

Level 2 Coaching – Task 4: Physical influences on participation

Learning outcomes

About this Task

By studying this task you will gain a knowledge and understanding about recognising physical influences on participants, including:

- the physical capabilities required for riding racehorses including the basic anatomical and biomechanical demands
- the components of physical fitness and how they link directly to riding racehorses
- how the physical capabilities of riders will influence the content and structure of the coaching session
- how to minimise the risk of injury and assist a rider returning from injury
- the role of the coach in encouraging the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, including an awareness of:
 - ❖ nutrition
 - ❖ hydration
 - ❖ weight management
 - ❖ social and performance-enhancing drugs

Physical attributes of a rider

Riders come in all shapes and sizes. Helping people to understand their own conformation can help them to become better riders. Things a coach might consider includes:

- Leg- torso ratio – long legs are useful for balance and stability. Short legged riders need to utilize their core.
- Neutral spine – there no curve through backbone. Pelvis should always be level.
- Lateral alignment of the spine – this is often compromised through falls and injuries and can result in crookedness
- Shoulders – should be level and relaxed
- Length of arms – will affect rein length



How to overcome differences in rider conformation

Coaches should give thought to how they support riders who have different challenges in their own physicality.

Common issues include:

- Riders who are short in leg must use core and shoulders to greater effect to aid balance and security
- Riders with longer legs will have longer stirrups and balance by adjusting their body position
- Riders who have short arms will ride with a longer rein
- Riders who are long through the rib cage must develop balance through upper and lower leg

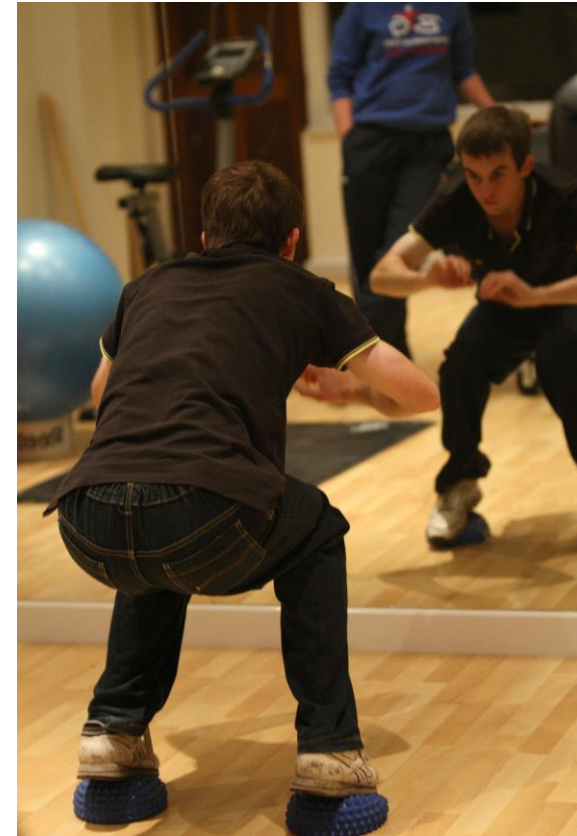


The components of physical fitness

A fit rider is one who has the stamina, balance and suppleness to move with their horse. They will move with the horse and have the ability to give clear, consistent and direct aids on a sustained basis.

Four components of fitness which a coach should encourage in their participants are:

- Cardiovascular fitness
- Muscular endurance strength
- Core strength and stability
- Suppleness



Cardiovascular Fitness

Cardiovascular fitness is all about increasing the capacity of the heart and lungs to deliver oxygen to working muscles. The more efficient this system is, the more oxygen will reach the muscles, thereby increasing the amount of work they can do, meaning the heart won't have to work as hard.

This is important because the faster the body has to work anaerobically (when it's working too hard to use oxygen as its main fuel source), the faster it starts producing lactic acid as a waste product.

The best way of increasing your cardio fitness level is interval training, either on a bike, running, rowing, on a cross-trainer or classes such as circuit training.



Muscular endurance strength

Rider strength is about developing long, lean muscles that can endure holding the rider out of the saddle for long periods of time. It also provides strength when needed, such as keeping a strong horse together, making a quick alteration when jumping or being able to sit still on the flat while still giving clear and effective aids.

