

**SARASOTA MANATEE ASSOCIATION
FOR
RIDING THERAPY**



**VOLUNTEER
MANUAL**

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Bradenton, FL 34211
(941) 322-2000**

**www.smartriders.org
www.facebook.com/smartriders**

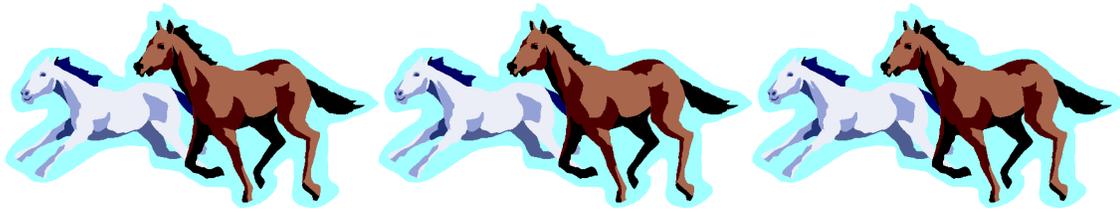
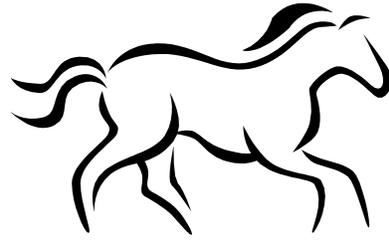


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WELCOME!

Thank you for choosing to become a SMART Volunteer! By giving some of your valuable time to volunteer, you will directly help improve the lives of many children and adults with special needs in our community! We hope that in doing so, you will find that your own life has been enhanced as well.

All of us at SMART are proud of the fine work we do, and the extraordinary results that we see. Thank you for becoming a part of the SMART Team.

This manual has been developed to provide you with some guidelines for working with our SMART riders and horses. **Please read it carefully.** The information it contains is important, and will improve the quality of your work. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

We want you to know that every person you are helping at SMART is aware of and grateful for your help. Without you, this program could not exist. You are *extremely* valuable to us, and we appreciate all that you do.

History of the organization:

SMART has been in existence as a not for profit, 501 (c) 3 Organization since 1987 and serves over 650 children and adults with special needs each year. SMART's original founder, Betsey London-Fish of Greenwood Riding Academy in Sarasota, started SMART shortly after she observed striking improvements in one of her young riding students who was dealing with the challenges of Cerebral Palsy. SMART moved several times over the years and in 1993 was relocated to property owned by Sarah Clark, the executive director at that time. Sarah sold the property to the Hunsader family who provided SMART with a free lease from 1996–2011. SMART purchased a permanent home at 4640 CR 675 E in December of 2011 and moved to this location in March of 2012. SMART is a Premier Center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, Int'l (PATH Int'l).

MISSION STATEMENT:
**Enriching the lives of people
with special needs through
therapeutic horse-related
programs.**

At SMART, we strive to improve the quality of the lives of our SMART Riders and their families through therapeutic horseback riding, carriage driving and equine assisted activities. Through respectful partnerships with our horses, we create an environment that promotes a life of inclusion, respect, growth and independence.

What's so therapeutic about horseback riding?

Therapeutic horseback riding lessons are provided on a weekly basis to our students and are for one hour. During this fun and enjoyable hour, much more is learned than just how to ride a horse. The lessons include grooming and preparing the horse to ride, mounted exercises to stretch and relax the rider, learning the use of the voice, legs and hands to communicate with the horse, and learning to guide and control the horse at various gaits.

The lessons also include playing games and relays to promote teamwork and camaraderie, and learning to navigate obstacles in the trail arena (guiding their horse over a wooden bridge, in and out of a ditch, up and over a hill, opening and closing a mailbox from horseback, and weaving poles.)

When grooming and caring for their horse, a bond of trust and affection is established between rider and horse. The student learns the task–sequencing needed and attention to detail required to place saddles and equipment on the horse in preparation to ride.

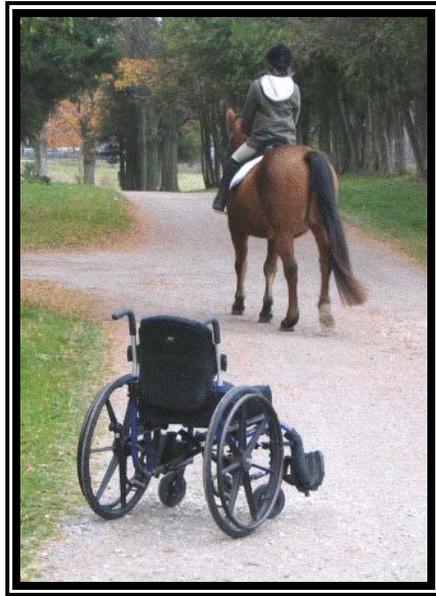
During the ride, the student's balance is challenged resulting in improvement of posture, coordination, strength and flexibility. Each learns to communicate with their horse actively and compassionately by using their voice, hands, legs and seat. They also learn to concentrate more fully on the task at hand, increasing self–awareness and self–discipline.

The gentle and rhythmical movements of the horse actually stimulate all of the muscles of the rider that would be used if they were walking; making riding especially beneficial for non–ambulatory individuals. The three dimensional swing of the horse's walk can be used as a means to facilitate more normal movement in the ambulatory individual. Riding activates the respiratory system, which helps to stimulate speech and normalize muscle tone in the vocalization area of the throat and throughout the body.

Learning to ride a horse also has psychological benefits, as each rider gains a sense of accomplishment and achievement. A respectful and affectionate connection with the horse is fostered and teamwork is promoted between the rider and horse. Teamwork also develops between all of the students in the riding class. The instructor becomes a role model, as well as a mentor. Independence in the participant is promoted with the increase in attention span and development of problem–solving strategies.

All of the horsemanship skills that are developed during therapeutic riding provide the participant with the opportunity to increase physical strength and stamina, improve balance and coordination, and improve general health. An increase in self–esteem and a sense of empowerment are gained from fostering a respectful, affectionate, working “partnership” with their horse. Multi–task learning abilities are developed as well, helping each individual achieve daily living skills.

With the special needs of our participants in mind, and creative caring on the part of our Instructors and Volunteers, we use the movement of the horse, the connection *to* the horse and the natural environment to help heal the body, mind and spirit of every SMART Rider.



WARNING: Under Florida Law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to, or the death of, a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Volunteering FAQs

Who do I call if I can't come out to volunteer?

If you know ahead of time that you cannot come out, or if you cannot come out on the day of the lessons, call the SMART Line and leave a message at the number below.



941-322-2000

What if I need more information or if I have questions?

You can call and leave a voice message at the above number. You can also visit our website at www.smartriders.org or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/smartriders for additional information and a listing of events.

Who do I call to find out if classes are cancelled due to weather or holidays?

SMART has a “no cancellation” policy---except in cases of extreme weather including hurricanes, tornadoes, violent thunderstorms, etc.

If you are unsure as to whether or not classes will be held, call the SMART Line one hour before lessons are scheduled. If lessons are canceled, there will be a message to that effect. *If it is our usual message---lessons are a GO!* If you are coming from any distance, it is a good idea to call the SMART Line before you leave home.

Volunteers are notified in advance of Holidays and Closings/Breaks.

How do I sign in? *This is very important to do!!*

There is a lap top computer on the volunteer table in the Ready Room. Type your first and last name each time you come out to SMART, and before leaving. Be sure to enter the number of hours you volunteered that day, including your travel time. Every minute you spend for SMART is put into reports that help with grants and funding.

It is very important for us to be able to accurately report your time for this!

Thank you for remembering to do this EACH time you give time to SMART. This includes, as well, any time you spend at home working on SMART projects, assisting with fund raisers, training's, meetings---or anything SMART related!

What do I do in an emergency?

Always follow the directions of the Instructor of the class or any Staff Person in the event of an emergency. There are more detailed emergency procedures within this manual.

Where is the First Aid Box?

First Aid boxes are located in the Ready Room in the Main Barn and in the Admin Office.

Where are the fire extinguishers?

Fire extinguishers are located in all buildings. The Main Barn fire extinguisher is located on the hallway wall by the Feed Room; the High Barn fire extinguisher is located on the back wall of that barn; Fire extinguishers are also located in the Pavilion, Warehouse, Workshop and Admin House.

What volunteering options are available? Volunteers are the heart and soul of SMART. Everyone works together at SMART to form a vital team that is essential to the success of our program.

SMART is an all Volunteer organization. Our need for Volunteers is always great!

Whether your experience with horses is lifelong or nonexistent, your willingness to give of yourself and your time is what we need! There are many areas of volunteer opportunities here at SMART; our volunteers help with leading horses and assisting students in classes, as well as with horse care, facility and grounds maintenance, fundraising and administrative work. We will be happy to work with you to find the area where you will feel most comfortable and that will be the most rewarding to you.

If you are unable to volunteer time, you can also visit our website to review our “wish list” http://smartriders.org/wish_list.htm. We are always grateful for your contributions in whatever form they take. If your school, church or company participates in community programs, don't forget to mention us!

