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Another woman's treasure

Platte City rider takes horse from slaughterhouse discard to award winner



By **Jimmy Potts**
Editor
editor@mycameronnews.com

When Kansas City rider Haley Johnson, formerly of Platte City, rescued Gilligan all she saw in him was a companion but overtime he became one of the area's elite in ranch horse competitions.

The previous owner saw so little in Gilligan, he was slated for slaughter at a kill facility in Pennsylvania, then was saved by a rescue organization before Johnson came and adopted him.

"I went out and met him before I signed the paperwork to take him home. He was such a friendly little thing. He just wanted to cuddle and kind of

be a puppy," Johnson said. "I thought, if nothing else I love him and I'm going to take him home and see what I could do with him. When I got him home, it was clear he was scared of everything. No one had really done him the courtesy of teaching him about the world."

While working with Gilligan, she began to notice peculiarities with him. He could move like an athlete, despite recently healing a gash on his leg significant enough for termination to be a consideration. He also quickly learned his training. At one point, Johnson traced Gilligan's lineage and discovered his original name was Keepsake Stowaway because his father sired him by breaking out of his stall and finding his way into a pen full of yearling mares.

"I had to start from the beginning like he was a baby. We kind of started from scratch. There was a lot of potential," Johnson said. "The way he moved; he was already athletic without knowing anything. He was really smart. He would catch onto things quickly. It wasn't going to be a dealbreaker if it didn't happen."

Once she felt confident enough to show him, Johnson began with a small show, then transitioned him to competitions with the Missouri Ranch Horse Association.

"We started with one small show and that went really well. We decided to start going to ranch horse shows through the Missouri Ranch Horse Association," Johnson said. "We did their circuit and took home a couple of high-point awards by the end of it. I have a reining award for one class. I also logged his points in a Morgan Horse reining association. That year was his first year showing and he won the open points competition award. I feel like a nervous wreck of a parent all of the time."

With Gilligan performing well as a ranch horse, Johnson said she hopes to see what other talents he has waiting to be discovered. She said she plans to work with him in order to compete in jumping competitions in the near future.

"Every week I just step back and go, wow, this would not have even been possible. It's pretty cool how they blossom," Johnson said.



