



Shadow Hills Riding Club

VOLUNTEER TRAINING MANUAL: Leaders, Side Walkers & Grooms

SHADOW HILLS RIDING CLUB

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GETTING THE HORSE READY

All Volunteers will be asked to help groom and tack up horses for lessons and untack and groom after lessons. The following pages will help you understand these procedures but nothing replaces trying it with an experienced volunteer or instructor nearby!

SHRC Grooming Steps

Position yourself at the horse's side; do not approach the horse directly in front of the head.

Use grooming equipment gently on the horse, particularly animals with sensitive skin. Be sure not to leave the grooming equipment where the horse could step on it. The safest place to position the grooming bucket in the crossties is in front of the pole on the horse's left side where we hang the bridle and reins.

Gather all equipment (grooming bucket, tack) and place it in the crosstie area to be used before bringing a horse from their stall. Put the horse in the crossties before beginning grooming. Drape the rope lead on the hook to the right side of the horse. Stay near the horse and keep a hand on it at all times so you can anticipate its movements. Never sit on the ground or groom from your knees, and always be in the position to move away quickly. For hygienic reasons, each horse has its own grooming bucket. Please do not share buckets or grooming equipment between horses.

Grooming Steps:

1. Hoof Pick
2. Curry Comb
3. Hard Brush
4. Soft Brush

Hoof Pick:

Begin grooming with the hooves. Hooves should be cleaned daily. Pick out the horse's feet before and after each ride, each turnout, or other exercise. Pick hooves in this order: Front Left, Back Left, Front Right, Back Right.

Facing the rear of the horse, place your left hand on its shoulder and rub down its leg. Lean slightly against the horse, to encourage him to balance on his opposite leg. If he does not pick up his foot, gently squeeze the tendons above the fetlock until he picks up his foot.

As the foot yields, slip your hand in front of the foot and raise it to knee height, but without jerking. Holding the foot firmly will encourage the horse not to jerk his foot away from you. If the horse gets anxious and struggles, put the foot down and start over.

Be sure your feet are not placed where the horse can step on them.

Use the hoof pick in a downward motion toward the toe, or in upward motion towards heel. Clean the sole, the frog, and the crevice next to the frog well. Look for bruises, punctures, foreign objects, or signs of disease, for example, a bad smell. If you find a problem, report it to the instructor. Make sure when you put the foot down to release it slowly making sure not to drop it.

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Curry Comb:

Start on the neck and brush in a circular motion. Work from front to back, grooming carefully in bony areas. Avoid using curry comb on the face, lower legs, hips and shoulders.

Hard and Soft Brushes:

After you have loosened the hair and dirt with the curry comb use a brush to remove it. If using two brushes, use the stiffer one first. Start on the neck and brush in the direction of the hair growth, working from front to back. Be sure to clean the horse's belly where the girth/cinch lies.

Do not brush manes or tails, unless requested to do so.

Avoid placing your face over or close to the horse's, as the animal can move quickly and hit you. Stay near and to the side of the hind leg when grooming the hindquarters. When working on the flank and groin areas get a feel for the horse's reaction. If it shows anxiety, work on these areas more gently.

After the horse is groomed check groomed areas for injuries and if found, notify the instructor.

1 HOOF PICK

Pick all four of the horse's hooves in the following order: front left, back left, front right, back right. Be sure to clean out every bit of dirt and debris so your horse has clean feet to walk on!



2 CURRY COMB

Make circular motions from upper neck to hind end with varying pressure. Be careful around your horse's joints and bones!



3 HARD BRUSH

Brush in short, flicking strokes from the top of the neck all over your horse's body following the direction of hair growth. Flick from the wrist!



4 SOFT BRUSH

Sweep in long brush strokes all over your horse's coat, starting at the head. Always follow the direction of hair growth.

