

RACEHORSE CARE

Workbook



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INTRODUCTION

This workbook has been designed to support the training and development of junior racing and stud stable staff who have started to develop the skills and knowledge to work successfully in the racing and Thoroughbred breeding industries.

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

Each section broadly relates to elements of a Level 2 qualification and to specific areas of the work likely to be undertaken by someone developing their career in this sector.

Each section is supported by a series of 'self-tests' or assignments. These aim to encourage the development of knowledge and understanding in a form that can be assessed.

HANDLING THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSES

This section is about handling, controlling and restraining Thoroughbred racehorses during normal daily routines.

By studying this section, you will gain knowledge and understanding of handling Thoroughbred racehorses including:

- effective and safe handling of racehorses
- using correct equipment when handling and controlling horses
- restraining horses using specified methods.

There are a few basic principles to consider when handling horses to ensure the safety and confidence of both horse and handler. There are times when horses will need to be controlled and restrained for presentation or inspection, and this should be carried out effectively and safely.



BASIC HORSE HANDLING

A horse's expression and body language will give clear indications about its temperament and will help the handler to anticipate its reactions. Generally, a handler should:

- speak quietly
- handle the horse gently but firmly
- avoid sudden movements
- approach the horse from the front or shoulder.



Quick release knot



Chifney

SECURING A HORSE (TYING UP OR RACKING UP)

The best way to secure a horse is by a headcollar and rope. The headcollar is put on from the nearside (left) and the rope placed through a small loop of string attached to a tie ring before tying the horse up. The reason for this is that the horse will be secure for normal purposes, but if it should panic and struggle hard, the string will break and free the horse, therefore preventing further problems. Some stables now use cable ties as the change in farming practices to big bales has made the string that is commonly found in the stable environment too thick to break easily. When tying a horse up, consider the following:

- Always use a quick release knot.
- Unless the horse is very reliable, always tie up in a stable or enclosed area.
- Never tie to a gate or fence that may give way under pressure.
- Never tie a horse to a hay net.
- If the horse has a tendency to chew, use a rack chain. When using a rack chain, a loop of string can be used to secure the chain to the headcollar.

LEADING IN HAND

For optimum control, a horse is led in a bridle rather than a headcollar. Very difficult or strong horses may also need a type of bit called a chifney. A bridle or chifney must always be used on a racecourse. Skullcap, gloves and sturdy footwear should be worn according to yard practice.

Horses must be led from the nearside (left), and the handler should stay close to the horse's shoulder. Never attempt to drag the horse, or wrap the rein or lead rope around your hand.

When turning the horse, it should be turned away from the handler. This will help the horse to remain balanced and give the handler better control. The handler should be aware of the surface and immediate area to prevent the horse from slipping or shying at any potential hazards.

When standing a horse up for inspection, it should stay still, be alert and stand squarely. The handler should, unless instructed otherwise, stand to the front of the horse, holding a rein in each hand, close to the bit.

STABLE MANNERS

Good stable manners make caring for a horse much safer and more pleasant. Good manners in a horse include:

- tying up quietly and patiently
- moving over when asked
- not kicking or biting
- standing quietly without fidgeting when being tacked up
- not barging or pushing
- picking feet up when asked.

METHODS OF RESTRAINT

Many yards will require a handler to wear a skullcap and strong shoes when holding a horse for treatment or clipping. Methods used to restrain a horse include:

- bridle
- holding up a front leg
- grasping a fold of skin on the horse's neck ('neck twitch')
- using a chifney
- applying a twitch (this will normally be applied by a senior member of staff).

Particular care must be taken when dealing with young or entire horses (colts) as their reactions are less predictable, and they may be more likely to bite or kick.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN HANDLING AND CONTROLLING THOROUGHBREDS

It is important to recognise the signs that indicate that a horse is nervous, anxious, bad-tempered or frightened. 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 skullcaps, should be considered. The surface should not be slippery, gates should be closed, and the area should be free from hazards.

Horses are much easier to control with a well fitting bridle or chifney than with a headcollar.

REVISION TESTS

1. Choose the correct word from the box to complete the sentences.

Away	Forwards	Close	Near	Shoulder	Front
------	----------	-------	------	----------	-------

- (a) When leading a horse in hand, face and stay to the horse's shoulder.
- (b) A horse should be approached from the or .
- (c) A headcollar should be put on from the side.
- (d) When presenting a horse to an observer, you should lead from the left side and turn the horse from you.
- (e) One way of restraining a horse is to hold up a leg.

2. Describe the stable manners of a horse in your care during:

- (a) mucking out
- (b) grooming
- (c) tacking up

3. Ask a friend or colleague to take a photograph of you standing up a horse in hand.

Write a short summary of what you have done well and what could be improved.

ROUTINE STABLE CARE

This section is about the daily routines needed to ensure the smooth running of a racing yard and that the horses have clean stables and bedding. These routines are essential to ensure the welfare and comfort of the horses you are helping to look after.

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

- types of stables and stable fittings
- horses' basic welfare requirements and how to maintain their health and well-being
- types of bedding and their use
- stable conditions that promote the health and well-being of horses
- equipment used to clean stables and how to store the equipment
- how to work safely when working in and around stables.





Internal stabling



Stable door with anti-weaving grille

THE STABLE YARD

Horses can be kept in a wide range of different stable environments. Some yards are traditional in style and layout, others are modern purpose-built units, and many are adapted from existing buildings. Whatever the type of yard, all stables should, wherever possible:

- have good access and security
- have free drainage
- be dry and warm
- have good light, both natural and artificial
- offer good ventilation while being free from draughts.

STABLE CONSTRUCTION

Although stable construction varies, there are some common principles that apply.

DIMENSIONS

To accommodate a horse, a loose box should be a minimum of 3.6m² (12'²) and preferably 3.7m² (12' x 14'). Pony boxes should be about 3.6m (12') by 3m (10'). Foaling boxes will need to be a minimum of 4.6m² (15'²).

DOORS

Stable doors should be of sufficient height and width to allow the horse free entry and exit without damage to its head and body. The bottom part of the door can have a metal covering along the top edge to prevent the horse from chewing the wood. The door should open outwards. Latches should be of a non-projecting type so that they do not injure passing horses. Two are needed – one at the top and another at the bottom. A foot-operated type is preferable for the bottom one.

CONSTRUCTION

Stables can be constructed of wood, stone, concrete block or brick. Existing farm and outbuildings can often be converted to make good stabling. Wherever possible, stables should be cool in summer and warm in winter.

The stable walls should be impervious to enable periodic cleaning. This can be achieved by painting.



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Rubber flooring

FLOORS

It is important for surfaces to be non-slippery, moisture-resistant and durable. Concrete is often used as it is practical and easily laid, but it must have a roughened surface to prevent horses slipping. Rubber matting may be used as it is non-slip and protects the horse from injury.

VENTILATION

Stables should be draught-free yet well ventilated. Ideally, windows should open inwards and be protected by slats or bars on the inside.

ELECTRICITY

Stables should be adequately lit, and all electric wiring should be protected and safety switches used so that horses cannot chew them.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

These should be kept to a minimum to provide a safe environment for the horse. Two rings should be fitted at a height of approximately 1.5m (5'): one to tie up the horse; the other to hang up a hay net. A feed manger, if used, should be positioned in a corner at approximately the same height as the horse's chest. It should be deep enough to prevent the horse throwing its feed out, with a broad, smooth rim and rounded corners.

PROVISION OF WATER

Fresh water should be available for stabled horses. This can be provided by automatic water systems, which should be regularly cleaned and maintained. Alternatively, buckets can be used. Handles are often removed, particularly with young horses.

THE STABLE YARD

Stable yards differ widely, but some common principles apply, and the following features will play an important part in the safe and efficient running of any equestrian establishment.

HAY AND STRAW STORAGE

Ideally, hay and straw should be stored in covered areas close to the yard, with easy access and secure footing. Bales should be stored on pallets off the ground, this allows air to circulate and prevents damp rising from the ground into the bottom of the bales. Roofs should be weatherproof, and floors dry and well swept.

MUCK HEAP

Muck heaps or muck trailers should be away from, but within easy access to, the main yard and stable area. They need to be positioned so that muck can be removed easily and situated away from public areas.

FEED ROOM

The feed room should provide dry, vermin-proof storage bins for hard feed. A feed chart should be positioned so that it is easy to see and update if the feed is altered. There should be a secure storage area for feed additives and supplements.

TACK ROOM

The tack room should be dry, and large enough to hold all the tack and equipment required for a full stable of horses. The tack room should be well lit, with sufficient space for tack cleaning. Ideally, the tack room will have hot and cold water, along with heating for the winter months. This will prevent tack becoming damp and mouldy. Storage cupboards for equipment and veterinary items should be secure and vermin-proof. Thieves may target the tack room so a sound security system is vital.

CLIPPING AND TREATMENT AREAS

A spare stable with good lighting and an electricity supply is very useful for clipping and treating horses. Ideally, this area will have a non-slip floor such as rubber matting.

ISOLATION BLOCK

All stable yards should have one or two stables away from the main block so that new horses or those with infectious diseases can be isolated.



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BEDDING

For horses to stay healthy and fit, they should be kept in clean, well ventilated stables with plenty of bedding. A good bed is essential for the stabled horse for several reasons:

- to allow it to lie down and rest
- to provide insulation
- to encourage it to stale (urinate)
- to protect legs from standing for long periods on a hard surface.

When selecting a suitable bedding, the following points should be considered:

- availability
- effect on horse's health and condition
- warmth
- protection
- cost
- type of floor (e.g. rubber matting)
- method of disposal.

The most common types of bedding used in racing are:

- shavings
- straw
- paper
- rubber matting.

A summary of different types of bedding and their suitability is shown below:

Bedding	Advantages	Disadvantages
Shavings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fungal-spore-free • Absorbent • Easy to manage and use • Some are dust-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Can be difficult to dispose of
Straw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive • Readily available • Warm and comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May affect horses with respiratory problems • May also affect yard staff (e.g. those with asthma) • Some horses may eat straw bedding • Time-consuming to muck out
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spore-free • Warm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to dispose of • Expensive • Can be difficult to manage
Rubber matting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour-saving • Spore-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Horse/rugs get dirty • Usually used in conjunction with shavings or paper

DAILY ROUTINES

DAILY MUCKING OUT

Unless a deep litter method is used, beds should be mucked out daily. Some employers prefer horses to be removed from the stable while it is being mucked out. The process will vary according to which type of bedding is used, but the following principles apply to most types:

- Collect equipment (wheelbarrow, shovel, broom, fork and headcollar).
 - Check horse has eaten its last feed and that it has suffered no injury during the night. Tie horse up. Adjust rugs if necessary.
 - Remove water buckets.
 - Remove droppings.
 - Sort clean from soiled bedding. Place clean bedding to one wall, and remove soiled bedding.
 - Sweep floor.
 - Turn banks regularly.
 - Replace bedding and build banks.
 - Check sufficient depth of bedding by ensuring the fork does not strike through to the floor.
 - Add clean bedding.
 - Sweep in front of stable.
 - Empty wheelbarrow.
 - Scrub and refill water bucket or check automatic water bowls.
 - Untie horse.
 - Sweep yard and tidy up muck heap.
 - Return equipment and store it neatly.
- Any faulty or defective equipment that is noticed during mucking out should be reported to a supervisor.



Tool room

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CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Stables should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis and always after they have been occupied by a horse suffering from an infectious or contagious disease. The procedure is as follows:

- Remove all buckets, portable mangers and hay nets.
- Remove old hay and bedding.
- Dispose of salt lick if used.
- Clean floor, walls, doors, windows and fittings thoroughly with hose or pressure washer, and scrub to remove all organic material before soaking with disinfectant.
- Sweep out and leave to dry.

Disinfectants should be used carefully and under supervision. Protective clothing should be worn and the risk assessment adhered to.

MUCK DISPOSAL

Most employers will have an arrangement for the disposal of the muck heap. Prior to collection, muck areas should be kept tidy, with easy access for large vehicles. Rubbish such as packaging and string should be disposed of in designated bins and not put on the muck heap.



Muck heap

© British Racing School

DEEP LITTER

Deep litter is a system whereby droppings are removed from the bed regularly, but soiled bedding is left in place and fresh bedding placed on top of the old bed. The advantages of this method are:

- less bedding required
- labour-saving
- warm for horse.

However, the beds should be completely cleared several times a year, and careful attention should be paid to the horse's feet to prevent any disease such as thrush.

SKIPPING OUT

This is removing droppings regularly throughout the day.

SETTING FAIR/EVENING STABLES

At evening stables, the droppings should be removed, banks and bed tidied, and water buckets emptied and refilled with fresh water.



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WORKING SAFELY IN THE STABLE YARD

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

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

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

Protective clothing must be worn when disinfecting stables, drain or yards. This includes overalls, rubber gloves, strong waterproof gloves and goggles. Disinfectants should always be kept under lock and key. Supervisors will ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out.

If you are concerned, always ask for assistance.

REVISION TESTS

1. Name three different types of bedding. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each. State which type of bedding you would prefer to use for a horse in your care, and explain why.

2. Make a plan of the tack room in the yard where you work. Think of three things that work well in the layout of the tack room and three things you would do to improve it.

3. Answer the following questions:

(a) Describe a suitable stable for a Thoroughbred, and state the fittings that should be available.

(b) When preparing a stable for horses, what factors should be taken into consideration?

(c) Describe two potential hazards that may be present in stabling, and state how these can be minimised.

(d) How would you introduce a horse into a new stable?

(e) What are the requirements for ventilation, lights and fittings in stables?

GROOMING

This section is about grooming and presenting horses, and washing horses to improve appearance and to keep them healthy.

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

- grooming procedures for stabled and grass-kept horses
- reasons for grooming
- correct use and care of grooming equipment.





Body brush and curry comb

GROOMING

Grooming is the daily attention 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
- improve circulation
- maintain circulation
- prevent disease
- promote health.

GROOMING METHODS

Quartering

Quartering is done before exercise to check the horse over and tidy it up before work. 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 its eyes, nose and dock sponged. In cold weather, the rugs should be folded forwards and then back to expose the areas of the horse being brushed so that the horse does not get cold.

Full groom

A full and thorough grooming is carried out after exercise, normally at evening stables, and involves the following:

- Tie up the horse, and remove the water buckets so that they do not get in the way or gather dust from the grooming process.
- If the weather is cold, the rug should be folded over the quarters while grooming the forehand and over the shoulders while grooming the quarters.
- Pick the feet out. If the shoes are worn, loose or causing concern, the supervisor should be told. Hoof oil may be applied.
- Give the horse's coat a thorough brush using the body brush. After every few strokes, clean the brush with the curry comb. To remove the dust from the curry comb, tap it on the ground. Begin with the head and work towards the hindquarters. Use the body brush vigorously so that you lift and remove the dirt from the horse's coat. Normally, the horse will be brushed from the nearside with the left hand and offside with the right hand. When brushing areas that are difficult to reach or the underside of the horse, it may be necessary to swap the brush into the opposite hand. Particular care should be taken to remove the sweat marks from around the bridle, saddle, girth areas and between the horse's hind legs.
- Brush the mane and tail out with the body brush or dandy brush according to yard practice. The mane should be laid flat with a damp brush.
- Sponge the eyes, nose and dock. Two separate sponges should be available – one for the face and another for the dock. The under part of the tail should be wiped clean as this can become dirty and, if neglected, will become sore.
- Wipe the horse over with a stable rubber to give a shine to the coat.
- Shake the rugs to remove dust before replacing.



Stable rubber



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A colt or gelding will require regular attention to its sheath. The sheath can be washed with warm water and a mild soap. It may be necessary to have an assistant to help to restrain the horse.

A mare's dock will require similar attention but more frequently, particularly when she is in season.

Sponging off and hosing down

In hot weather or after strenuous work, horses will be sponged or hosed off to remove sweat and dirt, paying particular attention to the saddle and bridle area, neck, under the elbows and between the hind legs. Any excess water is removed with a sweat scraper. The horse should then be walked around in a suitable sweat rug or cooler until it is cool and dry.

Washing

Horses may be given a thorough wash down as a preparation for sales or performance or alternatively after a race or strenuous exercise. It may also be necessary to wash a horse to apply certain skin medications.

The horse should be completely soaked from the neck backwards with warm water and a suitable equine shampoo applied and worked into the coat. The horse's head should be gently sponged off. The horse should then be rinsed thoroughly and excess water removed with a sweat scraper. The horse should be walked out in a sweat rug or towelling sheet until it is dry and cool.

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



GROOMING THE GRASS-KEPT HORSE

Horses living out at grass will require the minimum of grooming. Grooming is normally limited to:

- picking out the feet and checking the shoes
- brushing with the dandy brush to remove mud and sweat marks, using the body brush on the head (the body brush is not normally used on the coat as it tends to remove too much grease, which helps to keep the horse warm and dry).