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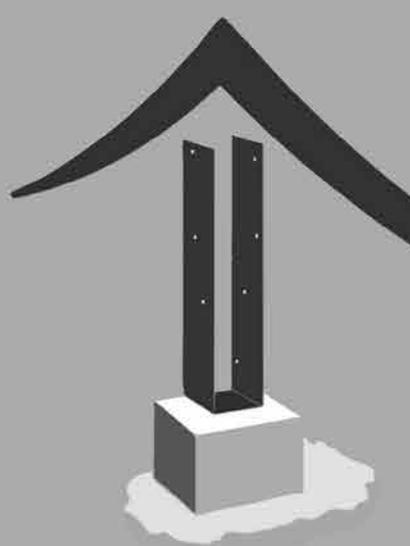
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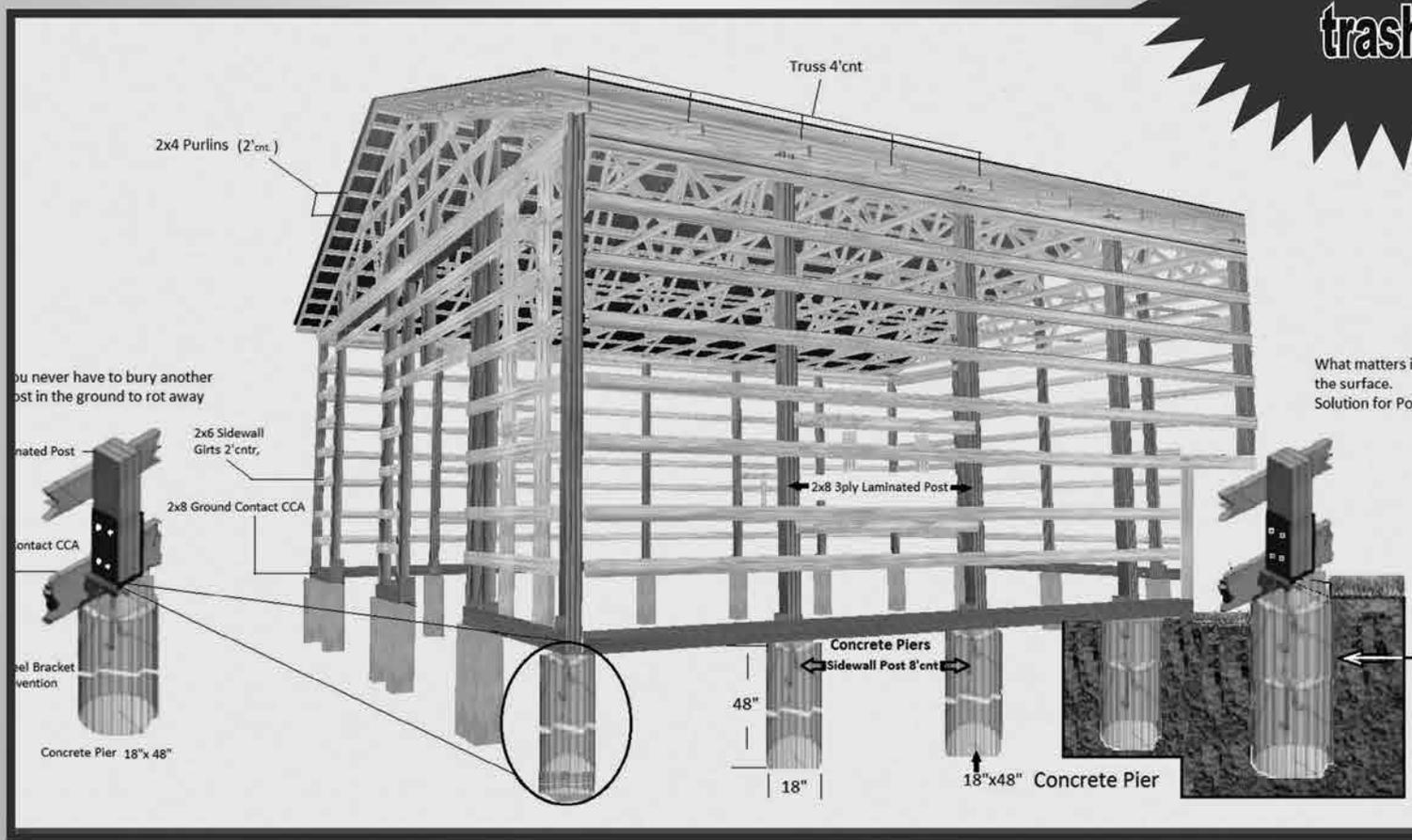
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Western Saddle Fitting 101: Tips on Proper Fit, Selecting Saddle Pads, Cinches and More

By Valley Vet Supply
Contributed

If your blue jeans were two sizes too small, it's likely your body would show signs of (major) discomfort, such as pinching and red marks. Now, unless they're the last pair to your name, you're likely not wearing those jeans again, let alone tomorrow, the next day, or for days to come.

Now, imagine how your horse might feel, if he is consistently ridden in an improperly fitted saddle.

How Does Your Saddle Fit Your Horse?

Your horse's comfort, happiness and your proper positioning as a rider all weighs on your saddle's fit. An improper saddle fit causes your weight to be distributed unevenly, which can result in pressure points, rub marks, soreness, or the development of white saddle spots on your horse. Monitor your horse's attitude and behavior while riding, which can clue you in on a painful saddle fit, but keep in mind: some horses are more stoic than others. It's best that you take a step back and take a close look at your horse while he is saddled to determine fit.

Your saddle fits just right if it sits level on your horse's back and the bars of the tree do not pinch. The front of your saddle should be positioned behind your horse's shoulder blade, allowing him freedom of movement.