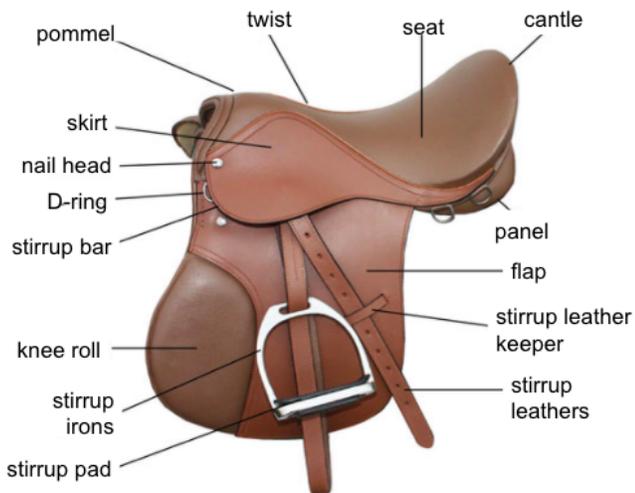


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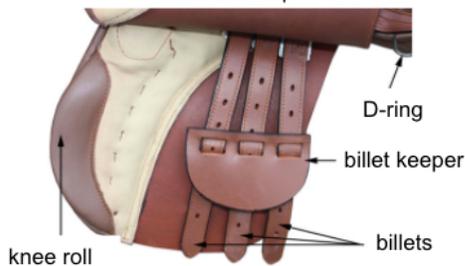
TACKING UP HORSES

Tack

Parts of an English Saddle



Under the Flap



english girth



Parts of a Western Saddle



western fluffy cinch

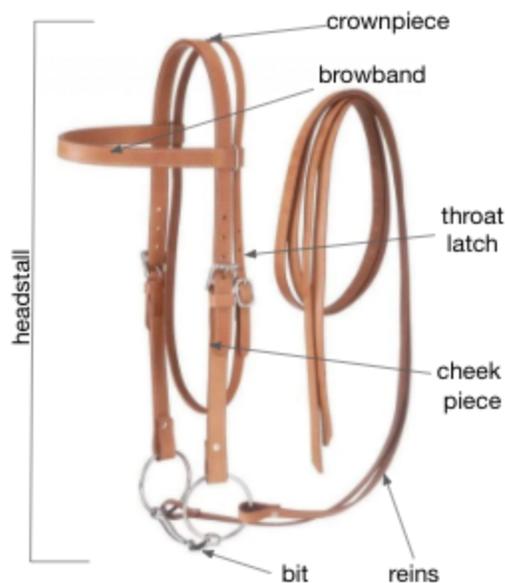


western cinch



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Parts of a Bridle



How to Tie a Western Cinch



Step 1: Take the cinch and attach the buckle to the billet on the right hand side of the horse

Step 2: Loop the latigo strap through the buckle of the cinch on the left side of the horse.

Step 3: Loop the latigo strap a second time through the cinch buckle.

Step 4: Take the end of the latigo strap and bring it across the cinch buckle.



Step 5: Loop the latigo strap around the opposite side of the cinch ring; creating a loop of strap in the front of the cinch buckle.

Step 6: Take the end of the latigo strap and pull it through the back of the loop; creating a knot.

Step 7: Pull down on strap to tighten.

Step 8: If the cinch is too loose, pull up on the loop of latigo that runs through the cinch buckle to the rigging on the saddle. This will loosen the knot. Pull the excess latigo strap back through the knot and tighten the knot again.

Step 9: Once cinch is tight, mount up and enjoy the ride!

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Saddling

Saddle the horse from the horse's left side. Stand slightly behind the shoulder of the horse and place the saddle blanket with the straps toward the horse's head. Place the blanket just behind the horse's shoulder blades, particularly covering the withers. Next slide it backwards over the horse's back, leaving about one inch over the withers. This straightens the hair under the pad. Make sure equal portions of the pad or blanket are on either side of the horse. Pick up the saddle and arrange it so the stirrups/irons and cinch/girth are not underneath the saddle or dangling.

With an English saddle, the stirrups should be run up on the leathers and the girth draped over the seat. With a western saddle place the right stirrup over the horn and the girth should be draped over the seat. Place the saddle gently on the horse's back. Never throw or drop the saddle on the horse's back, the pain can result in an injury.

With the saddle in place, secure the girth to the saddle on the right side of the horse. The girth is secured just behind the horse's front legs. For English, the elastic side of the girth should be on the left side of the saddle. For Western, the metal loop in the middle of the girth should be closest to the horse's head. Go around to the other side of the horse, reach under the belly and grab the free end of the girth, making sure it's not twisted.