Picking out hoof

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 you are unsure of the temperament of a horse, always seek advice from a supervisor. Make sure the horse is tied up securely and according to yard practice.

When washing the horse, 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.

Make sure all grooming and washing equipment is stored away 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 – they are not biodegradable so must be disposed of safely.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the dangers of working in a dusty environment when grooming?

(b) What are the dangers of wearing perfume and jewellery when grooming?

(c) Describe two different grooming techniques.

(d) What are the reasons for grooming?

(e) Describe how to wash a horse in hot weather.

2. Take a photograph of a horse you look after before and after you have groomed it.

3. In the table below identify six things you should do when grooming a:

(a) grass-kept horse

(b) stabled horse in full work.

Grooming a Grass-kept Horse	Grooming a Stable-kept Horse

TRIMMING AND PLAITING

This section is about improving the appearance of a horse, including basic trimming and plaiting a mane.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of improving the appearance of a horse including:

- reasons for trimming
- reasons for plaiting
- how to trim
- how to plait.





PULLING

The reasons for pulling a mane are to:

- thin an over-thick mane
- shorten the mane to improve the appearance
- make plaiting easier
- help the mane lie flat.

A pulled mane can be kept tidy by removing long hairs a few at a time on a regular basis. This is best done after exercise or on a warm day as it will cause the horse less discomfort. To pull a mane, backcomb a small section of the mane, then wind the remaining few hairs around a mane comb and pluck them out briskly. Never pull the top hairs, and do not use scissors or clippers.

The length of the mane may vary according to the trainer's preference.

TRIMMING

The horse can be trimmed by clipping a small bridle gap at the top of the mane just behind the ears.

The tail will be cut squarely a few inches below the hock.

PLAITING A MANE

Plaiting the mane improves the horse's appearance by showing off the neck and crest. There should always be an odd number of plaits, excluding the forelock. The two conventional methods of securing plaits are sewing or using rubber bands.

The equipment required for plaiting includes:

- a water brush and water
- mane comb
- sail or tapestry needle (blunt-ended with a large eye)
- strong thread the colour of the mane
- scissors
- plaiting bands
- something safe to stand on.

The mane should be damped down with the water brush and divided into an odd number of equal parts. Plait each of these parts of the mane and secure the end with thread. The needle should then be pushed through the plait from underneath close to the crest, doubling the plait up. The plait should then be rolled up. Stitch through the underside of the plait to secure it, and cut the tail end of the thread close to the mane. It should be noted that plaits in racehorses are rarely sewn in as the jockey will often pull them out once he/she mounts.

The second method is to use rubber bands instead of a needle and thread. Having finished plaiting the lock of mane, a band should be looped several times around the end. The plait is then folded into position and the rubber band looped around near the crest until it is tight.



WORKING SAFELY WHEN TRIMMING AND PLAITING HORSES

Not all horses enjoy being trimmed and plaited. They may fidget and become temperamental. If you are unsure of the temperament of a horse, always seek advice from a supervisor. Make sure the horse is tied up securely and according to yard practice. It may be necessary to ask a colleague to restrain the horse for you.

If you are using a needle and thread, plait the horse on an area clear of bedding. Otherwise, if you drop the needle, it will get lost in the bed.

Make sure all plaiting and trimming equipment is stored away in its correct place after use.

REVISION TESTS

1. Take two photographs of a horse you look after. The first photo should show the mane unplaited and the second photo after you have plaited it.
2. Complete the sentences below using the words in the box:

Thread	Comb	Thin
Bands	Appearance	Shorten

- (a) Plaits can improve the of a horse.
 - (b) Manes can be pulled to and them.
 - (c) Plaits can be secured by or .
 - (d) A mane can be used to pull a mane.
3. Answer the questions below:

- (a) Describe the circumstances when a horse may be plaited.

- (b) Why are horses trimmed?

- (c) How can a horse be restrained for trimming or plaiting?

- (d) Describe the plaiting process.

FEEDING AND WATERING

This section is about how to feed horses, both stabled and at grass, and understanding the basic nutritional requirements of horses at rest and in work.

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

- rules of feeding and watering
- how to identify common feedstuffs
- general principles of feeding
- behaviour and habits of horses at feed times.

The preparation of feed and planning diets for horses is a senior responsibility, and requires experience and skill to ensure horses get the best possible diet for the activity they are undertaking. Many employers work with feed companies and equine nutritionists in order to combine the art and science of feeding to get the best results.





Manger

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FEEDING

Horses in the wild will eat little and often, and normally over extensive areas. The horse 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 regular feeds and a diet to suit its activity level.

Feeding horses is a combination of experience, knowledge and science. A senior member of yard staff will normally be responsible for preparing a diet for each horse, often in collaboration with a feed company or equine nutritionist. When preparing rations, there are a number of general principles that should be considered.

RULES OF FEEDING

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

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 lifting them. Horses can suffer from colic or choke and grain overload, which can be fatal, through overeating after breaking loose and straying into a feed room.

Hay and straw should be stacked on pallets or wooden slats to allow the air to circulate underneath, and to prevent damp from rising into the bottom bales.



WATER

Water is vital and is present in every part of the body. Thirst will cause death in a much shorter time than hunger. All food materials contain water, but the main source is drinking water.

Some of the reasons that water is so important include the following:

- Nutrients can only pass through the gut wall as a solution.
- It helps regulate body temperature, through sweating.
- It acts as a lubricant (e.g. saliva aids the chewing and swallowing of forage).
- Water helps in the removal of waste (e.g. through the production of urine).

A horse can drink up to 55 litres (12 gallons) a day. This will vary according to the horse's work and diet, and the weather.

A stabled horse's water should be changed at least twice a day and topped up as necessary as standing water becomes stale and unpalatable due to the absorption of ammonia from the air.

After hard physical work, and particularly in hot weather, a horse should be offered small sips of water until it has cooled off and stopped blowing.



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NUTRIENTS IN THE DIET

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are the horse's main source of energy. Carbohydrates are found in cellulose (grass and forage), starch (cereals) and sugar (molasses). The racehorse needs to be fed a high-energy diet with good quality protein to fulfil its needs for maintenance, growth and exercise.

PROTEINS

Proteins are required for growth, body building and tissue repair. Protein is also a source of energy but is only used if carbohydrate is deficient in the diet. Protein is essential for all horses, but youngstock, and in-foal and lactating mares need higher levels in the diet.

FIBRE

Fibre in the diet assists the digestive process and provides the horse with slow-release energy. All the normal components of the horse's diet contain some fibre, but forage is the main source. A horse should have at least 40% of its total diet as roughage.

FATS AND OILS

Fat is a concentrated source of energy. Fat is stored in the body under the skin and around the internal organs, and acts as a source of energy when required. The horse's normal diet contains a sufficient amount of fats and oils.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Minerals and vitamins are micro-nutrients that play important roles in the normal functioning of the body. They occur naturally in certain foods, and the horse can make some vitamins from materials in the diet. However, the racehorse has restricted access to grazing and may need to receive a mineral and vitamin supplement in order to balance the diet.

A BALANCED DIET

Horses should receive a well-balanced, palatable diet. There are a wide range of traditional feeds available, along with proprietary brands of mixes and cubes.

TRADITIONAL FEEDS



© The National Stud

Feed Type	Overview	Use	Feeding Advice
Oats	Large, hard, shiny and dust-free	Good energy-giving feed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palatable Fed rolled for better digestion
Maize	Shiny, yellow, large flakes	High energy, low fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually fed micronized or steam flaked Palatable and easily digested Good for putting weight on horses in poor condition
Barley	Bright, clean and plump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy-giving Good for increasing weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be fed rolled, micronized, steam flaked or boiled Boiled barley is a useful, easily digested feed that can be used after hard exercise
Bran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By-product of the milling process of wheat Flakes should be dry and dust-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds bulk and aids digestion Low in calcium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has mild laxative properties Can be fed as a mash to tired or sick horses
Linseed	Small, hard, shiny brown seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High in oil and protein Improves condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly palatable and has mild laxative properties Must be boiled before feeding to destroy toxins
Sugar beet	Shredded or cubes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High fibre, high calcium Succulent feed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be fed soaked Not widely used in diets of horses in hard, fast work
Succulents	Grass, apples, carrots	Add variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tempt difficult and 'fussy' feeders Aid digestion
Peas and beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normally fed steam flaked or micronized Sometimes mixed with flaked maize and barley 	High in energy and protein	Palatable and useful to tempt difficult and 'fussy' feeders

COMPOUND FEEDS

There is a wide range of mixes and cubes prepared by manufacturers to suit a variety of horses in different work situations. The range includes:

Type	Use
Horse and pony/leisure	For horses in light to medium work
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For performance horses in medium to hard work • Contains no prohibited substances
Racehorse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For racehorses and competition horses in peak fitness undertaking hard, fast work • Contains no prohibited substances
Stud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For brood mares and stallions • High protein and energy
Yearling	For growing youngstock
High fibre	For replacing all or part of the hay ration for horses with serious dust allergies or potential laminitics

The advantages of feeding a compound feed are:

- consistent quality
- balanced diet
- prepared for a range of types and requirements
- convenient
- dust-free
- palatable.



BULK FEEDS

Forage in the form of hay or haylage provides the stabled horse with the bulk feed needed as a substitute for grass. Good hay should be:

- sweet-smelling
- a light greenish/brown colour
- crisp and free from dust
- free from signs of damp and mould.

There are three main types of hay available:

- Meadow hay – this comes from permanent pasture and has a soft texture. It is used for horses in light to medium work, and contains a wide variety of grasses.
- Seed hay – this is made from temporary pasture. It is usually used for horses in hard work. It tends to be coarser and harder to the touch than meadow hay.
- Lucerne/alfalfa – this is a clover-type plant used in the same way as hay. It is high in energy, protein and calcium.

Haylage

Haylage is made from grass that is cut, wilted and then packed in airtight plastic wrap. It is available in bales of various sizes. It has a higher nutrient value than hay and is dust- and mould-free, making it ideal for performance horses or those with respiratory problems as an alternative to soaked hay. Once opened, haylage should be used reasonably quickly as it will deteriorate within a few days.

Horses that suffer from respiratory problems may need to be fed soaked or steamed hay.

Hay and haylage can be fed in a variety of ways, including:

- feeding from the ground — the most natural way but can be wasteful unless small portions are fed
- hay racks — attached to the stable wall
- hay nets — economical and easy to weigh on a spring balance, must be tied up safely.



Correctly secured hay net

MAKING UP AND GIVING FEEDS

Feeds should be made up and mixed in a container or bucket prior to being fed to the horse. Most yards have a feed room with a feed chart showing how much and what type of feed each horse should receive.

It is important to know the exact quantities of feed. Often, feed charts will express the ration in 'scoops', and the weight of each type of feed should be calculated per scoop.

Stabled horses are generally fed from a manger to avoid waste. These can be fixed or portable and should be kept clean and dry.

Grass-kept horses should be fed from a bowl on the ground or a manger hanging on a fence or gate. 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.

FEEDING FROM A FEED CHART

When feeding from a chart, the following points should be considered:

- Are utensils clean and safe?
- Are instructions clear and understood?
- Is feed measured accurately? (There is a big difference between a flat scoop and a heaped scoop.)
- Is the feed room swept out and left clean and tidy?



WORKING SAFELY WHEN FEEDING HORSES

Horses can become temperamental and aggressive at feed times so care should be taken and assistance sought if required.

Racehorses and performance horses must be fed a diet free from prohibited substances so all feed must be given by a senior member of staff and any treats avoided.

REVISION TESTS

1. Ask permission to take a photograph of the yard where you work. Explain what each horse gets to eat per day in respect of type of food and amount. How much hay or haylage does the horse get to complement its hard food? Also state what the horse's daily work routine is.
2. Answer the following questions:
 - (a) Give six rules of good feeding.
 - (b) What are the dangers of feeding poor quality food?
 - (c) Why is fibre necessary in a horse's diet?
 - (d) Name two types of hay.
 - (e) How much water will an average horse drink per day?
 - (f) Give two examples of succulent food.
 - (g) Give three methods of feeding hay, and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each method.
3. Are the following statements true or false?
 - (a) Horses should be fed little and often.
 True False
 - (b) Stabled horses should have their water changed every other day.
 True False
 - (c) Hay should be stored outside on a hard surface.
 True False
 - (d) A supervisor should be advised if a horse leaves its feed.
 True False
 - (e) Sugar beet should be fed dry.
 True False
 - (f) Lack of water could lead to dehydration in a horse.
 True False
 - (g) Hay can be fed in a hay net.
 True False
 - (h) Compound feeds can provide a balanced diet.
 True False
 - (i) Linseed must be boiled prior to feeding
 True False
 - (j) Proteins are used for body building and tissue repair.
 True False

HORSE HEALTH

This section is about promoting and maintaining the health and well-being of horses.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of the health and well-being of horses including:

- recognising a healthy horse
- signs of ill health
- how to recognise a horse health emergency and the action to take
- when to call a vet
- routine preventative treatments
- care of the horse's foot
- how to recognise lameness in the horse
- how to recognise and treat minor health issues in the horse
- recognising stable vices.

Racing grooms play a very important role in maintaining the health of horses in their care and reporting any abnormalities that might require veterinary attention. Many ailments can be resolved most effectively by early recognition and attention.

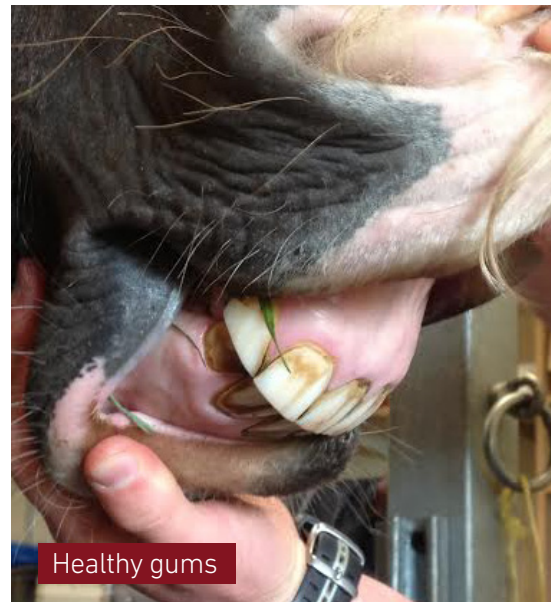


Horse in good health



© Mikaelle Lebreton/Mark Johnston Racing

Alert expression



© Rosdales

Healthy gums

SIGNS OF GOOD HEALTH

It is important to recognise the signs of good health so that any abnormalities are identified immediately.

Most stable staff will be familiar with the characteristics of horses in their care and will be quick to identify any abnormalities. The following are indications of good health:

- bright eyes
- alert expression
- normal behaviour
- sleek coat that is lying flat
- normal droppings
- urine is colourless or pale yellow and passed several times a day
- good appetite
- drinking normal amount of water – 8–12 gallons (32–48 litres) per day
- salmon-pink mucous membrane of eyes, gums and lining of nostrils
- no visible signs of sweating at rest
- temperature 37.5°C–38.5°C (99.5°F–101.3°F)
- pulse rate (heart rate) 36–42 beats per minute (bpm) at rest
- respiration rate (breathing) 8–12 breaths per minute at rest.

MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH

Any changes from the signs of good health, or abnormal behaviour, should be reported to a supervisor. Whether a horse is stabled or living out, it has the following needs:

- balanced diet
- clean, fresh water
- suitable work and exercise
- safe environment
- regular dental care
- regular foot care
- routine preventative health care:
 - worming
 - faecal worm egg counts
 - tetanus vaccinations
 - influenza vaccinations.

CARING FOR A SICK HORSE

Any sign of ill health or injury should be reported to a supervisor immediately. Careful and considerate nursing of a sick horse will greatly improve the likelihood of it making a full and complete recovery. The following points should be considered when caring for ill or injured horses:

- Environment – if there is any likelihood of the horse having an infectious or contagious disease, it should be isolated immediately. The horse should be moved to an isolation block or a stable well away from the others. Keep tack, tools and equipment separate, follow agreed disinfectant procedures, and maintain high levels of self-hygiene to prevent the spread of disease.
- Stable – the stable should be well ventilated.
- Bedding – the horse’s bed should be clean, dry and deep. If the horse has a respiratory problem, paper or shavings are preferable to straw.
- Exercise – exercise according to veterinary instruction.
- Feed – give small, regular, tempting feeds. A low-concentrate, high-roughage, laxative diet is normally recommended.
- Warmth – keep the horse warm with lightweight rugs. Stable bandages may also be used for warmth, protection and support.
- Grooming – give a light groom to make the horse comfortable.
- Medication – medication will always be given by a senior member of staff.



