



*Reins To Recovery, Inc.*  
*Therapeutic Riding Center*

## **Volunteer Training Handbook**

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## **Who We Are**

Reins To Recovery, Inc. is a non-profit, organization that provides therapeutic riding services. We charge a nominal fee for our riding lessons and we are funded primarily by individual donations, fundraising events, grants and corporate gifts.

## **Staff Members**

- \* Executive Director ~ Calli Johnson
- \* Certified Therapeutic Instructor ~ Janette Coulter
- \* Equine Specialist ~ Barb Phelps
- \* Recreational Riding Instructor ~ Kayla Pence

## **Our Mission**

Reins To Recovery, Inc. works to promote the physical, psychological, and social wellbeing of persons with disabilities through their interaction with a therapeutic team consisting of a horse, and instructor, and/or a therapist, and volunteers. We also provide equine assisted programs for children who have been victims of violence or abuse.

## **Contact Information**

Calli Johnson, Founder and Director  
Cell: (812) 350-4864  
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## **Down on the Farm**

Our farm is located at the address 10861 N. US. 31, Seymour, IN 47274. The farm includes a 6-stall barn, and an outdoor riding arena. We are actively planning for the future construction of an indoor arena to allow our riders to attend lessons year-round.

## **What is NARHA?**

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association is a non-profit organization created to promote and support equine-facilitated activities for individuals with disabilities. Centers that are accredited are subject to an on-site review of all program, administrative and facility standards.

## **Therapeutic Riding**

Therapeutic Riding has been around for centuries, but the actual organization of centers for the handicapped or disabled rider began in Europe in the 1950's. Therapeutic riding maintains the basic principles involved in all horseback riding—the connection between human and horse. Rider's benefit physically from the rhythmic motion of the horse's walk. Riders must focus and concentrate on their control of the horse using the physical and verbal cues that the horse will understand. The physical contact and the mental connection that exists between a horse and a rider can be motivational. A typical lesson has one to three volunteers and an instructor working with a rider in the horse barn and the riding ring (arena). This therapeutic team helps the rider learn how to groom a horse, saddle a horse and ride a horse. The rider may play games on horseback, maneuver around obstacles, or learn to ride without physical support or even without a horse leader. Therapeutic riding is a way to develop confidence, balance, strength, coordination and endurance.

**HIPPOTHERAPY** (from Greek hippos – horse) utilizes the horse as an integral part of therapy service. Medical professionals such as physical, occupational, and speech therapists direct and utilize the three-dimensional movement of the horse to achieve therapy goals with participants of various disabilities ages two and above.

## **Safety**

Safety is our first priority. Our second priority is to have fun and we want everyone to have a good time at Reins To Recovery, Inc. A safe environment promotes learning and prevents accidents. Consistent conformity to the following rules will help everyone (riders, instructors and volunteers) be clear about procedure and more easily identify a situation that might be less than safe. Please try to set an example for new volunteers and riders by adopting the guidelines below as your standard operating procedure.

- ◆ Information about our riders is strictly confidential.
- ◆ No smoking in or around barn/ riding areas.
- ◆ Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes are required at all times.
- ◆ Please do not wear perfume or jewelry.
- ◆ Use sunscreen and insect repellent and drink plenty of water.
- ◆ Children must be supervised at all times.
- ◆ No running in the barn or around the horses.
- ◆ Always talk to a horse when approaching from any direction, but especially from behind. Use calm, quiet voices with both horse and rider.
- ◆ Maintain a position that allows you to move quickly should the horse move suddenly.
- ◆ Never kneel beside a horse—keep both feet on the ground and bend at the waist.
- ◆ Horses may not be hand fed. With permission, a rider may give his or her horse a treat after a lesson using a bucket. Remove the horse’s bridle first so the bit won’t interfere with his eating.
- ◆ If something doesn’t seem right with a horse’s behavior (tail swishing, ears pinned, etc.) please alert the instructor.
- ◆ If you are in a lesson and you need to stop for any reason, inform the instructor. For safety purposes, she may ask you to lead your horse and rider to the center of the arena.
- ◆ Keep at least a horse-length distance between horses.
- ◆ Please wear appropriate work clothing for each season.
- ◆ The team needs to communicate visually and verbally (short conversations to minimize distraction) to ensure safety for everyone.

## **Our Instructors**

Our therapeutic riding instructors understand the various disabilities of the riders they teach. They see that goals for the riders’ lessons are developed and met. The instructors are in charge of the riding lessons and they coordinate the riding team. They have the ability to teach riding skills and are knowledgeable about horsemanship. Instructors and volunteers develop strong relationships with our riders, offering a caring hand and words of encouragement and sharing in the joy of their achievements.