The girth should be tightened in three or four phases. Secure the near side of the girth, using gentle consistent movement is more comfortable than a quick jerk. The girth should be checked again and tightened if necessary before the lesson begins. The final position of the girth should be tight enough to slide only fingers between the girth and the horse. Make sure hair under the girth is lying flat and the girth is not pinching the horse's skin.

The stirrups should remain run up until the instructor mounts the rider and the stirrups are adjusted. The stirrups should run up the leathers after the rider dismounts.

Bridling

Unfasten crossties before bridling.

Pick up the bridle by the middle crown piece. Stand to the side and just behind the horse's head on the left side facing the same direction as the horse. With your right hand, raise the crown piece up to the horse's ears as you guide the bit into the horse's mouth with your left hand. If the horse refuses to accept the bit, ask for assistance. Be sure to keep your left hand raised once you insert the bit, or the horse will open his mouth and drop the bit. Once the bit is in the horse's mouth settle the crown piece behind the ears.

Adjust the bridle to comfort and appearance. The noseband should be fastened with as little interference from the halter as possible. The throatlatch should be fastened loosely enough to fit your hand between the strap and the horse's jaw.

After bridling, attach reins to the bit. The reins should not ever touch the ground. Tie reins in a knot behind horse's ears as taught in the volunteering training class.

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Untacking

After the lesson, lead the horse back to the crossties. To unbridle the horse simply reverse the process of bridling. Remove the reins. Undo the throat latch and noseband. Slide the crown piece over the ears and down the horse's head with your left hand, grasp the halter with your right hand so the horse does not wander off and reattach the crossties to the halter.

Unsaddling is also done in reverse order. Undo the girth on the left and then on the right, and lay it over the saddle. Remove the saddle and pads from the left side of the horse.

Groom the horse after untacking, paying special attention to the sweaty areas and places where the hair seems out of place.

When you put the horse in its stall, the halter must be removed and left in front of the stall.

After the horse has been thoroughly groomed and returned to its stall: wash the bit on the bridle with a damp cloth then return the bridle to the bridle hook with the horse's name on it in the tack room; return the saddle to the correct rack in the tack room; return the cinch/girth to the correct size peg; place the saddle pads back on the stack in the tack room; place bareback saddles on the stack in the tack room; put Devonshire Boots back in marked plastic container on shelf in tack room; return grooming bucket to tack room; sweep crosstie area thoroughly.

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PARTS OF THE HORSE



UNDERSTANDING HORSES

The Horse and You

Safety Rules

1. Use a quiet voice around the horses.
Why? Because loud sudden noises may frighten the horses and they may accidentally hurt you!
2. Always let your horse know where you are by speaking and touching your horse at all times.
Why? Because the horse will not be startled if he knows you are there.
3. When you move around the rear of the horse, be sure to stay close to his body and maintain contact with your hand and speak.
Why? Horses generally only kick when startled so it is important to communicate with your horse as you move behind him.
4. Movements around the horse should be slow without surprises.
Why? You tell me.
5. Observe the body language of the horse to evaluate his mood and comfort level. Tail swishing, smashing of teeth, ears back and pacing may indicate that the horse is disturbed about something.
What to do? Look at what you are doing. You may be bothering the horse, assess your own actions and the environment around him.
6. If you are unsure of anything concerning contact with your horse, please ask your instructor or volunteer before acting.

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SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE BARN AND AROUND THE HORSES AT ALL TIMES!

Horse Body Language

Spending time around horses, one becomes more adept at reading horse body language. Below are a few examples of horse body language.

Ears - *Always pay close attention to the position of the ears!*

- When the horse's ears are laid flat back, it is usually quite angry and a bite or kick may soon follow.
- When the ears are pricked forward, the horse is curious or alert.
- When a horse flicks its ears around when being ridden, he is usually very attentive to his rider's wishes.

Eyes

- In a curious or alarmed state the horse's eyes will widen.
- When he is tired of resting, his eyelids will be droopy.
- Squinting to notes pain; it can also happen as a horse ready himself to attack or is setting in to be stubborn.

Head & Neck

- An outstretched neck usually denotes curiosity.
- If on the defensive or on the alert, the horse lifts and arches his neck and head.
- Nodding of the head usually denotes impatience.

Lips & Teeth

- When a horse is extremely relaxed, the lower lip can be droopy.
- When stubborn, the lips are tightly drawn.
- An alert horse will have some tension in his lips.
- A horse with bared teeth means business and will likely attack and bite.