A horse with colic

© Rossdales

PREVENTION OF DISEASE

Good management and routine health care will help to prevent a horse from becoming ill. Preventative measures include the following:

- Vaccination against influenza is mandatory for all racehorses in the UK and for competition horses in the FEI disciplines, and must be correctly recorded on the horse’s passport by the veterinary surgeon who has administered the vaccine. Vaccination against tetanus is not mandatory but is highly recommended.
- Worm control is a key factor in maintaining a horse’s health and condition. Worm control includes good pasture management (picking up droppings regularly) and use of an appropriate worming strategy:
 - interval or strategic worming – the use of specific wormers at set times of the year.
 - ideally, targeted strategic worming based on regular faecal worm egg counts.

LAMENESS

When diagnosing lameness, the first task is to find out which leg the horse is lame on. The procedure is as follows:

- The horse should be observed in the stable for any obvious wounds or injuries. If the horse is resting or ‘pointing’ a leg, that may indicate the painful limb.
- The leg should be examined for heat, pain and swelling.

The horse will then be led up in hand in walk and trot:

- A horse that is lame in front will drop/nod its head as the sound leg touches the ground, and raise its head when the lame leg touches the ground.
- A horse that is lame behind may drag the lame leg, or show irregular hip action.

Identifying the lame leg is a skill that is developed over years, and will require senior staff or veterinary input to make such a diagnosis.

TREATMENT OF WOUNDS AND INJURIES

A senior member of staff who will decide whether the wound requires veterinary attention normally deals with wounds and injuries. All injuries, however slight, should be reported immediately to a supervisor.

There are four main types of wounds, which are shown in the table below:

Type of Wound	Cause	Symptoms	Treatment
Contused (bruise)	Blow or kick	Skin unbroken, but heat, pain and swelling may be present	Depending on the site of the injury, cold hosing or poultice
Incised	Glass/sharp object	Clean cut edges to wound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess wound for veterinary attention Clean the wound Control bleeding
Lacerated (tear)	Wire etc.	Edges of cut are jagged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess wound for veterinary attention Clean the wound Control bleeding
Puncture	Nail/thorn etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small, deep wound Potentially serious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess wound for veterinary attention Where possible (i.e. if it is not likely to cause further harm), leave the penetrating object in place until veterinary attention has been sought. Clean the wound Poultice Check the horse is vaccinated against tetanus

For all wound types, check the horse is vaccinated against tetanus. All wounds carry the potential for infection and tetanus, both of which may be life-threatening. Racehorses and breeding stock will normally be vaccinated against tetanus.



Eye injury showing healing process

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Superficial flesh wounds

MANAGING A WOUND

The size of a wound does not always reflect the severity, and if an injury is found, however small, the supervisor should always be informed.

The following procedure will normally be followed:

- The wound will be assessed to establish whether it needs veterinary attention.
- The bleeding will be controlled by applying pressure if necessary.
- The wound will be cleaned (trimming any excess hair around the site of the wound). Clean with an antiseptic solution.
- A non-stick dressing and bandage may be applied if necessary to protect the wound.



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Foot abscess

TYPES OF TREATMENT

There are several methods of treating wounds and injuries, including:

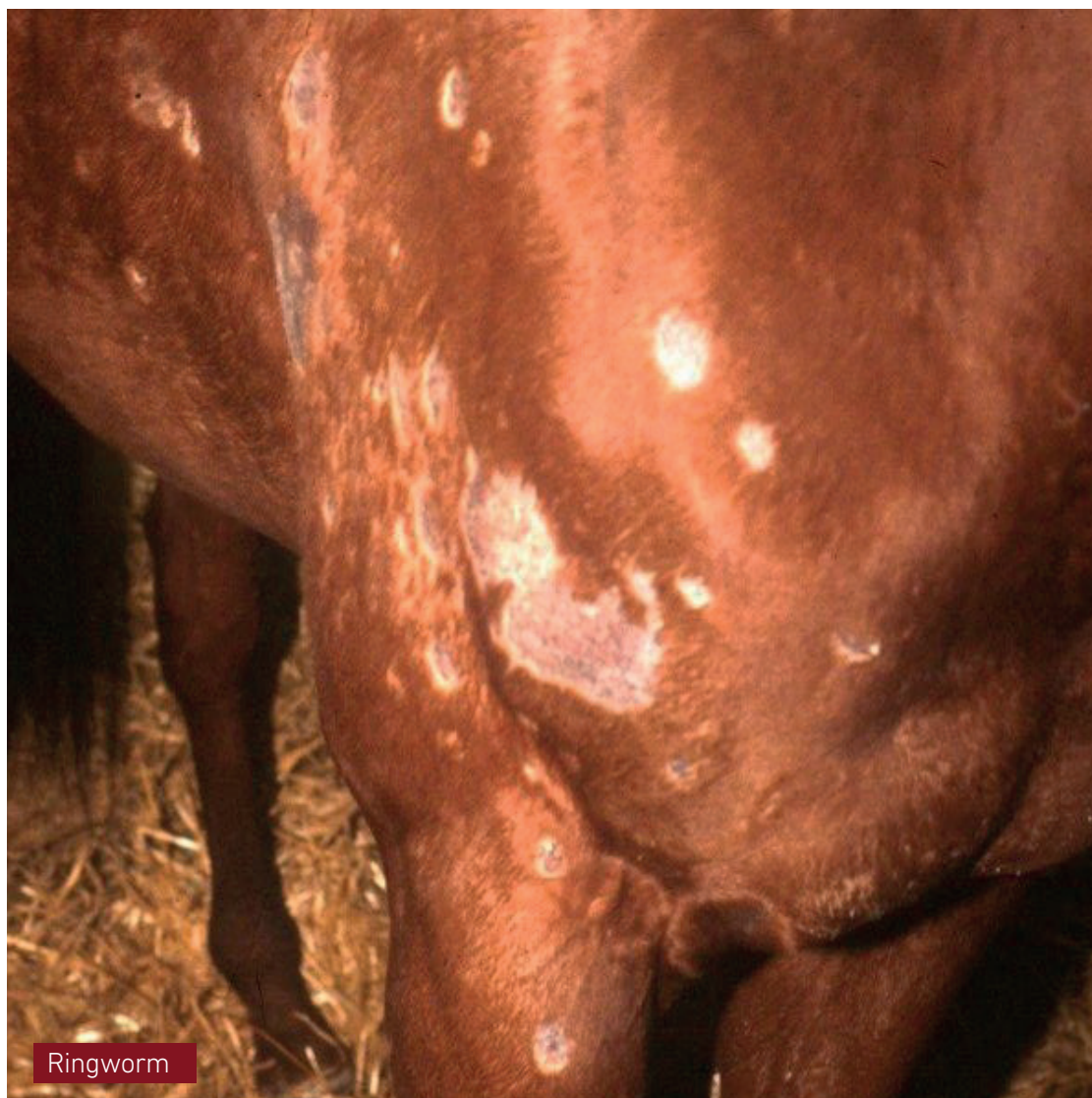
- Hosing – This is an effective way of reducing heat and cleaning a wound. The water should be set at a fast trickle, and starting at the foot, the flow of water should be taken up the leg until it is above the affected area. Hosing should last for about 10–15 minutes depending on the supervisor's directions.
- Tubbing – Tubbing is an effective treatment for a bruised foot or foot abscess. The horse's foot should be placed in a bucket of hand-hot water (with a handful of Epsom salts) for about 20 minutes. Keep topping up with warm water to maintain a consistent temperature.
- Fomenting – This is a method of treating bruised wounds that are difficult to poultice (e.g. a kick on the hindquarters). Soak a towel in a bucket of hand-hot water with a handful of Epsom salts in it. Place the hot towel over the affected area for one minute. Re-soak the towel and repeat the process for about 15 minutes.

COMMON AILMENTS

Horses can suffer a variety of different ailments. There are a number of common ailments, the symptoms of which should be recognised and reported.

Ailment	Signs	Immediate Treatment	Prevention
Colic (abdominal pain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discomfort Restlessness Lying down/getting up frequently Patchy sweating Kicking belly Looking at flanks Increased temperature, pulse, respiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call vet Prevent horse from rolling Walk out where it is safe to do so Remove food, but allow access to clean water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate worming strategy Adhere to rules of good feeding Careful stable management and following a regular routine
Equine influenza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High temperature Nasal discharge Loss of appetite Cough Lethargy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call vet Isolate Stop work Adjust diet 	Vaccination is mandatory for racehorses in the UK, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> decreases the severity of illness in affected horses reduces the risk of an outbreak occurring reduces the spread of disease in an outbreak
Strangles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High temperature Nasal discharge Raised pulse and respiration Mucous membranes red Loss of appetite and energy Glands beneath throat hot and swollen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate Call vet Adjust diet Keep horse warm 	Highly infectious so implement strict isolation and disinfectant procedures
Azoturia or 'tying up' (painful muscle cramp over loins, normally occurs after exercise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindquarters become stiff and hind legs drag Muscles over quarters become hard and painful Increased temperature, pulse rate and respiration rate Sweating Reluctance to move 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop horse from moving to prevent further muscle damage Call vet Keep horse warm Transport home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some horses are more susceptible to azoturia than others Feed well balanced diet, introducing changes gradually Reduce concentrate ration prior to rest day
Mud fever/cracked heels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scabby areas of skin in heels and back of pasterns In severe cases, larger areas of skin become swollen and sore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on severity, condition may need vet treatment Keep horse in a dry, clean environment Remove scabs Apply antibiotic ointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some horses are more susceptible than others Keep legs clean and dry after exercise

Ailment	Signs	Immediate Treatment	Prevention
Laminitis (painful condition that affects the feet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical stance stretching forelegs forward and taking weight on heel • Feet hot • Reluctance to move • Increase in temperature, pulse rate and respiration rate • Bounding digital pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In acute stages, call the vet • Restrict access to pasture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses that are overweight or have suffered previous attacks are more susceptible • Careful feeding management is required
Abscess in foot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute lameness • Heat in foot • Reluctance to move or bear weight on affected limb • Bounding/strong digital pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call vet or farrier to locate site and release pus • Tub and poultice foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be caused by bruised foot, poorly fitting shoes or penetration (i.e. standing on a nail) • Normally clears up quickly after treatment
Bruised foot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treading on sharp object • Varying degrees of lameness in affected limb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove shoe • Stop work • Tub and poultice the foot 	Normally clears up quickly after treatment unless bruising is very deep-seated
Ringworm (fungal infection, can be transmitted to humans)	Small, circular areas of raised hair that falls out to leave patches of scaly skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate • Call vet • Apply anti-fungal wash or cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infectious • Strict isolation and hygiene procedures • Normally clears up quickly after treatment • Must be examined by the yard veterinary surgeon and accompanied by the appropriate certification if the horse is to go racing before the hair has grown back



CARE OF THE HORSE'S FOOT

Careful daily attention to the horse's feet, along with regular shoeing, can assist in preventing lameness and lost work. Hooves should be picked out prior to and after exercise, and during evening stables. Many yards have a policy of applying hoof oil or other hoof treatment on a daily basis.

The condition of the horse's feet and shoes should be checked daily. Any concerns regarding the shoes should be reported to a supervisor. Indications that re-shoeing is necessary include:

- loose shoe
- shoe that has worn thin
- risen clenches
- cast (lost) shoe
- shoe that has become twisted or displaced
- overgrown and out of shape feet.

STABLE VICES AND MANAGEMENT

Horses can develop stable vices, some of which are difficult, if not impossible, to cure. These are often attributed to anxiety or illness. Any abnormal behaviour should be reported. Some of the common vices are listed below.

WEAVING

The horse swings its head and neck from side to side, often when it is stressed or at feed times. In a severe form, the horse may rock from one foreleg to the other. The horse may develop the habit through boredom or nervous tension. It is a difficult vice to manage but can be alleviated by reducing the anxiety by either turning the horse out or by giving regular exercise. Anti-weaving grilles may be fitted.

CRIB-BITING

The horse will grab hold of the manger or top of the door, drawing air in through the mouth and swallowing it, often making a loud gulping noise. This can cause colic and poor condition. The cause is unclear. An anti-crib collar may be effective in managing the behaviour but not eliminate the underlying cause.

WINDSUCKING

This is a stage on from crib-biting where the horse arches its neck and swallows air without catching hold of anything. It may also lead to colic and poor condition. It is very difficult to cure although an anti-crib collar may help.



BOX WALKING

This is a tiresome habit as the horse walks continuously around its stable, creating havoc with its bed and rarely resting. It is generally caused by stress or anxiety, especially if a horse resents being separated from a companion. Horses with this habit are often difficult to keep condition on, and waste a lot of energy. This vice is difficult to cure, but a calm environment with company helps.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN CARING FOR SICK HORSES

All medication should be kept in a locked cupboard and only administered by a senior member of staff. Records should be maintained of all medication administered.

Items used for cleaning and treating wounds should be disposed of safely, and care taken to wash hands thoroughly after any treatments.

Horses suffering injury or ill health can display abnormal behaviour and stress so always be aware of any changes of temperament, and seek help if required.

Horses in isolation should be cared for by separate staff, or should be cared for after all healthy horses, to reduce the spread of disease. Separate equipment should be used for horses in isolation.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

- (a) What are the reasons for hosing a horse, and how should it be carried out?

- (b) Describe the symptoms of colic, and explain what action to take if a case of colic is suspected.

- (c) State three different types of wound, and give a cause, symptom and treatment for each.

- (d) Describe the action that should be taken with a horse suspected of having a contagious or infectious disease.

- (e) State the normal temperature of a horse.

- (f) State the normal respiration rate of a horse at rest.

- (g) State the normal pulse rate of a horse at rest.

2. Describe an occasion when you observed a horse ailment or illness. What was the condition and how was it dealt with?

3. Are the following statements true or false?

- (a) Strangles is a contagious disease.

True False

- (b) A foot abscess can cause lameness.

True False

- (c) A bruised foot should be tubbed and poulticed.

True False

- (d) A horse with very warm feet and its forelegs stretched forward, taking the weight on its heels may be suffering from colic.

True False

- (e) Box walking is a vice associated with anxiety.

True False

- (f) The normal pulse rate of a horse is 12–15bpm.

True False

- (g) A horse can be vaccinated against laminitis.

True False

HORSE CLOTHING

This section is about the use and care of rugs and other 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 the horses you are caring for.

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

- different types of rugs and their uses
- how to fit rugs and the dangers of ill-fitting rugs
- purpose and fitting of stable bandages
- purpose and fitting of tail bandages
- dangers of ill-fitting bandages.



Stable rug



Outdoor rug



Summer sheet



Cooler/sweat 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 some will have legs straps or a neck cover.

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, and may include a neck cover. Modern outdoor rugs are made of synthetic fabrics that afford 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.

SUMMER SHEET

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

COOLER/SWEAT RUG

These are made of cotton mesh, synthetic materials or towelling. These are used on sweating horses while cooling off, or after washing or sponging off a horse.



Exercise sheet

EXERCISE SHEET

These short, square-fronted rugs are used in cold weather to keep the horse’s back, loins and quarter muscles warm. They are fitted under the saddle and will have a fillet string that passes behind the quarters to prevent the sheet from blowing forward.

PADDOCK SHEET

These are similar to exercise sheets and are used for parading a racehorse prior to a race or sale. They will often be made in the same colour as the owner’s or trainer’s racing colours and have a set of initials in the corner. They will normally be used with a matching racing surcingle.



Paddock sheet

RUGGING UP

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 as follows:

- Secure the horse.
- Fold the rug in half with the back folded towards the front.
- Reassure the horse. While standing at the 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 legs straps and then the surcingle or roller.
- 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 regularly for signs of chafing. When measuring a horse for a rug, the measurement should be taken from the point between the centre of the chest to the farthest point of the hindquarters. The depth of the rug is usually standard although some manufacturers offer a choice of extra depth. Rugs are usually sized in increments of three inches.

CARE AND STORAGE OF RUGS

Rugs in daily use 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 washed, re-proofed and dried before being stored away for the summer. Repairs should be carried out as required, and leather fittings should be oiled with leather dressing. 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.

BANDAGES

Bandages are used for a variety of reasons, including:

- protection
- support
- warmth
- veterinary purposes
- travelling.

The two main types of bandages in common use are tail bandages and stable bandages.