## **Our Volunteers**

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Our volunteers come from all walks of life—from students to retired adults—and they volunteer for all sorts of reasons. Volunteers help out with lessons as a horse leader or a side walker, bringing their knowledge and skills to the therapeutic team effort. Volunteers bring other skills to the organization: they roll up their sleeves and paint a few fence posts; pull on their boots and clean stalls in the barn; turn on the computer and input data; and pull out their organizers and help plan an event. No matter how our volunteers help us at Reins To Recovery, Inc., they are always appreciated. They are special people and we know it. Their willingness and commitment to share their time with others is truly remarkable.

## **A THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM VOLUNTEER ...**

- ◆ Must be at least 13 years old and able to work independently.
- ◆ Must attend a Reins To Recovery's volunteer training.
- ◆ Must be physically fit enough to walk approximately one hour, jog occasionally, and be able to hold arms up at shoulder height to support a rider when necessary.
- ◆ Must be emotionally fit enough to cope responsibly with situations and concerns as they arise pertaining to riders and horses, and always use good judgment.
- ◆ Is requested to volunteer on a regular basis in order to experience the benefits of the program and to develop relationships with other volunteers, staff, riders, and horses.
- ◆ Is covered by Reins To Recovery's insurance while on the premises.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

Our volunteers will be subject to a criminal background check during the training phases. This is to ensure the safety of our riders and all persons involved with activities at Reins To Recovery, Inc.

## **A THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM VOLUNTEER IS EXPECTED TO...**

- ◆ Be prompt and dependable. Without the proper number of volunteers, riders would not be able to ride in their lessons. If you need to cancel, please contact RTOR at least 24 hours in advance of your volunteer time.
- ◆ Always maintain confidentiality with regards to RTOR participants. Do not disclose any personal information outside the RTOR program concerning the riders, their disabilities, their names, etc.
- ◆ Follow all RTOR rules and be familiar with RTOR emergency procedures.
- ◆ Dress appropriately for working in the barn; ALWAYS wear closed-toe shoes, do NOT wear dangling necklaces or earrings, shorts shorter than thigh-length, or tight, skimpy tops; do NOT wear perfume because it may bother the horses or riders and attract flies.
- ◆ Always inform a RTOR Instructor, Stable Manager, or the Executive Director of any accidents or injuries to riders or volunteers, no matter how minor the situation.
- ◆ Be attentive to your surroundings at all times and report any safety concerns with riders, horses, or other volunteers to your Instructor, Stable Manager, or the Executive Director.

## **A THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM VOLUNTEER SHOULD ...**

**NEVER HANDLE THE RIDERS** unless given specific instructions by the instructor or therapist. Handling a rider without knowledge of their disability could be harmful to the rider.

**NEVER** hand feed the horses, although treats may be fed to the horses in their buckets with the instructor's permission.

## **VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE AND ARRIVING ON TIME**

Make every possible effort to honor your scheduled day and time on a regular basis. If you cannot come at your designated time call or email the Director or Barn Manager at least 24 hours before your scheduled shift. Prior to the start of each session, the Director will provide appropriate contact information in case you need to notify RTOR of a cancellation. If you need to contact RTOR on the day of lessons, in addition to calling or emailing the Director, please call the Instructor at 812-498-3315.

## **REINS TO RECOVERY VALUES YOUR TIME AND EFFORTS**

- ◆ If you are assigned a task before you feel you are ready, or if you are uncomfortable in any way, please inform the Stable Manager, or Head Instructor as soon as possible. Volunteers should feel free to communicate any questions, problems, concerns, or preferences at any time.

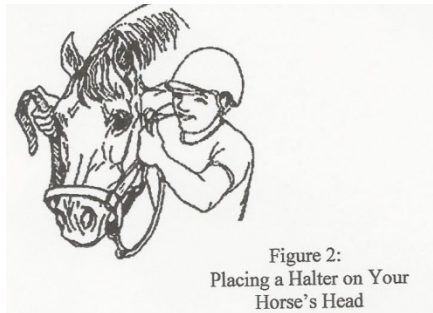
- ◆ Volunteers should talk with the Head Instructor if they want to lead or sidewalk, have a specific job request, or would like to work with a particular rider. If you ever need help with something, do not be afraid to ask. It is always better to be safe.
- ◆ Have fun in the therapeutic riding lesson or hippotherapy session! Build positive relationships with the riders, horses, staff, and your fellow volunteers!

