

HORSE CARE

Workbook



This resource is copyright under the Berne Convention. All rights are reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to the British Horseracing Authority.

All photography © British Horseracing Authority, unless otherwise stated.



British Horseracing Authority
75 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6LS

General enquiries:

Tel: 020-7152 0000

Email: info@britishhorseracing.com

Website: britishhorseracing.com

Design and Typeset:



Acknowledgements:

The British Horseracing Authority would like to thank the following for their valuable input into this resource:



CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Yard Routines	2
Prepare and Clean Stables	8
Identification of Horses	14
Lead and Present Horses for Inspection	20
Catch and Move Horses	24
Tacking Up and Removing Tack	28
Care of Tack	36
Care and Fitting of Horse Clothing	40
Groom and Wash Horses	44
Assisting with Feeding and Watering	50
Establishing Good Working Relationships	54
Basic Riding Skills	58
Health and Safety at Work	66





INTRODUCTION

This workbook has been designed to support the training and development of new entrants to the racing and equestrian industries.

It can be used to develop an understanding of the basic skills required to work in the industry and will also help learners working towards qualifications to identify and collect evidence that is needed for assessment.

Each section broadly relates to elements of a Level 1 qualification and also to specific areas of the work likely to be undertaken by someone starting their career in the industry.

Each section is supported by a series of 'self-tests'. These are designed to encourage the development of knowledge and understanding, presented in a form that can then be assessed.

YARD ROUTINES

This section is about the daily routine that is normally followed in a racing yard, although many of the principles apply to other equestrian establishments. It is essential that everyone understands the various activities that take place on a daily basis so that the yard runs efficiently and safely.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of yard routines including:

- daily yard routines
- staffing structure within a racing yard
- staff responsibilities within a racing yard
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.



INDUCTION TO THE WORKPLACE

New members of staff will normally undertake an induction programme. This involves:

- being shown around the yard and facilities
- introduction to colleagues and supervisors
- explanation of the work routine and standards of work expected
- briefing on health and safety policies
- details of all employment policies and practices
- details of who to turn to with any problems or if advice is needed.

MORNING STABLES

It is important to establish daily routines when working in a busy racing yard. Horses are creatures of habit and thrive best when living and working in a structured environment. The day in a racing yard starts early, when the horses are fed and checked to ensure they have not been injured or become ill during the night.

It is important that stable staff report any abnormal behaviour, such as leaving food, sweating, filled legs or abnormal droppings, to a senior member of staff.

Horses are normally fed by a senior member of staff. Stable staff will then commence yard duties including mucking out, changing water, sweeping yards and tidying muck heaps.

While this is going on, some riders will tack up and pull out first 'lot'. This is the term for the group of horses being exercised. One or two lots are ridden before the breakfast break, depending on the time of year and number of horses to be exercised. On return from exercise, the horses may be given a pick of grass before being untacked. They will then be sponged or brushed off, feet picked out, rugged up and given hay.

After breakfast, further lots will be exercised or worked. Once all the horses are exercised, yard duties are completed, and horses will be given their lunchtime feed and then left to rest.

EVENING STABLES

Traditionally, a racing yard has a break of two to three hours between the end of morning stables and the start of evening stables, which begins mid-afternoon. Stable staff will skip out and groom the horses in their care. A senior member of staff will check each horse during evening stables. The yard will be swept, tack cleaned and routine jobs completed. Horses will be given hay and their third feed. The horses will normally be checked later on in the evening and given a fourth feed, if that is yard policy.

STAFFING STRUCTURE (RACING)

Although the detailed staffing structure may vary from yard to yard there is a traditional structure that many yards adhere to. Positions include:

1 TRAINER holds the licence to train racehorses	2 ASSISTANT TRAINER assists the trainer with the running of the yard and represents the yard at race meetings	3 HEAD STAFF responsible for the care and welfare of horses, supervises staff and oversees smooth running of the yard	4 TRAVELLING HEAD STAFF takes horses racing, organises transport and racing equipment
5 RACING SECRETARY completes all administration and financial activities	6 WORK RIDER responsible for riding, schooling and working horses; usually a very experienced rider with good judge of pace and understanding of horse performance	7 STABLE STAFF care for their allocated horses, ride routine exercise and take horses racing	8 YARD WORKER undertakes routine stable work, basic yard maintenance and may take horses racing.

A supervisor, either the assistant trainer or head staff, should always be approached if advice or guidance is required.

STAFFING STRUCTURE (BREEDING)

<p>STUD MANAGER¹</p> <p>has ultimate responsibility for horses and promotion of stud/stallions; mainly office-based</p>	<p>STUD GROOM²</p> <p>responsible for the day-to-day running of the stud farm, and ensuring the welfare, care and health of the horses</p>	<p>SECOND MAN³</p> <p>responsible for assisting the stud groom</p>	<p>STUD HAND⁴</p> <p>responsible for the day-to-day care of the horses on the stud under the supervision of the stud groom and/or second man</p>	<p>STALLION HANDLER⁵</p> <p>responsible for the health and well-being of the stallions and covering duties</p>
<p>FOALING ATTENDANT⁶</p> <p>responsible for the foaling of mares, and caring for the mare and foal immediately after birth</p>	<p>STUD SECRETARY⁷</p> <p>administers paperwork connected with visiting mares, booking coverings, registration and invoicing</p>	<p>SALES PREPARATION MANAGER⁸</p> <p>responsible for the health and well-being of sales horses, and ensuring they are in optimum condition to achieve a good price at auction</p>	<p>BLOODSTOCK ADVISOR⁹</p> <p>selects and purchases breeding stock; advises on mating plans</p>	<p>PEDIGREE RESEARCHER¹⁰</p> <p>responsible for collating notes on individual horses' pedigree ancestry, earnings, race records and progeny; also responsible for determining the ability of the horse to pass on its genetic traits to its offspring</p>

WORKING SAFELY WITH COLLEAGUES

It is the responsibility of all employers and employees to take all reasonable care at work and in the stable yard. Everyone has a duty to behave in a safe and careful manner to prevent accidents or injury.

Good communication is essential – staff should advise colleagues or supervisors if they have any problems or difficulties in connection with their work to avoid disruption and accidents.

Good timekeeping is very important. A busy racing yard does not function well if staff do not keep to the agreed timetable, and if just one member of staff is slow to tack up, it can result in everyone having to wait and therefore getting behind in their schedule.

All yard equipment should be tidied away after use, and any damaged equipment reported and taken out of use.

REVISION TESTS (RACING)

1. On a separate piece of paper, draw a diagram showing the staffing structure of the yard or training organisation where you are based.

2. Which go together?

(a) Travelling head staff	Oversees smooth running of yard	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Stable staff	Organises transport of horses to races	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Head staff	Holds the licence	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Yard worker	Carries out basic yard maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Trainer	Looks after and rides horses in their care	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Secretary	Schools horses	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Work rider	Looks after finances and administration	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Answer the following multiple-choice questions.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>(a) Who normally organises transport to take the horses to the races?</p> <p>I. Racing secretary <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>II. Travelling head staff <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>III. Work rider <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>(c) Who would normally school the racehorses in preparation for a race?</p> <p>I. Work rider <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>II. Assistant trainer <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>III. Trainer <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>(e) Who is responsible for the administration of the business?</p> <p>I. Travelling head staff <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>II. Racing secretary <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>III. Work rider <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>(b) Who holds the licence to train racehorses?</p> <p>I. Head staff <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>II. Racing secretary <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>III. Trainer <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>(d) Who is responsible for the care and welfare of the horses and supervision of staff?</p> <p>I. Racing secretary <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>II. Head staff <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>III. Yard worker <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |

REVISION TESTS (BREEDING)

1. When is all thoroughbred horses' official birthday?

(a) 1 May

(b) 31 October

(c) 1 January

2. When does the northern hemisphere thoroughbred breeding season start?

(a) 1 January

(b) 15 February

(c) 1 March

3. When does the northern hemisphere thoroughbred foaling season begin?

(a) 1 February

(b) 31 December

(c) 1 January

PREPARE AND CLEAN STABLES

This section is about the daily attention needed to ensure horses have clean stables and bedding, which is an important part of the daily routine in a racing yard. It is also essential to ensure the welfare and comfort of horses.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of cleaning stables and yard including:

- horses' basic welfare requirements and how to maintain their health and well-being
- types of bedding
- how to handle and tie up horses when mucking out
- equipment used to clean stables and how to store the equipment
- how to work safely when cleaning stables
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.

When you first start work, you will be shown round the stables and advised on the routine you are expected to follow. You will also be introduced to someone who can help and guide you during your working day. This person might be:

- yard supervisor
- work colleague
- head man or head girl.



Straw bed



MUCKING OUT

For horses to stay healthy and fit, they should be kept in clean, airy stables, with a plentiful supply of fresh water and the food they need to meet their welfare and work requirements. This provision is always part of the daily routine. When mucking out in a morning, time should be taken to check the following:

- rugs have not slipped
- previous feeds have been eaten up
- the horse has no obvious illness or injury.

Before mucking out, the horse should be approached from the front or near (left) side, not forgetting to close the stable door behind you. The headcollar should be put on from the near side and the horse secured with a tie rope, using a quick release knot, or rack chain. Normally, these are attached to the tie ring with a piece of string so that if the horse pulls back suddenly, the string will break quickly and easily, so reducing the

likelihood of the horse injuring itself. Normally, beds are mucked out daily. This is done by removing droppings and wet and soiled bedding. The equipment needed includes:

- straw or shavings fork
- broom
- shovel
- wheelbarrow.

Banks are turned over to make sure they are clean and do not conceal any hidden droppings. Fresh, clean bedding is added to replace any that has been removed. The front of the stable is swept in so that the bedding does not spill out onto the yard.