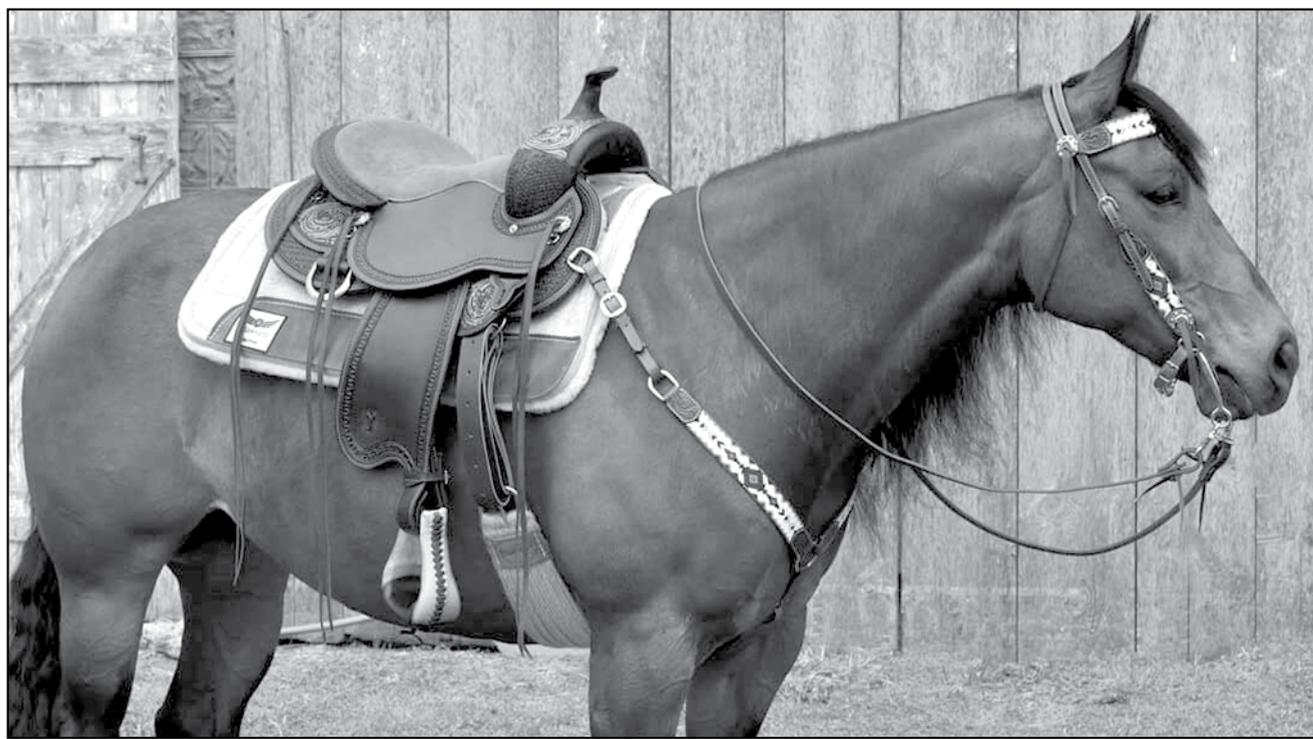
Your saddle is too narrow if the front of the saddle sits high. When the saddle is sitting directly upon the horse's withers, pinching can often occur.

Your saddle is too wide if the front of the saddle is low. This also results in pinching but at the top of the saddle's bars. In this scenario, the gullet of the saddle may be too low and rest on your horse's withers causing pain and discomfort.

Continue reading for additional guidance to help ensure you and your horse enjoys the most comfortable and secure ride possible.

What to Consider When Selecting a Saddle Pad

Selecting a saddle pad is an important decision that should



not be based on look and color patterns alone. Some saddle pads, such as the SMX Cowboy Deluxe Pad, are uniquely designed and contoured to fit your horse's back immediately, relieve wither pressure and wick away sweat and moisture.