Hooves & Legs

- As a threat, a warning to kick would be lifting the hoof off the ground and pinning the ears. *However merely lifting the hind hoof off the ground when the horse looks otherwise relaxed does not indicate threat*; horses often rest a foot while standing on their other feet.
- When a horse paws at the ground it is most often a sign of impatience.

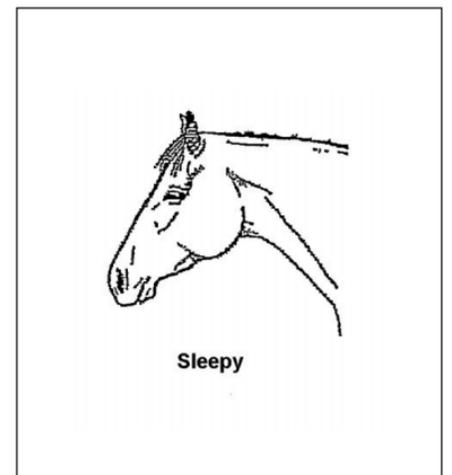
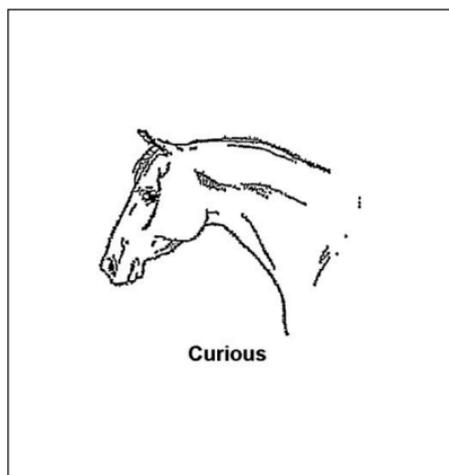
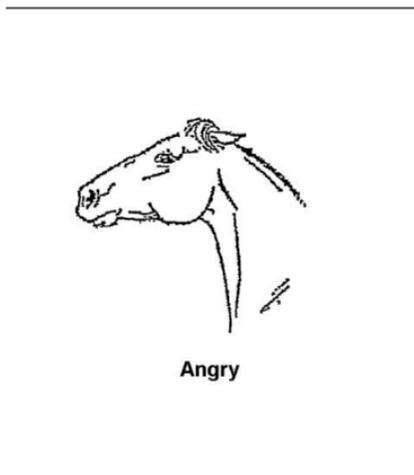
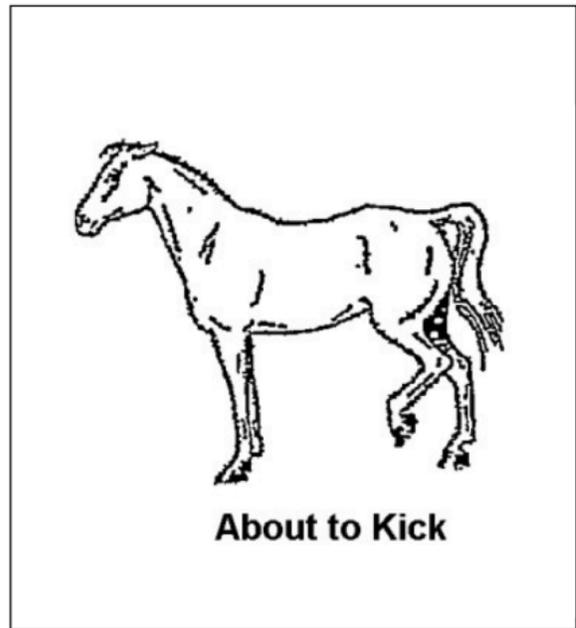
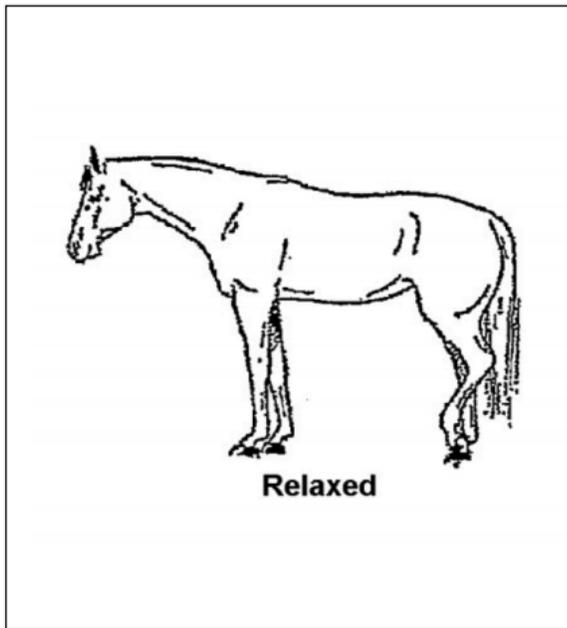
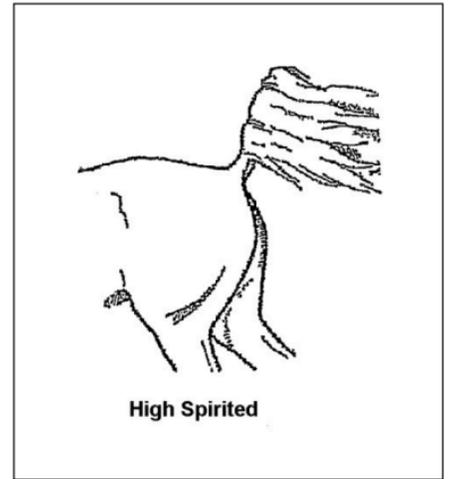
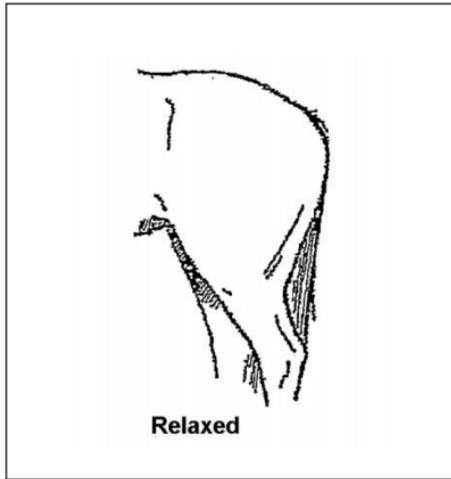
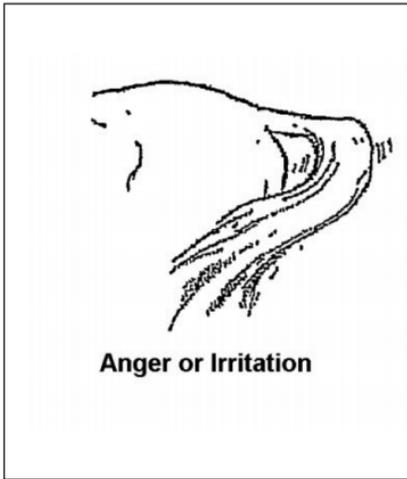
Tail