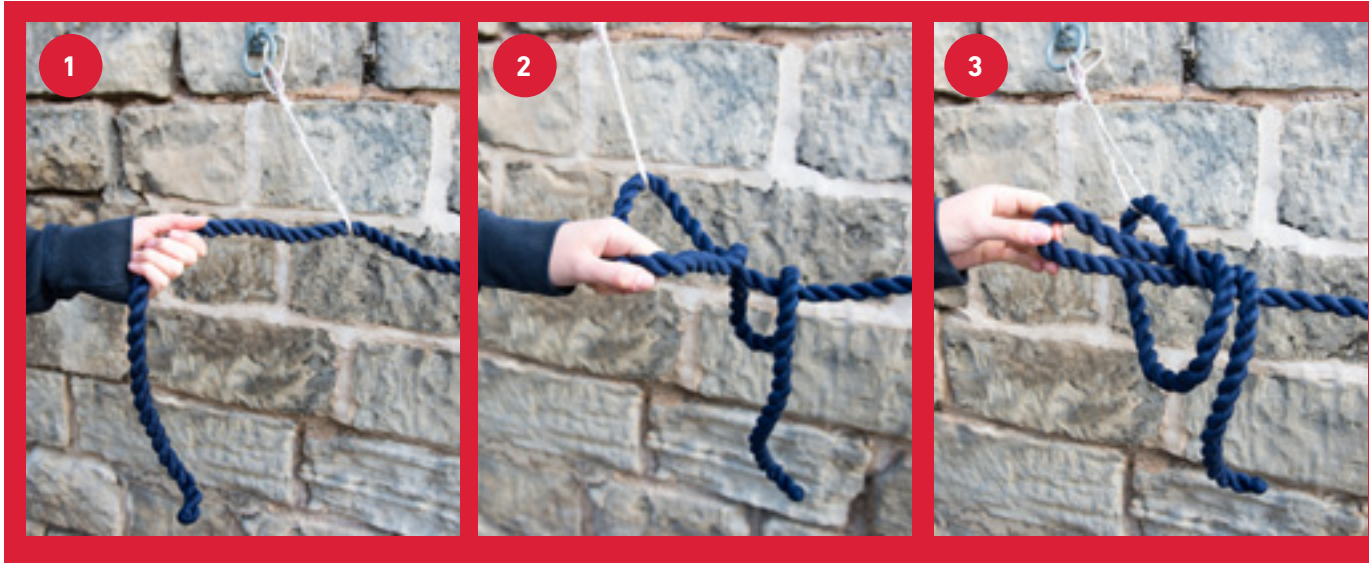
Muck should be disposed of on the yard muck heap or trailer. Care should be taken not to slip, particularly in icy weather, when salt or grit should be applied to walkways. Shavings bags and packaging, or string from straw bales, should be disposed of in

designated bins, not the muck heap as this sort of material will not decompose.

Water buckets should be emptied, washed out and refilled. If automatic water systems are used then these will need to be checked to ensure the water is clean and the water bowl not blocked. Feed bowls or mangers should be rinsed out.

When the mucking out routine is finished, the horse should be untied, and the equipment should be stored away neatly and out of the way.

Once all the horses on the yard are mucked out, the muck heap can be tidied and the yard swept.



SKIPPING OUT

Skipping out is normally done at evening stables when droppings are removed and the banks and bed tidied up. Water is also replaced at this time.

ROUTINE YARD MAINTENANCE

Stables should be disinfected on a routine basis, according to the yard practice. The procedure for disinfecting is:

- remove buckets and stable fittings
- remove all soiled and used bedding
- clean walls, floor, doors and windows with hose or pressure washer and scrub with disinfectant
- sweep out and leave to dry.

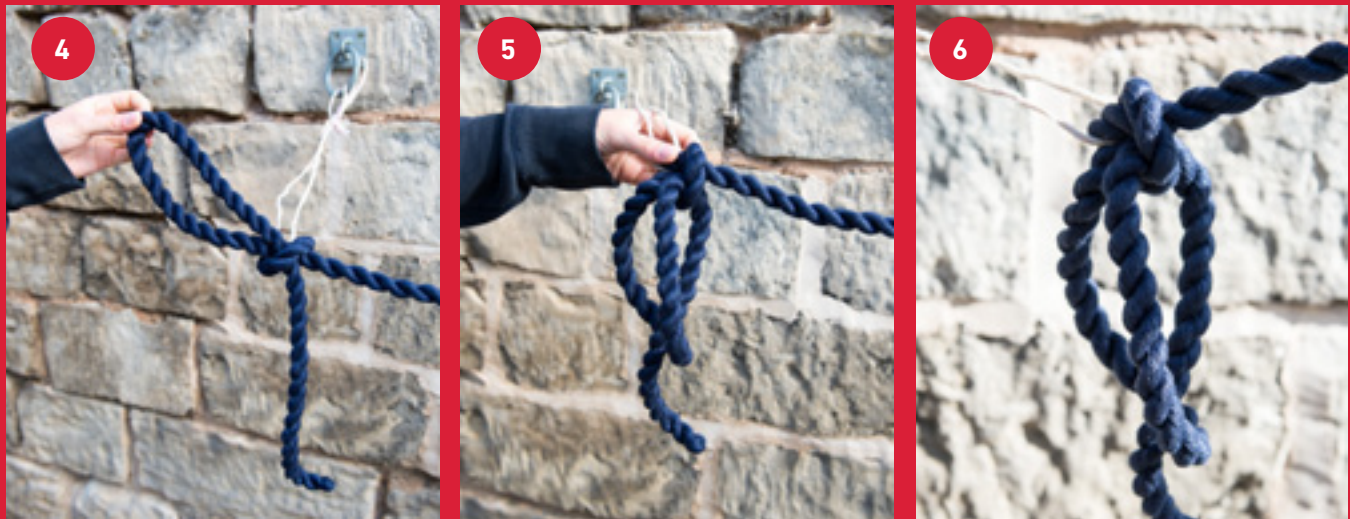
TYPES OF BEDDING

Bedding is necessary for stabled horses to encourage them to lie down, keep them warm and to help keep their feet in good condition.

The main types of bedding are:

- shavings
- straw
- paper
- rubber matting.





HOW TO TIE A QUICK RELEASE KNOT

A quick release knot is used when tying horses up so that they can be released quickly and easily by pulling on the loose end of the rope. The six-step process is shown in the photos above.

AVOIDING HAZARDS AND WORKING SAFELY

It is essential that everyone working in a stable yard adheres to the organisation's health and safety policy. All employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or fail to do at work
- co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters
- not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of themselves or others
- report any broken item of equipment to a supervisor.

COMMON HAZARDS IN A STABLE YARD AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Horses

- Handle correctly under supervision.
- Wear protective equipment.
- Do not make sharp or sudden movements.

Mucking out equipment

- Use according to instructions.
- Report faulty or defective equipment to a supervisor.
- Store neatly.

Electrical sockets

- Use a circuit-breaker.

Disinfectant

- Be aware of risk assessment.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Use under supervision.

Icy pathways

- Spread salt or grit to avoid slipping.



© Northern Racing College

WORKING SAFELY IN THE STABLE YARD

Suitable clothing and strong, non-slip boots should always be worn when mucking out. To prevent accidents, hair should be tied back and no jewellery worn.

Anyone suffering from asthma or dust allergies should wear a dust mask when mucking out and handling hay and straw.

Hands should be washed after completing stable duties and handling horses and before eating.

Protective clothing must be worn when disinfecting stables, drains or yards. This includes overalls, rubber gloves, strong waterproof boots and goggles. This is to prevent injury to the handler or damage to clothing through using irritant substances such as disinfectant.

Disinfecting should only be undertaken under supervision, and this type of substance will always be kept under lock and key. Supervisors will ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out before use.

Wash hands after working in the yard and before eating.

REVISION TESTS

1. Tick when these jobs are normally done (sometimes, you might tick both morning and evening):

	Morning	Evening
Muck out		
Skip out		
Sweep yard		
Wash out and refill water buckets		
Add clean bedding		

2. Fill in the blanks using the words in the box below:

Asthma	Disinfectant	Supervisor
Shavings	Near	Salt

- (a) _____ is a type of bedding in common use.
- (b) _____ can be put on icy pathways to avoid slipping.
- (c) Broken or faulty equipment should be reported to a _____.
- (d) Protective clothing should be worn when dealing with _____.
- (e) Horses should be approached from the _____ side.
- (f) Dust masks can be worn if you suffer from _____ when mucking out.

3. Which go together? Put the correct letter in each box.

(a) Straw	Store equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Tidily	Used to take muck to the muck heap	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Supervisor	Used on icy pathways	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Skipping out	Who to report problems to	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Grit	A type of bedding	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Wheelbarrow	Done at evening stables	<input type="checkbox"/>

IDENTIFICATION OF HORSES

This section is about basic identification of horses through colours and markings. When working in a stable yard, it is essential that everyone knows which horse is which to avoid any problems with incorrect identification.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of identification of horses including:

- methods of identification
- basic horse markings
- colours of horses.



METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION

Although most horses can be identified by stable staff, trainers and owners through their colours and markings, there are other methods of identification that can be used by others. The main ones are:

- microchip – all registered thoroughbreds and horses that require a passport have a small chip inserted into their neck that has a unique identity number
- passport – giving a detailed description of a horse
- freeze brand – a mark on the horse's coat that shows a unique number (not used in racing).

In addition a horse's age, height and sex will be used as identification.

SEX

Male and female horses are described as follows:

- foal – from birth to 1 January of the following year
- mare – an adult female horse
- filly – a young female up to three years old
- colt – a young male up to three years old
- stallion – an uncastrated or 'entire' male horse
- gelding – a castrated male horse of any age.

HEIGHT

The traditional standard measurement of height for a horse is the 'hand', which is equivalent to approximately 10cm or 4 inches. For example, a height given as 16.2hh indicates that the horse measures 16 hands and 2 inches.

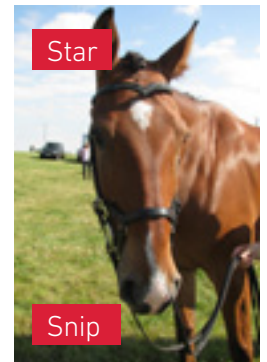
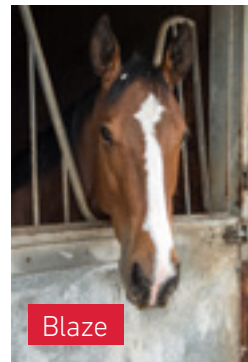
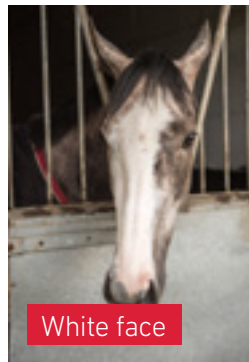
MARKINGS

There are a number of different markings found on a horse's head or legs that will help to identify it. The most common markings are shown below.