TAIL BANDAGES

Tail bandages are made of an elasticated fabric. They can be used on a pulled tail to keep the hair straight or when travelling, to prevent rubbing. Tail bandages should never be left on overnight or on long journeys as this can cause discomfort and damage the tail. The procedure for applying a tail bandage is as follows:

- Lightly dampen the tail hair with a water brush.
- Placing the left hand under the tail, unroll about 20cm (eight inches) of bandage.
- Put the bandage under the tail, leaving a 10cm (four-inch) flap.
- Secure the end of the bandage by making one or two turns as high as possible then bring down the spare flap of bandage.
- Unroll the bandage evenly around and downwards, overlapping about half the bandage width at each turn.
- Bandage to the end of the dock, wrap the tapes around the tail, and tie to the side.
- To remove the bandage, untie the tapes, grasp the bandage with both hands around the dock, and slide it off in a downwards direction.



STABLE BANDAGES

Stable bandages are used for warmth, protection, drying off wet legs, support, or keeping a dressing in place. They are normally made of a woollen-type material and applied with padding underneath. This will protect the leg from direct pressure from the bandages that could cause pressure sores and circulatory problems. If used for travelling, the padding should extend well over the knee and coronet of the front legs, hock and coronet of the hind legs.

Types of padding include:

- gamgee – cotton wool with gauze cover, popular for use over wounds, and offers good protection
- felt-covered foam – easy to wash and durable, making it popular for use when travelling and under exercise bandages, also called fibagee
- leg wraps – thick padded squares, these give good protection and are hard-wearing.

Applying stable bandages

The general principles of fitting stable bandages are as follows:

- Before use, check that bandages have been correctly rolled, with the tapes or Velcro in the centre.
- Wrap the padding around the leg, ensuring that it lies flat.
- Starting below the knee or hock, pass the rolled up bandage around the leg with an even tension, wrapping around the leg towards the tail.
- Tie the tapes or fasten the Velcro. Neither should be tighter than the bandage itself.
- The padding underneath the bandage should always run in the same direction as the bandage, and the edge of the padding must not lie on the tendons as this could cause pressure points.
- To avoid pressure points, tapes should be tied to the outside of the leg, not on the shin at the front or the tendons at the back.
- To remove a leg bandage, unfasten the tapes or Velcro, and unwind the bandage, quickly passing the unwound bandage from hand to hand. The bandage should not be rolled up as it is being removed.
- Once it has been removed, the tendons should be checked for irregularities, and the bandage cleaned, dried and rolled up.
- Stable bandages should never be left on a horse for more than 12 hours at a time.

WORKING SAFELY WITH HORSE CLOTHING

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

Always report any damage to rugs or horse clothing. Damaged equipment should be taken out of use and sent for repair.

When cleaning rugs and horse clothing, adhere to manufacturers' 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.

When putting on tail or stable bandages, be very aware of the horse's temperament or signs of agitation – when it may be tempted to kick out. Never kneel down when applying stable bandages.

If problems are encountered, always seek assistance.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the reasons for applying stable bandages?

(b) What are the dangers of unsafe bandaging?

(c) Name four different types of rugs, and describe their use.

(d) What are the consequences of badly fitting rugs?

2. From a catalogue, sales brochure or the Internet, obtain photographs of three different types of rugs. Describe the rugs, and state when they would be used and for what purpose.
3. Practise putting on stable bandages. When you are happy that you have mastered that skill, take a photograph for your records.

SADDLERY AND TACKING UP

This section is about the saddlery in common use, tacking up and removing tack after exercise.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of saddlery and tacking up including how to:

- identify tack and equipment in common use
- fit and apply tack
- recognise if the tack is likely to cause the horse discomfort or be unsafe
- care for tack and equipment.



Tacking up

SADDLERY

Well fitting tack is extremely important to protect the safety and welfare of horses and riders. 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:

- bridles
- martingales
- breastplates
- saddles
- exercise boots.



Loose ring snaffle bit

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.

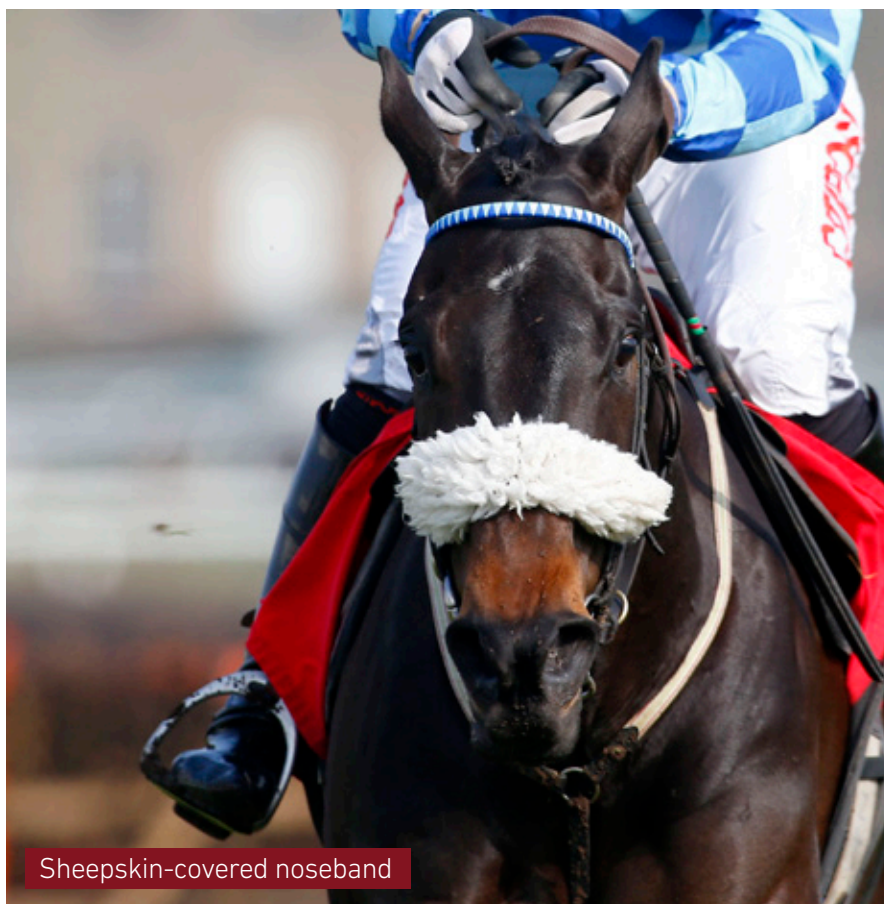




Drop noseband



Grackle



Sheepskin-covered noseband

© Racingfotos.com



Flash noseband



Cavesson



Kinton

NOSEBAND

There are a range of different nosebands, including:

- drop
- cavesson
- sheepskin-covered
- grackle
- flash
- kinton



MARTINGALES

There are several different types of martingales available according to the particular needs of the horse and rider. The most common types are:

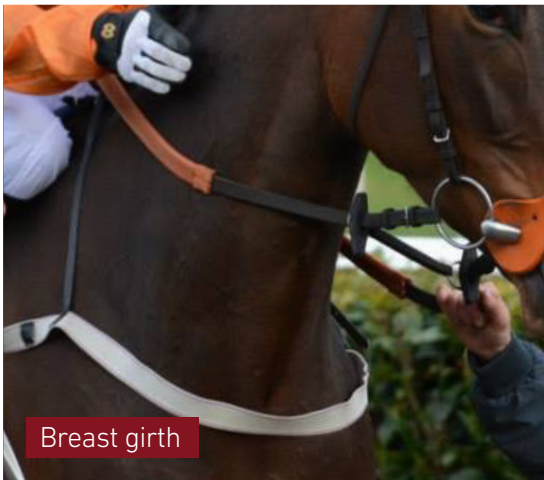
- Standing – this type of martingale prevents the horse lifting its head beyond the point of control, and fixes at one end to the girth and the other end to the cavesson noseband with a leather strap passing around the horse's neck.
- Running – this type of martingale has the reins passing through the rings of the martingale, which puts pressure on the horse's mouth when its head is raised too high. This helps to prevent the horse from putting its head above the point of control.
- Bib – this type of martingale has a centre piece of leather to prevent the horse from getting caught up in the branches of the martingale.
- Irish – this is a short strap with rings at each end through which the reins pass. This martingale is designed to prevent the reins coming over the horse's head in the event of a fall. This type of martingale is normally used for racing.

© Mikaelle Lebreton/Mark Johnston Racing



Breastplate

© Jedda O'Keefe Racing



Breast girth

BREASTPLATES AND BREAST GIRTHS

These are used to prevent the saddle from slipping back.

- Breastplate – this fitted with straps running back to fasten on the saddle 'D', and a further strap is passed between the horse's front legs, after which the girth is passed through the loop to secure it. Care must be taken not to fit the breastplate too tightly as it can cut into the horse's chest when jumping.
- Breast girth – this has a section of web or elastic, and fastens to the girths underneath the flap of the saddle.



Racing saddle

SADDLES

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 saddles, depending on the type of riding activity. These include saddles for:

- racing
- general purpose
- jumping
- dressage.



Girth straps and girth

© British Racing School

Structure of the 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 determines the size and width of the saddle. The tree may be either rigid or spring. Some racing saddles are half tree.
- 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.
- 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.

Girths

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.

Saddle pad

This is a protective pad that sits 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.

EXERCISE/PROTECTIVE BOOTS

There is a wide variety of boots available to protect the horse from injury during flat work, fast work or jumping.

The principal types, each produced in a variety of materials and designs, include:



Brushing

Designed to protect the inside of the leg and fetlock from injury from the opposite leg



Yorkshire

Designed to protect the hind fetlock from low brush injuries



Tendon

Similar to brushing boots but open at the front with extra protection over the tendon area



Overreach

Bell-shaped rubber boots that fit over the hoof, protecting the heels and coronet



Knee

Designed to protect the knees during road work or travelling; normally made of thick felt or leather and fastened securely above the knee, and loose enough below the knee to avoid any restriction of movement



Fetlock

Similar in purpose to the Yorkshire boot, designed to protect the fetlock from brushing injury

TACKING UP

The procedure for tacking up is described below.

- Approach the horse quietly from the front or nearside, 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 saddle pad well forward on the horse's back.
- If an exercise sheet is used, this should be placed over the saddle pad. It will normally have the corners folded up at the front.
- Place the saddle on the saddle pad, and slide into position.
- Straighten the saddle pad and pull up into the arch of the saddle.
- Fasten the girth, catching the loop of the martingale if worn.
- 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 horse's 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

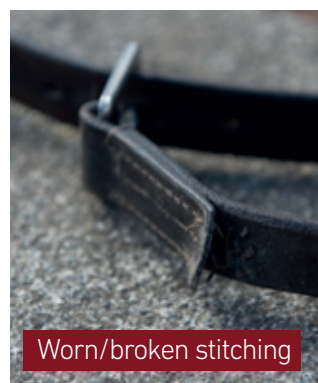
If a horse has to be left in the stable with a saddle and bridle on, the following checks should be made:

- 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 as follows:

- Tie the horse up.
- Remove the saddle and pad.
- 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.



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.

When cleaning tack, the following procedure should be used:

- Undo all billets and buckles.
- Clean each part with a damp sponge, checking the stitching and leather.
- Soap each part.
- Polish metal parts (except the mouthpiece of the bit).
- Re-assemble.

A summary of the routine care of tack is shown in the table below:

Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe over tack with damp sponge. • Wash bit. • Check for safety.
Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismantle tack and give thorough clean and soap. • Polish metal parts. • Wash girths and saddle pads.
Annual care and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have saddle checked by saddler 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 WITH SADDLERY AND WHEN TACKING UP

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. Answer the following questions:

(a) Why is it important to check tack for comfort and safety?

(b) What are the main features of correctly fitting tack?

(c) Describe how you should approach and handle a horse when tacking up.

(d) What type of problems could occur when you are tacking up a horse?

(e) Give two examples of ill-fitting tack, and state how you would deal with them.

2. Have a look in the tack room at the yard where you work. Identify three different types of noseband, breast girth or martingale that are in use.

3. Name three different types of protective boots, and describe their fitting and use.

CARE OF HORSES AT GRASS

This section is about the daily and routine care required by horses at grass. Horses may be kept at grass for a number of reasons, including rest, breeding, recovery from injury, retirement or owner's preference.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of the care of horses at grass including:

- checking fields for suitability and security
- how to turn out and catch grass-kept horses
- the routine checks that should be made to horses at grass.

Horses are herd animals and will normally thrive in a natural, well maintained environment with company and routine care.



FIELD SUITABILITY

There are a number of requirements that should be considered when selecting a suitable field for horses.

FENCING

Fencing must be safe and stock-proof. There are various types of fencing available:

- Hedges – must be tough, strong and well maintained. Often used with another form of fencing to prevent horses from pushing through. Hedges must be safe from poisonous plants such as privet, yew and laburnum.
- Post and rail – safe and strong but can be expensive to erect and maintain. Horses may chew it.
- Heavy-duty plastic – low maintenance but expensive to erect.
- Electric – ideal for temporary fencing, being easy to erect and dismantle.
- Stone walls – offer good security and shelter but are expensive to erect and maintain.
- Plain wire – all wire fencing is potentially hazardous and must be stretched taut between the posts. Barbed wire should be avoided as it can cause serious injury

SHELTERS

Horses need shelter from the sun, insects and the wind. Shelter can be provided by:

- field shelters
- large trees
- hedges.



Hedge

© British Racing School



Post and rail fence

© British Racing School



Keepsafe fencing

© British Racing School



Field shelter

© British Racing School



© British Racing School

GATES

Gates should be positioned for easy access and open inwards. They should be of sound construction with a secure catch and lock.

WATER

There must always be a clean and constant supply of water. The best arrangement for watering a horse at grass is by providing a self-filling trough. Troughs must be checked daily (twice a day in icy weather) and cleaned out regularly. The trough should be placed away from trees so it does not become clogged up with leaves in autumn.



© Shutterstock.com

Ragwort

A suitable alternative is a river or stream with a good approach and gravel bottom. Ponds or stagnant water and streams, which may be polluted, should not be used, and must be fenced off.

POISONOUS PLANTS

All poisonous plants must be removed before a field is grazed by horses. Some plants are more palatable to a horse when cut and dried so must be removed from the site and destroyed. Gloves should be worn when pulling ragwort and other poisonous plants.

The following are the most common types of poisonous plants:



Privet



Foxglove



Yew



Horsetail



Hemlock



Oak/acorn



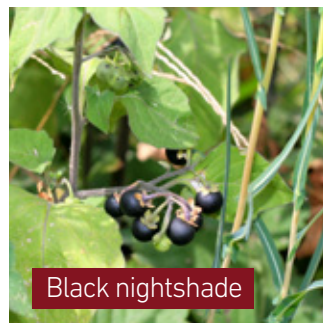
Laburnum



Woody nightshade



Deadly nightshade



Black nightshade

ROUTINE CARE

GROOMING

A horse at grass should be checked twice a day for health and condition. Its feet should be checked and picked out regularly.

Horses at grass would not normally be groomed unless ridden. In this case, care should be taken not to remove the natural oils from the horse's coat by excessive use of the body brush.

FEEDING

In the winter months and when grazing is limited, supplementary feeding will be required. Purpose-made feed bowls can be placed in old car tyres, which do not tip over and have no sharp edges. Feed bowls should be well spaced out to reduce the risk of kicking.

Hay should be fed on the ground in small heaps. There should be more heaps of hay than horses as bossy horses will often chase the timid ones off. Hay racks tend to be wasteful and difficult to manage, and hay nets are hazardous when tied to a fence as horses can get their legs caught in nets that have dropped when empty.

CHECKING HORSES AT GRASS

Twice-daily visits to horses at grass are essential, and the following points should be checked:

- health and condition of the horse
- foot and shoe condition
- water supply
- fencing
- general condition of field
- amount of grass
- presence of any poisonous plants
- removing any litter that might have been thrown into the field.

TURNING OUT

When turning horses out, it is important to follow safe procedures. The following points should be considered:

- The field should be checked for safe fencing and to ensure it is free from hazards.
- If turning out young or excitable horses, a skullcap and strong footwear should be worn.
- A bridle will give more control than a headcollar.
- The horse should be taken into the field, the gate closed and the horse turned towards the fence before being released.
- If more than one horse is being turned out, they should all be taken into the field and turned towards the fence. The gate should then be closed and all horses released at the same time on an agreed command.
- New horses should be observed to ensure they settle and are accepted by the rest of the group.

CATCHING

Safety factors should also be considered when catching horses, and the following points should be considered:

- Approach the horse from the side and front.
- Keep the headcollar concealed until close to the horse so it is not frightened.
- Catch difficult horses with a small feed as a reward. This method may not be suitable for a group of horses as it may lead to fighting and kicking.



© The National Stud

WORKING SAFELY WHEN CARING FOR HORSES AT GRASS

Horses at grass, and particularly groups of horses, can display a different temperament to stabled horses. Any interruption to their normal routine can create tension, which can lead to kicking, biting and aggressive tendencies. Be aware of the position of horses when entering a field of horses.