- When firmly clamps down, the horse is settling in to be stubborn or may be extremely annoyed.
- When swinging side to side in a relaxed way, the horse is calm and happy.
- When carried up and somewhat away from his body, the horse is alert and/or curious.
- When held straight up, the horse is usually high-spirited and/or showing off.
- Tail swishing can mean either flies are bothersome or he may be slightly annoyed at another horse or at a person nearby.
- When a tail lashes violently at his sides, he is usually very angry or in a state of extreme distress.

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	Head, Neck & Face	Body
Listening to Rider		
Relaxed		 
Angry/Irritated		
Alert		

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DURING THE LESSON

Leader

As the Leader you are in charge of the horse at all times.

Leading Position

- Walk on the left beside the horse's head staying just between the ears and shoulder.
- Hold the right hand about 12-16 inches from the clip end of the rope, creating a "smile".
- Hold the extra rope in a figure 8 in your left hand. NEVER wrap the rope around your hand.

Be Observant of Horse Movement & Location

- Look up and forward, but always be aware of your horse's focus.
- Keep your attention on the lesson and your team.
- Glance back occasionally to make sure they are safe.
- Keep at least one horse length distance between your horse and the other horses.

Leading at the "Walk" and "Trot"

- Wait for your rider to ask the horse to "walk on" before proceeding.
- Be sure you don't crowd your side walkers. If you don't watch your distance they can become trapped between horse and fence.
- Walk on, giving a couple of clucks with your voice and use a gentle tug with the lead rope if your rider is unable to motivate the horse.
- Don't pull on the horse or face him to get him to walk on.
- When it is time to trot, wait for your rider to ask the horse to "trot on" before proceeding.
- During the walk and trot, avoid downward tugs or pulls on the lead line – the horse may become unbalanced.
- Be careful not to get too far ahead, behind or away from the horse.

Be Aware of Rider and Progression of Lesson

- Be aware of what the rider is asking of the horse.
- Turn as or after the rider uses the reins to turn the horse, not before.
- Let the rider do as much as possible.
- Try not to pressure on the horse's head if they are doing what is asked of them. The release of pressure is their reward for doing it right. It continues the proper teaching of the horses.

Be Observant of Environment + Emergencies

- Pay extra attention to your horse when there is abnormal activity around the arena which might scare your horse (winds gusts, people running, trash blowing, noise from the parking lot, etc.).
- In the event of an emergency or accident, the leader is responsible for the horse. Stay with the horse and follow the instructor's directions.

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The Role of the Leader

By Susan F. Tucker, NARHA Accreditation Committee

One of the most challenging duties that can be assigned to a volunteer is that of a 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 alongside the horse, about even with his eye. This helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial to 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.

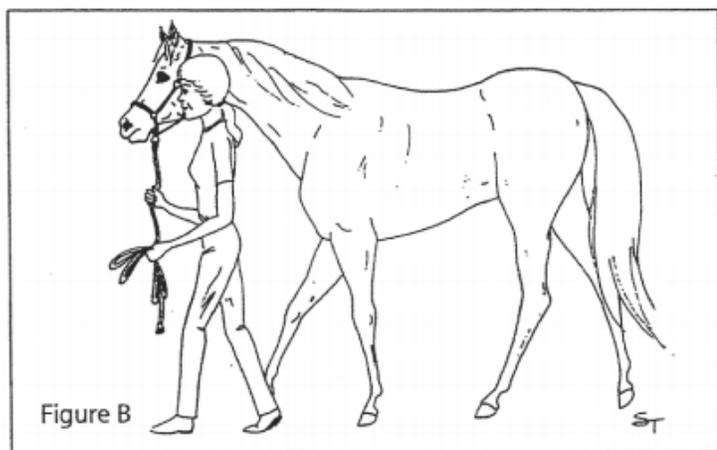
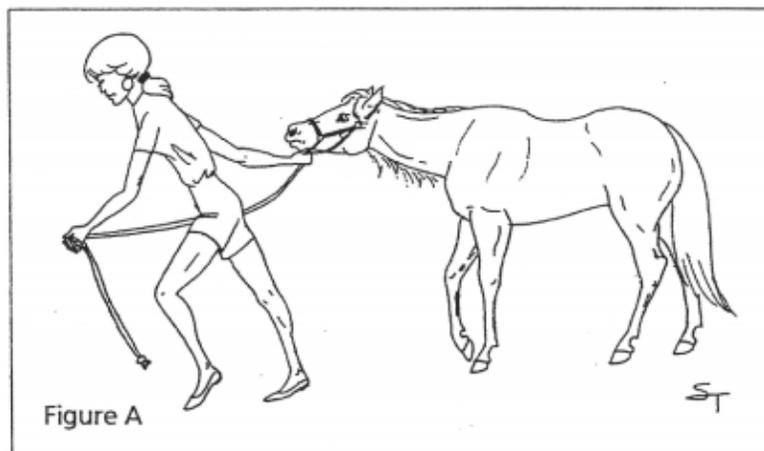


Figure B shows the correct position for leaders. The lead shank is held with the right hand 6 to 12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure-eight in the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

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 to the horse and he will stand more quietly than if he has an easy

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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 our rider, as well as make it safe for them to have fun riding. In short, if you lead, we'll be happy to follow.

Turning Your Horse

- Extend your arm to keep the horse on track.
- Look and walk with intention in the direction you plan to go.
- When turning, *push* the horse away from you as opposed to pulling the horse towards you to prevent being stepped on accidentally.

The Right Way

Push him away from you when turning.



The Wrong Way

Don't pull the horse toward your feet.



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Side Walker

As the Side Walker, you are responsible for the rider at all times!

You are the person responsible for the rider's safety. You will help them maintain their balance and feel safe during the lesson.