## Our Horses

Trained properly, the therapeutic horse is a calm and gentle animal that responds to guidance and praise. Each horse contributes its unique nature to the program, and is paired with a rider specifically for the qualities it brings to each lesson.

### CATCHING A HORSE

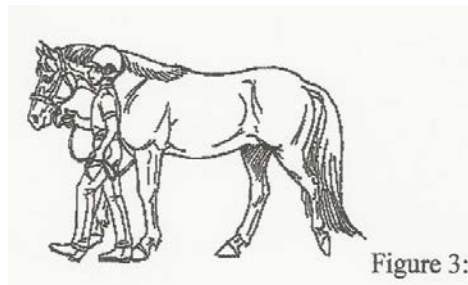
- ◆ Halters are kept on the hook near stall door.
- ◆ When entering the stall, knock on the stall door and talk to the horse so the horse is not surprised.
- ◆ Be sure to close the stall door behind you.
- ◆ Reach your hand out to pet the horse.
- ◆ Move toward the left side of the horse's head and gently place the lead rope around the horse's neck. Then put the halter on by putting the horse's muzzle in the center and snap the halter on the left side of the horse's head (Figure 2). Figure 2:



- ◆ Stand on the left side of the horse and grasp the lead rope in both hands. Your right hand should be about six to eight inches away from the halter and your left hand should be holding the excess lead rope.
- ◆ *Never wrap the lead rope around your fingers or hand or neck.*
- ◆ Lead the horse out of the stall.
- ◆ When in the horse's stall, pay attention to the horse's mood. If the horse is acting upset and you are not sure what the horse will do, *leave the stall immediately* and ask the Head Instructor or Stable Manager to help.

### LEADING A HORSE

- ◆ Lead from the horse's left side, holding the lead rope in two hands. Your right hand should be about six to eight inches away from the halter and your left hand should be holding the remaining lead rope in a figure eight loop (Figure 3).



- ◆ You should stand between the horse's left shoulder and head. Maintain this position to make sure you do not pull or drag the horse or so the horse does not pull or drag you.
- ◆ The lead rope should NEVER be wrapped around your hand or placed around your neck.
- ◆ The lead rope should never touch the ground, nor should the lead rope ever be placed around the horse's neck at any time when leading.
- ◆ When you are ready to walk, start walking and ask the horse to "WALK ON."
- ◆ When you are ready to halt, stop walking and ask the horse to "WHOA."

## TURNING A HORSE

- ◆ When turning a horse, you should turn the horse's head away from you by moving your hand under the horse's chin and pushing to the right (Figure 4).

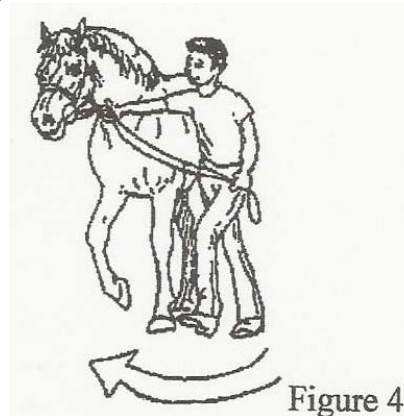


Figure 4

- ◆ When turning a horse toward you, keep your body an arm's length away from the horse and make sure that your feet are away from the horses' hooves.
- ◆ Pull to Release

## TYING A HORSE

FIRST - Check the horse's stall tag to make sure they can be tied. If a horse can't be tied then ask the Stable Manger how to groom the horse. There are two main ways to tie a horse:

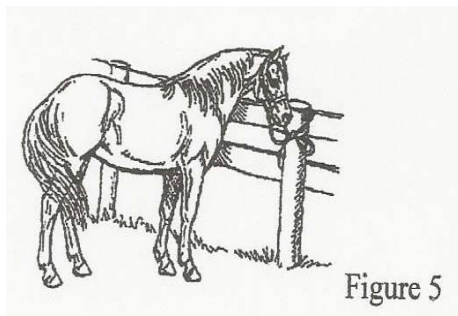
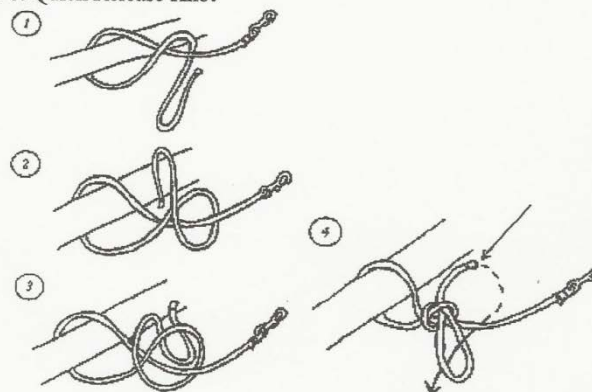