How can I get credit for my hours? – Make sure you are signing in for all your hours! If you need credit for your hours for school, internships, etc. please see a Staff person.

Do I have to work a set schedule or can I volunteer when I can? This depends on what you volunteer for. If you are volunteering to assist during lessons, we count on your attendance on a regular basis. You can speak to the Volunteer Coordinator if you need a more flexible schedule to determine what would be the best fit for you.

How old do you have to be to volunteer? You need to be 14 years old to volunteer at SMART.

Do I need any special immunizations to work around a barn? We strongly suggest that you have a current Tetanus shot. Please consult your physician or local health department if you have any other concerns about any health and safety issues you may have when working in an agricultural setting.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Some Basic “Do’s”



Dress Code – Although “dirt happens” at a barn, please remember that particularly during lessons and shows we are representing Sarasota Manatee Association for Riding Therapy, and as such, we try to present ourselves as neatly and professionally as possible. The following dress code is to both foster a professional atmosphere as well as keep everyone safe from injury.

- Please wear closed toe shoes (no sandals or loafers) to prevent foot injuries. Protective shoes or boots are preferred.
- Please wear long pants/jeans and shirts with appropriate coverage. Shorts or tank tops are not permitted.
- Avoid loose clothing and jewelry, as they can be obstructive and cause injury.
- Wearing sunglasses and/or a hat to protect your eyes are suggested.
- Sunscreen is strongly recommended when working outdoors throughout the year.
- Bug spray may also be needed during certain times of the year.



Documenting your hours – Please don’t forget to sign in – your hours are as important to us as they are to you!

- If you are getting school credit for volunteering, we need proof that you were here. You will need to keep track of your volunteer hours for reporting purposes. We are happy to sign off on your documentation when provided.
- Volunteer hours also make SMART eligible for certain kinds of funding.
- Your hours are also noted by us for use in volunteer recognition and volunteer rewards.



Shift responsibility – We depend on you to be here. If you can’t come, please let us know ahead of time so that we can arrange for a substitute. We really appreciate your consideration.



Snacks and Beverages - If you need a break, please feel free to take one and be sure to stay hydrated! We have refrigerators full of water! Snacks are available for a quick energy boost, if needed. Please remember that chewing gum, eating and drinking are not allowed while working with the horses and/or riders. This is both for your safety and the safety of the riders.

Some Basic “Don’ts”



Cell Phones– Cell phone usage is not allowed in any areas where there are students or horses (barn, grooming and tacking areas, tack room, mounting areas, arenas, fields & paddocks, etc.) except by Staff and Instructors. Please leave your cell phone in your car or turn your cell phone OFF when you arrive and leave it in the Ready Room cabinet. If you are expecting an important call that cannot wait until after you are finished volunteering, please wait in the Cell Phone Usage Area in the Pavilion to take that call. Answering a call while volunteering takes your attention away from your very important job – and compromises the safety of our riders, horses and other volunteers. SMART is a cell phone free zone! Cell phone photos are also not allowed.



Smoking and Alcohol Consumption – SMART is a smoke and alcohol free facility. Please do not smoke or use other tobacco products while volunteering, and please refrain from volunteering after the consumption of alcohol.



Pets – We love pets-- but for safety reasons we ask that you please keep your dogs and other pets at home. Our horses are not used to having other animals around and it can be very distracting to them as well as to our riders.

...and some ‘SMART’ Basics



R–E–S–P–E–C–T –

- **Volunteers** – As an all-volunteer organization, teamwork is an important part to our continued success and we couldn’t do it without mutually respecting each other and the role we all play.
- **Students** – Please treat our students with RESPECT. Talk to them appropriately for their age, and never yell. Use positive rather than negative reinforcement. Be patient and allow time for the student to process a request. He or she might need extra time to process what you’ve asked. Be understanding, but if you can’t handle a problem with a student, ask the instructor for help.
- **Horses** – We treat our horses GENTLY. Never kick or hit a horse. If a reprimand or schooling is necessary, an Instructor or Staff person will handle that. If you are having a problem with a horse or feel there is a safety issue, tell an instructor.



Foster Independence – One of the hardest aspects of volunteering and working with our students is standing back and letting the student do things for themselves. We want to empower each of our students to achieve all that they can. Assist when needed or asked, or if you see a dangerous situation arising, but encourage independence.



Confidentiality – Please remember our Confidentiality Policy. We know you are excited about what you do here, and want to share it with others. Please do so in a respectful way that does not identify the riders (do not use their names or specific personal information) and protect their right to privacy. If you take photos while you are at SMART, please clear that with a Staff person. Some of our students do not have photo releases and should not be photographed for personal/safety reasons. If you post your cleared photos on your personal webpage (Facebook/MySpace, etc.) please do NOT use the students' names or any personal information about them.



Make the most of your time – Not every volunteer task is glamorous, but every one is necessary! If you have a long break from leading or side walking, there are plenty of things you can do to help out. Tidy up the tack room or office, wash out buckets, clean the toys, pull weeds, groom a horse that isn't being used, muck the stalls, or just ask us how you can help. These horses are cared for entirely by our volunteer organization and they all deserve the same amount of attention and care giving as if they were in their owner's backyard. So while cleaning water buckets, treat bowls or troughs may not seem important, we have a barn full of horses that would beg to differ.



ASK! – There is no such thing as a stupid question!! If ever you are in doubt about anything or just want to know more information about a particular matter, feel free to ask an Instructor or Staff person. We welcome questions.



...and the most important of them all....Have fun! Smile, laugh, and enjoy yourself. Your enthusiasm is contagious!

KEEPING OUR PROGRAM SAFE

Things to remember when working around our horses:



Keep horses well away from each other at all times. Maintain the “Size of a Large Elephant” between horses at all times. Fighting horses are a danger to everyone nearby. Keep an eye on their heads and rear ends. If the ears are flattened, the horse could become dangerous. If he lifts his leg, he is getting ready to kick. **DO NOT ALLOW HORSES TO SNIFF EACH OTHER.**

Our horses must get used to a multitude of “strangers” grooming them, tacking them, leading them and riding them. For this reason, we try to keep things as “routine” as possible which means that although you may actually own a horse, we request that you follow our methods for grooming, tacking, leading, etc. to maintain a sense of “normalcy” for the horses.

Grooming

While there may not be any one way to groom a horse, there is a SMART way to groom a horse! New volunteers should only groom a horse with the assistance of an experienced volunteer. Once you are an ‘experienced’ volunteer and approved by an instructor, independent grooming is permitted in the stall providing the horse has a halter on and is loosely tied.

Each horse has their own grooming box located in the Ready Room. Each box should contain a curry comb, a hard body brush, a soft body brush, a mane comb/brush and a hoof pick.

Step 1– Using the curry comb:



A curry comb is a round/oval rubber brush that is designed to loosen dirt and hair in the horse’s coat. Start at the top of the neck and gently move the brush in a circular motion. Continue this process on the rest of the horse’s body, excluding the face and legs.

Step 2 – Using the Hard Body Brush:



A hard body brush is used to remove the dirt and hair that was loosened by the curry comb. Brush the horse using short “flicks” of the wrist as though you were sweeping the dirt off the horse. Do not use the hard body brush on their face or legs. It will look very similar to the soft body brush – feeling the bristles is the best way to differentiate the two.

Step 3 – Using the Soft Body Brush



Use the soft body brush in the same style as the hard body brush on their legs and sensitive areas. You can use it as a finishing touch on the body as well. It will look very similar to the hard body brush – feeling the bristles is the best way to differentiate the two.

Mane/Tail Comb



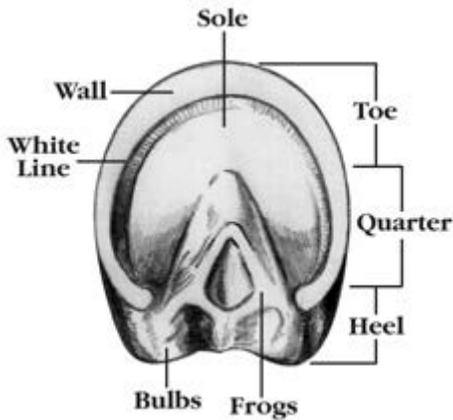
Manes and tails are cared for by barn staff only.