When catching horses at grass, always approach from the front or side. When turning out, face the horse towards the fence to avoid being kicked.

Always seek assistance if faced with difficulties when caring for grass-kept horses.

REVISION TESTS

1. Take a photograph of a field that could be grazed by horses. Describe the field and state its suitability for horses. Are there any dangers, concerns or hazards that should be dealt with?

2. Answer the following questions:

(a) What potential hazards could occur in moving, releasing and catching horses?

(b) Describe how to turn horses out.

(c) How often should horses be checked in a field?

(d) What simple records should be kept for grass-kept horses?

(e) How would you introduce a new horse to an established group?

(f) Describe some aspects of group behaviour in grass-kept horses.

(g) When looking after grass-kept horses, how can you minimise the risk of danger to yourself, others and horses?

3. Draw or obtain pictures of four different types of fencing. Give the advantages and disadvantages of each.

TRANSPORTING HORSES

This section is about preparing horses for travel, loading and unloading. Most Thoroughbreds will have been transported from a very early age and will be used to the procedure. Most horses travel well if they have been carefully and sympathetically introduced to the horsebox or trailer and have had the benefit of careful driving.

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

- how to prepare a horse for travelling
- how to check a vehicle prior to loading a horse
- how to load and unload a horse safely
- how horses may react to travelling
- care of a horse and vehicle after a journey.



PREPARATION FOR TRAVEL

The following protective clothing may be applied to the horse according to supervisor's instructions, weather conditions and purpose of the journey:

- tail bandage – to prevent a horse rubbing its tail against the ramp or partition
- tail guard – fitted instead of or over a tail bandage for extra protection
- travelling bandages and boots – to protect the legs from the knee or hock to the coronet; bandages should be applied over a protective pad or gamgee
- knee caps – leather and felt pads that protect the knee
- hock boots – leather and felt pads that protect the hock
- poll guard – a sponge and leather strap fitted over the headcollar to protect the top of the horse's head
- rugs – a sweat rug or thermal travelling rug is useful for horses that sweat up while travelling; a light summer sheet can be used in summer and warmer rugs in colder weather.

THE VEHICLE

The horsebox or trailer should be clean and maintained in good condition. The condition of the vehicle is normally the responsibility of the employer or driver, and must include safety checks of ramps, floors and partition.

Floors are normally finished with an anti-slip material, and bedding is not necessarily required, although it may be yard practice to lay shavings or straw down. A bed will normally be laid when transporting mares and foals, and a double partition space provided.

LOADING

A supervisor or assistant should always be at hand when loading horses. A bridle can be fitted over the headcollar to give better control, and the handler may need to wear gloves, strong shoes and a skullcap according to yard practice.

- The ramp should be lowered on to a flat, non-slip surface and the partitions opened.
- The horse should be led straight up the centre of the ramp and positioned so that the partition can be closed and secured.
- The partition should be secured and the horse tied up quite short with a quick release knot.
- Experienced staff should deal with horses that are difficult to load.
- Care should be taken when securing and fastening the ramp.

THE JOURNEY

Before driving off, the doors, ramp and couplings should be checked. Horses must be checked at regular intervals to ensure they are settled and neither too hot nor too cold.

On a long journey, horses should be offered food and water according to the supervisor's instructions. Some horses are not good travellers and can become stressed due to a number of reasons including:

- inconsiderate driving
- lack of company
- anticipation of a competitive performance
- inexperience
- a distressing experience on a previous journey.

Stress can be shown by sweating, stamping, whinnying and reluctance to load. Horses that sweat profusely may become dehydrated, and this should be reported immediately to the supervisor.



Front travel boots



Hind travel boots

UNLOADING

Care must be taken when unloading to ensure the horse does not rush out and either frighten itself or suffer injury. The following points should be considered:

- The horse should be untied before the partition is opened or the ramp lowered.
- A bridle can be put on for better control.
- The horse should be encouraged to step calmly down the centre of the ramp.
- When unloaded, checks should be made to ensure no injury has been suffered during the journey.

AFTER THE JOURNEY

To ensure that the horsebox or trailer is maintained and in good condition, the following procedures should be followed:

- Remove droppings.
- Sweep or hose floor.
- Remove tack and equipment.
- Replace any permanent items that may have been used (e.g. medical kit).
- Replace partitions and secure ramp.
- Report any damage that may have occurred during the journey.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN TRANSPORTING HORSES

Loading and unloading horses can be hazardous, and therefore, it is important to follow the correct procedures and ensure there is assistance at hand.

Suitable clothing should be worn, which may include a skullcap and gloves.

Maintenance of the vehicle is vital to ensure the safety of horses and handlers.

REVISION TESTS

1. Take a photograph of a horse that you have prepared for travelling. Comment on the equipment you have used, and state why you have used it.

2. Answer the following questions:

(a) Describe how horses should be prepared for travelling, depending on the time of year and individual requirements.

(b) What protective equipment can be used on horses when travelling?

(c) How should transport be prepared for horses?

(d) What is likely to cause a horse stress when travelling?

(e) How should horses be loaded and secured in a vehicle?

3. Answer the following multiple-choice questions:

(a) When loading a horse, it should be led up the:

I. right hand side of the ramp

II. left hand side of the ramp

III. centre of the ramp

(b) Which of the following pieces of equipment can be used to protect the top of a horse's head when travelling?

I. Poll guard

II. Brow band

III. Wither pad

(c) Which of the following items of tack can give the best control when loading a horse?

I. Halter

II. Headcollar

III. Chifney

(d) What should be done after transporting horses?

I. The ramp should be serviced and oiled.

II. The floors should be swept and hosed.

III. The tyre pressures should be checked.

RIDING RACEHORSES FOR ROUTINE EXERCISE

This section is about exercising horses during routine fitness work on roads, tracks and gallops.

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

- procedures for riding racehorses during routine roadwork
- procedures for riding racehorses during routine fitness and canter work
- safety and welfare precautions to be taken when riding racehorses in a string on roads, tracks and gallops.

Racing grooms are a key part of any training operation and will normally know the horses they care for and ride on a daily basis better than anyone else. The trainer will rely on them to report on an individual horse's well-being and performance.



RIDDEN WORK

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 the rider's 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 serviceable condition.



Receiving a leg-up

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 the free movement of the body.

Jewellery

It is advisable that jewellery is not worn 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'. The person giving the leg-up should hold the horse with their left hand and, using the right hand, spring the rider into the saddle. The rider should land gently in the saddle without catching the back of the horse as they are lifted. The handler should keep hold of the horse until the rider indicates that they are safe and secure.

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.

ADJUSTING 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.



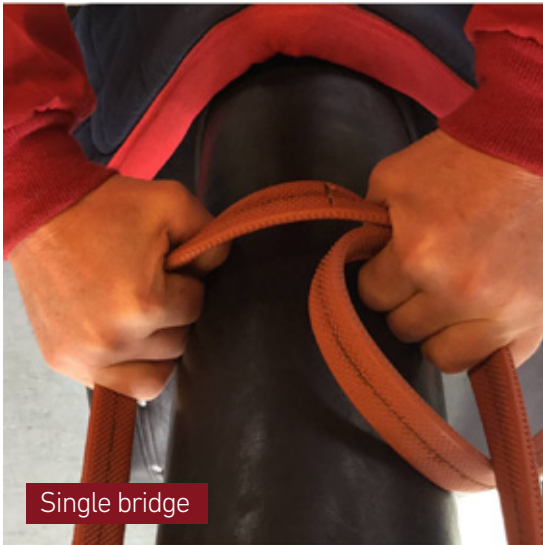
Adjusting stirrups

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.



Adjusting girth



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DISMOUNTING

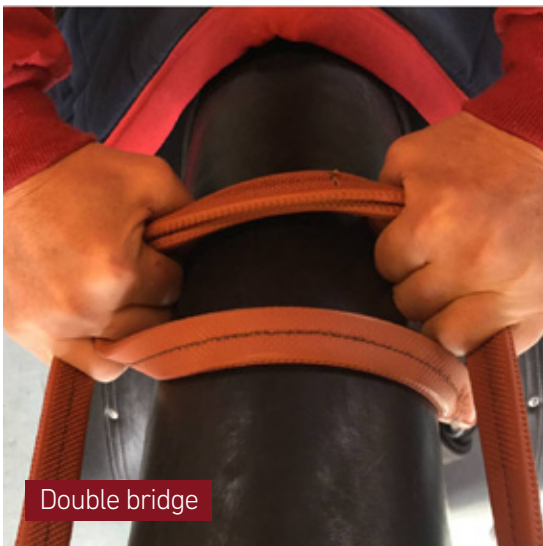
When dismounting, the rider should establish halt, keeping a contact on the horse's mouth to prevent it moving off, then lean forward and swing their right leg over the horse's hindquarters (taking care not to catch the horse) and lightly jump to the floor. The rider should keep hold of the horse during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

RIDING IN AN ENCLOSED AREA

Riding instructions given by a trainer or supervisor must be followed closely. Failure to follow orders could result in an accident or disruption to a horse's training programme, which may affect its future racecourse performance.

Before riding on the gallops at faster paces, riders must be able to control their horse in an enclosed space. They must be able to walk, trot and canter on both reins, ride simple school figures and make smooth changes of pace. The rider should maintain their balance independently of the reins and have a secure and effective position. The style of a rider will develop with experience. The rider should be able to maintain a light contact with the horse's mouth at all times.

When riding at walk, trot and canter, the rider should have a sensible stirrup length and must hold the reins in either a single or double bridge. They must be able to shorten and lengthen their reins and change hands without altering position or unbalancing the horse.



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The rider should be able to hold a sitting and poised position while cantering, showing softness and suppleness while maintaining a suitable rein contact. In the poised position, the lower leg should come a little more forward and the weight be relaxed down into the rider's heel. The back should be flat, with the rider looking straight ahead and the hands either side of the horse's withers.

The rider should be aware of the surface they are riding on. Grass paddocks can become slippery after a shower of rain or may become hard and rutted in summer.



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ROAD AND TRACK WORK

Many trainers prefer their horses to undertake a period of long, slow exercise during the early part of the fitness programme. Normally, horses at the same level of fitness are ridden out in a group (string), with experienced horses leading the nervous or young ones. Those horses less confident in traffic will be kept to the inside of a more experienced stablemate.

When riding on the road, it is advisable for horses to wear knee boots and brushing boots. In poor weather conditions, riders at the front and rear of the string should wear fluorescent clothing.

Riders should always think ahead and try to anticipate potential hazards such as slippery road surfaces, road signs or unusual objects at the side of the road, which may cause the horse to shy. The relevant sections of the Highway Code should be understood and adhered to, and riders must always be considerate and courteous to other road users.

When riding on bridleways and tracks, riders should:

- close gates
- keep off crops and private grassland
- never frighten stock
- keep off footpaths, pavements and garden verges.

Accident procedure

If a rider falls off or a horse is injured, it is essential for everyone to stay calm and follow the supervisor's instructions. The fallen rider should be attended to while the other riders maintain control of their horses at walk. The supervisor may send a member of staff for help or to catch the loose horse.



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CANTER WORK

When riding exercise involving faster paces, ground and weather conditions should be uppermost in the rider's mind. Wind and rain can make normally quiet horses tense and uptight. Trainers will often prefer riders to have a slightly longer length of stirrup when riding to and from the gallops, or on a fresh and excited horse.

Canter work is a key element of a horse's fitness programme and can be any pace from a very steady canter (often described as a hack canter) to a swinging canter, which is much faster. Canter work is not only used to develop the fitness of horses as they progress to more strenuous work, but it is also used to warm a horse up prior to working (galloping) or schooling over hurdles or fences.

Judging pace is a skill that comes from many years of experience, and novice riders will normally start on a quiet, straightforward horse and follow a senior rider, at an agreed distance, who will set the required pace. It is important that the distance is maintained as lagging behind may mean that the horse is not doing enough work and is holding up other members of the string. Getting too close to the horse in front may result in kicking or the front horse being struck into.

If a rider feels that there is something wrong with a horse prior to or during a canter, they should pull up and report their concerns to a supervisor. Canter work on a horse that is showing signs of lameness or distress can do serious damage.

During the canter, a rider can increase the speed by shortening or altering the hold they have on their reins. This is called 'changing hands'. The rider may also slightly shift their weight and adopt a more crouched body position but should avoid action that is more vigorous unless specifically instructed.

When the horse has cantered the required distance, it should be pulled up gradually and quietly through trot to walk. Sudden pulling up could cause injury to joints and tendons, or may result in another horse getting too close and being kicked. It is a rider's responsibility to keep a safe distance from the horse in front and inform riders in front and behind if they are making a change of pace.



Horses must be walked after cantering to allow them to cool down and stop blowing. The rider should note how quickly the horse recovers from exercise and report this or any abnormality to the trainer. It is particularly important to listen out for the horse coughing during exercise or cool-down, and report this to the trainer. Horses should return from exercise dry, cool and relaxed.

Gallops vary greatly in terms of surface, distance and shape. Differences include:

- surface (turf or all-weather)
- gradient
- shape (straight or oval).

One mile consists of eight furlongs, and a furlong is 220 yards. Most gallops have furlong markers, and as a rider becomes more experienced, they will be able to judge these distances.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN RIDING RACEHORSES

It is important to follow correct procedures when riding fit, strong racehorses, to avoid accidents and falls. Communication with other riders is vital, particularly if you are having problems with the horse you are riding.

Correct riding equipment, including boots, skullcaps and body protectors, must be worn.

Follow the supervisor's or trainer's instructions, and always report any concerns immediately.

In the case of a fall or accident, all riders should stay calm and follow the supervisor's instructions. The fallen rider should be attended to while other riders maintain control of their horses at walk at a suitable distance.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) What effect can weather conditions have on a road surface?

(b) What action should be taken in the event of an accident?

(c) Describe six hazards that could be encountered when riding on the road.

(d) Why is it important to communicate with other riders in a group?

2. Ask a colleague or friend to take a photograph of you riding at walk, trot and canter.

Discuss your position on the horse, and describe what you do well and what you would need to improve on.

3. Complete the following sentences from the words in the box:

A leg-up	Eight	Close
Protective	220	

(a) One mile consists of furlongs.

(b) A furlong is yards.

(c) A racehorse is normally mounted by .

(d) When riding on bridleways and tracks, riders should always gates.

(e) Riders should always wear equipment when riding.

PROVIDING NON-RIDDEN EXERCISE FOR HORSES

This section is about providing non-ridden exercise for horses through a range of methods. When getting horses fit, there may be occasions when it is necessary to provide exercise other than ridden work. This may be due to weather and ground conditions, or if the horse is unable to be ridden due to health reasons.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of non-ridden exercise, including:

- methods of providing non-ridden exercise
- lungeing
- the use and purpose of horse walkers
- how to exercise a horse in hand.

The main methods of exercising a horse without riding it are:

- lungeing
- long reining
- horse walker
- walking in hand.



Covered horse walker



LUNGEING

Lungeing can be a useful form of exercise in the following circumstances:

- when a horse has a sore or injured back or mouth
- when a horse is fresh and needs to be settled prior to being ridden
- if a member of staff is unable to ride but has the skills to lunge
- to re-accustom a rested horse to the feel of the saddle
- as part of the training of a young horse.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Horse

The following tack should be used:

- lungeing cavesson or a bridle with a coupling
- a bridle may be worn beneath a cavesson
- lunge rein
- brushing boots
- overreach boots
- saddle and side reins (if required).

Handler

The following equipment should be used by the person lungeing the horse:

- gloves
- skullcap
- suitable strong footwear
- lunge whip.

Environment

Lungeing should be carried out in an enclosed area with a good surface. Hazards such as jumps and poles should be removed prior to lungeing.

METHOD

The horse should be encouraged to go forward calmly and actively. The voice is an essential aid when lungeing, and well-trained horses will respond to voice commands when changing pace. The horse can be worked in walk, trot and canter, depending on its level of training and fitness. Lungeing can be hard work, particularly for an unfit horse that is unused to using certain muscles, and therefore should be introduced gradually for short periods of time.

Horses must be worked equally on both reins to ensure equal muscle development and to prevent stiffness on one side. The horse should remain on a true circle, working around the handler on a constant contact. The rein should never be wrapped around the hand or allowed to trail on the ground.

HORSE WALKERS

These are circular pens with rotating partitions in which horses are exercised. Each horse is placed in an individual partition that rotates around the outer limits of the pen.

Horse walkers are useful for providing light exercise and, once accustomed to the process, one or more horses can be walked at a time, for any of the following reasons:

- to warm a horse up before exercise
- to cool down after exercise
- to provide light exercise on a day off
- to provide a change of scenery and prevent boredom.

Horse walkers come in a variety of designs and sizes, normally taking a maximum of six horses. They can be open or covered, and should always be sited on flat, well drained land. Suitable footing is essential.