HEAD MARKINGS

These white markings on the face of a horse can vary in size and shape and include:

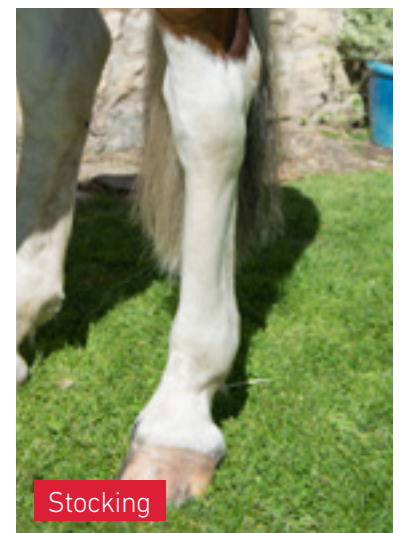
- white face
- blaze
- star
- stripe
- snip.



LEG MARKINGS

Some or all of the legs of the horse may have white markings, which include:

- sock
- stocking.



COLOURS

There are many different horse colours, although not all of them apply to thoroughbreds. The common colours include:



Bay



Chestnut



Palomino



Skewbald*



Appaloosa*



Liver chestnut



Grey



Dun



Piebald*



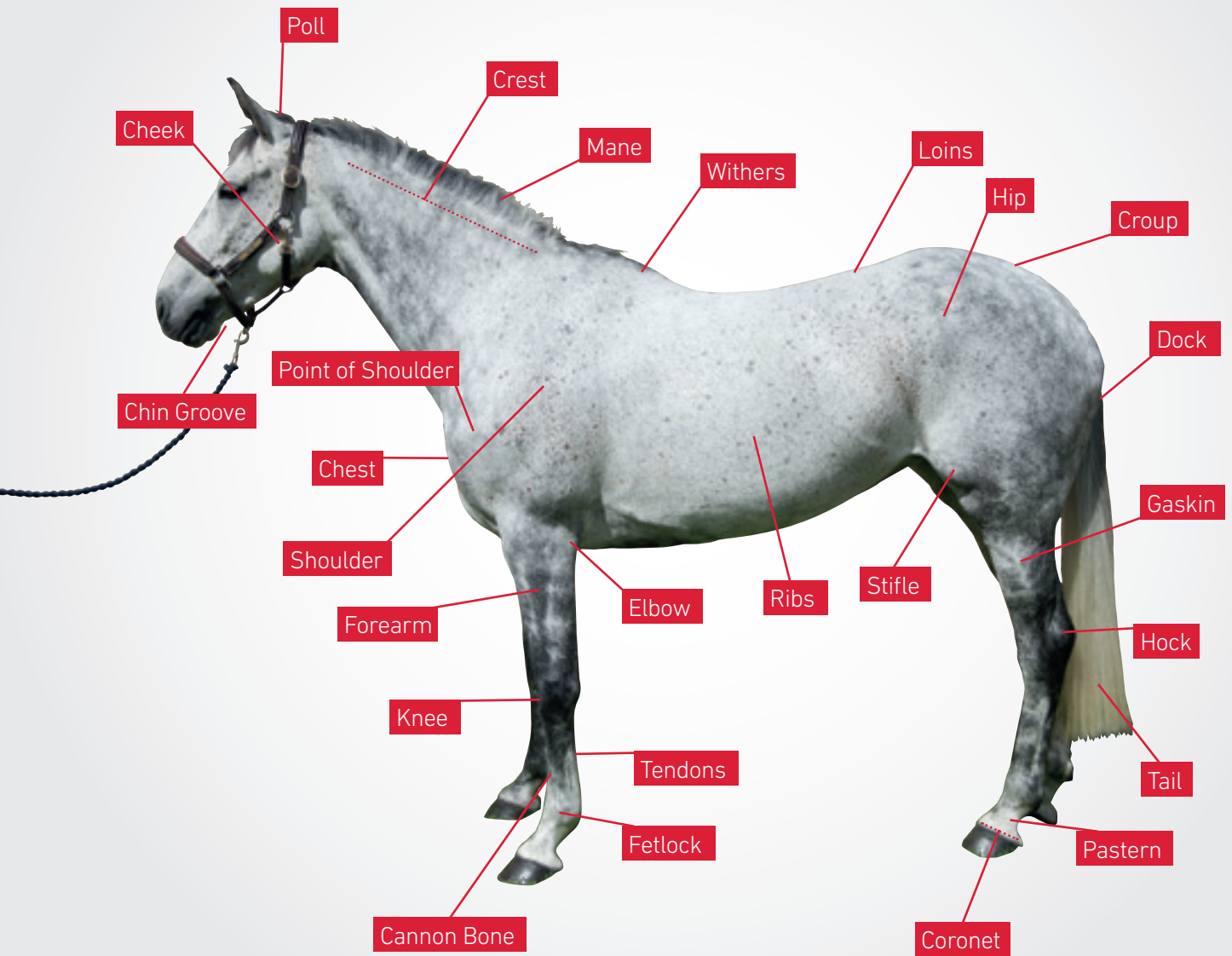
Roan



Black

* Correctly referred to as 'painted'.

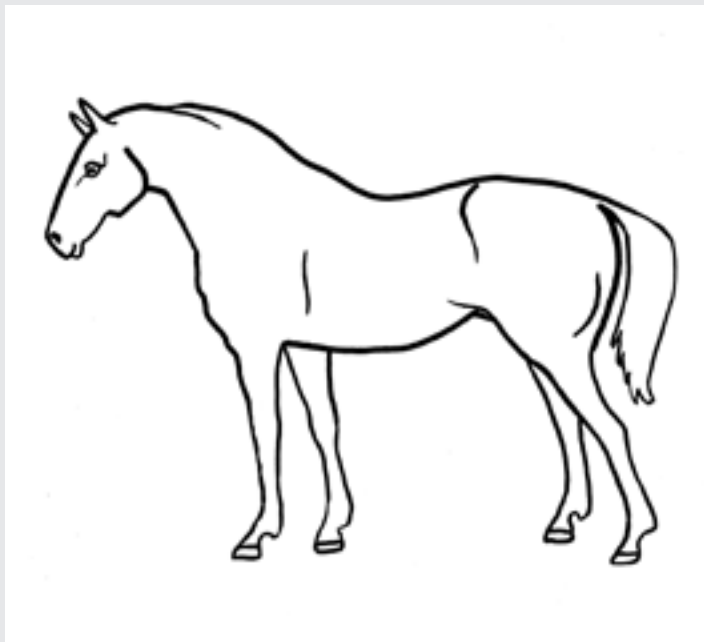
POINTS OF THE HORSE



REVISION TESTS

1. Shade the pictures below to show:

(a) Star (b) Snip (c) Sock on a front leg (d) Stocking on a hind leg



2. Unscramble the words below to find colours of horses:

(a) dablswke

(b) stenchtu

(c) mainpolo

(d) plabdie

(e) nora

3. Select a horse in the yard where you work and describe it. You will need to state its age, height, sex, colour and any markings.

LEAD AND PRESENT HORSES FOR INSPECTION

This section is about handling, leading and presenting horses for inspection. It is important that the correct procedures are followed so that the handler and horses are not at risk, and those viewing the horses are able to assess them properly.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of handling, leading and presenting horses including:

- approaching and handling horses
- maintaining control of the horse by using suitable tack and control techniques including with a headcollar and a bridle
- moving, leading and controlling a horse for health and soundness inspections according to instructions
- working safely when handling, leading and moving horses
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.



HANDLING HORSES

Whether stabled or at grass, a horse should always be approached from the front or near (left) side so that it is not startled and is therefore less likely to spook or kick. A headcollar should be put on from the near side. If the horse is stabled, the door should be closed while you put the headcollar on.

Horses are generally tied up with a rubber-covered rack chain or lead rope, using a quick release knot. The chain or rope should be attached at one end to a piece of strong string. This will prevent the headcollar breaking or the horse damaging itself if it pulls back, as the string will break quickly and easily.

Good stable manners in a horse are important for the safety of both the horse and handler. The horse should tie up quietly and patiently while being groomed and handled. It should move over when asked and should not kick or bite and should lead out of the stable quietly without rushing or barging.

LEADING AND PRESENTING A HORSE FOR INSPECTION

There are a number of reasons why a horse might need to be presented for inspection including:

- to check for lameness
- health inspection
- presentation to owner or purchaser.

When presenting a horse for inspection, using a bridle will give more control than a headcollar. Some yards prefer to use a type of bit called a chifney with a headcollar. It may well be yard practice to wear sturdy footwear, a skullcap and gloves for safety reasons, particularly if the horse is young or fresh.

The horse will normally be led from the near side and, when being turned, should always be turned away from the handler. This allows the horse to be seen clearly from all sides by the observer and gives the handler more control.

When holding a horse still, the handler should stand in front of the horse holding a rein in each hand close to the bit. If possible, the horse should be encouraged to stand still.

When walking or trotting a horse in hand, the handler should face forward and remain close to the horse's shoulder. The handler should be aware of the surface and immediate area to prevent the horse from slipping or shying at anything that is likely to present a potential hazard.





© Northern Racing College

When leading a horse that is tacked up, care should be taken to avoid excessive slack in the reins or martingale. When leading a horse with a lead rope or lunge rein, the rope or rein should never be wrapped around the hand. This could result in serious injury to the hand or arm if the horse pulls away.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN LEADING OR PRESENTING HORSES

It is important to learn to recognise the signs that may indicate that a horse is bad-tempered or anxious. A horse that has its ears back and is showing a lot of white of the eye may be aggressive so should be handled firmly but with caution. If you are concerned, always ask for assistance.

Horses can be fresh or excited when being presented so control should be maintained, and the wearing of protective equipment, including sturdy footwear, gloves and a skullcap, should be considered.

Horses are much easier to control with a well fitting bridle than with a headcollar. The surface should not be slippery, gates should be closed, and the area should be free from hazards.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) Why should a horse be approached from the front or side?

(b) From which side should a headcollar be put on?

(c) What is the reason for using string or a strong band when tying a horse up?

(d) What protective clothing should be worn by the handler when leading a fresh or young horse in hand?

(e) How should a handler hold a horse that is being stood up for inspection?

2. Take a photograph of an area of your yard where it would be:

- safe to present a horse for inspection
- unsafe to present a horse for inspection.