Step 4 – Picking the hoof



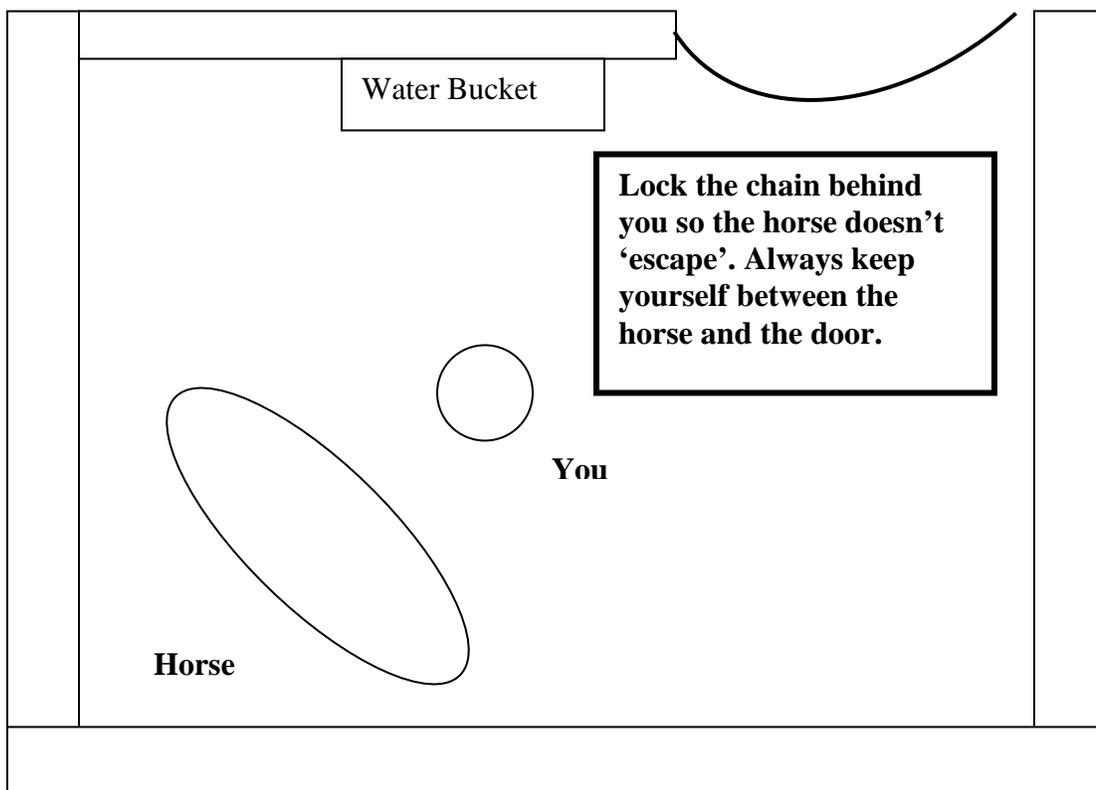
Always start with the left front foot. Face the rear of the horse, bend down and run your hand down the back of the leg starting at the knee, gently squeeze at the fetlock and say “foot.” When the horse picks up his leg, support the hoof. The horses are well trained and used to the process so in most cases they will begin lifting the hoof as soon as you begin. If the horse does not respond, lean gently against the horse’s shoulder and repeat the action again. After cleaning, gently place the foot on the ground. Work from hoof to hoof, moving counter-clockwise around the horse.

Use the hoof pick from the heel to the toe to loosen all debris. Clean around the frog (triangle of flesh in the center of the hoof) but be careful not scratch or dig into the frog. Switch to the brush side to sweep away the loose material. Once all debris has been removed gently place the hoof back on the ground.



Getting a horse from the barn

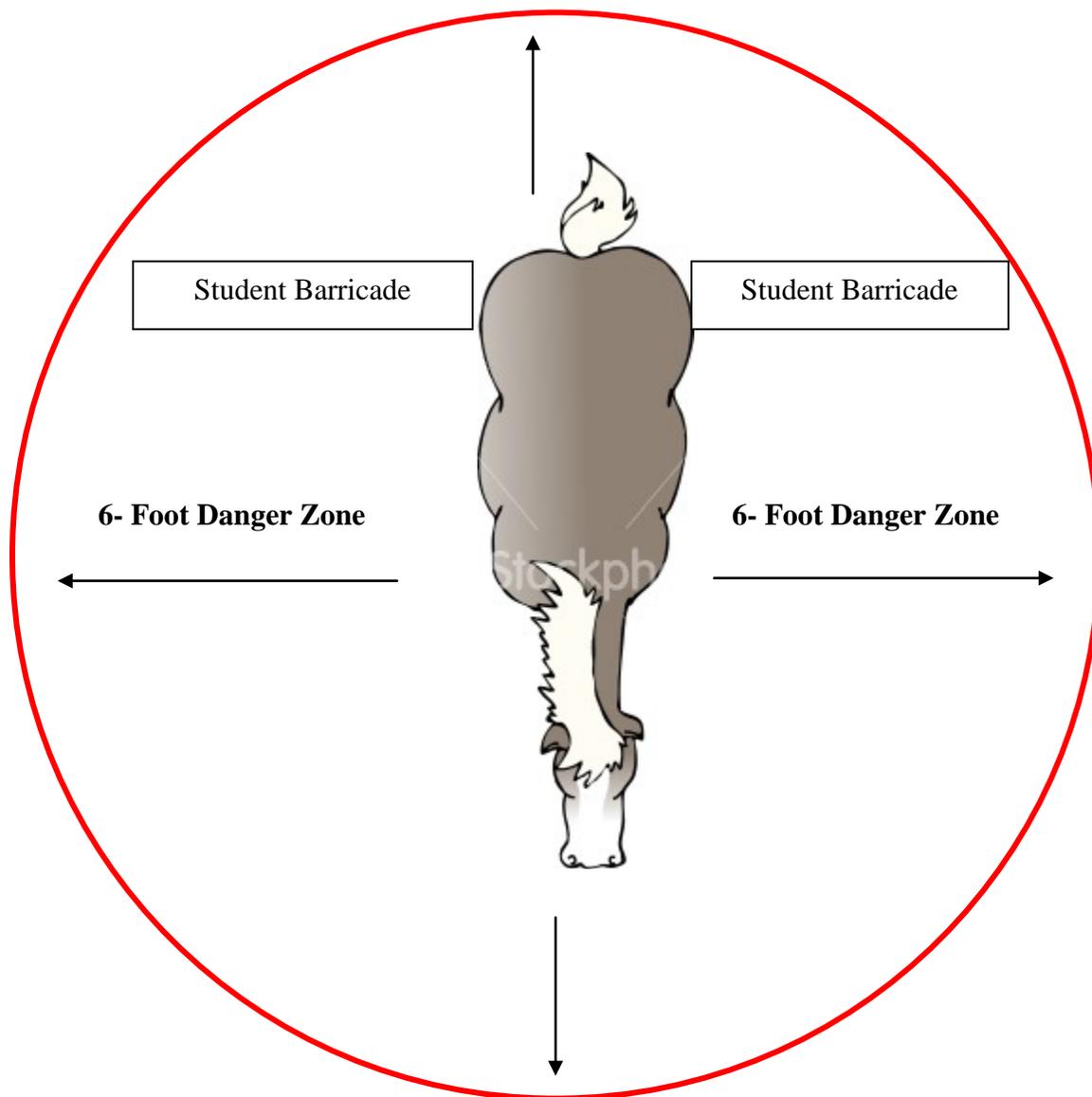
This is only done by experienced volunteers approved by an instructor. Once a horse has been groomed and is ready for lessons, it should have a halter on. The lead ropes are hung next to the stall doors. Usually the horses are waiting at the door and it is very easy to unhook the door chain, step inside and clip the lead line to the bottom of the halter and lead the horse out. However, if the horse is not at the door, always make sure to clip the door chain behind you when you step in and always keep yourself between the horse and the door.



Safety First!

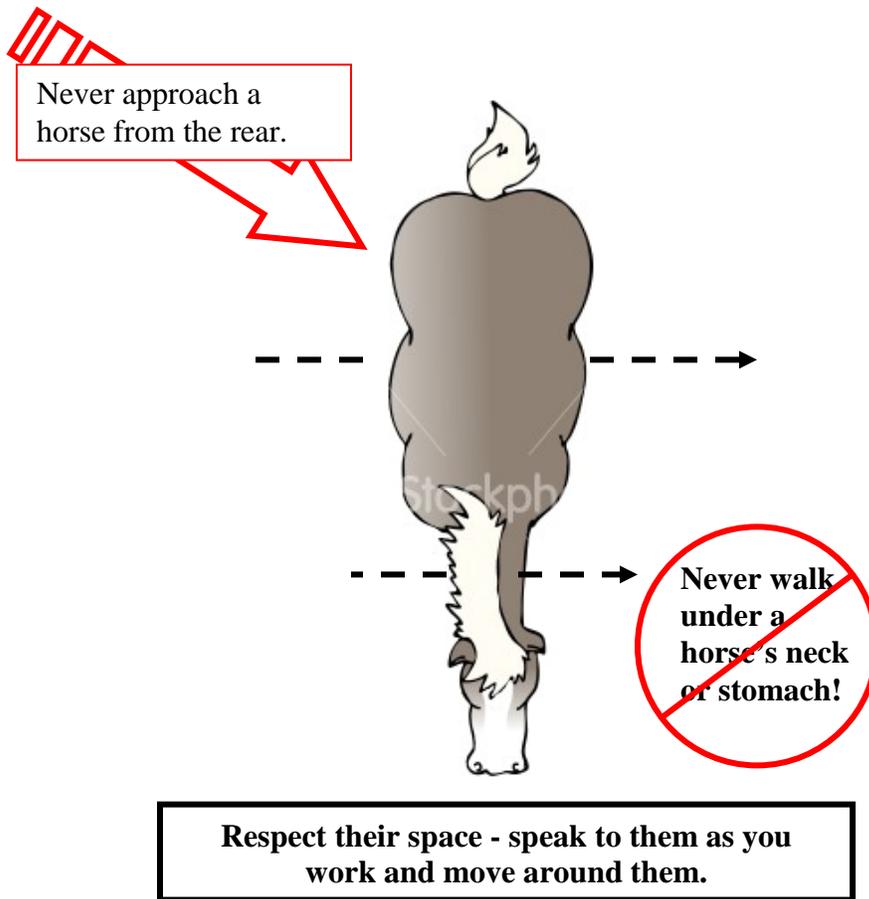
Don't yell, run or make sudden movements near a horse. Be slow and gentle.