Be sure to avoid over-padding your horse, a common practice that can result in your saddle rolling and sliding more easily. Choose a saddle pad that offers your horse the support he needs.

How to Measure For a Cinch

For your saddle's fit and proper positioning on your horse, it is important that your horse's cinch fit well, too. In the video above, Professional's Choice representative and professional rodeo cowboy, Brodie Poppino, shares how to

properly measure and fit a cinch to your saddle. Keep in mind, though: non-nylon cinches could stretch up to a full size, so based on your preference, consider the material before ordering a cinch for your horse.

What to Consider When Choosing a Cinch

When choosing a cinch for your horse and saddle, keep in mind there are two different types of cinches: Western cinches and roper cinches. A roper cinch is wide and contoured, so when they are cinched up and stop quickly, the weight is distributed more evenly over a wider area of the horse, reducing uncomfortable pressure on the horse's

See SADDLE on page H5



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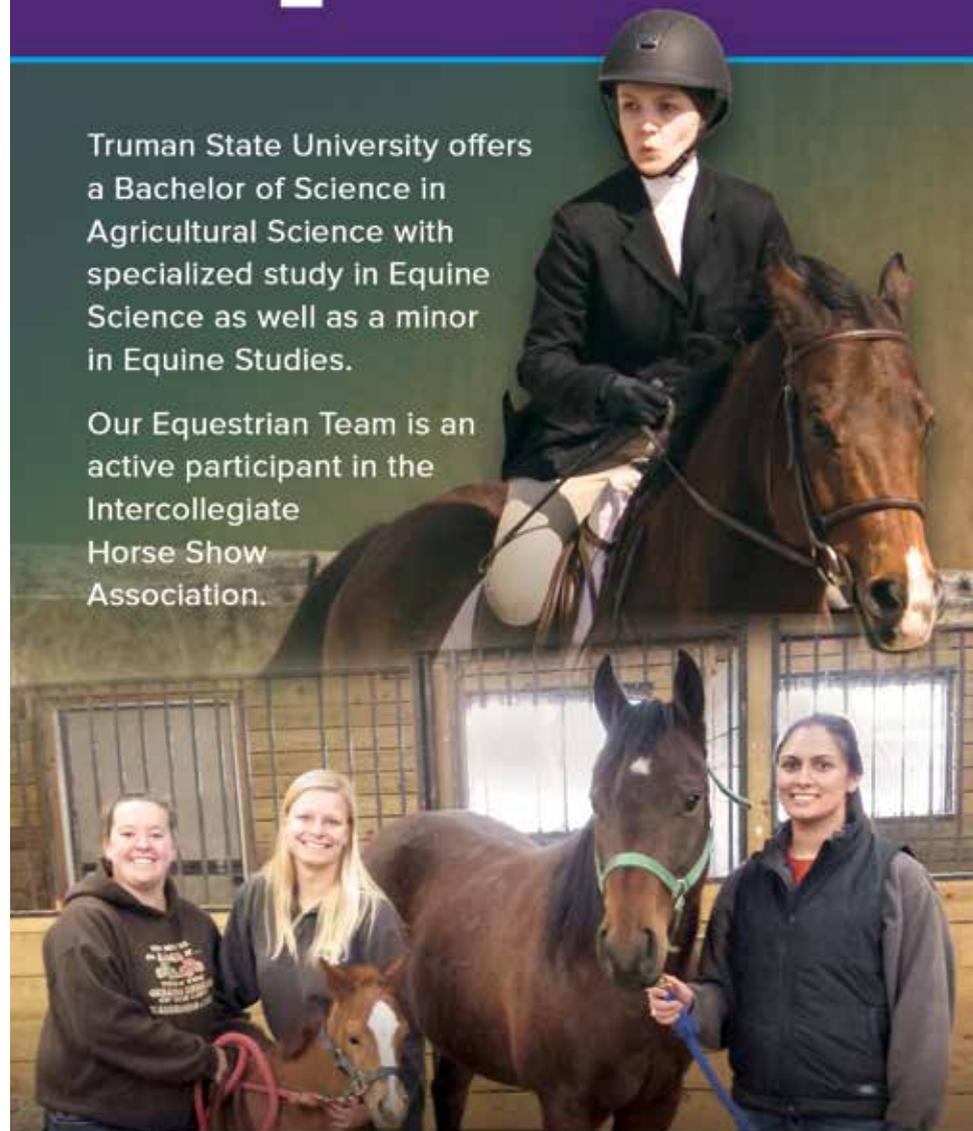