Give reasons for your selection of these two areas.

3. Fill in the missing words:

When presenting or leading a horse:

- Use a for more control.
- Lead the horse from the side.
- The horse should be turned from the handler.
- Stay close to the horse's .
- Avoid surfaces that are .

CATCH AND MOVE HORSES

This section is about catching both stabled and grass-kept horses and moving them to a new location. It is essential that the enclosure – for example a horse walker, round pen or field – is checked for safety and security prior to releasing a horse.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of catching and releasing horses and checking enclosures for safety and security including:

- approaching and catching horses in a manner that minimises risk
- checking the enclosure for safety and security of the horses
- moving horses to the required enclosure
- releasing horses into enclosures
- working safely when moving horses
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.





CHECKING FIELDS OR ENCLOSURES

Most horses will spend some time at grass whether they are in work or resting. The field or enclosure will need to be checked regularly for safety and security. The main checks will include:

- fencing – no gaps in fencing or broken rails
- gates – secure and in good working order
- shelter – field shelters or large hedges or trees to provide shelter from heat, flies or elements
- water – there should always be a supply of fresh, clean water
- state of the ground – very muddy ground should be avoided as it can create skin and feet ailments
- safety – no hazards or poisonous plants.

CATCHING

When bringing a horse in from a field or enclosure, it should be approached from the front or near (left) side. The lead rope should be placed quietly around its neck and the headcollar fitted from the near side. As the horse is led through the gate, care should be taken to ensure the gate has been opened wide enough to allow the horse through without catching its sides. If other horses are in the field, help will be required to prevent these from escaping. It may be yard practice to wear a skullcap and gloves when bringing horses in, or to use a bridle for additional control.

TURNING OUT

When turning a horse out into a field or enclosure, it should be led into the field, the gate closed and the horse turned towards the fence before being released. If there is more than one horse being turned out, all the horses should be turned towards the fence some distance apart and released at the same time. This procedure avoids the likelihood of the handlers being kicked.



© The National Stud

WORKING SAFELY WHEN CATCHING OR MOVING HORSES

Some horses get excited or fresh if they are being moved or turned out. A bridle will provide more control than a headcollar, and many yards advise the wearing of strong boots, gloves and a skullcap. Inexperienced handlers should seek assistance from a supervisor or more experienced colleague.

Safety of the enclosure or field is very important, and regular checks should be made (normally twice daily for grass-kept horses). Any problems should be reported to a supervisor.

REVISION TESTS

1. Are the following statements true or false?

(a) Horses should be turned towards a fence before being released in a field.

True False

(b) Shelter is only required in winter weather.

True False

(c) A bridle gives more control than a headcollar.

True False

(d) Horses only need fresh, clean water in hot weather.

True False

(e) Horses should only be turned out in summer.

True False

(f) Horses at grass should be approached from the front or near side.

True False

2. Find a field or enclosure on the yard where you work and assess it for the following:

- fencing

- water

- gate

- shelter

- ground conditions.

TACKING UP AND REMOVING TACK

This section is about tacking up and removing tack after exercise. It is essential for the safety and welfare of horse and rider that the horse is tacked up correctly. Any badly or incorrectly fitted tack could cause a serious accident.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of tacking up and removing tack including:

- approaching and preparing the horse for tacking up
- tacking up correctly according to instructions, to include snaffle bridle, saddle, numnah, neck strap and exercise boots
- state how to recognise whether the tack is likely to cause the horse discomfort or be unsafe
- state how to secure the horse if it needs to be left when tacked up
- list the parts of the bridle and basic parts of the saddle, and the individual horse's equipment
- removing tack after work and storing it in the required place
- difficulties that may occur and who these should be reported to
- safety precautions to be taken while tacking up.



SADDLERY

Tack must be kept clean and in good condition. When selecting tack to put on a horse, it is important to check for any cracked leather or broken stitching, which should be reported to a supervisor. Tack or equipment that is not in good condition should not be used.

For general riding, the following equipment is normally used:

- snaffle bridle
- saddle
- numnah/saddle pad
- neck strap
- exercise boots.



PARTS OF THE TACK

BRIDLE

The bridle is made up of the following parts:

Bit

There are a variety of bits available, each with a particular purpose, and each acts on different parts of the horse's mouth. The simplest and most widely used is the snaffle bit. The snaffle bit can have a variety of mouthpieces, which may be either jointed or unjointed. The rings of the bit may be loose, where they can move freely through the mouthpiece, or fixed, where they are attached directly on to the mouthpiece. The bit should be fitted to lie comfortably showing a slight crease at the corners of the lips and without catching the horse's teeth.

Headpiece

This also includes the throatlash, which must not be fastened too tightly as it can cause the horse discomfort. A guide is to allow four fingers' width between the throatlash and the horse's cheek.

Cheekpieces

The bit is attached to the headpiece by two cheekpieces.

Browband

This keeps the headpiece forward and is often covered in the owner's colours on a racing bridle.

Reins

Reins normally have a rubber covering over leather to improve grip for the rider.

Noseband

A plain cavesson noseband is generally used to improve the horse's appearance. There are several types of noseband available that act in different ways on the horse's head. Normally, racehorses only wear a noseband if it is needed for a specific purpose.



Racing saddle



General purpose saddle



Jumping saddle



Dressage saddle

SADDLE

All saddles in general use conform to the same type of construction:

Tree

This is the foundation of any saddle. The size and width of the tree determine the size and width of the saddle. The tree may be either rigid or spring.

Stirrup bars

These are attached to the tree. Traditionally, they are open-ended to allow the stirrup leathers (which are looped over the bars) to slip off in the event of an accident, preventing a rider being dragged after a fall if their foot is caught in the stirrup iron.

Seat

The seat is built on a base formed of strips of wadding that are stretched along and across the tree. The seat is padded over the webbing and covered by leather.

Flaps

This is the part of the saddle that covers the girth and panel below against which the rider's leg sits.

Panels

The panel is the inside of the saddle, acting as a cushion for the horse.

Lining

The lining on the under part of the saddle is made of leather.

Buckle guards

All saddles should have buckle guards to prevent the flap from being damaged by the girth buckles. Some are detachable and others attached to the saddle flap.



© British Racing School

The saddle should be comfortable for both horse and rider. Its purpose is to:

- distribute the rider's weight as comfortably as possible over the horse's back
- help the rider to adopt the correct position.

There are several types of saddle, depending on the type of riding activity. These include saddles for:

- racing
- general purpose
- jumping
- dressage.

NUMNAH OR SADDLE PAD

These are protective pads that sit under the saddle, preventing the saddle from rubbing the horse's back and causing discomfort. A saddle pad is normally a square pad, and a numnah is a saddle-shaped pad.

GIRTH

The girth is used to secure the saddle on the horse's back. It is vitally important that the girth is checked regularly for signs of wear. Girths can be made of leather or synthetic materials and may be elasticated. In racing yards, the girth is often covered by a girth sleeve.

NECK STRAP

This is a simple leather strap that passes around the horse's neck. It is there for the rider to hold on to in an emergency. If the horse is not wearing a martingale, it is a good idea to use a neck strap.



Running martingale



Bib martingale



Irish martingale

MARTINGALE

There are several different types of martingale available according to the particular needs of the horse and rider.

The most common types used in racing are:

- running
- bib
- Irish.



EXERCISE BOOTS

Exercise boots are designed to prevent the horse injuring itself during exercise. They should be fitted snugly, with the fastenings on the outside of the leg and the ends of the straps pointing towards the rear. Back boots are bigger than front boots and may have one more strap.

TACKING UP

The procedure for tacking up is described below.

- Approach the horse quietly from the front or near side and tie it up.
- Give it a quick brush, remove stains, pick feet out.
- Put on the exercise boots.
- Remove the headcollar.
- Put the reins over the horse's head.
- Put the bridle on and check it fits correctly.
- Replace the headcollar and make sure the horse is not able to chew the reins.
- Place the numnah well forward on the horse's back.
- If an exercise sheet is used, this should be placed over the saddle pad or numnah. It will normally have the corners folded up at the front.
- Place the saddle on the numnah and slide into position.
- Straighten the numnah and pull up into the arch of the saddle.
- Fasten the girth, catching the loop of the martingale if worn.
- The buckles should be well up the saddle flap to prevent chafing of the horse's side.
- Check the saddle does not press down on the horse's wither.
- If the weather is cold, the rug should be replaced until the horse is taken out of the stable.
- The stirrups should not be let down until the horse has been led out of the stable and the rider is preparing to mount.



BADLY FITTING TACK

Examples of badly fitting tack may include:

- bit too low and catching the horses teeth
- bit too high and rubbing the corners of the horse's mouth
- saddle too low on the horse's back and rubbing the withers
- browband too tight and pulling the headpiece forwards, which will rub the horse's ears.

HOW TO SECURE A HORSE WHEN IT NEEDS TO BE LEFT TACKED UP

If a horse has to be left in the stable with a saddle and bridle on, the following procedure should be followed:

- Put the headcollar on over the bridle and tie the horse up securely.
- Either loop the reins under the stirrups or twist the reins round each other under the throat and pass the throatlash through one of them.

REMOVING TACK

After exercise, the tack should be removed carefully. The procedure for untacking is described below.