Think of a horse as having a 6-foot "danger zone" surrounding it. Within 6 feet, the horse can kick, buck, cowkick (kick to the side), bite, or rear – and you or a student can be seriously injured. Always approach the "danger zone" with caution.

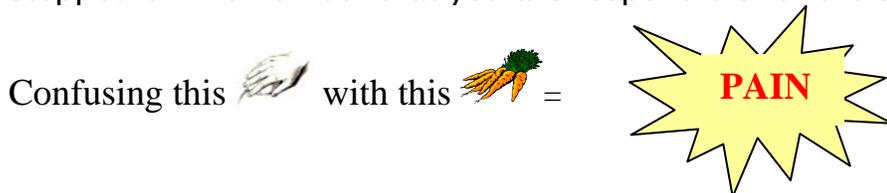


Never walk behind a horse when working with a student. Never allow a student to walk behind a horse. If you must walk behind a horse (when grooming or in their stall) approach from the side, touch the horse and speak to it. Keep touching it as you walk very closely around the horse.

When horses are tied to their tie ring in their stalls, remember:



Keep your feet away from the horse's hooves and from beneath the horse or you might get stepped on. Remember that you are responsible for the students' feet too!



Hand feeding is an invitation to have your fingers bitten. After the food is gone, your fingers still carry the smell. A horse can't tell the difference between a carrot and a finger that smells like a carrot. Keep your hands and your students hands away from the horse's mouth. ALL horses can bite! Feed treats to horses only in the treat bowls.

Tacking Up!

Reviewing the Class Schedule – The Class Schedule is a list of each class, the instructor and the horse each rider is paired with.

When tacking the horse, always refer to the class schedule to determine:

- Whether the student is riding English or Western – if the tack is Western, the saddle will start with a ‘W’, otherwise assume it is an English saddle.
- The correct saddle for the rider (S1, M3, L2, etc)
- What helmet size the rider wears or if they have their own helmet
- What additional pads the horse may require
- What reins to use (colored, leather, black and white or western)
- The stirrup lengths (settings)

English Tack

Although there may be some variations, in general English riders will require a flat pad, a fluffy pad, a saddle, a girth, a sidepull and reins. Additional accessories may include a lollipop pad, riser or girth extender. There is a list in the tack room that will advise which horses need additional or non-traditional pads.



Flat Pad – goes on first, covers the withers, sits evenly on the back.



Fluffy pad – goes on top of the flat pad.

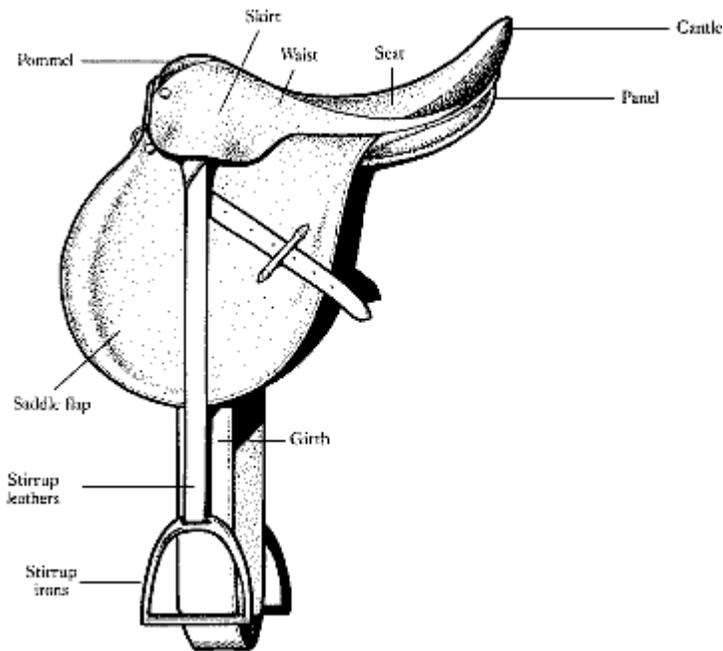


The Girth – the “belt” for the saddle

English saddle with Girth – goes on top of the two pads.

- The girth should fit through the straps on either the flat or fluffy pad to keep it in all in place.
- The girth has buckles at both ends. The buckles that have rollers always go on the left side of the saddle for ease in tightening the girth while the rider is mounted.

- When saddling a horse, please do NOT fully tighten the girth. You should be easily able to slide a hand between the girth and horse. Tightening the girth and final tack checks will be completed before the rider mounts and is the responsibility of the Instructor.
- Never leave the saddle on the horse without a girth and walk away.
- You adjust English stirrups by counting the holes from the tip. A rider who has stirrup lengths of R 6 and L 7 would have the right stirrup set on the 6th hole from the tip and the left stirrup set on the 7th hole from the end. It is quite common for the sides to be different.



Additional Accessories:



Lollipop pad – goes on in place of a fluffy pad.



Riser – (Can be black or white) usually goes on over the flat and fluffy pads and under the saddle.



Sidepull – looks like a leather halter, it does not have a bit. The side pulls hang with the girths in the tack room.

- Only Instructors and designated Volunteers are responsible for putting bridles/sidepulls on and taking them off of the horses.
- Only tie up a horse that has a halter on. **NEVER** tie a horse to the hitching post if they still have their sidepull/bridle on. Let an Instructor know that you need them to remove your horse's sidepull or bridle.
- Not all riders will use a sidepull; some riders will only have the reins clipped to the horse's halter. The more independent a rider is, the more likely they will use a sidepull. If you are unsure, always ask the instructor.
- The same sidepulls are used for English and Western tack.



Rainbow Reins – These reins help the riders learn hand position.

Black and White Reins – These reins can be used to teach right and left.

Leather Reins – generally used for more experienced riders

- Always lead a horse by his lead rope and halter, not by the reins.
- Never let the reins hang low off the horse's neck or drag on the ground.
- Unclip reins when rider is not mounted and hand carry reins.

Western Tack

Western tack includes a saddle pad, the saddle, a sidepull and reins. Western reins are leather and will usually have a knot in them.

Western pads will either be “square” or “cut-out” depending on whether or not it covers the withers. There will be a list in the tack room that will indicate which horses need a square or cut-out western pad.



Square pad – goes on first centered evenly on the horse’s back



Cut-out pad – goes on first centered evenly on the horse’s back



Western Saddle – placed gently on top of the pad. There should be an equal amount of pad visible on both sides of the saddle.

- Western saddles are much heavier than English saddles, for both you and the horse! Hook the right stirrup on the saddle horn before you place it gently onto the horse’s back.
- While we encourage riders to be independent, most riders will need assistance with a Western saddle due to the size. Encourage the student to try but be prepared to take over instantly if needed. In some cases, the Instructor may just simply ask for you to tack the horse.
- Our Western saddles have been converted to use English girths, follow English tacking procedures. You adjust stirrup lengths on a western saddle from counting the holes from the TOP. A rider with stirrup lengths R 2 L 2 would have the stirrups on the second hole from the top.

Basic Rules:

- If a tied horse rears or pulls back, or otherwise acts upset, **STAY AWAY** from the horse and remove yourself and your student from the area. Let the instructor handle the problem. A panicked horse can be very dangerous. If you are in the wash stall area--- **GET OUT!**
- Please notify the staff immediately if you happen to get stepped on, nipped or bitten by a horse. All instructors are trained in First Aid and CPR.
- Remember that you are participating as a Volunteer at SMART *at your own risk*. Your safety and the safety of our participants, staff and horses is of the utmost importance!

Mounting Procedures:

Once the horse is tacked, the rider will go to the mounting area to wait for their horse. If there is a side walker, they will take the rider. If there is not a side walker, a designated volunteer will assume responsibility for the rider and take them to the mounting area. Carefully walk your horse to the area around the mounting ramp, being sure to watch for traffic and keeping "an elephant's" distance between horses.

The horses will wait for their turn at the mounting ramp. While waiting, the instructors will check the tack prior to mounting. It is the leader's responsibility to know if the tack has been checked and to advise the mounting instructor if it has not. **NEVER** let a rider mount a horse whose tack has not been checked.

Once the tack has been checked, the leader will guide the horse into the mounting area by walking toward the ramp in leader position, then moving in front of the horse with the lead rope over their back right pocket as they move into the ramp alley. This will allow the horse to be aligned and positioned as close as possible to the mounting ramp. Once the horse's head is even with the far edge of the mounting block, halt the horse and stand in front unless otherwise instructed. It is the leader's responsibility to be alert and to keep the horse calm while being mounted. Once the rider is mounted, wait for the rider's command to "walk on". Lead the horse straight out of the ramp and when reaching the end, guide the horse to the waiting area, halt and stand in front of the horse until all riders are mounted. The instructors will check the tack one more time before the lesson begins. Notify an instructor if a final tack check has not been made before beginning the class. Never let a rider begin a lesson without this final tack check.