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15 facts about horses

Dogs may be man's best friend, but horses have been companion and assistance animals for millenia. In fact, archaeological evidence indicates that humans formed intermingled relationships with horses nearly 5,500 years ago.

Horses provided people with much of the essentials they required for group survival. Khan Academy indicates that the domestication of the horse ushered in an era of innovation in transport and communication. Horses also were invaluable animals on the farm or in early villages.

Horses still serve many practical functions, but they're more often than not companion animals or relied on for riding hobbies and sport. Horses are majestic and fascinating animals, and these 15 interesting facts show just how incredible these beautiful animals are.

1. Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up.
2. Horses have the largest eyes of any mammal that lives on land.
3. People once believed horses were colorblind. In fact, horses can see colors, but are better at detecting yellows and greens than purples and violets.
4. A horse's body contains 205 bones.
5. Because a horse's eyes are on the side of its head, it is capable of seeing nearly 360 degrees at one time.
6. The fastest sprinting speed ever recorded for a horse is 55 miles per hour, though they generally trot at around four miles per hour.
7. Horses evolved from a very small animal about the size of a dog or baby lamb that was called a hyracotherium. This ancestor lived in tropical rain forests in North America and ate leaves.
8. Hooves are made from the same protein that comprises human fingernails and hair.
9. The Przewalski's horse is the only truly wild horse species still in existence. The last remaining wild population is in Mongolia.

SADDLE _____ from page H4



Saddle crafted by internationally renowned trainer and clinician, Julie Goodnight.

abdomen. When tightening your horse's cinch for an everyday ride, consider how tightly you wear your belt, and offer your horse the same level of comfort. Overtightening a cinch can add pressure and discomfort for your horse before you even step into the stirrups.

Remember that the longevity of your saddle and tack all depends on how well it is cared for over the years. Cleaning and oiling your tack regularly helps to prevent cracking and protect the leather. Oiling your saddle also aids in a safer ride, as dry, cracked leather can result in breakage, which can potentially lead to a mishap and rider injury. For safety, closely observe your tack and the quality of your leather pieces. Are they oiled and secure, without any sign of dry rot or cracking? If so, happy trails. If not, for the safety of your ride, it is time for repair or replacement.

10. A male horse is called a stallion, while a young male horse is a colt. A female horse is a mare, while a young female is a filly.

11. Ponies are not immature horses. They are a small variety of horse.

12. Estimates suggest there are around 60 million horses in the world.

13. Early civilizations used horses as a form of food. But in 732 A.D., Pope Gregory III said the ritual consumption of horse meat was a pagan practice and had to be abolished. Islamic and Jewish communities also advocated toward avoiding horse meat. Today there is no specific law in the U.S. banning horse meat, but most people still steer clear of it.

14. An adult horse's brain weighs 22 ounces, or about half the weight of a human brain.

15. Horses like sweet flavors, which is why you can tempt them with sweet treats like apples and sugar cubes.



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Tackling Thrush in Horses

Learn more about the common condition, hoof thrush, and about thrush treatment for horses



By Valley Vet Supply

Contributed

Whew, do you smell that?

Once you smell thrush, it's unlikely you will ever forget it.

Equine thrush infection is a hoof condition that many horse owners battle. It is described as an infection localized in the "frog" of the hoof, especially the grooves on the sides and middle of the frog called the sulci. The condition is characterized by a foul odor, a dark-colored discharge, soreness of the frog and deformation of the frog's shape.