- Tie the horse up.
- Remove the saddle and numnah.
- Remove the exercise boots.
- Untie the horse and remove the bridle.
- Tie the horse up again.
- Brush off and pick out feet.
- Replace rugs.
- Untie the horse and remove the headcollar.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN TACKING UP AND REMOVING TACK

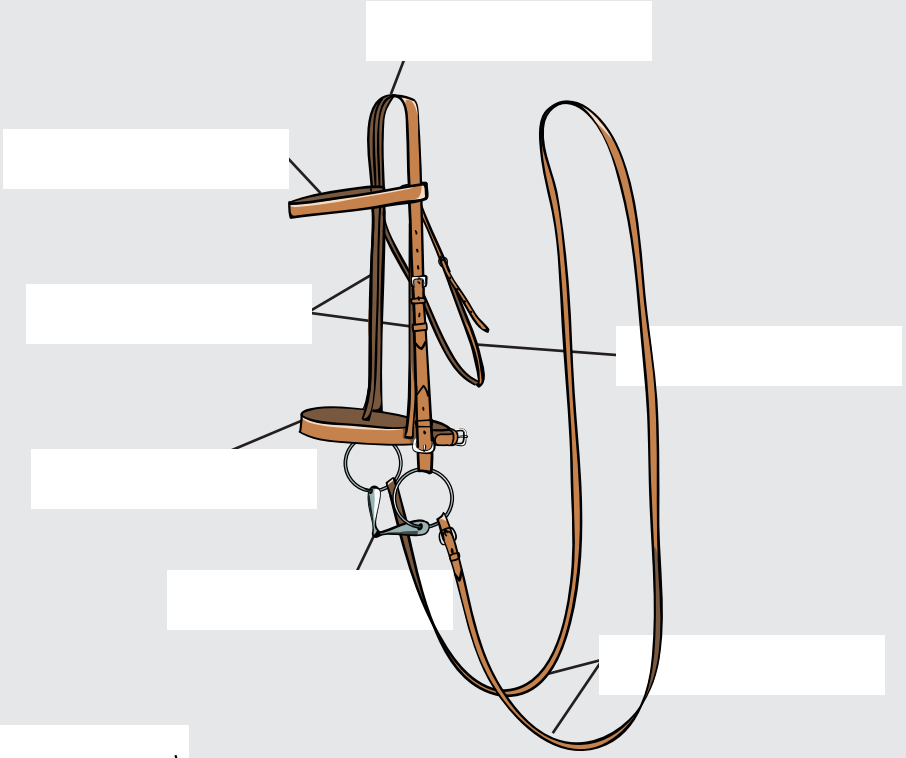
The tack should be checked to ensure it is in good condition. Any broken tack, worn stitching or cracked leather should be reported and removed from use until repaired or disposed of.

The horse should be tied up, and the handler should remain in a safe position in relation to the horse. The reins should be fastened up in the throatlash or headcollar to prevent the horse from chewing the reins.

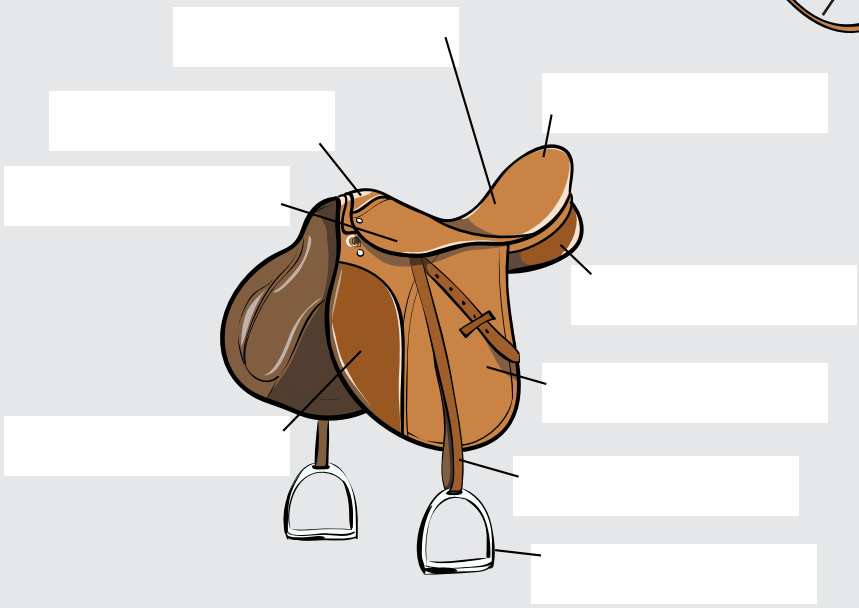
The handler should be aware of the horse's movement when applying tack and boots. Avoid putting yourself in a position where the horse could kick or bite. Be particularly alert when doing up the girths.

REVISION TESTS

1. Label the parts of the bridle:



2. Label the parts of the saddle:



3. Complete these sentences using the words in the box below:

Stitching	Exercise sheet	Cheek
Bit	Saddle pad	

- (a) The numnah is also called a _____.
- (b) The _____ goes in the horse's mouth.
- (c) An _____ may be placed over the numnah and under the saddle in cold weather.
- (d) The bit is attached to the headband by the _____ pieces.
- (e) Always tell a supervisor if you notice any broken _____.

CARE OF TACK

This section is about cleaning tack and keeping it in good condition. Serious falls and injuries may result from tack breaking. All tack must therefore receive daily attention to ensure it is checked for safety and remains in good condition.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of caring for tack including:

- how to carry out routine cleaning of tack
- the reasons for regular cleaning of tack
- the dangers of unsafe stitching or damaged tack
- the problems vermin may cause for tack in storage
- how to identify and report faults and defects in tack to the appropriate person
- how to store clothing and tack
- how to maintain the health, safety and security of yourself and others during work.





Tack cleaning equipment



Worn/broken stitching

REGULAR CARE OF TACK

It is vital that tack and equipment are maintained in good condition. Specific checks include:

- stitching – checks should be made for worn or broken stitching
- leather – dry, hard leather is prone to cracking and breaking
- fittings – free from cracks and breaks. This includes buckles and billets, the small metal hook found, for example, at the end of the cheekpieces.

Tack should be cleaned daily, even if it is just to sponge off excess sweat and dirt, and wash the bit. When cleaning tack, the following procedure should be used:

- Undo all billets and buckles.
- Clean each part with a damp (but not wet) sponge, checking the stitching and leather.
- Apply saddle soap to the leather parts.
- Polish metal parts (except the mouthpiece of the bit).
- Re-assemble.

ANNUAL CARE AND STORAGE OF TACK

Saddles should be checked by a saddler on a regular or annual basis for any attention required to the tree, stuffing or stitching. When not in use, tack should be cleaned, oiled and stored in a dry place.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN CLEANING TACK

Tack cleaning should take place in a dry, clean environment. Make sure oils and saddle soaps are used according to instructions. Use hand-hot water.

Check carefully for cracked leather, worn stitching or broken parts. Report any of these immediately to a supervisor and remove the damaged tack from use.

Keep the tack room and cleaning area tidy. Wash hands after cleaning tack.



REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following multiple-choice questions:

(a) What equipment is normally required to clean tack?

- I. Bucket, sponge, sweat scraper
- II. Water, sponge, saddle soap
- III. Shampoo, water brush, water

(b) What should you do if you find cracked leather on a set of reins?

- I. Apply leather dressing.
- II. Use more saddle soap.
- III. Advise a supervisor.

(c) When should tack be cleaned?

- I. Daily
- II. Monthly
- III. Annually

2. Time yourself to:

- take a bridle apart
- put a bridle back together.

Do this several times and see how much quicker you can get. Fill in your results in the table below. To make it more fun, you can give yourself a 'target time'!

Session	Time for Taking a Bridle Apart	Time for Putting a Bridle Back Together
Example	<i>3 minutes, 20 seconds</i>	<i>7 minutes, 40 seconds</i>
Target		
1		
2		
3		
4		

3. Look at a saddlery catalogue or website and find out how much it would cost to purchase the following items needed to maintain tack in good condition.

(a) Three sponges

(b) Saddle soap

(c) Leather dressing

(d) Bucket

What is the total cost?

CARE AND FITTING OF HORSE CLOTHING

This section is about the use and care of rugs and other routine items of horse clothing. Most stabled horses in work are rugged up, and the type of rug depends on weather conditions and whether the horse is clipped or not. The correct application and care of rugs ensures the comfort and welfare of horses.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of putting on, removing and care of horse clothing in everyday use including:

- how to put on rugs according to instructions
- the potential hazards when using rugs with leg straps
- the reasons for ensuring rugs are applied correctly
- the procedure to follow if rugs slip
- how to remove, fold and store rugs according to instructions
- how to carry out routine cleaning of rugs and horse clothing according to instructions
- how to work safely when rugging up and cleaning horse clothing
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.



Stable rug



Outdoor rug

TYPES OF RUGS

Stabled horses in full work will normally require the use of one or more of the following rugs:

STABLE RUG

These are normally quilted rugs with an insulated filling, which can be of varying levels of warmth and thickness. This enables different stable rugs to be used throughout the year according to the weather conditions. In very cold weather, an under rug may be used for additional warmth. Stable rugs come in a range of different designs. Most are fitted with crossover surcingles but may have leg straps or a neck cover.



Summer sheet

OUTDOOR RUG

Outdoor rugs are used for turning horses out to grass in the winter months or in poor weather conditions. They are designed to offer the horse warmth and protection from the elements. Modern outdoor rugs are made of synthetic fabric that affords excellent warmth and are hard-wearing and durable. Outdoor rugs have a variety of fittings and leg straps to keep them in place without causing pressure on the spine. The rug should be fitted to stay in place and keep the horse warm and dry without rubbing.



Cooler/sweat rug

SUMMER SHEET

These are made of cotton or synthetic fabric. They are used to protect a groomed horse against dust and flies.

COOLER/SWEAT RUG

These are used on sweating horses while cooling off or after washing or sponging off a horse.

EXERCISE SHEET

These short, square-fronted rugs are used in cold weather to keep the horse's back, loins and quarters warm during exercise. They are fitted under the saddle and have a fillet string, which passes behind the quarters and under the tail to prevent the sheet from blowing forward.



Exercise sheet

PUTTING ON AND REMOVING RUGS

When putting on any rug, it is important that particular care is taken with young or nervous horses. The procedure for putting on a rug is described below.

- Secure the horse.
- Fold the rug in half with the back folded towards the front.
- Reassure the horse. Standing at its shoulder, place the rug well forward.
- Adjust the front of the rug and fasten the breast buckle.
- Unfold and straighten the rug into position over the horse's back.
- Fasten cross surcingles and then leg straps.
- Check the horse is comfortable.

The procedure for removing the rug is as follows:

- Secure the horse.
- Unbuckle the leg straps and then the cross surcingles.
- Unfasten the breast buckle.
- Fold the front of the rug over the back part of the rug.
- Slide the rug off following the direction of the horse's coat.

FITTING RUGS

All types of rugs must cover the horse's back from the front of the withers to the top of the tail. They should be comfortably snug around the chest and deep enough to keep the horse's body warm. Rugs must be fitted to stay in position without relying on straps or fittings that are too tight. Hind leg straps should not rub the horse when it walks but not be so loose that the hind legs could become caught up with them when it lies down. Withers, hips and point of shoulders should be checked daily for signs of chafing.