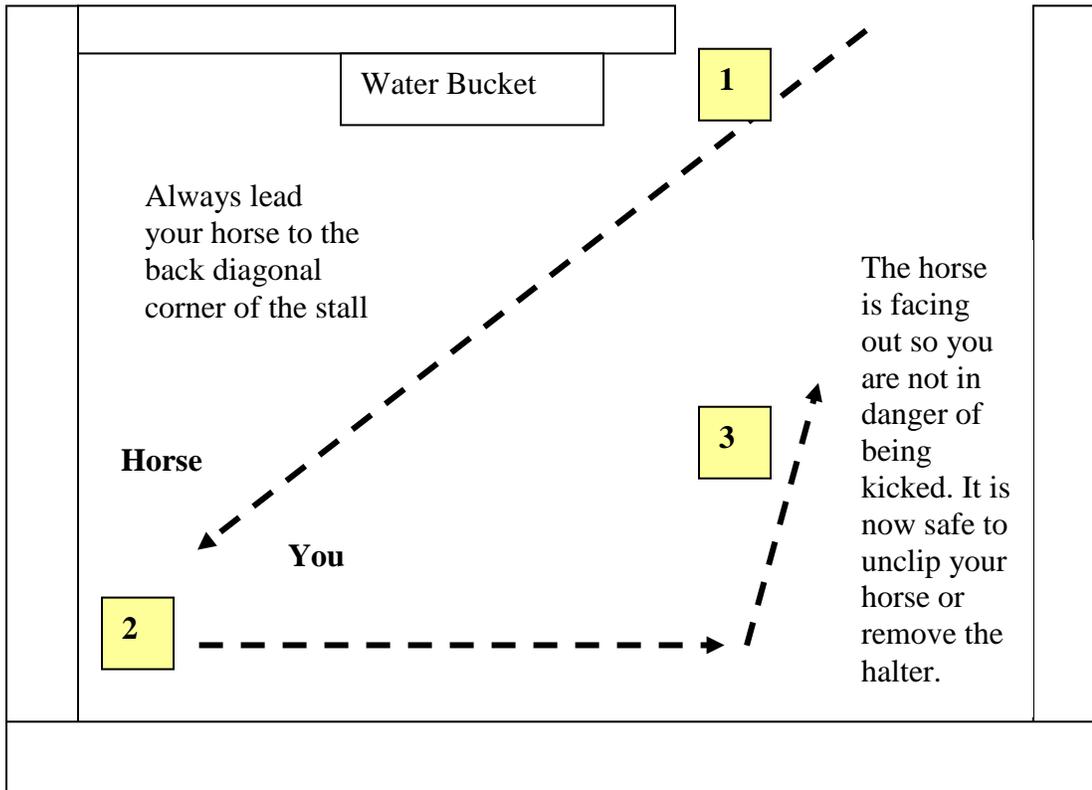
Some students will use a mounting block instead of the ramp. The procedure for leading the horse into the mounting block area is similar to leading the horse into the ramp.

Once the tack has been checked, the leader will guide the horse into the mounting area by walking toward the block in leader position, then moving in front of the horse with the lead rope over their back right pocket as they move into the block alley. This will allow the horse to be aligned and positioned as close as possible to the mounting block. Once the horse's head is even with the far edge of the mounting block, halt the horse and stand in front unless otherwise instructed. It is the leader's responsibility to be alert and to keep the horse calm while being mounted. Once the rider is mounted, wait for the rider's command to "walk on". Lead the horse straight out of the block and guide the horse to the waiting area, halt and stand in front of the horse until all riders are mounted. The instructors will check the tack one more time before the lesson begins. Notify an instructor if a final tack check has not been made before beginning the class. Never let a rider begin a lesson without this final tack check

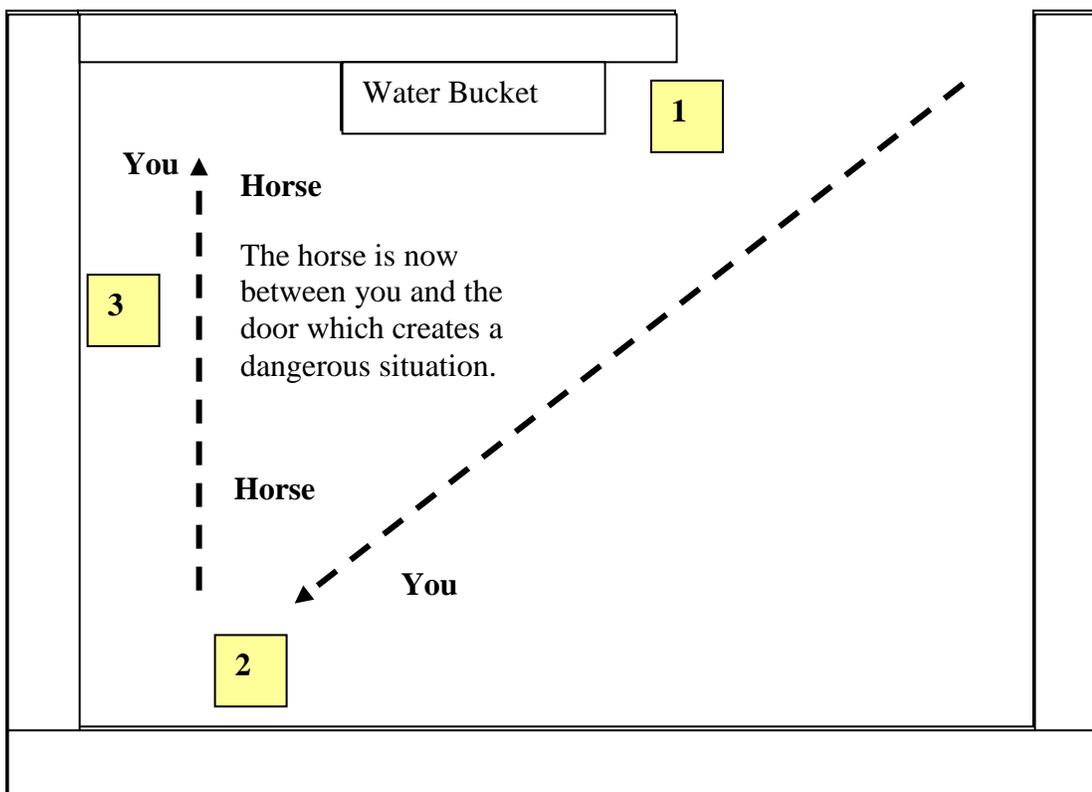
Taking your horse back to the stall safely

As always...Safety First! There is a right way and a wrong way to take the horse back to the stall to ensure that everyone is safe.

RIGHT WAY: DO – always keep yourself between the horse and the door.



WRONG WAY: DO NOT – let the horse get between you and a clear exit to the door.



MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN

The following procedure is meant to act as a guideline for you to follow in case of an emergency. Please remember that as a volunteer, you will never be expected to perform a task outside of your level of knowledge or experience. Since emergency situations are by nature generally unexpected and unplanned, always refer to a Staff member to provide direction based upon the individual circumstance.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A RIDER'S FALL OR JUMP FROM HORSE

- 1. STAY CALM.**
- Instructor will attend to fallen Rider.
- All horses will be halted and leaders will stay at the head of their assigned horse. Leader of horse of fallen Rider will move horse away from Rider and keep horse still. Sidewalkers will remain with Rider until Instructor arrives, then stand by quietly, waiting for further instruction. If necessary, the loose horse will be caught by assigned Horse Handler and/or Staff.
- Sidewalkers of all remaining Riders will remain with assigned Riders and wait for further instructions from Instructor and/or Staff. If necessary, Horse Handlers will be asked to lead horses out of the area, Sidewalkers and/or Spotters will exit with the Riders to a safe location.
- After assessment is made, Instructor will inform staff if assistance is needed or to call 9-1-1.
- Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.
- If Rider is unhurt and it is appropriate, Instructor will encourage Rider to continue with lesson and will assist with re-mounting horse.
- It is imperative that the Instructor remains in charge and that all participants quietly and calmly wait for instructions!

INFO for 911 call:

SMART's Address is: 4640 CR 675 E, Bradenton, FL 34211

A land line phone can be found in the Admin Office on the reception desk.

SMART's address is clearly indicated on the back of all name tags for easy reference.

HORSE LEADERS



The responsibility of a horse leader is to guide and control the horse. For this reason, a horse leader should be someone with some experience in horsemanship. The rider has a leader because he or she is unable, at this time, to control the horse fully. The goal is to allow the rider to be as independent as possible. Although the leader is responsible for guiding the horse, stopping and starting, the leader should allow the rider to do as much as possible.



For the safety of our riders and our volunteers, you will need the ability to understand and carry out direct instructions. This position requires physical endurance and good verbal communication skills.