Figure 5

Figure 6: Quick Release Knot



Pull To Release

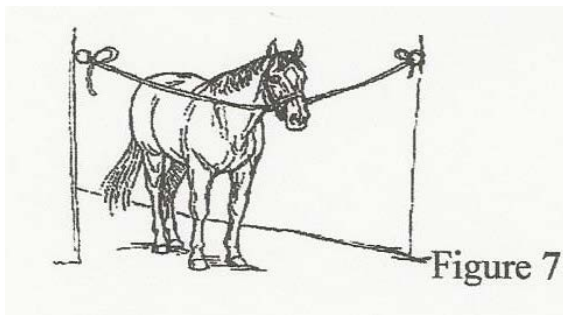
1. Tie a horse to a solid object (Figure 5) that is level to the horse's back using a "quick release knot" (Figure 6). Each horse has a tie set up in their stall this should be used unless otherwise instructed by the Stable Manger.

2. Put a horse in a "cross tie" area (Figure 7) using a —quick release knot.

Quick Release Knot (Figure 5)

Tuck the Loose End Through the Loop if Your Horse Plays with the Rope (Figure 6)

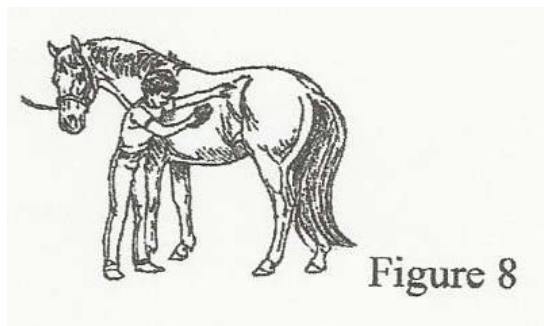
Tuck the Loose End Through the Loop if Your horse plays with the rope.



## GROOMING A HORSE

### *Things to remember...*

- ◆ Watch your body and your feet when working with or grooming a horse.
- ◆ Never stand behind a horse. If you have to move to the other side of the horse place your hand on the horse's rump and walk around to the other side.
- ◆ While grooming, you should check the horse's body for fungus, scratches, or cuts. If you see anything abnormal, notify the Stable Manager or Head Instructor.
- ◆ Volunteers will work in pairs until you are comfortable grooming a horse.
- ◆ Get the appropriate groom bucket from the tack room and place the groom bucket on the ground outside the stall. **NEVER** take a groom bucket inside the stall.
- ◆ Gently put the leather halter on your horse and secure the horse to the tie in their stall.
- ◆ Groom the horse, starting from the horse's left side and working from front to back. Keep one hand on the horse's body at all times while you are grooming (Figure 8).



The following grooming tools should be in each horse's groom bucket (Figure 9) and should be used in the following order on both sides of the horse:

- 1) Curry Comb: Use in a circular motion all over the horse's body, except on the face or bony parts of the horse's legs, to loosen the dirt.
- 2) Hard Brush: Use to brush the horse's body, going with the grain of the hair to brush away dirt. Do not use this brush on the face or bony parts of the horse's legs.



3) Soft Brush: Use to brush the horse's body, going with the grain of the hair as a finishing brush. This brush may be used on all areas of the horse's body.

4) Mane and Tail Comb: Use to gently comb out the mane and tail, starting at the bottom and working up without pulling out hair. When combing the tail, never stand behind the horse; instead bring the tail over to the side of the horse.

5) Hoof Pick: Use to clean out the horse's hooves. Only the Instructors, Stable Managers, and volunteers designated by the Head Instructor will do this procedure.

Fly spray the horse, starting at the horse's legs and working up. *Never spray the face.* To put fly spray on the horse's face, spray it on a sponge or towel and wipe on the horse's face. Be careful to stay away from the horse's eyes.

## TACKING UP A HORSE

◆ Check the "Rider Roster" to figure out which saddle, special equipment, and reins are needed for the lesson. Also check if the reins should be attached to the horse's halter or bit.

## SADDLING A HORSE

◆ Always use a saddle pad underneath any saddle or special equipment.

◆ Place pad on horse's back, well up on the horse's withers (Figure 10), smoothing out any wrinkles.

◆ Place the saddle or special equipment gently on the horse's back and slide back a few inches.

◆ Attach the girth (with elastic) to the left side of saddle and then tighten it up on the right side. Do NOT make it too tight; you only want to secure the saddle enough so that it will not move around (Figure 11).

◆ Make sure that the stirrups are up and out of the way and that the correct stirrups are on the saddle.