Thrush has been positively identified as being a bacterial infection of the soft tissue of the hoof, which is caused by *Fusobacterium necrophorum*. This anaerobic bacteria is a natural part of a healthy horse's gut flora. It passes through their system and gets picked up on the hoof. While thrush is encouraged by dark, wet conditions, a case can occur in even the best of circumstances.

How do you identify thrush?

- Tenderness and/or pain in the foot
- Black, pus-like fluid
- Bleeding
- Strong, unpleasant odor

What causes thrush?

• Bacteria that thrive in wet conditions, especially environments contaminated with urine or manure

- Consistently wet conditions
- Infrequent hoof cleaning

How do you treat thrush?

- Move the horse to a clean and dry area.
- Ensure bedding and footing is as dry as possible.
- Pick the hooves out daily.

• Apply an antiseptic foot wash to clean the hooves. To determine frequency of application for daily use, please reference your thrush treatment's product label, as treatment recommendations vary by product. Gently wipe it through the hoof to get into cracks and crevices.

• Hooflex Thrush Remedy is tough on bacteria and fungi because it is a broad-based antimicrobial. This means it will help battle the bacteria that causes thrush but also fungus that can follow. The product is "convenient to use and dried up my horse's thrush in two weeks," said Jeannette, a horse owner in Pennsylvania. "It was recommended to me by my farrier."

• Contact your farrier or veterinarian if the problem persists for longer than one week.

How long will it take to treat thrush?

Because of the nature of this infection, and the possibility of reinfection, it will take persistence to fully treat a case. Don't give up after a few days -- it can take weeks. Though thrush can happen in just about any barn, it can be successfully managed when a comprehensive hoof care plan is implemented.

To help reduce risk for thrush and support excellent hoof care for your horse, schedule regular farrier visits every six to eight weeks. Also, pick your horses' hooves often, daily if possible. Fight back bacteria and fungus with a proven thrush treatment solution, and make sure the paddocks and bedding are as dry as possible.

Looking to learn more about common hoof problems your horse may experience? Continue reading for details on types of horse hoof cracks, or, learn answers to common hoof care questions in this Q&A with a horse farrier.

About the author: This content was originally provided by Absorbine/W.F. Young, manufacturer of Hooflex Thrush Remedy, with additions included from Valley Vet Supply.

Sweet treats to make at home

HORSE MUFFINS

- 1 1/2 cups of bran
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup skimmed milk
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons corn oil
- 1 egg, beaten

Stir together bran, flour, baking soda and baking powder. Mix together milk, molasses, oil and egg. Mix wet ingredients into dry ingredients. Bake in greased muffin pan at 400° for 15 minutes

CARROT APPLE DELIGHT

- 3 carrots chopped into small pieces
- 3 apples cut into small pieces
- 1 cup oats
- Molasses

Drench cut-up carrots and apples in molasses. Roll molasses-covered carrots and apples into oats. Put in refrigerator.

HORSE COOKIES

- 1 cup uncooked oats
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup molasses

Mix ingredients in bowl as listed. Make little balls and place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

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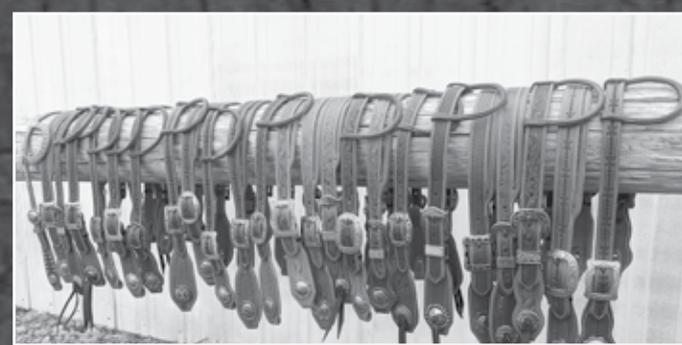


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Horse Care and Safety

Horses are beautiful, large and powerful animals. Though some people grow up around horses, many have had just brief encounters with horses or enjoyed them from afar. Unpredictable and awe-inspiring, horses require constant care, and those who interact with horses should know how to act around horses to reduce their risk of injury.