If you are leading a horse, walk between the horse's head and shoulder, NOT in front of the horse. Be a calm and assertive "leader" for your horse by staying alert, looking forward and keeping your energy level up.



When leading or holding a horse with a mounted rider, always inform the rider BEFORE moving or changing directions. Avoid sharp turns or sudden stops. Allow the rider to initiate all movement if possible. Give the rider time to give commands to the horse. ALWAYS let the riders do as much as possible.



Help your rider if he or she needs it, but first allow plenty of time for the rider to perform independently. Responses often take longer than we expect. Allow the rider to perform at his or her own pace. But do make sure the rider understands the instructor.



Riders should always stay at least 2 horse lengths apart from each other (or the "size of a large elephant") whether moving or standing still. If your rider's horse gets too close to another horse, ask the rider to circle or cross to the other side of the arena. If they are unable to do this, the horse leader must do this.



When passing another horse, always pass on the inside (the side closest to the center of the arena) and at least 12 feet away from the horse being passed. When passing, the Leader or Rider should announce loud enough for the rider being passed to hear: "Passing on the inside!"



Before completing any tasks like circling, reversing, turning, etc. LOOK UP to make sure that your path is clear and safe. Leader or Rider should clearly communicate with other riders who may be on the same path to decide who has the right of way. Use your voice!



All horses should be going in the same direction. If one rider reverses, all riders must reverse. A reverse is always made by turning in toward the center of the arena. See diagram



When leading a rider in the arena, do not allow the horse to get too close to the fence. If there is a Sidewalker on the off side, make sure to lead the horse so that there is plenty of room for the Sidewalker as well.



It is very important to pay attention to the Instructor and the rider's cues. Don't chat with riders or other volunteers while the class is in session. Be friendly, answer direct questions from the rider briefly, but keep your ears on the instructor and your eyes forward.



Never *yank* on the lead rope to stop the horse. Pull slowly in a vibrating or "give-take" manner. Yanking frightens the horse and could cause rearing or backing up. If a horse pulls back, do not resist. Move quietly with him, holding the lead rope with little resistance. The harder you pull a horse, the harder he will resist you.



NEVER HIT OR KICK A HORSE. If a horse is misbehaving, call the instructor for help.



If the horse or rider you are working with is nervous or upset, walk the horse to the center of the arena and ask the instructor for assistance. Horses should be calm and riders should be alert. If this is not the case, bring it to the instructor's attention immediately.



If you aren't comfortable for any reason with your horse or rider, tell the instructor immediately. You are often the first person to be aware of a potential problem. Trust your instincts.



During classes, horses should not stand at the rail (fence) except under the instructor's directions. If your rider needs to stop, come off the rail and move to the center of the arena so you don't block the movement of other riders.

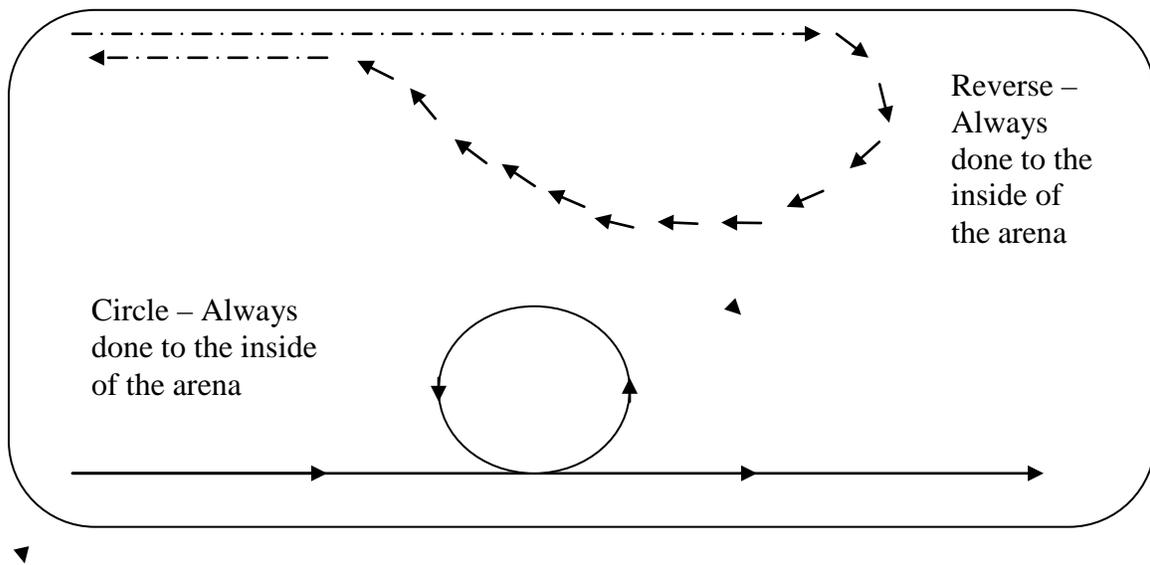


If you are asked to unclip your horse so that the rider may ride independently, unclip the lead rope from the halter and then continue to walk by the head, slowly allowing the horse to pass you. Stay close enough that you can get to the horse quickly if needed but far enough away so that the rider gets the experience of “being independent”.



If a horse stops during a lesson to urinate, ask the rider to move into a two-point position. This relieves pressure on the horse’s kidneys.

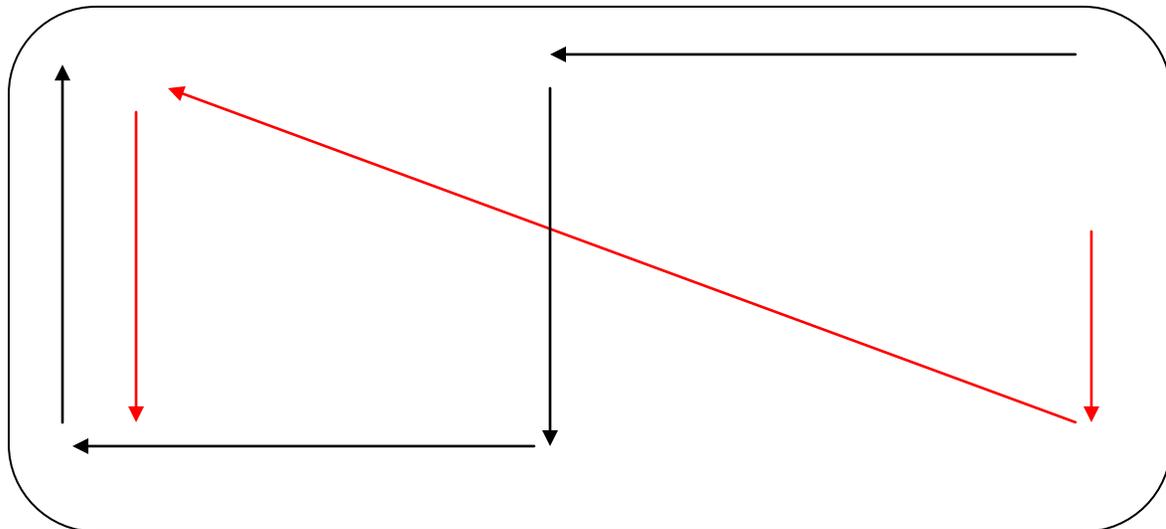
When leading a horse during a lesson, this is how you reverse directions and make circles when asked for by an instructor:



Here are two more ways to change direction:

Change the rein across the diagonal

Change the rein across the middle of the arena



SIDE WALKERS



The responsibility of the Sidewalkers, first and foremost, is the safety of the rider. Sidewalkers assist the riders to the degree necessary. Riders on taller horses should, if possible, have tall Sidewalkers. Riders on ponies should have short Sidewalkers.



For the safety of our riders and our volunteers, you will need the ability to understand and carry out direct instructions. This position requires physical endurance and good verbal communication skills.



The side walker is responsible for the rider and gives physical support to the rider or assists the rider with the instructor's direction.



Other responsibilities of the Sidewalkers include encouraging the rider to pay attention to the instructor, helping the rider to follow directions, showing the rider which side is right and left, assisting in games, demonstrating to the rider where to place the legs and how to keep heels down, encouraging the horse to keep moving (by gently squeezing using their legs) and providing encouragement and enthusiasm for the rider's efforts.



It is important that the Sidewalkers pay attention to the instructor at all times. Conversations should be non-existent when the instructor is speaking. Sidewalkers reinforce, but do not teach, so restrain the urge to tell the rider what to do and how to do it unless the instructor tells you to do so.



If there is only one Sidewalker and no leader, the Sidewalker takes on the additional responsibility of control of the horse in the event that the rider has trouble controlling his mount. This is only done when the rider's balance is sufficient to not need support and the rider is beginning to ride independently.



It is very important to pay attention to the rider and instructor. Don't chat with riders or other volunteers while the class is in session. Be friendly, answer direct questions from the rider briefly, but keep your ears on the instructor and your eyes on the rider.



You may reinforce what the instructor is saying by showing the rider or touching the appropriate area. Try not to talk. If you are talking, you might miss an emergency instruction.



