ears under the head piece and tidy any mane or forelock that may be caught up.
- 7) Depending on the type of bridle being used will determine how many buckles you have to adjust.

Bridle Parts



Throat latch: Once done up you should fit approximately 4 fingers between the jaw and the strap.

Nose band: Depending on the horse and the style of noseband used you should fit approx. 2 fingers between the nose and the strap.

Brow bands: Whilst brow bands cannot be adjusted by a buckle, if it is the correct size for the horse you should fit 2 fingers between the brow and the strap.

Check the bridle on the horse for:-

- For any twisted or looped straps
- Straps adjusted to the wrong buckle

Unbridling a Horse

To remove the bridle-

- 1) Organise the reins so they're not on the ground and buckle the halter around the horses' neck.
- 2) Undo the buckles you did when you put the bridle on (throatlatch & nosebands).
- 3) Then holding onto the headpiece, slide the bridle over the horses' ears, lowering it gently so the bit doesn't knock the horses' teeth.
- 4) Put the halter on the horses' head
- 5) Rinse the bit off with water so it is clean & ready for the next use.

Boots

Boots (and bandages) help to protect and support the horses' leg from injury. Different boots will be suited for different disciplines. When fitting boots the leg should be clean, the boot needs to be firm enough so that it won't slip around but not so tight that it will do damage to tendons etc. As a guide you should be able to fit a finger between the boot and leg. If applying boots you should put all the boots on. The reason for this is that if someone else helps you they will adjust the boots to a different tension.



Bell boots

These can be made from either rubber or neoprene and protect the coronet and heel from the other hooves. They either attach with Velcro or pull on over the hoof.



Open front jump boots

Made with a hard plastic or leather exterior these boots protect the tendons on the front legs from the hooves of the hind legs when jumping.



Brushing boots

Usually made from neoprene these protect the inside of the leg if knocked or brushed by the opposite leg

Boots (cont.)



Knee boots

Protect the knee from jumps and falls. These boots can have a neoprene or hard plastic exterior.



Fetlock boots

Similar structure to brushing boots but only protect the fetlock



Hock boots

Similar structure to brushing boots but only protect the hock. Can be used during travel.



Tendon/Support boots

Made from neoprene these wrap around the cannon and fetlock to support the tendons.

Putting on Boots

Sequence for putting on a brushing boot:-

- 1) Make sure the leg is clean. A dirty leg or boots will cause rubbing.
- 2) Slide the boot down the leg in the direction of the hair. This will avoid irritation to the horse from brushing hair in the wrong direction.
- 3) Check to ensure it is positioned correctly. Brushing boots often have a tear shaped padding which goes to the inside of the leg, the larger, rounder end should sit over and protect the inside of the fetlock.
- 4) Adjust the middle strap. The middle is secured first to hold it in place. By adjusting the middle strap first you will minimise the amount of twisting of the boot as opposed to securing the top or bottom strap first which would leave the opposite end loose.
- 5) Next fasten the bottom strap.
- 6) And finally the top strap.

Once secured you should be able to slide a finger between the boot and the horses' leg. if it is too loose the boot will twist or slide down the horses' leg which may cause the horse to panic. If the boot is too tight it can do serious damage to the tendons and structures in the leg.

It is also important that the same person puts on all the boots. This is because different people will adjust boots to different tensions. Boots that are adjusted to different tensions are also bad for the horses' legs.



Extension Lesson

Practice the following tasks using the methods describe in this workbook.

- Grooming
- Picking out hooves
- Putting on boots
- Saddling & unsaddling
- Bridling & unbridling

Recommended Reading

Publication:-

The Course Companion (BHS stages I&II)

Footsteps

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Horses

Horse Sense
(The Australian guide to horse husbandry)

Author:-

Maxine Cave

Sally Hinton and Joan Eccleshare

Sarah Montague and PJ Dempsey

Peter Huntington and Fran Cleland

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