Contrary to popular belief, all horse-related accidents do not happen when riding a horse. While many injuries result from falling off of a horse, injury also can occur during routine daily horse chores such as feeding, grooming and tacking. Even the smallest or most mild-mannered horses have the potential to hurt someone if they are scared or startled. While no one should ever fear a horse, certain recommendations can help you avoid kicks, bites or trampled feet when interacting with horses.

- Understand the animal. Understanding horses can reduce your risk of injury. Horses are prey animals in the wild, and they are genetically predisposed to outrunning predators. Domestic horses may still have that fight or flight behavior ingrained in them. Should a horse become startled, it may react by running away. The goal is to remain calm and quiet around a horse. Sudden moves, especially when the horse is getting to know you, can cause a horse to kick out or shy (jump sideways).

Recognize injury, illness or discomfort. All bets are off if a horse is sick or injured. Pain can cause any animal to act out of character. A horse in pain may be sluggish or unresponsive, while another may act aggressively. Be extra careful around sick horses or when engaging in any activities that may make the animal uncomfortable. Check the horse for injuries or soft spots before grooming. Poor-fitting tack can make a horse uncomfortable and the horse may attempt to nip at you or the tack when tightening the girth.

Use proper restraint. According to Blue Cross for Pets, horses should be tied up when they are being groomed or tacked-up, even if they are in a stable. This enables you to move quietly and confidently around the horse. When grooming a horse, make sure the animal is wearing a well-fitting head collar and that the lead rope is secured through a loop attached to the tying up ring. Horse

handlers should remain calm but confident around horses, as the animal will get its cues from its handler.

Always remain on guard. Maintain a safe position when working around horses, regardless of which task you're performing. For example, never stand directly in front of or behind a horse, which can easily injure you with one kick of its leg. Horses have amazing peripheral vision but two blind spots. One blind spot is directly in front of his nose extending around four feet in front of it. The second blind spot is behind the tail. That blind spot extends about ten feet long, beyond the horse's tail. Horses will not be able to see you if you approach in their blind spots, and that could spook the animal. The safest place to stand is beside your horse's shoulder where you can see each other. Make sure you always have an "out" when standing close to a horse. You should remain on your feet to be able to move out of the way. Do not kneel or sit down on the floor next to a horse. You need to be spry and able to react at a moment's notice.

Watch your ropes. Do not loop lead ropes or reins around your hands or other body parts. If the horse pulls away or startles and darts, your body can become trapped. This may cause broken bones, dislocation or dragging.

Feed from buckets. When giving food or treats to a horse, do so from a feeding trough or bucket. A horse may not mean to bite, but when excited about treats he could mistake fingers for food.

Wear proper clothing. Always wear appropriate attire when around horses. A substantial shoe or boot will protect your feet against trampling and give you adequate traction. Gloves can be used when handling. Clothing should be well-fitting so that you do not become tangled or ensnared. Novice and even experienced riders may want to wear a riding helmet to protect against head injuries and a crash vest to protect the torso. Brightly colored clothing or reflective gear is advisable when riding in poor visibility or near moving vehicles.

Educate yourself. Take advantage of opportunities to learn more about horse care and safety. Less experienced riders can benefit from the training and advice of more experienced riders. Veteran riders also

can make suggestions when selecting horses, as some have make better fits for novice riders than others.

Maintain good veterinary care. Horses, just like any other domesticated animal, require veterinary checkups and may even need immunizations. Develop a good relationship with your horse's vet so that you feel comfortable turning to him or her with any questions.



Horses can make wonderful companions to those who understand their behavior and how to remain safe around these magnificent animals.

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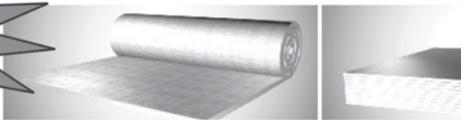
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