CARE AND STORAGE OF RUGS

Rugs should be shaken out daily to remove excess dirt and bedding. Rugs should be washed regularly although the method of washing will depend on the weight and material of the rug. Outdoor rugs should always be repaired, washed and dried before storing away for the summer. When not in use rugs should be stored in a clean, dry place free from vermin. Any rips, tears or broken fittings should be reported to a supervisor. A damaged rug may slip and cause discomfort or injury to a horse.

CARE AND STORAGE OF OTHER HORSE CLOTHING

Other items of horse clothing require regular care and attention including:

- saddle pads/numnahs
- girth sleeves
- bandages
- exercise boots
- stable rubbers.

These are normally washed according to the manufacturer's instructions, and most yards have access to washing facilities. Any damage to these items should be reported to a supervisor, and they should not be used until the damage is repaired. These items should also be stored in a dry, vermin-free place.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN RUGGING UP

Some horses are sensitive when being rugged up or having rugs removed. Horses should be tied up when applying or removing rugs, and care should be taken when reaching under the horse to secure surcingles. Care should be taken to ensure the horse does not kick out when you are applying leg straps.

Always report any damage to rugs or horse clothing to a supervisor. Damaged equipment should not be used and should be sent for repair.

When cleaning rugs and horse clothing, adhere to the manufacturer's instructions. Do not leave rugs lying about as they could be a potential trip hazard. Store them safely and securely in a dry, vermin-free place.

REVISION TESTS

1. Choose words from the box below to complete these sentences:

Leg	Quarters	Paddock	Surcingles	Quilted
-----	----------	---------	------------	---------

- (a) A stable rug is normally made of a material.
- (b) Crossed normally secure a stable rug.
- (c) Outdoor rugs will normally have straps.
- (d) Exercise sheets are used to keep the warm.
- (e) A racehorse will be paraded in a sheet.

2. Make a visit to a local saddler's or look at an equestrian catalogue or website.

- (a) Make a list of all the rugs that would be needed by an owner who is buying their first horse or pony.
- (b) Make a note of the cost of each item and give the total amount to be spent.

3. Answer the following multiple-choice questions:

- (a) What is an exercise sheet normally used for?
- I. Travelling
- II. Putting on a stabled horse after exercise
- III. Ridden exercise in cold weather
- (b) Where should well fitting rugs not exert pressure?
- I. Spine
- II. Poll
- III. Elbow
- (c) What are summer sheets normally made of?
- I. Quilted fabric
- II. Wool
- III. Cotton
- (d) When putting rugs on, the fastenings should be secured in which order?
- I. Breast buckle, surcingle, leg straps
- II. Leg straps, surcingle, breast buckle
- III. Surcingle, leg straps, breast buckle
- (e) Which of the following will prevent an exercise sheet from blowing forward in windy weather?
- I. Girth
- II. Surcingle
- III. Fillet string

GROOM AND WASH HORSES

This section is about grooming and washing horses, which is an important part of the daily routine. It is also essential to ensure the welfare and comfort of horses as it can help to avoid ailments or spot injuries.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of grooming, washing and sponging off horses including:

- how to prepare horses prior to exercise
- how to groom horses
- how to sponge off horses after exercise
- how to wash horses
- grooming equipment and how to use it
- how to work safely when grooming and washing horses
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.

When you first start work, you will be introduced to the horses you will help to look after and be given advice about their temperaments. You can also turn to a colleague or your supervisor if you need any help or advice.



GROOMING

Grooming is the daily attention necessary to the coat, skin, mane, tail and feet of the horse, which helps to keep it healthy and fit. The reasons for grooming are to:

- improve appearance
- ensure cleanliness
- maintain condition
- prevent disease
- promote health.



WHEN TO GROOM

When to groom depends on the time of day and activity the horse is doing. These can generally be broken down into the following occasions.

Activity	When
Quartering/brushing over	Before exercise, to check the horse over and tidy it up before work.
Full groom	After exercise, normally at evening stables.
Sponging off	To remove sweat and dirt after exercise.
Washing	In preparation for public appearance or after race or strenuous exercise.
Grooming grass-kept horses	Grass-kept horses will generally need their feet checking and picking out on a daily basis. If being ridden or exercised, they will need a brush over.

GROOMING EQUIPMENT

The grooming kit will normally be made up of the following items of equipment.



Dandy brush
Grooming horses at grass, removing heavy dirt



Body brush
Removing dust, scurf and grease from coat, mane and tail



Curry comb (metal)
Cleaning the body brush



Curry comb (plastic)
Cleaning the body brush or removing heavy dirt



Mane comb
Pulling manes and plaiting



Water brush
Laying the mane and tail, and washing the feet



Sponges
Washing eyes, nose and dock



Sweat scraper
Removing excess water



Hoof pick
Picking dirt out of the hooves



Stable rubber
Final polish

HOW TO GROOM

The type of grooming will depend on the activity to be undertaken. The main types of grooming include:

Quartering/brushing over

When preparing a horse for exercise, the stable stains should be removed, it should be given a quick brush over, have its feet picked out, mane and tail brushed through, and eyes, nose and dock sponged.



Full groom

When giving the horse a full groom, normally after exercise, the following procedure should be followed:

- Tie the horse up and remove water bucket.
- Pick feet out. If the shoes are worn, loose or causing concern, the supervisor should be informed.
- Give the horse's coat a thorough brush with the body brush, used in a circular motion.
- Clean the brush every few strokes with the metal curry comb.
- Pay particular attention to removing sweat marks around the bridle, saddle and girth areas and between the horse's hind legs.
- If the weather is cold, fold the rugs over the quarters or shoulders to keep the horse warm.
- Brush the mane and tail out. Some employers prefer a body brush to be used, others prefer a dandy brush.
- Lay the mane down with a damp water brush.
- Sponge eyes and nose with one sponge, clean the dock with a separate sponge.
- Wipe the horse over with a stable rubber.
- Apply hoof oil if it is yard practice.

Sponging off

In hot weather or after strenuous work, the horse will be sponged or hosed off in the saddle and bridle areas, neck, under the elbows and between the back legs. Any excess water should be removed with a sweat scraper. The horse should be walked round in a suitable rug (cooler or sweat rug) until it is cool and dry.

Washing

A thorough wash down can be used as a preparation for competition, sales, racecourse performance or alternatively after a race or strenuous exercise. If the weather is warm enough, the horse should be completely soaked from the neck backwards with warm water and an appropriate shampoo applied. Once shampooed, the horse should be rinsed and excess water removed with a sweat scraper. The horse should be walked round in a suitable rug (cooler or sweat rug) until it is dry.

Sometimes, it may only be necessary to wash the horse's legs, feet and tail. In this instance, the above procedure should be followed to those areas, taking care not to stand directly behind the horse. Legs should be dried thoroughly to avoid cracked heels.

Grooming a grass-kept horse

Horses living out at grass will require little grooming unless they are being ridden from the field. Daily attention is required to picking out the feet and checking the condition of feet and shoes. If ridden, the coat can be brushed with a dandy brush to remove mud and sweat marks. The body brush is not normally used on a grass-kept horse as it can remove grease from the coat, which helps to keep the horse warm and dry.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN GROOMING OR WASHING HORSES

Not all horses enjoy being groomed and washed. They may have sensitive skin, and attempt to bite and kick out if they are uncomfortable. If the horse appears to be temperamental, advice should be sought from a supervisor. The horse should be tied up securely and according to yard practice.

When washing the horse, it may be safer to work with a colleague so that one person holds the horse and the other carries out the washing activity. Never stand directly behind the horse when washing the tail or hind legs. Use the shampoo according to instructions and store away once used. Wear gloves if necessary.

Make sure all grooming and washing equipment is stored in its correct place after use. Grooming equipment should be cleaned regularly.

Report any problems with difficult horses or faulty kit to a supervisor and always seek help if unsure of a particular horse's temperament. Pay attention to shoes, and report any concerns – loose or twisted shoes could cause an injury to a horse.

Wear a dust mask when grooming if suffering from asthma, and avoid jewellery – it could cause injury if it gets caught during the grooming process.

Dispose of any waste in the designated place. Do not throw empty shampoo bottles on the muck heap.

REVISION TESTS

1. Choose words from the box below to complete these sentences:

Twisted	Body	Mane comb	Sweat	
Water	Tie	Buckets	Jewellery	Waste

- (a) Check shoes when picking feet out, _____ shoes could cause injury.
- (b) Use a _____ brush to remove dust, scurf and grease from a horse's coat.
- (c) A _____ can be used to pull a mane.
- (d) Excess water is removed by a _____ scraper.
- (e) After brushing, the mane can be laid with the _____ brush.
- (f) _____ the horse up and remove water _____ before grooming.
- (g) Do not wear _____ when grooming a horse.
- (h) Dispose of _____ safely

2. Complete the reasons for grooming:

- (a) Improve _____
- (b) Ensure _____
- (c) Maintain _____
- (d) Prevent _____
- (e) Promote _____

3. Which go together? Put the correct letter in each box.

(a) Water brush	To give a final polish	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Curry comb	To lay the mane	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Sweat scraper	To remove heavy dirt	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Hoof pick	To clean the body brush	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Dandy brush	To remove excess water	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Body brush	To get dirt out of the feet	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Stable rubber	To remove dust and grease	<input type="checkbox"/>

ASSISTING WITH FEEDING AND WATERING

This section is about assisting with the feeding and watering of stabled and grass-kept horses. It is vital that horses have fresh, clean water at all times. The feeding regime will always be overseen by a senior member of staff.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of assisting with feeding and watering including:

- the methods of feeding and watering horses throughout the year
- the normal feeding habits of horses and why it is important to report any changes
- the types of changes in horses' feeding habits that may occur
- how to feed horses according to instructions, to include both forage and concentrate
- how to supply horses with water using the correct sources, system and quantities
- possible changes in horses' behaviour at feeding time, and safety awareness
- the importance of reporting any changes in the feeding and drinking habits of horses to the appropriate person
- how equipment should be cleaned, maintained and stored
- the hygiene requirements of horses, yourself and others
- how to work safely when feeding and watering horses
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FEEDING

In its natural habitat, a horse will graze, eating little and often, and normally over extensive areas. It may rest occasionally but is normally never too full of food to escape rapidly from danger. A stabled horse must be helped to thrive in an unnatural environment, for example by having a regular daily routine and by feeding little and often.

A senior member of yard staff will normally be responsible for preparing a diet and making up feeds for each horse. When preparing rations, there are a number of general principles that should be considered.