When putting horses on a walker, care must be taken to ensure the horse remains calm and confident, particularly during entry and exit. A supervisor should always oversee the loading and unloading process, and horses should never be left unattended.

IN-HAND EXERCISE

In-hand walking is useful to provide light exercise for resting horses and stallions. The horse should wear a bridle for control (a chifney can be used with fresh or difficult horses) and should be led from the nearside. The horse may also wear protective boots if necessary. It is advisable for the handler to wear a skullcap, gloves and suitable footwear.

A well trained horse will walk calmly forward alongside the handler. When turning, it should be turned away from the handler for better balance and control.



WORKING SAFELY WHEN PROVIDING NON-RIDDEN EXERCISE

It is essential to wear the correct safety equipment when providing non-ridden exercise, particularly as horses might be fresh and difficult.

Always follow the correct procedures, and seek advice when unsure or if a problem occurs.

Be aware of the weather and external conditions, which could affect a horse's behaviour or way of going.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the reasons for using a horse walker?

(b) Describe how you could exercise a horse that could not be ridden.

(c) What equipment do horse and rider need to lunge a horse?

(d) What facilities are needed to lunge a horse?

(e) What protective equipment would a handler wear when exercising a horse in hand?

2. Describe the facilities you have used at your workplace to provide non-ridden exercise, and explain how they are kept in serviceable condition.

3. Give an example of a horse in your workplace that is given non-ridden exercise, and explain why.

CARE OF THE HORSE AFTER WORK

This section is about caring for a horse after hard, fast or strenuous work. This is a crucial time to note any problems or health issues, which can be managed with timely reporting and swift action.

By studying this section, you will have knowledge and understanding of caring for a horse after hard work including:

- how to care for a horse after strenuous or fast work
- the health signs to look for after a horse has undertaken fast work.





COOLING DOWN

The cooling down process is every bit as important as warming a horse up. Careful care of a horse after work will help to prevent stiffness and other health problems. The following points should be considered, as appropriate:

- Pull up from fast paces gradually, and walk the horse until it has stopped blowing.
- Loosen the girth and, if appropriate, dismount for the last 10 minutes of exercise.
- Remove the saddle, and rub saddle area to promote circulation.
- In hot weather, the horse may need to be cooled down quickly by hosing or sponging with cold water.

HEALTH CHECKS

- After strenuous exercise, the horse should be checked for minor injuries or lameness.
- Be alert to any stiffness or reluctance to move, which could indicate a muscle problem.
- Pay particular attention to look for blood in the nostrils, which must be reported immediately.
- If the horse's breathing does not return to normal quickly enough, report your concerns to a supervisor.
- Report any other concerns to a supervisor.



WASHING OFF

- If weather permits, the horse should be sponged or washed off. A sweat rug or cooler should be put on the horse before walking it in hand until it is cool and dry.
- In cold weather, the horse should be rested in a sweat sheet or cooler, and checked every 10 minutes until it is dry. Normal rugs should then be applied.
- Regular checks must be made to ensure that the horse does not 'break out'. 'Breaking out' is a term used to describe large patches of cold sweat that can appear on the coat of a horse that has not been properly cooled off. If this happens, the horse should be walked in hand until it is dry and warm.
- A tired horse should be given short sips of tepid water at frequent intervals.

The horse should be allowed to recover and cool down completely before being offered hay or a small feed. A pick of grass is often a good way of getting a horse to settle and relax.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN CARING FOR A HORSE AFTER WORK

Horses that have undertaken strong or fast work can be anxious and stressed during the cooling down period. They are often fidgety and unwilling to stand.

Assistance should be sought so that one person can hold the horse while the other checks it, and sponges or washes it off.

Correct equipment, including boots and a skullcap, should be worn according to yard practice.

REVISION TESTS

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) Describe the signs of tiredness and stress in a horse following strenuous work.

(b) What are the feed and water requirements for a horse following work?

(c) How would you groom or clean a horse after strenuous exercise?

(d) Describe how a horse can be cooled off and dried in various weather conditions.

2. Describe the routine in your workplace for caring for a horse after fast work.

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

(a) Sweat rug/cooler	Relaxes a horse after recovering from fast work	<input type="text"/>
(b) Pick of grass	Put on a horse after washing down	<input type="text"/>
(c) Health checks	Important process after fast work	<input type="text"/>
(d) Cooling down	Should be provided in small amounts	<input type="text"/>
(e) Trainer	Should be carried out after strong or fast work	<input type="text"/>
(f) Water	Should be advised of any concerns	<input type="text"/>
(g) Washing off	Should be carried out after fast work	<input type="text"/>

TAKING HORSES RACING

This section is about the raceday routine when taking horses racing, and care of the horse after a race.

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

- preparation of a horse for a race
- racecourse entry procedures
- security arrangements at a racecourse
- racecourse procedures for racing grooms and horses
- post-race procedures, including dope testing
- care of a horse after racing.

Racing grooms will normally take the horses they look after on a daily basis to the races. Racecourse performance is the result of many months of training and preparation so care on the day and adherence to racecourse procedures are vital.



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RACECOURSE PROCEDURES

ON ARRIVAL

Before unloading the horse at the racecourse, stable staff should sign in at the stable security office, which is normally situated at the entrance to the stables. The Attendant's Identity Card (Stable Pass) should be shown. This card contains the following information:

- name
- date of birth
- photograph
- date of issue
- renewal date
- card number
- name, address and signature of the trainer.

A stable will be allocated to the horse, and it can then be unloaded and allowed to settle in its new environment.

The trainer's representative will ensure that the colours and other racing equipment are taken to the weighing room, and will find out whether the racecourse veterinary surgeon needs to inspect the horse's passport.

The trainer, or authorised representative, should declare the horse to run no later than 45 minutes before the race, and the declaration procedures should be carried out according to Jockey Club instructions.

Nothing may be given to a racehorse on raceday other than normal food and water, which must be given in the normal manner (i.e. by bucket or manger, and not in a syringe or by any other means). The trainer will advise if water should be restricted prior to the race.

BEFORE THE RACE

Horses will normally be tied up half an hour before they are due to make their way to the pre-parade ring. This will allow stable staff time to dress over, oil feet and plait if required.

The bridle and paddock sheet should be put on, and other equipment (e.g. bucket, sponge and sweat sheet) prepared. The horse is



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usually presented in the pre-parade ring about 40 minutes before the race off time. The horse is walked round until it is saddled up by the trainer or their representative. This usually takes place in the saddling boxes.

Once the horse is saddled up, it will be led around the main parade ring until the owners and jockeys arrive. When the order for the jockey to mount is given, the trainer will remove or pull back the paddock sheet. Jockeys will be legged up, and horse and jockey will continue to be led around the parade ring. At this point, the handler may decide to unfasten the lead rope and lead the horse from the rein so that they are prepared for the horse to be released on to the track.



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Horses may become strong and excited at this point, and care must be taken to ensure the safety of other horses and the public. Racecourse officials will indicate when the horses can be led on to the track and released to canter down to the start. The handler will then gather together the equipment and find a suitable place to watch the race.



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AFTER THE RACE

After the race, the handler will collect the horse from the course. Winning and placed horses will be led to the winner's enclosure, while unplaced horses are taken to the unsaddling area for unsaddling and after-race debrief. Jockeys will return to the weighing room. Normally, all placed jockeys will weigh in, and unplaced jockeys at the discretion of the clerk of the scales. If a placed jockey fails to weigh in, the horse will be disqualified.

At this stage of the raceday procedures, horses can be at their most unpredictable, and due regard should be shown for the safety of all concerned, including the public. This is particularly relevant in the winner's enclosure where there are likely to be many people around who do not understand horse behaviour.

Winning horses will normally be required to provide a urine (or blood) sample for routine testing. Sometimes, other runners will also be required to provide samples either on a random basis or if there appears to have been an irregularity in their form.

After-race care

Horses should be washed down (according to weather conditions) and checked for any injury sustained during the race. Abnormal conditions such as bleeding from the nose, cuts, lost shoes or unusual signs of distress should be reported immediately.

Once washed off, excess water should be scraped off the horse and a cooler or sweat sheet applied. The horse should then be walked round until it is dry and has stopped blowing. Water, ideally with the chill taken off, should be offered in small amounts at regular intervals. A hot, sweaty horse should never be allowed to drink a full bucket of cold water.

Before leaving the racecourse, the colours and equipment should be collected from the weighing room. The horse should be given a final check before being prepared for the journey home. To prevent choking or colic, trainers normally require the horse to have a considerable period of recovery after the race before being given hay or feed.

WORKING SAFELY WHEN TAKING HORSES RACING

Racehorses can be at their most excitable and unpredictable when at the races, and care must be taken to retain control of the horse at all times, particularly when in public areas.

Bridles and chifneys must be used on a racecourse. Care should be taken in the parade ring not to get too close to other horses to avoid kicking.

If the horse is proving difficult or temperamental, always seek assistance.

REVISION TESTS

1. Make a diary of an occasion when you took a horse racing. Describe how you prepared the horse for the race and how you cared for it after the race. Find out as much as you can about the race and your horse's performance.

2. Answer the following questions:

(a) Describe the racecourse entry procedures.

(b) Describe how a horse may react:

I. before racing

II. after racing.

(c) Give three examples of difficulties likely to be encountered when handling horses at race meetings.

(d) Describe four health and condition problems that may be associated with horses after racing, and what action you could take.

(e) How should water be provided to horses after racing?

3. Answer the following multiple-choice questions:

(a) Prior to racing, a horse will normally be paraded in:

I. an exercise sheet

II. a paddock sheet

III. a summer sheet

(b) When entering the racecourse stables, a racing groom will normally be asked for their:

I. passport

II. Stable Pass

III. contract of employment

(c) When leaving the racecourse, what should normally be collected from the weighing room on behalf of the trainer?

I. Stable Pass

II. Colours

III. Saddle

(d) If a horse has won a race, which of the following procedures might be expected?

I. Routine dope testing

II. Scoping

III. Heart monitor

(e) What is the minimum time before a race that a horse can be declared?

I. 30 minutes

II. 45 minutes

III. 60 minutes

BREEDING AND STUD WORK

This section is about teasing, covering, foaling, and the handling of mares and foals. It also explains the use of stud work records and the procedures involved in preparing breeding stock for the sales.

By studying this section, you will have a basic knowledge and understanding of breeding and stud work, including:

- signs of a mare in season
- teasing procedures
- safety precautions to be taken when handling breeding stock
- general stud records
- how to prepare a foaling box
- how to handle a newborn foal
- how to lead a mare and foal
- methods of weaning
- how to teach stable manners to a young horse
- sales preparation.

Thoroughbred studs can generally be divided into the following two main categories:

- public studs, which stand stallions for commercial use
- private studs, which only accommodate brood mares, and do not stand stallions.

In addition, there are 'boarding studs', which provide a range of facilities for mares needing to travel to visit their nominated stallion.

Some studs combine the boarding of mares with other activities such as a commercial stallion unit.





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TEASING AND COVERING

Mares can be divided by status into the following categories:

- maiden mare – a mare that has never been covered
- barren mare – a mare that has previously bred a foal, but is not currently in foal; this term is also used for mares that are retired from breeding
- in-foal mare – a mare that is pregnant
- mare with foal at foot – a mare that has an unweaned foal with her; she may also be pregnant or not.

TEASING

The Thoroughbred covering season in the northern hemisphere starts on 15 February. It is therefore important to ensure that all barren and maiden mares are ready for the breeding season by this date. This would mean they are 'cycling' and showing periods of being in season, and are free from any disease or infection.

The normal cycling of mares starts in spring. To help encourage Thoroughbred mares to start cycling earlier in the year, most Thoroughbred studs will extend the winter daylight hours by putting the mares under lights from mid-December. This means that artificial white and heat lights will be used to encourage the mares to start coming into season earlier in the year than they would normally.

From 1 January, all mares need to have had a variety of veterinary tests done. These include:

- blood tests for equine viral arteritis (EVA) and equine infectious anaemia (EIA)
- reproductive swabs to check for any sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These are essential for any Thoroughbred mare to be covered. The swabs are taken from the clitoris and cervix. The clitoral swab will test for the presence of contagious equine metritis (CEM), and the cervical swab will test for the presence of endometritis.

Around the same time, the vet will:

- perform a scan of the reproductive tract to assess what stage of oestrus the mare is at
- check that vaccinations for equine herpes virus (EHV) along with flu and tetanus are up to date for the year.

Please note, the above swabs and blood tests are for low risk mares that have been based in the UK or Ireland in the year before.

Further information for requirements on mares from other countries or ones that are deemed as being **high risk** can be found at:

www.newmarketstuds.co.uk/breeders.php

You can also find a copy of the Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) Codes of Practice on Equine Diseases via this link. It is advisable to familiarise yourself with this publication in case you are ever involved with cases of the diseases outlined in the manual.

It is also vital that the mare has her hind shoes removed before the season begins.

Following these checks, mares can be teased.

Teasing is the term used to identify whether a mare is in season by using a stallion. Each mare is individual, and teasing routines are designed with that in mind. The mare is usually in season for 3–7 days within a 21-day cycle.

The teaser can be any breed of stallion, provided he has a good temperament and is capable of the role. It is a potentially dangerous role for handlers and teasers as the interaction between mare and teaser can be unpredictable. It is also the teaser's job to 'bounce' mares. Bouncing is the term used when a stallion mounts a mare but without covering her. This ensures she is receptive and is not going to kick out and damage the actual covering sire.

The teaser's role is a very important one. He increases the chance of conception by accurately predicting when the mare is in season and the correct time for covering. Not all studs have teasers, and not all studs that do use them in the same way. But teasers do help identify in-season mares and help protect valuable sires from injury from difficult mares.

Teasing can be a potentially dangerous process, and care should be taken to ensure the safety of staff and horses. The following points should be considered:

- Handlers should wear suitable protective clothing (skullcap, gloves, strong footwear).
- Suitable tack should be put on the mare and teaser for optimum control (e.g. a bridle or chifney).
- The handler should be positioned to the side of the mare to avoid being struck by a foreleg.
- The mare should be held parallel to the board, and the teaser allowed to approach her head and then her quarters from the other side.
- The teaser should be allowed to sniff the neck and then quarters of the mare. Time should be given to allow the mare to show if she is in season or not.
- Foals are normally left attended in the stable during the teasing process.

There are various methods of teasing that can be used. The most common one is 'closed teasing'.

A teasing or trying board or bar is placed between the mare and teaser. This helps prevent injury to the horses and handlers by not allowing the horses to make physical contact with their limbs.



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Another method of teasing is open teasing. This method is more natural than closed teasing as there is no board between the mare and teaser. It can be used in various settings, including with groups of mares in a field. However, it can be very dangerous to both horses and handlers. For this reason, only experienced, competent staff should handle the horses.



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Please note the teaser in this picture is wearing a 'bib'. This prevents a teaser from covering any mare he bounces.



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Above is a picture of a teaser stallion with a correctly fitted bib.

If a mare is not in season (i.e. in dioestrus or anoestrus), she may show the following signs:

- aggressive or violent attitude towards the teaser
- swishing or clamping down her tail
- putting her ears back
- trying to move away from the teaser.

In contrast, if the mare is in season (i.e. in oestrus), she will be:

- placid
- amenable to the stallion
- leaning toward the teaser
- arching her back
- straddling and lifting her tail
- winking the lips of her vulva and passing cloudy, strong-smelling urine.



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Not all mares will exhibit easily seen external signs of being in season. These mares are known as having 'silent heats'. This is why mares are also internally checked by a vet for in-season signs as it is very important to optimise timing for covering and conception.



Checking microchip



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COVERING

A veterinary surgeon will normally examine a mare before covering and take a further swab to ensure she is still free from infection and STDs prior to covering. STDs can infect the stallion and prevent the mare from getting in foal. The vet will also ensure that the mare is close enough to her ovulation point to be covered and may administer either injections or an implant of a synthetic hormone to help the mare to ovulate. As the Thoroughbred racing industry only allows natural covering and most Thoroughbred stallions are very busy during the covering season, there will be limited if any availability to cross-cover a mare. This is why it so important to ensure that the mare is at her optimum time to be covered and conceive first time.

The usual process for covering a mare is as follows:

- The mare must be transported with her passport and a completed Freedom from Infection Certificate.
- Visiting an outside stallion is known as a 'walk out'. Having arrived at the stud, the mare should have a bridle fitted before she is unloaded and placed in a set of stocks. The mare will then have her identification checked by scanning her microchip and checking the markings in her passport. This is to ensure the correct mare is seen by the correct stallion.
- If the mare has a foal at foot, it must be taken off the horse lorry with her and be visible to the mare at all times.
- All staff should wear protective clothing according to yard practice. Jewellery and perfume should not be worn.
- While the mare is in the stocks, the area around her vulva should be washed down and a single-use tail bandage, such as Vetwrap, applied.
- Some mares may have had their vulva stitched. This is called a caslicks operation. The stitches will need to have been removed prior to covering.
- If the mare is visiting an outside stallion, all the relevant paperwork should be sent to the stud that stands the stallion prior to the mare's arrival for covering.