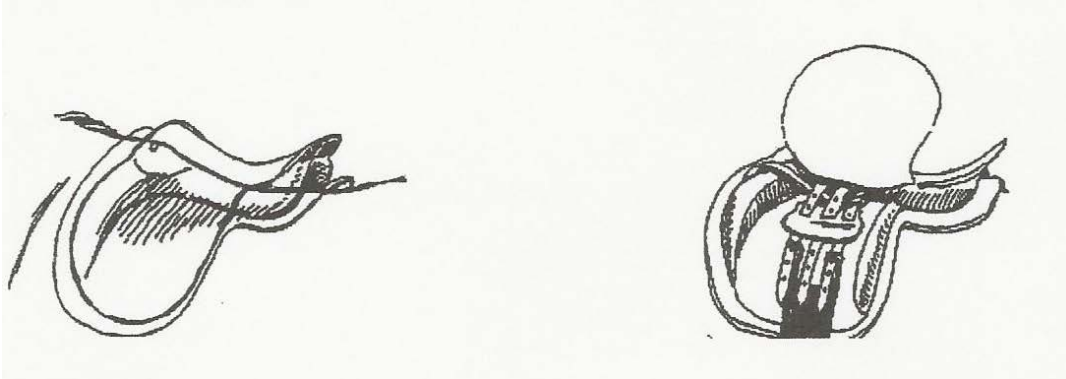


Figure 10

Figure 11

## BRIDLING A HORSE

◆ Only Instructors, Stable Managers and approved volunteers may bridle a horse.

◆ Talk to the Head Instructor or Stable Manager to become approved to bridle horses at Reins To Recovery.

◆ Each horse has its own bridle that is already fitted.

◆ Each bridle is labeled with a nametag.

To bridle a horse:

1) Leave the leather halter on.

2) Stand on the left side of the horse's head.

3) Hold the crown piece (top of bridle) in your right hand and place your right hand between horse's ears

Hold the Crown Piece in your right hand and the Bit in the Left Hand. Place the Bit between the Horse's Lips - No Fingers in Front of Teeth. Figure 12.

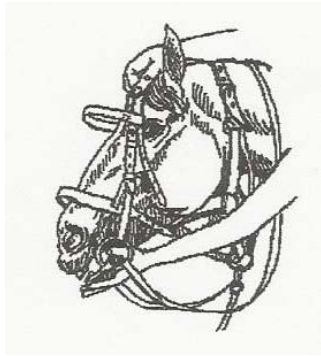


Figure 12

- 4) Gently ask the horse to take the bit by raising it up and into the horse's mouth
- 5) Raise the bridle up and gently put the horse's ears through the crown piece, making sure that they do not get pinched (Figure 13).