RULES OF FEEDING

When planning a diet, the person responsible will consider the following principles:

- Feed little and often.
- Feed by weight, not volume.
- Feed according to size, age, temperament and work being carried out.
- Keep all feeding equipment and utensils clean.
- Make gradual changes in diet (unless a dramatic reduction is needed for health reasons).
- Feed only good quality forage.
- Provide a plentiful supply of fresh, clean water.
- Feed a balanced diet.
- Keep to a regular routine.
- Feed sufficient forage and bulk feed.
- Do not work hard immediately after feeding.
- Store feed in dry, vermin-proof containers.
- Report any change in the horse's normal feeding habits to a supervisor.



TYPES OF FEED

When assisting with feeding, there are two main types of feed to be aware of:

- hard feed – also known as concentrates, including oats, nuts/cubes and mixes
- forage – also known as roughage, such as hay or haylage.

HOW TO FEED

When a supervisor has put out feeds into feed buckets, the feed should be taken to the stable and placed in the manger. Horses can get excited or show aggression at feed times so care should be taken to remain in a safe position and not get into a situation where the horse could kick or bite. Some horses may not eat up all at once. It is important to know if the horse is fussy and prefers to eat when the yard is quiet. If a horse does not finish a feed or does not drink the normal amount of water, the supervisor must be informed as lack of appetite could indicate an illness.

Hay or haylage is normally fed from the floor or in a hay net. Hay nets should be tied securely, using a quick release knot.

Grass-kept horses are normally fed from a bowl on the ground. If there is more than one horse in the field, bowls should be spaced well apart (out of kicking range), and horses should be attended to ensure they all eat their own feeds and get a fair share. Hay should be placed in piles a suitable distance apart to avoid horses kicking each other. There should be more hay piles than horses to ensure there is no squabbling.

Horses should have fresh, clean water at all times. Buckets should be washed out every day. Even if a horse has only drunk a little, the water should be changed twice daily. Any changes in the amount a horse drinks should be reported to a supervisor.

STORING FEED

Feed should be kept in vermin-proof bins, free from damp. The bins should have lids that are heavy enough to prevent a horse from raising them. Hard feed in particular must be safeguarded. Horses can suffer from colic through overeating after breaking loose and straying into a feed room.

Hay should be stacked on wooden slats to allow the air to circulate underneath and to prevent damp from rising into the bottom bales. Haylage should be stored in a safe place and care taken to ensure the plastic wrapping does not tear during storage as this will affect the quality of the haylage.

Haylage wrapping and hay string should be disposed of carefully in a designated waste bin.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN FEEDING AND WATERING HORSES

Horses and ponies can get anxious and excited at feed time and may display some aggressive tendencies. It is important to be aware of this and to remain in a position to avoid being kicked or bitten.

Only senior members of staff should make up feeds as giving the wrong feed to a horse can cause illness or ailments such as laminitis or colic.

When moving or storing bags of feed, safe lifting practices should be used.

REVISION TESTS

1. Choose words from the box below to complete these sentences:

Aggressive	Feed	Water	Often
Quality	Bulk	Supervisor	Little

- (a) Feed [] and [] .
- (b) If a horse does not eat up, this should be reported to a [] .
- (c) A horse should be fed plenty of [] food.
- (d) Feed good [] food.
- (e) Horses should have access to plenty of fresh, clean [] .
- (f) Horses should not be ridden immediately after a large [] .
- (g) Some horses may become [] at feed times.

2. Draw a plan of the feed room where you work.

3. Ask your supervisor if you can record the diet of a horse in your care. State what it is fed and what time it is fed, and find out the weight of the various foodstuffs it is receiving.

ESTABLISHING GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

This section is about establishing good working relationships and how to liaise with visitors and colleagues. It is important to the efficient and safe running of a yard that everyone works in harmony, communicates well with each other and treats others with respect.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of good working relationships including:

- the behaviour required when working with others
- how to receive visitors.



ESTABLISHING GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

All staff should expect to be treated with respect and in turn should treat others with respect. Good teamwork contributes to the success of a business, and the qualities that employers will look for in a member of staff include:

- loyalty
- good timekeeping
- a good work ethic
- politeness and consideration towards others
- responsible attitude
- commitment.

Personality clashes are sometimes unavoidable, and efforts should be made to iron out any disagreements or problems that will affect work. Those involved may need to seek help and advice from senior members of staff and should be prepared to accept that there are often faults on both sides. Most disagreements can be resolved through compromise and good communication.



RECEIVING VISITORS

Any member of staff, however junior, should be able to receive and assist visitors to the yard in a courteous manner, ensuring that visitors do not enter or look round the yard without being accompanied by a senior member of staff.

Visitors may include:

- farriers
- vets
- owners
- sales representatives.

These visitors should be greeted politely and taken to the supervisor. It is important that junior staff refer all visitors to a more senior person.

Visitors, particularly those who are unfamiliar, should never be left unattended in a racing yard or stud, and staff should find out what the yard policy is when dealing with visitors.



REVISION TESTS

1. Choose words from the box below to complete these sentences:

Efficiently	Name	Timekeeping	Number
Supervisor	Unattended	Politely	

- (a) Visitors should be greeted _____ .
- (b) Visitors should never be allowed to wander around the yard _____ .
- (c) When taking a telephone message it is important to record the _____ and _____ of the person calling.
- (d) Good working relationships help the yard to run _____ .
- (e) Employers require their staff to be good at _____ .

2. Have a think about your role as a member of your team or training group. What do you think your qualities are? What do you think you could improve to become a more responsible member of the team or group?

Teamworking	
Things I am Good at	Things I could Improve

BASIC RIDING SKILLS

This section is about the basic skills needed by a novice rider. It involves mounting a horse correctly, being able to adjust the tack, adopt the correct basic position and control a quiet horse in an enclosed area.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of:

- the necessary preparations for mounting, including checking the girth and pulling down stirrups
- the use and care of personal protective equipment, including hats, boots and body protector
- the importance of being able to mount and dismount quiet horses correctly and safely
- how to adjust girths and stirrups once mounted
- the basics of adopting a suitable riding position
- the basic principles of controlling a quiet horse in an enclosed area
- hazards likely to be encountered when riding in an enclosed area, and how these can be minimised
- how to work safely when mounting and riding horses
- what to do if you have problems and who to report problems to.





PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations require that suitable personal protective equipment should be used by employees wherever there is a risk to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

As riding is considered a risk activity, riders should wear suitable clothing and equipment including the following:

Protective headgear

All horse riders must wear suitable, correctly fitting, protective headgear. Skullcaps and riding hats should conform to current and appropriate safety standards. Protective headgear should be replaced periodically according to use and updating of standards. Damaged hats should not be worn.

Riding boots

Riding boots (either short boots and chaps or long boots) should be worn when riding as they are designed for maximum safety and comfort. Riders should never ride in plimsolls, trainers, wellingtons or sandals as their foot may slip through the stirrup iron.

Safety vest/body protector

When riding in a licensed racing yard, all staff must wear a safety vest/body protector that conforms to the current BHA requirements. This must be correctly fitted and in a serviceable condition.

CLOTHING

Gloves

Gloves can help to prevent the reins slipping through the rider's hands, and when leading horses can also prevent friction burns.

Jackets

Jackets should be fastened so that they cannot flap and frighten the horse. Arms and shoulders should be covered to avoid the risk of abrasions during a fall. Tight clothing should be avoided as this may restrict free movement of the body.

Jewellery

It is advisable not to wear jewellery when riding or working with horses. Jewellery and earrings can become caught up and cause cuts and injuries. Long hair should be tied back or secured with a hairnet.

MOUNTING

There are a number of ways to mount, according to the type of horse, the activity and yard practice.

Leg-up

Most racehorses are mounted by the rider receiving a 'leg-up'. This is when the rider bends their left knee while standing close to the horse's near side. An assistant will take the lower part of the rider's leg and assist them in jumping on to the horse, making sure the right leg does not catch on the horse's hind quarter. The rider will land gently in the saddle.

Mounting block

Some riding horses are trained to stand still by a mounting block so that the rider can easily put their foot into the stirrup and mount.

Vaulting on

Some jockeys and athletic riders can vault on to the horse by standing by its near shoulder and jumping on.

Using the stirrup

Most riding horses will have been trained to accept a rider mounting from the floor by using the stirrup. This type of mounting is not used in racing.

DISMOUNTING

When dismounting, the rider should establish halt, keeping a contact on the horse's mouth to prevent it moving off, then lean forward and swing their right leg over the horse's hindquarters (taking care not to catch the horse) and lightly jump to the floor. The rider should keep hold of the horse during the process to ensure it does not move off.





© British Racing School

ADJUSTMENT OF TACK AND EQUIPMENT

The rider should always check the horse's tack for safety and fitting prior to mounting. The girth should be tightened before mounting and the stirrups run down.

ADJUSTING THE GIRTHS

- The leg should be lifted forwards so that the knee and lower leg hang down over the horse's shoulder in front of the saddle.
- The reins should be taken into one hand so that the other hand is free to lift the saddle flap up, lift the buckle guard and adjust the girth straps with the thumb and first finger.
- Care should be taken to ensure that the girth is on a similar hole on either side of the saddle flap.
- The rider should ensure that all buckles are securely fastened before replacing the buckle guard so that it lies flat over the buckles of the girth.
- The saddle flap should then be lowered into the normal position, the leg replaced and the reins taken up as normal.

ADJUSTING THE STIRRUP LEATHERS

- To adjust the stirrup leather, when mounted, the reins should be taken into one hand. Keeping the foot in the stirrup, the pressure should be slightly eased from the tread and the knee brought away from the saddle.
- With the free hand, the spare end of the stirrup leather should be taken between the first finger and the thumb close to the buckle.
- The leather should be pulled loose enough to disengage the tongue of the buckle from its present hole, and the tongue should be controlled by the tip of the first finger.
- The leather can then be either shortened or lengthened.
- The tongue of the buckle should be replaced and checks made at all points to ensure that the clip at the end of the stirrup bar is flat and not pushed up.

THE RIDER'S POSITION

When riding a horse, the rider should be able to demonstrate the following:

- security
- effectiveness
- balance
- awareness
- common sense
- a good manner with the horse.