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Covering shed equipment

A: Leather neck cape – this is fitted to the mare's neck to prevent injury if the stallion bites her once he is mounted.

B: Breeding roll – this is placed between the mare's hindquarters and the stallion. It prevents deep penetration, which could cause internal damage to the mare. It is often used with maiden mares.

C: Leather leg strap – this is sometimes used as a restraint to hold a mare's front leg up until the stallion has successfully mounted. It must then be released to allow the mare to bear the weight of the stallion.

D: Skullcap – these must be worn correctly by everyone in the covering shed to prevent head injuries.

E: Twitch – this will help keep the mare's attention on the handlers and also assist with keeping a maiden, nervous or difficult mare still.

F: Covering boots – these are used to prevent injury to the stallion if a mare kicks out.

- In the covering area, the mare is fitted with covering boots on her hind feet, and the leather cape over her neck and withers according to the stud's policy. It is usual for the mare to be twitched prior to the stallion's arrival.
- Mares with foals at foot are covered with the foal in view. Normally, foals will accompany the mare into the covering pen, and be held by a member of the stud's staff either in a foal cage or in the corner of the covering barn.



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- The handler at the mare's head should stand to the side of the mare, out of reach of the stallion's forelegs, while the stallion is mounting or covering the mare. Teamwork is essential throughout the process, and one person should have responsibility for giving instructions.
- The stallion handler should have complete control of the stallion as he approaches the mare. The stallion should be encouraged to mount from behind and slightly to the nearside. One person will normally be responsible for checking that the stallion has ejaculated.
- As the stallion dismounts, the mare is normally turned to prevent her from kicking him, and she will be walked for a few minutes afterwards.
- After covering; the mare's tail bandage, boots and twitch will be removed, and the stallion's penis will be washed off with warm water.

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Examination of the mare after covering

Immediately after covering, the mare's vulval area should be checked for signs of damage that may have occurred during the covering procedure.

24 hours post-covering, the vet will perform a rectal scan of the mare's ovaries to check for ovulation and also check all is normal with her uterus and vagina. If the mare has ovulated, she can then be scanned for conception and pregnancy using the following timeline:

- days 15–16:
mobility phase and easy to detect twins
- days 19–20:
double check for twins/cysts
- day 28:
check for foetal heartbeat and normal development
- day 42:
check for normal foetal development
- day 60:
check for normal foetal development and gender.

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FOALING

FOALING BOX

Facilities for foaling Thoroughbred mares will vary from stud to stud. Whenever possible, foaling boxes should have:

- plenty of space for a mare and foal – the ideal size is 4m x 4m
- good ventilation without draughts
- a free-draining floor
- sufficient headroom
- a wall-mounted feed and water source
- a sliding or outward-opening door
- a suitable power supply and good lighting
- a warm, clean room for the foaling attendant to observe the mares from
- a communication system (i.e. telephone or radio)
- round corners so that the mare cannot get cast, or the foal get trapped in a corner
- two doors to ensure suitable access if the mare is lying down
- a supervision window
- reasonable access for the veterinary surgeon
- a site close to nursery paddocks
- deep wheat-straw beds to the door, with high banks
- CCTV with a monitor that can be watched by staff day and night
- chalkboards on the individual doors that have notes on each mare's status and history
- a large whiteboard either in the sitting up room or in an accessible place – this should have all the information on the various mares in the boxes, along with contact information of vets and senior staff.

The foaling box should have all the bedding removed and be thoroughly steam cleaned after each foaling to help minimise the risk of spreading infection.

FOALING EQUIPMENT



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- A:** Tail bandages
- B:** Lubricant
- C:** Enemas
- D:** Disposable gloves
- E:** Cotton wool
- F:** Foaling sheet
- G:** Arm-length gloves
- H:** Refractometer (used to test antibodies in colostrum)
- I:** Towels

- A:** Foaling ropes
- B:** Hibuscrub (used to treat the foal's navel)
- C:** Oxygen cylinder

Other equipment required:

- sterile scissors
- replacement colostrum (frozen/powdered)
- feeding bottle and teats
- string (to tie afterbirth up)
- black bin bag or bucket (to place afterbirth in once passed and checked)
- sterile plastic jug and whisk to prepare colostrum.



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SIGNS OF FOALING

A pregnancy usually reaches full-term at around 340 days, but this varies hugely between mares. Anywhere between 320 and 360 days is completely normal. The mare's udder may start to develop up to six weeks prior to foaling, with maidens often only bagging up relatively close to foaling. Some mares will show no signs at all, and must be watched very closely. Waxing up takes place anywhere from a week or more to an hour before foaling, or not at all. The mare's pelvic muscles may relax a couple of days prior to foaling, and a hollow develops either side of the tail. Within 24 hours of foaling, the mare's vulva will start to relax and lengthen. Most mares will foal as night falls or just before dawn when they feel most secure, though they can just as easily foal during the day, in the paddock, so they need monitoring closely, with checks on them and their udders for development every 20 minutes.

Mares close to foaling should be kept under close supervision with minimum disturbance. Many studs will have closed-circuit television cameras in foaling boxes, or organise sitting up rotas.

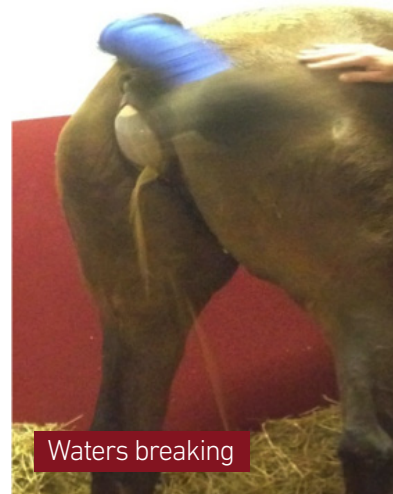
The actual process of foaling, or parturition, can be divided into three stages:

STAGE ONE

- Restlessness (may show colic-like symptoms), looking at flanks, getting up and down.
- Increased heart and respiration rate.
- Sweaty patches.
- This stage lasts on average 2–6 hours (this is very dependent on the individual mare).
- Apply a tail bandage at this phase so as not to disturb the mare later.

STAGE TWO

- The 'waters' break (straw/brown-coloured fluid) – at this point the presentation of the foal should be checked.
- Abdominal contractions.
- The mare will get up and down and strain at this point.



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Within around five minutes of the waters breaking, the foal's hoof, covered in a whitish membrane, will appear.



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The foal will appear with one forefoot first, with the other forefoot just behind, followed by the nose resting on top of the forelegs (the diving position).

Please note that the string in the picture above will be used at a later stage of foaling to tie up the afterbirth.

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As the foal is expelled, the white membrane will burst and uncover the foal.

The photo above shows an assisted birth. It is important to pull the foal's front legs down towards the mare's hocks in time with her contractions.

From the waters breaking to the foal being on the ground, the time should not be more than 20–30 minutes.

STAGE THREE

Once the foal is out the mare will often lie down for up to 20 minutes. Do not disturb her at this point.

Once the umbilical cord has broken, some studs will pull the foal around to the mare's head so that she can see the foal and start the bonding process.

The foal's umbilical stump should now be treated with an antiseptic solution. The afterbirth should be tied up to avoid it being trodden on by the mare.

The foal should exhibit a strong suck reflex and be making attempts to stand within 15 minutes of being born.

In most mares, expulsion of the placenta will occur within 30 minutes of foaling (and should be no longer than two hours). The placenta should be checked to ensure it is complete. Keep it bagged in a cold area for the vet to examine.



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CARE OF THE NEWBORN FOAL

A foal will normally get to its feet within the first hour of birth and should start to suck shortly afterwards. The mare's first milk is the colostrum, which contains antibodies and nutrients essential for the foal's survival. It is vital that the foal receives this colostrum.

The foal's first droppings, called the meconium, should be passed within the first 24 hours. If the foal is unable to pass the meconium, professional help should be sought. Most studs will administer an enema to the foal as a routine part of the aftercare.

The mare's udder should be checked regularly after foaling to check she is providing sufficient milk. Foals that go 'off suck' require prompt professional attention.

Mares with young foals can be very protective and may show aggression to handlers. Extra care should be taken to ensure the safety of stud staff and the foal.



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Exercise after foaling is beneficial for both mare and foal. For the mare, it assists the uterus in returning to its normal size and the passing of any remaining fluids. For the foal, exercise provides the opportunity to develop balance and strengthen limbs. Many studs will turn the mare and foal out into a small paddock, known as a nursery paddock, on their own within one or two days.

To start with, the foal must be 'cradled' to ensure it is stable when being taken to the paddock, and an extra person is required to walk behind the foal and its dam.

Although studs will vary in their individual practice, it is normal to start handling and training the foal from birth. A foal slip will normally be correctly fitted so the foal can be taught to lead and be handled more easily. Some studs will fit a foal slip as soon as the foal is standing.

Foals grow rapidly so it is vital that foal slips are checked and adjusted regularly. As part of a foal's education, slips should be removed overnight and refitted in the morning.



A foal being 'cradled'

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Early handling of the newborn foal

The handling and education of foals should start early and be tailored to the individual foal's temperament. Handling should be kind but firm, and foals should be taught good manners. Some foals can be more exuberant than others and require more experienced handling.

For early leading, slip rope can be passed through the foal slip and back to the handler's left hand. At first, this hand steadies the foal by being placed across the chest. A second handler should lead the mare, with the foal kept by the mare's flanks. It is also helpful to have a third person to assist with gates and doors. After a short time, the foal should become accustomed to being led, and one person should be able to manage both mare and foal.

The foal should also become accustomed to having its feet picked up, along with regular daily handling.

An established procedure should be followed when turning out mares and foals. Mares should be turned to face the fence and kept well apart from each other, with the gate being closed before the mares are released. It is advisable to let the mare go slightly in advance of the foal to prevent the foal being trampled or separated from its mother.



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ROUTINE PREVENTATIVE TREATMENTS

Vaccinating the mare in the last month of pregnancy will provide the foal with some protection against the flu virus and tetanus. However, it is important to discuss a suitable regime with the veterinary surgeon.

Mares and foals should have their temperatures taken twice daily (AM and PM) for three days after foaling. Within 12–18 hours of being foaled, the vet should take a blood test from the foal to ensure it has received sufficient nutrients from the mare's colostrum. This is known as an IgG test and checks the immunoglobulin (antibodies) levels in the foal's blood.

The foal will normally be first wormed when it is about four weeks old. It is important to follow the manufacturer's recommended dosage and use a suitable wormer.

Foot care should be started within the first few weeks unless the foal has a conformational defect that would benefit from immediate attention from the farrier. Frequency will depend on rate of growth and reaction to remedial treatment.

WEANING

Foals are normally weaned when they are 4–6 months old, although 'early' weaning (prior to four months old) is sometimes a necessity. Prior to being weaned, the foal should be well handled, eating hard and forage feeds, and be relatively independent from the mare. Two methods are in common use, with the aim being to minimise stress for both mare and foal.

Gradual weaning

Using a small established group of mares and foals who are at grass day and night, one mare is removed from the group every 2–3 days, leaving the most amenable mare until last.

Abrupt weaning

This involves bringing mares and foals into safe, familiar stables (some studs may stable foals in pairs for company) and then removing mares to an isolated part of the stud where the foals cannot be heard. Care must be taken when putting foals out for the first time using this weaning method.

After weaning, the mare's udder must be carefully observed for signs of mastitis until she has stopped producing milk (dried up). Some studs will reduce the amount of feed intake for a short period of time, but the most important factor in preventing mastitis is exercise. Symptoms of mastitis include a swollen and painful udder, stiffness, lack of appetite and a thickening of the milk.

The foal should also be monitored for signs of stress, any injuries and maintaining a healthy appetite and water intake.

SALES PREPARATION

Many Thoroughbred studs will consign (sell) horses to sales using the services of well-established agencies, while others prefer to consign their Thoroughbreds to the auctions under their own names. Many Thoroughbreds are conceived purely for sale, while others are retained by their breeder to race.

The sales preparation process takes on average 10–12 weeks, depending on the horse. Sales preparation focuses on correct feeding, care and exercise to produce a commercial sales animal. Preparations are tailored to bring a horse to its peak at sale time. Prior to the preparation process, all sales stock will be assessed for their suitability for sale. This enables a consignor to treat each horse as an individual and recognise that some will take longer than others to prepare.

While the preparation work will take around three months, the correct feeding, education and training of the young horse should normally have commenced soon after it was born. Youngstock should be taught good stable manners, have general handling on a daily basis and be confident when being handled.

The types of sales that horses can be consigned at are:

- breeze-ups (sales for un-raced two-year-olds)
- horses in training
- foals
- yearlings
- brood mares.

Stallions and colts deemed of high enough quality to become future sires are generally sold privately.

SALES PREPARATION PROCESS

All Thoroughbreds should have been registered with Weatherbys by the age of six months and have started the correct vaccination programme. Failure to do either will result in the animal not being able to be sold via a specialist public auction.

All Thoroughbreds destined for sale at auction need to look in top condition in order to achieve the maximum selling price. A lack of attention to detail can result in the horse being overlooked or achieving a low price.

All sales horses will need to be thoroughly groomed on a daily basis. Some yearling consignors groom twice a day for up to an hour each time. This process will enhance the coat, circulation and muscle tone, and allow the horse to be checked for any cuts or injuries. If the horse's mane is lying on the offside, plaits should be put in to tame the mane to the correct nearside.

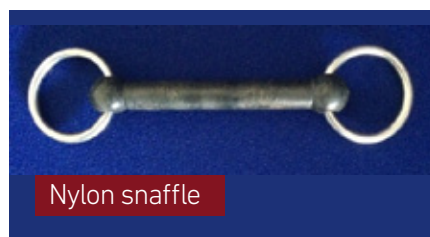
Rugs are used to prepare coats in different ways depending on the sales animal. Foals and brood mares should only require a lightweight rug during the final month of preparation. This will 'lay' the coat down but not prevent a winter coat coming through as, if successfully sold, many will be turned out in the field unrugged for the winter months. Yearlings are usually more heavily rugged as this preserves their summer coat and appearance. If turned out, all except foals will normally wear a turnout rug in the field.

Foals and yearlings will need to be introduced to having a bit in their mouth for the sales. This is more commonly known as 'mouthing'. Traditionally, a straight bar metal bit with keys attached was used for this process, but more recently, a nylon straight-bar snaffle has been used.



Traditional 'mouthing' keys

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Nylon snaffle

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Regular visits from the farrier should be scheduled in to the preparation process, along with the daily application of a hoof hardener. Yearlings and mares will generally have shoes fitted two weeks prior to the sales date.

Horses being viewed by potential purchasers will need to have a certain level of fitness and know how to 'stand up' correctly.



A yearling correctly presented for viewing

© The National Stud



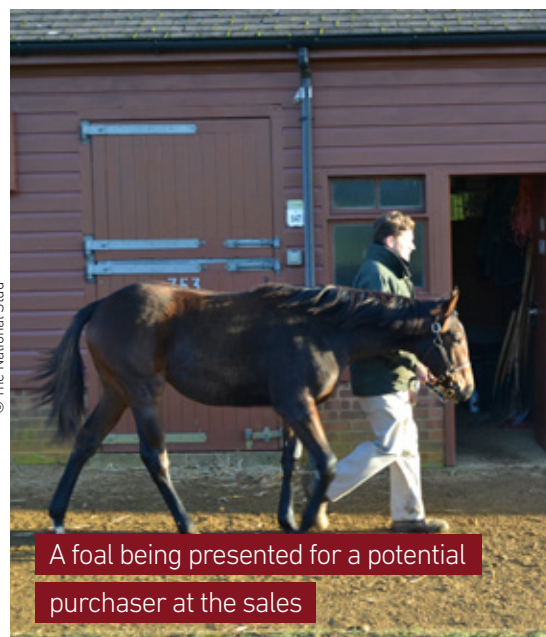
Foals being walked in hand

The fitting process can be achieved via a range of methods, the most productive being daily in-hand walking, starting with 10 minutes per day and building up to 90 minutes per day depending on the type of horse being prepared. As this process can require a larger number of staff, some consignors and studs will employ staff specifically for the sales season.

An alternative to in-hand walking is the use of a horse walker. Care must be taken to ensure that the horses go round in opposite directions on alternate days as going in a constant circle can strain the joints of a young horse.