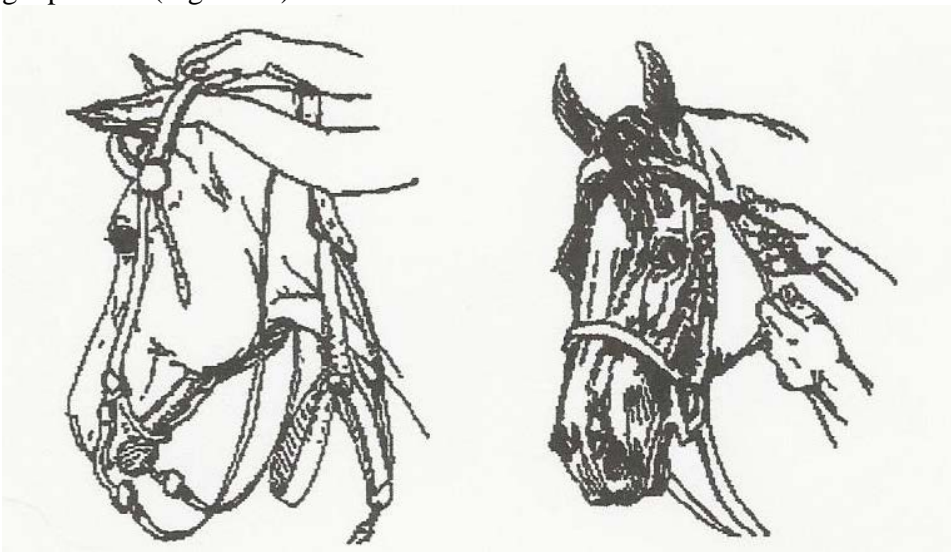


Figure 13

Be gentle when slipping  
the bridle over the ears

Figure 14

Buckle the Throatlatch leaving  
enough room for four fingers

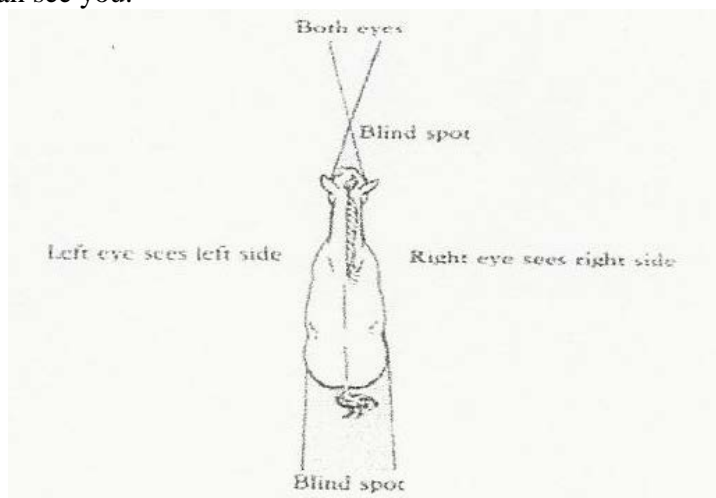
- 6) Attach the throatlatch, leaving enough room to insert four fingers between the throatlatch and the horse's jaw (Figure 14).
- 7) Fix the reins to either the bit or the halter after checking where they should be attached on the "Rider Roster." Make sure the rein snaps are facing away from the horse's face. Hold the Crown Piece in your right hand and the Bit in the Left Hand. Place the Bit between the Horse's Lips - No Fingers in Front of Teeth (Figure 12). Be Gentle When Slipping Buckle the Throatlatch Leaving the Bridle Over the Ears Enough Room for Four Fingers (Figure 13 & Figure 14).

### ***Things to remember...***

- ◆ While tacking up a horse, check the tack for defects. If you find any problems, please tell the instructors or stable managers immediately.
- ◆ A stable manager, instructor, or designated volunteer will work with you until you are comfortable tacking up a horse.
- ◆ Horses and volunteers should be ready and in the mounting/arena area five minutes prior to a lesson.

## HORSE BEHAVIOR AND ETIQUETTE

- ◆ Horses can express many things with their body language and knowing some basic horse body language can help you when you are working with horses. Horses are naturally prey animals and they will act accordingly if they feel threatened. Large gestures and loud noises will startle almost any horse, so it is important to be quiet and gentle until you become comfortable with the horse's mannerisms.
- ◆ A horse can indicate their mood by the position of their ears.
- ◆ If the horse's ears are forward the horse is alert and the direction of the ears shows where their interest lies.
- ◆ If the horse's ears are back against the head the horse is angry and is an indication that you should stay away unless you have horse experience.
- ◆ If the horse's ears are stiff they are showing a sign of fear. Stay calm and try to locate the cause of fear.
- ◆ If the horse shows the whites of its eye, the horse is afraid or feels threatened.
- ◆ Do not look a horse directly in the eye, as the horse may find this gesture threatening. Look either toward their shoulder or directly above or below their eye.
- ◆ Some horses stomp or paw at the ground when they are bored or displeased. In the summer, the horses also stomp to get flies off their legs. If a horse is stomping and you have them tied, simply say, "Quit it" and ignore them.
- ◆ There are many seemingly harmless human behaviors that can be irritating and sometimes painful to our horses. We need to be mindful of their limitations and our safety because the horses are some of our most important volunteers.
- ◆ Girthiness is problematic in almost every riding center, and is a response in the anticipation or experience of pain. Do not tighten the saddle only once. This is very painful and irritating to the horse. Girth the horse slowly and check for tightness at the sternum, not behind the elbow. When they are girth sour, they become angry biters. Prevention to girthiness is much easier than a cure.
- ◆ When you need to reposition the horse, whether tied or in the stall, many people put their hands on the barrel and the rump and push the horse over. Instead cue the horse to move over by gently pushing on the horse's side, midway between the shoulder and thigh.
- ◆ A horse has a large field of vision, but has blind spots directly in front and behind the horse. In order for the horse to see you, you must stand beside the horse. Horses are flight or fight animals, so when you block their line of sight they become vulnerable and uneasy.
- ◆ Do not pat or scratch the horse's face. These loving gestures impose too much closeness on our four legged volunteers. We are violating their personal space and this type of human behavior can lead to head butting and biting. If you want to pet the horse do not pet their head, instead pet their neck or shoulder where they can see you.