The rider should be able to control the horse without impeding it in any way or causing deterioration in the horse's basic way of going. The correct riding position should have the following aspects:

- The rider should sit in the deepest part of the saddle with the weight evenly distributed over both seat bones and on surrounding muscles.
- The leg should be slightly bent at the knee. The lower leg should remain in light contact with the horse's side.
- The lower leg should hang relaxed, close to the horse's side.
- The heels should be down, with the toes pointing forwards and inwards.



- The sole of the foot should rest on the stirrup bar.
- The back should be straight yet supple to allow the movement of the horse to be absorbed and followed.
- The rider should sit comfortably in the saddle and not look perched on top of it.
- The shoulders should be level, straight and square, without tension. The rider should look forward and well ahead and be conscious of any situation around that could affect the way the horse is going.
- The upper arms should hang down freely, with a bend at the elbow.
- The hands should be held with the thumbs uppermost, one either side of the horse's neck and reasonably close together.
- The rider should be balanced independently of the reins.



THE AIDS

The aids are the signals the rider uses to communicate with the horse and that most horses will have been taught to understand and obey. The natural aids include:

- weight
- leg
- hands
- voice
- seat and back.

CONTROLLING THE HORSE

MOVING FORWARD

- The rider should think ahead and make a plan for the direction they want to go and the speed they want to achieve.
- The rider should ensure they have contact on the horse's mouth and, slightly easing the hands forward, should apply pressure with the lower leg.
- This pressure may be light or strong depending on the horse's response.
- As soon as the horse walks forward, the rider should allow it to do so by gently keeping a light contact on the rein.

SLOWING DOWN

- The rider should plan when they want to make the downward transition and prepare the horse. They should resist lightly with the hand while still maintaining contact with the lower leg.
- The horse should always go forward into a downward transition in a balanced and responsive manner.

TURNS AND CIRCLES

- The rider should think ahead and plan the direction in which they wish to go.
- The correct position should be maintained, and an increased pressure on the horse's mouth should be applied in the direction in which the rider wishes to turn.
- The rider should remain balanced throughout the turn.

PACES

Horses have four gaits or paces. Each gait has the horse's legs moving in a set order. The horse's left hand side is known as its nearside, with the foreleg being called the near fore and the hind leg being called the near hind. The right hand side is known as the offside, with the foreleg called the off fore and the hind leg called the off hind.

THE WALK

The walk is a four-time movement, which means that each leg moves on its own and in a set order. The horse's near hind starts the pace off, followed by the near fore, then the off hind, with the off fore being the last leg to go down. When the horse is walking, it should track up – this means that the hind hoof should fit into or in front of the hoof print of the forefoot. The average pace that a horse will walk is around 2–5mph.

THE TROT

The trot is a two-time movement, which means that the horse moves two diagonal pairs of legs at the same time. For example, the horse's near hind and off fore lift up off the ground at the same time as the off hind and near fore stay on the ground. On average, horses trot at around 7–10mph.

THE CANTER

The canter is a three-time rhythm. Depending on which rein you are on, there is either left lead canter or right lead canter. For right lead canter, the horse's near hind starts, followed by the off hind and near fore, which go down at the same time, with the off fore being the last to go down and therefore the leading leg. For left lead canter, the horse's off hind starts the canter off, followed by the near hind and off fore, with the near fore being the last to go down and therefore the leading leg. On average, horses canter at 10–17mph.

THE GALLOP

The gallop is the fastest of all the paces and is known as a four-beat pace due to each of the horse's legs striking the ground in quick succession, with a moment of suspension in between each stride. The gallop progresses out of the canter so the canter lead you started off with will determine the order of footfalls. When a horse is galloping, you will be able to clearly hear four distinct beats as opposed to just three when in canter. Depending on the breed, horses can gallop up to around 35–40mph. The footfalls for left fore leg leading would be off hind, near hind, off fore and near fore, then the moment of suspension before starting again.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING HORSES

Ensure that all tack and equipment has been checked and is fit for use, with no worn stitching, and that it fits the horse correctly.

Ensure that the girth is tight enough before mounting.

Riders should wear up to date and suitable personal protective equipment, such as a riding hat, riding boots, body protector and gloves.

REVISION TESTS

1. Choose words from the box below to complete these sentences:

Jewellery	Girth	Leg-up
Skullcap	Stirrups	Natural aid

- (a) A [] should always be worn when riding.
- (b) A horse can be mounted by the rider receiving a [].
- (c) Once mounted, the rider should check and, if necessary adjust, their [] and [].
- (d) The hands are a [].
- (e) [] should not be worn when riding.

2. Ask a friend or your supervisor to take a photograph of you on a horse in halt.

Look at the photograph and state what:

- (a) you think is good about your riding position
- (b) could be improved in your riding position.

Take a second photograph and try to show an improvement.

Identify where you think your improvements have been made.

3. Describe two ways of mounting a horse:

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

This section is about establishing and maintaining safe working practices when working in a busy stable yard. It is important that everyone works safely and follows correct procedures to prevent any unnecessary accidents or injuries.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of good working relationships including:

- your responsibilities in relation to health and safety at work
- occupational diseases
- how to identify potential hazards
- fire precautions and fire drill procedures.





THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

It is the responsibility of employers and employees to take all reasonable care at work and in the stable yard. Each has a duty to the public to behave in a safe and careful manner.

This legislation demands that people are not exposed to unnecessary risks in their place of work and that every possible precaution is taken where a situation of high risk or danger to health is anticipated.

Protective clothing should be worn to carry out certain tasks. This includes wearing skullcaps to the current approved standards for riding, or handling young and difficult horses; gloves for lunging, leading or loading; and non-slip footwear for work in the stable yard.

Dust masks should be made available for use when working in a dusty environment such as a hay barn.

Every yard should have a health and safety policy, which should be displayed in a prominent place for all staff to see and familiarise themselves with.

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Occupational diseases that staff should be aware of include:

- asthma – a serious breathing condition that can be aggravated by working in a dusty environment
- hay fever – a condition that causes sore eyes and sneezing when there is a high pollen count
- ringworm – a fungal disease that may be caught from horses or cattle
- tetanus – a serious condition caused by the tetanus bacteria entering an open wound, prevention can be established and maintained by antiviral vaccinations
- Weil's disease – a severe form of a bacterial infection known as leptospirosis that can be caught from rat droppings or urine.

All staff should know who the designated first-aiders in the workplace are, and report any health problems to the first-aider or employer.

SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

It is the responsibility of the owner or manager of the premises to ensure buildings and equipment are in good repair and safe condition. However, it is the responsibility of everyone to report anything that is worn or broken. In such cases, the item in question should be clearly marked 'Not to be used' and removed from the workplace.

SAFE LIFTING

Careful and safe lifting and handling techniques should be used to prevent damage to all parts of the body but particularly the back, hands and feet. One of the biggest causes of back injury at work is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Learning and following the correct method for lifting and handling heavy loads can help to prevent injury and avoid back pain.

Think before you lift.

- Plan the lift.
- Where is the load going to be placed?
- Use appropriate handling aids where possible.
- Will help be needed with the load?
- Remove obstructions, such as discarded wrapping materials.
- For long lifts, such as from floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change your grip on it.

Keep the load close to the waist.

- Keep the load close to the waist for as long as possible while lifting.
- Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.

Adopt a stable position.

- Your feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.
- Be prepared to move your feet during the lift in order to maintain a stable posture.
- Wearing over-tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, such as heels or flip-flops, may make this difficult.

Ensure a good hold on the load.

- Where possible, hug the load close to the body.
- This may be a better option than gripping it tightly with the hands only.

Do not bend your back when lifting.

- A slight bending of the back, hips and knees at the start of the lift is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Do not twist when you lift.

- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent.
- Keep your shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.
- Turning by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep your head up.

- Keep your head up when handling the load.
- Look ahead, not down at the load.

Move smoothly.

- Do not jerk or snatch the load as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Know your limits.

- Do not lift or handle more than you can easily manage.
- If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

All employees should look out for any hazards that might cause injury to people or horses. Some of the common ones include the following:

- Jewellery should be avoided when working with horses as metal rings, bracelets and earrings can get caught and cause injury.
- Drains should be kept clean and disinfected regularly.
- Rubbish should be disposed of correctly and in designated areas to discourage vermin.
- Circuit-breakers should always be used when using electrical appliances such as clippers.
- Staff should be correctly trained for handling horses as horses are one of the major hazards.
- Chemicals such as weedkillers or pesticides should be kept under lock and key, and clearly marked.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND FIRE DRILL

- One of the golden rules in a stable yard is 'no smoking', and it is illegal to smoke in the workplace.
- 'No smoking' signs should be displayed around the yard and stable area to ensure that no one is in any doubt about this.
- The muck heap and hay/straw barns are major fire risks, together with buildings, electrical points and anywhere that machinery is used or vehicles parked.
- Firefighting equipment should be professionally checked at standard intervals, and all staff should be aware of its location and how to use it.
- The assembly point in the event of a fire should be clearly marked.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with the workplace policy for action to take in the event of a fire.
- It is good practice to hold fire drills on a regular basis.

REVISION TESTS

1. Look around your place of work and state where you could find the following:

(a) No smoking sign

(b) Health and safety notice

(c) Firefighting equipment

2. In the boxes below, write down an item of protective clothing that could be worn to prevent injury or illness:

Working Situation	Clothing/Equipment
General stable work	
Working in the hay barn	
Riding	
Leading a horse to the field	
Cleaning drains	

3. Complete these sentences using words from the box below.

Tetanus	Locked	Circuit
Fungal	Asthma	Back

a) Ringworm is a disease.

(b) If bacteria gets into an open wound, it can lead to .

(c) Weedkillers should be kept in a cupboard.

(d) Safe lifting techniques will help to prevent injuries.

(e) is a condition that affects breathing.

(f) -breakers should be used when using electrical items.

NOTES:

Make Your Passion

A woman wearing a dark racing helmet with goggles on top is smiling and looking towards the head of a dark horse. The horse is wearing a leather halter with a metal ring. The background is a wooden wall.

Your Work

For information on careers, jobs and training in horseracing

**Job profiles • Career case studies • Live job board
Education/curriculum resources • Taster days**

careersinracing.com

info@careersinracing.com



British Horseracing Authority,
75 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6LS

General enquiries:
Tel: 020-7152 0000
Email: info@britishhorseracing.com
Website: britishhorseracing.com