Yearlings can be lightly lunged in order to condition them for the 'wind test', which will be a requirement of sale. Lungeing can also help to develop a better top line if specialist tack is used.

A wind test is when a vet will listen to a horse's breathing while it is galloped on the lunge. If the horse makes an abnormal noise, it will be deemed to have failed the test and could be withdrawn from sale.



A foal being presented for a potential purchaser at the sales

AT THE SALES

Once a horse has been entered for a sale, it will be issued with a lot number, stable and day of sale. Ideally, it should arrive at the sales venue at least two days prior to its sale date so that potential purchasers have plenty of time to view it. The horse must be stood up and shown correctly as this makes it easier for buyers or agents to see and analyse its action and conformation. Some horses react well to the sales atmosphere, others can become difficult so care must be taken to ensure the safety of the horse, handler and viewers.

Consignment staff nearly always wear branded uniforms. Each horse's stable will have a door card showing its lot number and breeding. The bigger studs (especially those that stand stallions) may also have hospitality boxes to entertain clients.

Buyers and bloodstock agents will start viewing the horses from early in the morning until dusk so it is important that the horses are mucked out and groomed, and clean tack is ready outside the stable. Buyers are very busy people, and if the horse they wish to view is not promptly presented, they may walk away and move on to the next one. This could result in a lower sale price.



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Every member of a sales team has a very important job to do. Most studs that consign horses do so to fund the stud's commercial activities so a professional team is very important, and the horses and staff must look pristine at all times.

On the day of the sale, it will be a member of staff's job to check which lots have been withdrawn. This must be checked as it affects the time that each lot will go through the auction ring. Horses need to be walking round the pre-sales ring at least 10 lots before their allocated number. This allows them to be viewed by any potential purchasers who may not have already seen them. The auction house will provide lot numbers that can be fitted to the brow band.



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Horses should be walked around the pre-sales ring and sales ring at a constant, even pace in order to show them off well and to their maximum potential. They will then be called into the sales ring to be sold. Once they have passed through the ring, they will have a hip number placed on them. This, along with their passport and a pass-out slip, will allow the horse to be removed from the sale.

WORKING SAFELY WITH BREEDING STOCK

Brood mares, youngstock and stallions can be unpredictable, particularly during the breeding season. Personal protective equipment should be worn according to yard policy, and assistance sought if required.

Jewellery should not be worn, and perfume should be avoided when dealing with entires.

REVISION TESTS

1. Take a photograph of a foaling box on your yard. Describe how the box is suitable for foaling, and list the equipment that would be needed for foaling.

2. Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the signs that may indicate a mare in season?

(b) How can pregnancy be diagnosed in a mare?

(c) What are the stages of foaling?

3. Keep a diary of your involvement with one of the following activities (take photographs where possible):

- (a) observing a foaling and care of the foal for the first month
- (b) weaning foals
- (c) preparing youngstock for the sales.

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR THE ASSISTANT STABLE WORKER

This section is about contributing to maintaining a safe working environment, and understanding your responsibilities for health and safety while working in a racing yard or stud.

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

- health and safety policies and responsibilities in the workplace
- how to identify hazards in the workplace, and how to deal with them or report them
- how to identify and evaluate risks in the workplace
- how to check your own working practices to ensure the safety of yourself and others.

Working with Thoroughbreds requires everyone to be familiar with health and safety requirements to ensure the workplace remains as safe as possible for all. There are some general policies and procedures that should be understood and adhered to, which will contribute to maintaining this.



HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 applies to all people at work — employers, self-employed and employees.

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.

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.

The legislation is there to protect not only people at work but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by work activities. The general duties of employers and employees are outlined below.

EMPLOYERS

Employers have a legal duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of all their employees, including:

- providing and maintaining plant, machinery and systems of work that are safe and without risk to health
- ensuring that articles and substances are used, handled, stored and transported safely and without risks to health
- providing the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety at work of all employees
- maintaining a workplace that is safe and without risks to health, including safe entrance and exit
- providing and maintaining a working environment that is safe, without risk to health, and with adequate welfare facilities and arrangements for employees' welfare at work.

EMPLOYEES

The legal duties of employees include:

- taking responsible care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or omit to do at work
- co-operating with their employer on health and safety matters
- not interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of themselves or others
- informing their employer of any shortcoming in the health and safety arrangements, even when no immediate dangers exist.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

Employers with five or more employees are required to prepare a written statement of their general health and safety policy, and organisation and arrangements for the health and safety at work of their employees.

The statement and any revision to it should be brought to the attention of all their employees.

Employers should record significant findings of their risk assessment and arrangements for health and safety.

The employer should keep a record of any reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences. These records will include:

- the date and time of the accident or occurrence
- the name, occupation and nature of the injury of the person affected
- the place where the incident happened
- a brief description of the circumstances.



The employer should also keep a record of any reportable disease. These records should include the:

- date of diagnosis of the disease
- occupation of the person affected
- nature of the disease.

These records should be kept for at least three years.

Staff, or those with full details, should always report incidents or accidents, and make sure that they are entered into the accident book.

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Good health and safety in the workplace does not happen of its own accord. An employer must ensure that:

- working practices are safe
- staff are properly trained
- risks are identified and assessed
- machinery and equipment are maintained and in good condition.

Keeping records is a legal requirement and can be a convenient and sensible way of managing health and safety.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND HAZARDS

Risk assessments play a major part in maintaining and improving standards of health and safety.

Many aspects of work with horses involve taking decisions that can affect health and safety. Some risk assessments may be simple (e.g. whether tack is safe to use). Others may be more complex and could include staff training needs; types of equipment (e.g. clippers), how they are to be used and by whom; and suitability of horses for particular riders and activities. There are many potential hazards in a stable yard, including the following:

- Chemicals – pesticides and weedkillers should be clearly marked and stored securely.
- Machinery – strimmers and clippers should only be used by trained personnel. A circuit-breaker must be used.
- Horses – staff must be properly trained in the handling and movement of horses.
- Equipment – broken tack and equipment could cause accidents or injury.

Employers should record significant risks, and detail the measures that are in place to minimise that risk.

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) REGULATIONS 1998

These regulations require an employer to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances at work. Such substances are those that are:

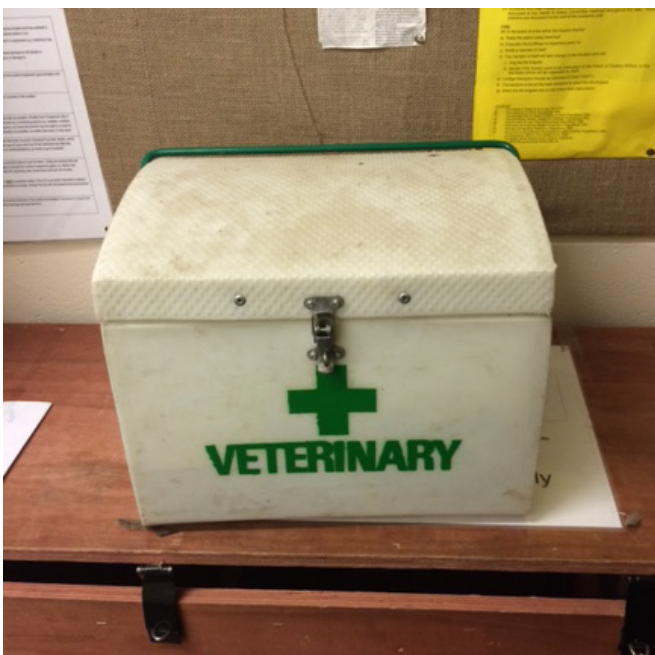
- toxic
- harmful
- irritant
- corrosive.

In racing yards and studs, such substances may include:

- disinfectants
- veterinary products.

The regulations also cover dust and micro-organisms. Exposure to these can cause or aggravate health problems, including:

- asthma
- hay fever
- leptospirosis (Weil's disease)
- ringworm
- tetanus.



SAFE LIFTING

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 require employers to take responsible practical steps to avoid manual handling activities where there is a risk of injury.

In equestrian establishments, there will be a range of manual handling tasks ranging from lifting muck sacks to unloading feed and lifting water buckets.

Measures should be introduced to avoid injury through manual handling. Examples include:

- using a wheelbarrow or trolley
- storing heavy items at a low level
- developing good handling techniques.

The procedure for lifting heavy or awkward objects is as follows:

- Plan the lift.
- Use appropriate lifting aids.
- Identify where load is to be placed.
- Get assistance if needed.
- Stance – the handler should stand with the feet apart, giving a balanced and stable base for lifting.
- Posture – the knees should be bent so that the hands are nearly level with the waist when grasping the load. The back should be straight, with a forward tilt, and shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips.
- Grip – the position and nature of the grip depends on the individual but must be secure.
- Process – the lifting should be carried out smoothly, without jolting. The load should be kept as close to the body as possible.
- Setting down – if precise positioning is necessary, the load should be put down first and then slid into the desired position.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, workplaces should have first aid provision. This means that there should be one appointed person who will take charge of a situation (e.g. calling an ambulance). Ideally, this person would have first aid training. First aid equipment should be available at the yard and in vehicles.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The use of electricity at equestrian establishments is subject to the Electrical at Work Regulations 1989. The regulations require employers to maintain, as far as is reasonably practical, electrical systems and equipment within their control.

Electricity can cause shock and burns, and start fires. It should always be treated sensibly and with respect. Circuit-breakers should be used where appropriate (e.g. when clipping).

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (1992) require that suitable personal protective equipment should be used by employees. Where there is a potential risk to health and safety in equestrian establishments, such equipment may include:

- protective headgear (must conform to the appropriate British Safety Standard)
- strong, safe footwear for stable work, and riding boots for riding
- gloves for lungeing or leading.

Suitable clothing must be worn at all times. Loose, flapping jackets and coats may frighten a horse. It is not advisable to wear jewellery, particularly rings and earrings, as these can cause serious injury if caught.

ENVIRONMENT AND WELFARE

The Workplace (Health and Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 aim to ensure that the workplace meets the health and safety and workplace needs of each member of the workforce. There should be adequate facilities for washing and getting warm, with suitable toilet and rest room facilities. Arrangements should be made to protect non-smokers from tobacco smoke.

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

FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND FIRE DRILL

There are a number of common principles that should be adhered to when taking fire precautions. These include:

- written fire procedure, displayed in main yard and reception areas
- regular fire drills
- no smoking policy on yard or in stable area
- no smoking signs clearly positioned
- clearly labelled flammable material
- correct storage of fuels and flammable liquids
- proper supervision of bonfires
- correct storage of new hay
- correct installation and maintenance of electrical equipment.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All stable staff have a legal responsibility to conduct themselves in a safe manner with regard and consideration for others. Each member of staff should take responsibility for:

- following safe working practices
- reporting hazards that present a risk
- dealing with low-risk hazards (e.g. putting tools and equipment away after use)
- understanding the structure of the organisation and knowing who is responsible for health and safety
- following manufacturers' instructions for the safe use of equipment, materials and products
- ensuring that their personal presentation meets health and safety, workplace and legal requirements.



REVISION TESTS

1. Describe the fire procedure for your place of work.
2. Give four examples of possible hazards in stable work, and describe how they should be managed.
3. Are the following statements true or false?
 - a) Chemicals should be stored in a locked cupboard.
True False
 - b) Body protectors should be used when riding.
True False
 - c) Ringworm is not an occupational disease.
True False
 - d) Broken equipment should be reported and removed from use.
True False
 - e) Accidents can only be recorded in an accident book by an employer.
True False
 - f) COSHH stands for Certificate of Safety in Horse Handling.
True False
 - g) The Health and Safety at Work Act only applies to self-employed people.
True False
 - h) Assistance should be sought when lifting very heavy objects.
True False
 - i) Veterinary products could be identified as hazardous substances.
True False
 - j) A hazard can be described as anything with the potential to cause harm.
True False

ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

This section is about working well within a team environment, taking personal and employment responsibilities seriously, and managing personal and career development.

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

- effective team working
- personal roles and responsibilities within the workplace
- how to deal with external visitors and internal colleagues
- how to communicate effectively within a team and with clients/customers
- basic employment legislation.

All racing yards and studs rely on professional and reliable staff to ensure the organisation runs smoothly and effectively in order to get the best performance from the horses being trained. Good working relationships can make the working environment a fun and motivating place to be.



PERSONAL SKILLS

Qualities that an employer will value in a good member of stable staff include the following:

- Commitment – an employer should be able to rely on staff to show dedication and loyalty, which includes good communication skills and good timekeeping.
- Reliability – stable staff should work efficiently and effectively. A reliable worker will be quick to report problems so that solutions can be agreed as appropriate.
- Professionalism – all staff will carry with them the reputation of the yard that they are representing, and must be professional and disciplined in their work.
- Responsibility – individuals should take responsibility for their own actions, showing consideration for their colleagues and horses they are caring for.
- Ambition – staff should be keen to develop their skills and undergo training to become more effective in their work.
- Efficiency – staff should be punctual and plan their work to make the best use of all available time.
- Safety – safe working practices must be followed and care taken not to put self and others at risk.

TEAM WORKING

Most successful racing yards rely on teamwork and a positive working environment. Good working relationships can be illustrated by the following aspects:

- all staff making a positive contribution to the success of the yard
- everyone putting in their best effort, helping others and being prepared to be flexible
- the ability of staff to take or give instructions as appropriate and to accept advice when it is offered
- the importance of resolving differences fairly and honestly, if necessary bringing in a supervisor to help resolve disputes

- colleagues who show courtesy, good manners and co-operation to others
- staff who respect colleagues, supervisors and senior members of the team.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A good employer will recognise the importance of developing their team by providing staff training to develop skills and increase motivation. Staff training tends to include the following aspects:

- agreeing team and individual training needs
- planning the delivery of appropriate training and development
- organising training within agreed timescales and at a suitable venue, which may be on the job
- checking progress against the agreed targets
- assessing the development of skills or achieving qualifications
- evaluating the benefit of training and making future plans.

GOOD WORKING PRACTICES

Although each racing yard may vary in daily routine and general working practices, there are common principles that will apply across them all.

VISITORS AND CLIENTS

External visitors to the yard should be greeted politely and quickly. Strangers entering the yard could pose a risk, and every yard should have an agreed procedure for visitors. This should be covered on the yard induction programme.

TAKING MESSAGES

Telephone and visitor messages are normally taken by a senior member of the team. However, every message is important and must be recorded and passed on accurately and efficiently.

Written messages should include:

- date and time of call or visit
- name of caller
- name of person they wanted to contact
- message
- action to be taken (i.e. return call)
- telephone number of caller.

All members of staff, to give a professional image of the yard, should adopt a courteous manner when dealing with visitors and clients.

CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

Any employee working 16 hours or more per week must be given a written statement of their terms of employment within 13 weeks of commencing employment.

Trainees should have a training agreement outlining terms and conditions. Terms of employment should include the following details:

- name and address of employer and employee

- job description – details of duties to be undertaken
- date of commencement of employment
- remuneration and payment details
- hours of work
- holiday entitlement
- benefits
- length of notice of termination of employment.

GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

On occasions, disputes may occur, and all employees should be aware of the grievance and disciplinary procedures. Details should include:

- disciplinary rules
- details of whom should be approached if an employee has a grievance
- details of the person to whom an employee can apply if dissatisfied with any disciplinary decision.

These procedures are normally detailed in a staff handbook or covered during an induction programme.

STAFF APPRAISALS

Regular staff appraisals provide an opportunity for staff and employers to discuss work-related matters, personal performance, and future training and development needs. Appraisals can be carried out at regular intervals or annually, and can be informal or formal, with details being recorded and timescales for achievements agreed.

Appraisals are crucial to the efficiency of the yard and development of the team and individuals within it. They give both the employer and employee an opportunity to discuss past achievements and make future plans.

WORKING SAFELY WITHIN A TEAM

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 or stud does not function well if staff do not keep to the agreed timetable. A professional approach to work is essential.

Staff inductions and staff handbooks will explain the yard policy in relation to safe working practices. Working as a team, with regard and courteous behaviour to others, will generate a positive and safer working environment.

REVISION TESTS

1. In your workplace:

(a) describe the tasks and activities for which you are responsible

(b) describe your daily routine

(c) from whom should you obtain advice in relation to specific tasks and activities?

2. Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the correct procedures for obtaining advice?

(b) What are the risks of not obtaining advice when you are unclear about specific tasks and activities?

(c) Why should your performance be reviewed?

(d) Why is it important to establish good working relationships?

(e) How can good working relationships be maintained?

(f) Give four examples of how you can work effectively with others.

(g) Why is it important to maintain confidentiality within the working environment?

(h) Describe two methods of communicating effectively.

3. Describe an occasion when you have developed and maintained a good working relationship with a colleague. Explain how you overcame any challenges.

NOTES:

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