Riding helps develop this type of fitness, but it can be supplemented with high repetitions of exercises such as squats and lunges with light weights.



Core strength and stability

A rider's position in the saddle has an enormous influence on a horse's movement. Effective and safe riders use their core rather than just their legs to ensure they remain balanced over the top of their horse.

Core stability is the name given to the strengthening of the corset of muscles around the mid-section (abdominals, pelvic floor, diaphragm and multifidus – the deep back muscles on either side of the spine) which, in effect, should provide a solid base upon which all other muscles can work upon to initiate movement.

The goal when improving your core strength is to get the pelvis to almost act as a shock absorber – absorbing the movement of the horse – enabling the upper body to stay still and therefore helping the horse to stay more balanced.



Suppleness

Suppleness is not just about flexibility, it is about a rider's ability to remain soft and relaxed both on the flat and over jumps, enabling them to follow their horse's movements.

Race exercise riders particularly need to work on ensuring suppleness in the back, shoulders, hips, thighs, hamstrings and ankles, all of which can be achieved through simple and regular stretches or classes such as pilates and yoga.



How the physical capabilities of riders will influence the coaching session

When planning individual or linked coaching sessions, the physical capabilities of the riders should be carefully considered. The content of the session may have to be adapted for many reasons including:

- The weight of the rider – is the horse suitable?
- The fitness of the rider – rest breaks and shorter sessions may be required.
- Does the rider suffer from any ailments which might affect their participation such as asthma or returning from injury?
- The age of the rider – mature riders may need a different warm up regime to children.
- Riders lacking co-ordination or balance – may need a quiet or more experience horse.
- Riders lacking strength – avoid very strong pullers.



Minimising rider injury

Coaches should be alert to circumstances which may affect the safety and security of their participants. Factors which should be considered when minimising the risk of accident or injury includes:

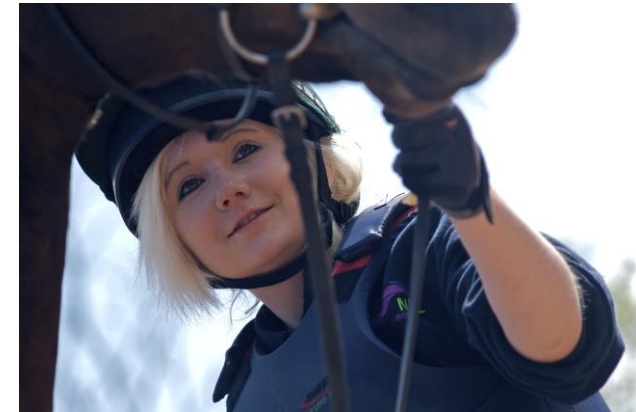
- Suitability of horse/rider combination
- Planned activity
- Weather and environmental conditions
- Health and fitness of rider
- Experience and fitness of horse
- Other group members



Assisting a rider returning from injury

When a rider is returning from injury, the coach should ensure that they are aware of any relevant details that could affect the coaching session. Support may be provided to the rider through a range of means including:

- Seeking specialist fitness or nutritional advice
- Working with an occupational health professional – which can be source through Racing Welfare
- Adjusting timings of the sessions – shorter, easier sessions to begin with
- Selecting a horse which is straightforward to ride
- Including confidence building exercises



Pursuit of a healthy lifestyle

To complete this section of the task you need to complete the following eLearning programmes on Racing2Learn

Basic principles of health and wellbeing (Part 1) – **DIET AND EXERCISE**

<https://racing2learn.com/course/view.php?id=114>

Basic principles of health and wellbeing (Part 2) – **SOCIAL FACTORS**

<https://racing2learn.com/course/view.php?id=117>

Further information can also be found at RACING WELFARE which also includes advise on Racing's Occupational Health Service

<https://racingwelfare.co.uk/>



BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING (PART 2) SOCIAL FACTORS

This course can be completed independently or as evidence towards one of three parts which make up the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Progression Award in Thoroughbred Preparation. To achieve

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BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING (PART 1) DIET AND EXERCISE

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