Help your rider if he or she needs it, but first allow plenty of time for the rider to perform independently. Responses often take longer than we expect. Allow the rider to perform at his or her own pace. But do make sure the rider understands the instructor.

IN THE ARENA

General Information:



In the arena, there is only “ONE VOICE” ---the voice of the Instructor.



Students should never be in the arena other than when mounted except to mount or dismount and leave the arena, or as part of a supervised activity.



The arena gates must be closed and latched at all times when there are horses in the arena.



If a horse is running away, (with or without a rider) **STAY CALM!** Do not yell and do not run. If you are leading a horse, halt *your* horse and stay with *your* rider. Wait for instructions from the instructor.



If another rider has a problem or a fall, **DON'T** rush to assist. Stay with your horse and rider and listen for instructions. The instructor will handle the problem and ask for assistance if needed. The horse and rider you are assisting is **YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY**.



If your rider falls, the horse leader is responsible for the horse –not the rider. A loose horse is a danger to every rider in the arena—so all horses must stay connected to their leaders! Quietly and calmly stop the horse, get it away from the rider and call for the instructor. The side walker stays with the rider until the instructor arrives, and then follows the directions of the instructor.



SMART has several lesson arenas: the Equitation Arena, the Trail Arena, the Sensory Trail Arena and the Round Pen. Each of the arenas are designed to promote different skills and/or provide different activities.

The Equitation Arena is used for teaching basic walk, trot, and canter lessons.

The Trail Arena is the grassy arena on the far side of the Equitation Arena. This arena has a variety of obstacles set up, each with a different degree of difficulty and designed to teach different skills. When leading a horse into the Trail Arena, do not go through an obstacle until the Instructor advises that it is ok. For safety reasons, even though the obstacles are not new to the horses, it is always a good idea to make sure they are comfortable before proceeding.

The Round Pen is used for lunge lessons and equine assisted activities.

The Sensory Trail Arena is in the front paddock and provides opportunities for sensory integration activities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Effective Sidewalking

By: Susan Tucker and Molly Lingua, R.P.T.

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally get the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson.

In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus his/her attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and to riders

who already have perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one should be the “designated talker” to avoid this situation.

When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says “Turn to the right toward me,” and the student seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say, “Right,” to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they’re just not paying attention.

It is important to maintain a position by the rider’s knee. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

There are two ways to hold onto the rider without interfering. The most commonly used is the “arm-over-the-thigh” hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse’s size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider’s thigh. Be careful that the elbow doesn’t accidentally dig into the rider’s leg.

Sometimes, pressure on the thigh can increase and/or cause muscle spasticity, especially with the Cerebral Palsy population. In this case, the “therapeutic hold” may be used. Here, the leg is held at the joints, usually the knee and/or ankle, check with the instructor/ therapist for the best way to assist. In the (unlikely) event of an emergency, the arm-over thigh hold is the most secure.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider’s waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer too much and uneven support. At times, it can even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Encourage your students to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities.

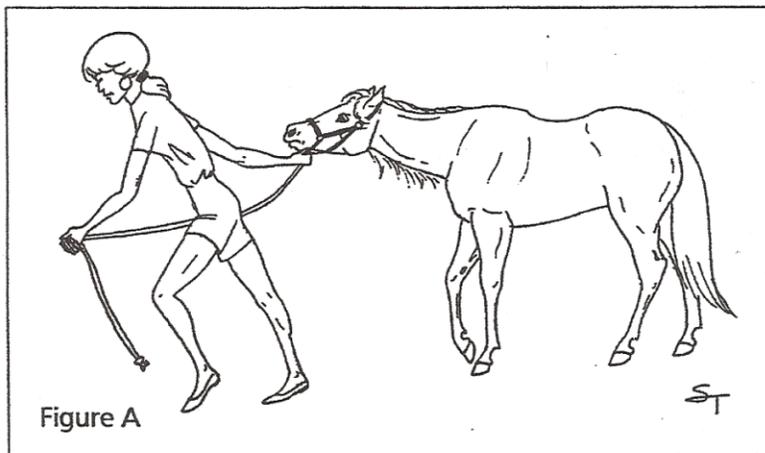
The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the riders to stretch and grow to be as capable as they can possibly be. You are right at their side, so help the instructor to challenge them to the best of their ability.

Without you, therapeutic riding programs couldn’t exist. We thank you for all you give and challenge you to be the best you can be!

The Role of the Leader

By Susan F. Tucker

One of the most challenging duties that can be assigned to a volunteer is that of leader. A leader's first responsibility is the horse but he must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.



An effective leader pays close attention to the rider's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This reinforces the rider's attempts to control the horse. However, you should not execute an instruction for the rider before he has time to process the information and make an effort to comply. Sometimes it may be appropriate to walk into the corner and stand until the student figures out what to do.

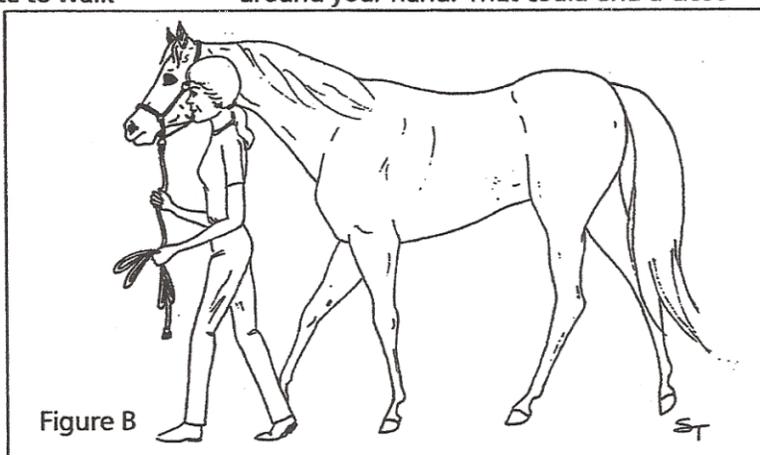
Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider or sidewalkers. A rider may get confused by too much input and not know who's in charge. (Instructors often make terrible leaders because they can't keep their mouths shut!)

Figure A depicts a few faults

common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along—head down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope—dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk along side the horse, about even with his eye. This helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

Talk to the horse; most of them know whoa, walk and trot, or can learn the words. Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. Do not walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where he is going.

Figure B shows the correct position for leaders. The lead shank is held with the right hand 6 to 12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure-eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. Never coil the rope around your hand. That could end a close



relationship with your fingers!

Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. Move out, about 1,000 steps per 15 minutes, to provide the most therapeutic benefit.

When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse with your hands on the halter's cheek pieces (if the horse permits), or loosely hold the lead or reins. Standing in front is a psychological barrier for the horse and he will stand more quietly than if he has an easy chance to move out. If you like your thumbs, don't put them through the snaffle or halter rings.

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse as far from the fallen student as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

These suggestions can help you control your horse, be a good aide to a rider and be a valuable assistant to an instructor. You will provide real therapeutic input to your rider, as well as make it safe for him to have fun riding.

Never coil the rope around your hand. That could end a close relationship with your fingers!!

Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving.

The Basics of Equine Behavior

Carey A. Williams, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Equine Management, Rutgers University

Ten Natural Survival Traits

1. The horse, a prey animal, depends on flight as its primary means of survival. Its natural predators are large animals such as cougars, wolves, or bears, so its ability to outrun these predators is critical. As humans, we need to understand their natural flightiness in order to fully understand horses.
2. Horses are one of the most perceptive of all domestic animals. Since they are a prey species, they must be able to detect predators. A stimulus unnoticed by humans is often cause for alarm for horses; as riders and trainers we commonly mistake this reaction for “spookiness” or bad behavior.
3. The horse has a very fast response time. A prey animal must react instantly to a perceived predator to be able to survive.
4. Horses can be desensitized from frightening stimuli. They need to learn quickly what is harmful (e.g., lion, cougar, etc.) and what is harmless (e.g., tumbleweeds, birds, a discolored rock, etc.), so they do not spend their whole lives running away.
5. Horses forgive, but do not forget. They especially remember bad situations! This is why it is critical to make the horse’s first training experience a positive one.
6. Horses categorize most experiences in one of two ways: a) something not to fear, so ignore or explore it, and b) something to fear, so flee. Therefore, when presenting anything new, the horse needs to be shown that ‘a’ is the case. Again, it is important to make all training experiences positive.
7. Horses are easily dominated. The horse is a herd animal where a dominance hierarchy is always established. If done correctly, human dominance can easily be established during training without causing the horse to become excessively fearful.
8. Horses exert dominance by controlling the movement of their peers. Horses accept dominance when: a) we or another animal cause them to move when they prefer not to, and b) we or another animal inhibit movement when they want to flee. Examples include using a round pen, longe line, or hobbles; or the more dominant horse in the field chasing the less dominant one away.
9. The body language of a horse is unique to the equine species. As a highly social animal, the horse communicates its emotions and intentions to its herd mates through both vocalization and body language. A person handling horses needs to be able to read the horse’s body language to be an effective trainer.
10. The horse is a precocial species, meaning that the newborn foals are neurologically mature at birth. They are most vulnerable immediately after birth so they must be able to identify danger and flee if necessary.