## Our Riders

The riders at Reins To Recovery, Inc. range in age. We serve clients from day treatment centers, specialized youth programs, residential homes and local school systems. Referrals to the program may come from teachers, doctors, therapists, social workers, family members and friends. The objective of a therapeutic riding lesson varies with each rider's need. For some the focus is on improving balance, normalizing muscle tone and improving body control. For others the goal is to build self-esteem, trust and confidence.

## INTERACTING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS A DISABILITY

Remind yourself that persons with disabilities are just like you with their own goals, limits, capabilities, attitudes, experiences, etc. People with disabilities like to be treated as normally as possible.

### *Things to remember...*

- ◆ Be yourself when you meet them.
- ◆ Treat them like you would a person without a disability of similar age.
- ◆ Talk about the same things you would with anyone their age.
- ◆ Help only when help is needed. This is very difficult to determine at times but use your judgment.
- ◆ Remember that safety is our main goal but we also want riders to develop independence.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to constantly assist riders who need to develop more independence. It is usually a good idea to have a rider try something before you step in to assist.
- ◆ Be patient! It is often more difficult to wait for an inexperienced person to accomplish something than to do it yourself. It is very important to encourage riders to *try* the task because they learn by doing and also gain confidence in the process.
- ◆ Do not be over protective, do not shower riders with too much kindness, and do not be overly sympathetic. Be genuine and be yourself!
- ◆ Develop friendships and relationships with riders.

### **Suggestions for appropriate language use:**

- ◆ *Put people first, not their disability.* Say "a person with a disability," not "a handicapped person;" or "a person with a hearing impairment," not "a deaf person."
- ◆ *Do not use labels for disability groups* such as "the retarded" or "the deaf." Emphasize people, not labels. Say "people who are deaf" or "people with mental impairment."
- ◆ *Terms that should never be used* to describe people are "crippled," "deformed," "suffers from," etc. Other terms to avoid: deaf, dumb, defective, lame, and invalid.
- ◆ *Do not sensationalize or attribute "superhuman" qualities* to persons with disabilities who are successful. They do not want recognition because of what they have overcome, but what they have accomplished because of who they are and their abilities.
- ◆ *Emphasize abilities, not limitations.* For example, say "uses a wheelchair" rather than "wheelchair bound."
- ◆ The key is to remember that *people HAVE disabilities; THEY are not disabilities.*

### **Tips for providing assistance:**

- ◆ If you are listening to persons with **speech impairment** and you cannot understand what they are saying, ask them to repeat it. Be patient and encouraging. Ask questions that they can answer briefly or by nodding. may also be helpful to have something for them to write on. *Do not pretend to understand if you do not understand.*
- ◆ For persons with **hearing impairment**, you may need to get their attention first. Tap them lightly on the shoulder or wave a hand. It helps people understand what you are saying if they can see your facial expressions and body language. Try to position your face so they can clearly see your lips move. Look

directly at them and speak clearly. This is another instance where it may help to have something to write on. If they have an interpreter, direct your conversation to the person with whom you are communicating, not to the interpreter.

◆ For persons with **visual impairment**, identify yourself and introduce others who accompany you. Repeat the name of the person to whom you are speaking so they will know where the comment is being directed. If you want to offer assistance, allow them to take your arm. Do not grab theirs and try to pull them. As you guide them, describe the terrain and let them know of approaching obstacles. Be specific and say, "There is a step approximately five steps in front of us." If you are talking to an individual with a **mental disability**, speak simply, not loudly, and do not use childish language.

◆ If you become aware that a person with a **physical disability** may need assistance, ask first if you can help. Do not assume he needs help. Grabbing someone's wheelchair and pushing them without asking can be an invasion of privacy and independence. Also, do not lean on the wheelchair since it is considered part of body space. And when talking to someone in a wheelchair, get down to their level so neither of you ends up with a stiff neck caused by looking in an awkward direction. If you are giving directions to someone using a wheelchair, make sure to reference barriers such as curbs, hills, narrow doorways, etc. that may pose a problem.

◆ It may take extra time for a person with a disability to express a thought or to get something done. Be sensitive to the situation and do not convey impatience. Let him or her set the pace.

◆ All of these suggestions boil down to three things: *common courtesy, common sense, and respect*. Interacting with persons with disabilities may seem awkward, but by focusing on who they are and what they can do, you will discover individuals just like you who want to be productive and respected. You will be encouraged by the contributions they make to life and how much progress can be seen if we all work together.

## **Rider Disabilities**

Following are definitions of some of the common disabilities noted at Reins To Recovery, Inc. and examples of how therapeutic riding may be beneficial.

**At Risk Youth:** A term used to describe school age children who are at risk for not succeeding in their school or home environments. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Allows for confidence and trust building, leadership, self-esteem and responsibility.