Depending on the rider's condition and balance, one or two side walkers may be assigned to the rider by the instructor.

When only one side walker is needed, this side walker will be on the right side of the rider while the leader walks on the left side of the horse.

If directed to do so, give support at the thigh and/or ankle. Try not to push on the horse or put pressure on the rider's leg. The horse might think he is being signaled to go faster.

If directed, walk beside the rider's leg assisting only when needed, for example at the trot or to reinforce the instructor's directions. Do not drop back behind the horse's middle.

In case of an emergency dismount, the side walkers are responsible for making sure the rider's feet are out of the stirrups and taking the rider off the horse, (procedure in emergency procedures).

Remember:

Be sensitive to where you are touching the rider. It is easy to be holding a small child without realizing where your hands are.

Learn to visualize the basic riding position so you can help your rider adjust his position.

If the rider slips in one direction or another, have the rider regain position in the center of the horse. If necessary, halt, reposition and continue the lesson.

Limit conversations during class. Direct the rider's attention to the instructor. If a problem arises, tell the instructor so that they can take appropriate action.

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Effective Sidewalking

(reprinted from May/June 1989 NARHA News)
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’s 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) and 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.

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If the instructor chooses to use a safety belt on your rider, be very careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires it's hard to avoid these movements, so rather than gripping the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and finger together around it. This way you are in position to assist the rider if needed, but you will neither give unneeded support nor pull him off balance. When you are ready for relief for your arm, ask the leader to move into the center to stop and trade sides, one at a time, with the other sidewalker. (Instructors: if your rider has serious enough balance problems to warrant a safety belt, you should probably be using two sidewalkers).

During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an all out effort to win.

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as normal as he can possibly be. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

Without you, these programs couldn't exist. We thank you for all you give and challenge you to be the best you can be.

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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Remember that the emergency procedures will be directed in most cases by the certified instructor.

In the event of an accident or an emergency:

- Remain with your team.
- Leader-halt and face your horse.
- Side walkers-remain with rider
- Stay calm and follow directions

If the rider(s) must be dismounted:

- Remain or line up where instructor indicates.
- Side walkers-assist rider's feet out of the stirrups.
- Left side walkers-escort/carry rider around front of horse to designated area.
- Leader-run up stirrups, tuck reins under left stirrup; await directions from instructor.

If a rider must be dismounted quickly (emergency):

- Instructor will indicate the need for an emergency dismount.
- Leader-halt.
- Right side walker-remove rider's foot from the stirrup and assist leg over horse.
- Left side walker-pull rider from horse, and await for further instruction.

If emergency personnel must be called:

- Instructor will ask a volunteer to go to the office phone and call emergency personnel.
- The volunteer will notify the Program Director or Executive Director then call 911 and report the location of the emergency.

1. Telephone number of phone being used
2. Caller's name
3. What happened
4. Number of victims
5. Condition of victims
6. Help being given
7. No sirens close to barn
8. Stay on line for further instructions

Remember the safety of our riders and other personnel is our first priority. The safety of the horses we are using is our next priority.

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If a seizure should occur during a Therapeutic Riding Lesson:

- Remain calm, remembering that once started the seizure cannot be stopped
- Implement emergency procedures, such as having all participants in riding class halt and calmly calling for help, as needed.
- If the seizure is minor with little risk to the rider, horse, or staff, the best option may be to wait out the seizure at a halt, securing and safeguarding the rider on the horse. Monitor the rider to ensure proper breathing.
- If necessary, dismount the rider in the safest manner that has already been planned, and protect from injury. If the rider is dismounted, remove (and reassure) the horse from the area.
- Place the rider on his/her side to maintain a clear airway and prevent inhalation of saliva.
- Remove any potentially dangerous objects from the immediate area to prevent injury.
- Do not restrict the person's movements, except to prevent injury.
- Do not insert any object between the teeth.
- Do not panic if the person appears to stop breathing momentarily, but monitor for a return of normal respiration.
- Explain to the other riders in the class that the individual having the seizure will be fine in a few minutes, and if possible, allow them to continue their riding activities away from that individual. Later, discuss the incident in a manner that is caring and educational.
- Allow the rider to awake from the seizure in the least stressful way, and if possible resume the riding activity when he or she is ready.
- Document the seizure in the session progress notes, and inform the parents or caretakers