READING HIS EARS

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



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



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



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



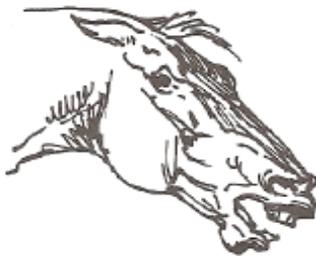
Ears pointed left and right
relaxed, paying attention
to the scenery on both sides.



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



Droopy ears
calm and resting,
horse may be dozing.

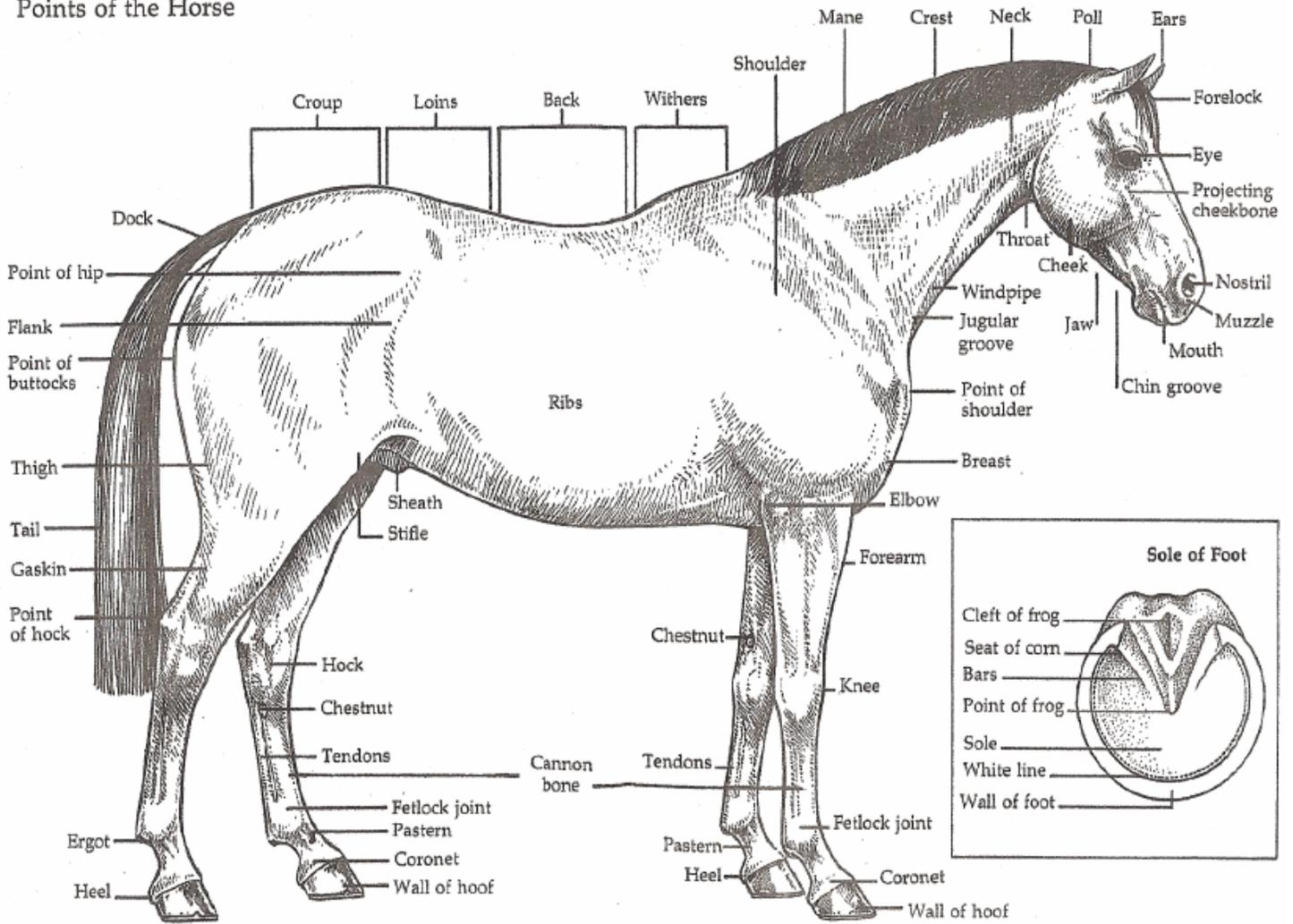


Ears flattened against neck
violently angry, in a fighting mood.
May fight, bite or kick.

OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

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

Points of the Horse



Respectful Disability Language

A guide for using appropriate disability language and terminology

"The difference between the right word and the almost-right word
is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug."

- Mark Twain

What does "Respectful Disability Language" Mean?

The Disability Rights Movement advocates for positive changes in society. These changes include equal rights under the law and equal access to housing and employment. It could also mean improving how people with disabilities are talked about in places like the media or in everyday conversations. The use of language and words describing people with disabilities has changed over time. It's important that people are aware of the meaning behind the words they use when talking to, referring to, or working with the Disability Community. Disrespectful language can make people feel excluded and can be a barrier to full participation. This is a guide to using respectful words and language.

When does Language = Power?

Imagine living your whole life always having to explain why the words that people use are hurtful and offensive to you. Teachers, co-workers, friends, and family need to know how the words and phrases they use make you feel. Many of us are brought up in homes in which we are the only one with a disability. Maybe we haven't learned to think of ourselves or other people with disabilities as proud individuals. People with disabilities want respect and acceptance.

Many people who do not have a disability now will have one in the future. Others will have a family member or a friend who will become disabled. If you become disabled in your lifetime, how do you want people to describe you? If a family member or friend becomes disabled, how would you want him/her to be treated? Disability affects all people. So learn respectful language and teach others.

General Guidelines for Talking about Disability

- Refer to a person's disability only when it is related to what you are talking about. For example, don't ask "What's wrong with you?" Don't refer to people in general or generic terms such as "the girl in the wheelchair."
- When talking about places with accommodations for people with disabilities, use the term "accessible" rather than "disabled" or "handicapped." For example, refer to an "accessible" parking space rather than a "disabled" or "handicapped" parking space or "an accessible bathroom stall" rather than "a handicapped bathroom stall."
- Use the term "disability," and take the following terms out of your vocabulary when talking about or talking to people with disabilities. Don't use the terms "handicapped," "differently-abled," "cripple," "crippled," "victim," "retarded," "stricken," "poor," "unfortunate," or "special needs."
- Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean he/she is "courageous," "brave," "special," or "superhuman." People with disabilities are the same as everyone else. It is not unusual for someone with a disability to have talents, skills, and abilities.
- It is okay to use words or phrases such as "disabled," "disability," or "people with disabilities" when talking about disability issues. Ask the people you are with which term they prefer if they have a disability.

- When talking about people without disabilities, it is okay to say "people without disabilities." But do not refer to them as "normal" or "healthy." These terms can make people with disabilities feel as though there is something wrong with them and that they are "abnormal."
- When in doubt, call a person with a disability by his/her name.

Words to Describe Different Disabilities

Here are some ways that people with disabilities are described. This list includes "out-dated language" - terms and phrases that should not be used. This list also includes respectful words that should be used to describe different disabilities. What is "okay" for some people is not "okay" for others. If you don't know what to say, just ask how a person likes to be described.

Disability	Out-Dated Language	Respectful Language
Blind or Visually Impairment	Dumb, Invalid	Blind/Visually Impaired, Person who is blind/visually impaired
Deaf or Hearing Impairment	Invalid, Deaf-and-Dumb, Deaf-Mute	Deaf or Hard-of-hearing, Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Speech/Communication Disability	Dumb, "One who talks bad"	Person with a speech / communication disability
Learning Disability	Retarded, Slow, Brain- Damaged, "Special ed"	Learning disability, Cognitive disability, Person with a learning or cognitive disability
Mental Health Disability	Hyper-sensitive, Psycho, Crazy, Insane, Wacko, Nuts	Person with a psychiatric disability, Person with a mental health disability
Mobility/Physical Disability	Handicapped, Physically Challenged, "Special," Deformed, Cripple, Gimp, Spastic, Spaz, Wheelchair-bound, Lamé	Wheelchair user, Physically disabled, Person with a mobility or physical disability
Emotional Disability	Emotionally disturbed	Emotionally disabled, Person with an emotional disability
Cognitive Disability	Retard, Mentally retarded, "Special ed"	Cognitively/Developmentally disabled, Person with a cognitive/developmental disability
Short Stature, Little Person	Dwarf, Midget	Someone of short stature, Little Person
Health Conditions	Victim, Someone "stricken with" a disability (i.e. "someone stricken with cancer" or "an AIDS victim")	Survivor, Someone "living with" a specific disability (i.e. "someone living with cancer or AIDS")

(c) 2006 This document titled Respectful Disability Language: Here's What's Up! was co-written by the National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN), and NCDE Roundtable Consortium member, and Kids as Self Advocates (KASA)

For more information or a training resource, download the free [Disability Etiquette Handbook](#), published by the United Spinal Association.

<http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tools/respect>