**ADD and ADHD:** These disorders are characterized by developmentally inappropriate inattention, impulsivity, and in ADHD, hyperactivity. Children with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder have difficulty organizing and completing work.

Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Lessons focus on breaking down tasks into small steps and recognizing success and achievements.

**Autism:** A syndrome of early childhood characterized by profound failure to develop social relationships, language disorder with impaired understanding, repetition of sounds or words, and rituals or compulsive behaviors. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Interaction in a group setting provides interest away from self and toward others and stimulates verbal skills.

**Brain Injury:** Injury to the brain may occur from a blow to the head or penetration of the skull, with loss of consciousness. Symptoms may include impaired muscle control and loss of cognitive, language or speech skills. Seizures are a common secondary problem associated with brain injury. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

**Cerebral Palsy:** A term used to describe a group of non-progressive disorders in which damage occurs to the brain either prior to birth or secondary to infection (e.g., spinal meningitis). Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination.

Types of Cerebral Palsy:

**Spastic** – Tense, contracted muscles with inability to move smoothly. This type may involve one or more limbs or one side of body.

**Athoid** - Uncontrolled motion even at rest and movements intensify with excitement.

**Ataxic** - Damage in the area of the brain concerned with balance and muscles are limp.

**Tremor** - Constant shaking, especially in arms or hands.

**Deafness or Hearing Impairments:** Hearing impairments may occur at birth or may result from injury or illness. Communication may be through sign language, lip reading or tactile cueing. True deafness is defined as a hearing loss in both ears severe enough to prevent communication through the ear even with amplification. Hearing losses can vary from mild (when the person has difficulty hearing faint or distant speech) to severe (when the person feels only vibrations). Many persons with deafness due to nerve damage will have associated disabilities. People who are deaf can communicate through various means such as oral speech, finger spelling, sign language, and writing. Riding signals are given through hand signals. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination.

**Down Syndrome:** A genetic disorder that results in mental retardation, dwarfed physique and generally —low tone muscles. Developmental milestones are generally significantly delayed (e.g.: sitting, walking, language skills, and fine motor skills). Degree of mental retardation varies significantly. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--The physical stimulation of riding is helpful in increasing muscle tone, stability and total body coordination.

**Epilepsy:**

Epileptic seizures are due to abnormal discharges of nervous energy in an injured portion of the brain. At present, more than half of all youth with epilepsy can achieve full or partial control of their seizures with medication. You will find that many persons with epilepsy are the same as everyone else in appearance and intelligence. However, the epileptic seizures of some persons are the result of a general brain damaged condition. These persons may also show abnormal body movements, lower intelligence, or abnormal behavior. The three most common types of seizures are:

**Grand Mal** - Violent shaking of the entire body accompanied by temporary loss of consciousness. Person may lose bowel or bladder control. Seizures usually last two to five minutes followed by a period of deep sleep.

**Petit Mal** - A simple staring spell, which is often mistaken for daydreaming. Usually it lasts less than a minute, often for just seconds. The person usually is not aware of their seizures and does not require aid. These may occur repeatedly.

**Psychomotor** - Inappropriate or purposeless behavior with subsequent loss of memory regarding the episode. Usually last two to five minutes.

If a person begins to have a grand mal seizure, remain calm. Do not try to restrain the rider. Let the rider lie down and clear the area of any objects that could cause injury. Turn the rider on their side if doing so will not interfere with their movements. Following the seizure, leave the person on their side and let them sleep.

**Learning Disabilities:** This term covers a wide range of symptoms that are far reaching and can be very complex. Some diagnoses that are often associated with learning disabilities are Attention Deficit Disorder, Sensory Integration Dysfunction and Dyslexia. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Effects depend upon the particular disorder. It can stimulate attention span, social skills, cooperation, language skills, posture, and coordination.

**Mental Retardation:** Mental Retardation (MR) can be the result of many different causes including genetic defects, biochemical imbalances or environmental conditions. MR may also be accompanied by physical disabilities. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Stimulates coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination and provides a structured learning environment.

**Multiple Sclerosis:** A disease that affects the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). MS is classified into several categories from chronic progressive, to single episode. MS is typically characterized by flare-ups and remissions. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for physical activity.

**Muscular Dystrophy:** An inherited disease that is marked by the progressive degeneration of muscle fibers. There are many types of muscular dystrophy. Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Provides opportunity for

group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free with assistive devices.

### **Spina Bifida**

Spina bifida is a birth defect in which part of the backbone that covers the spinal cord fails to develop, leaving the spinal cord exposed in one spot. There are five major types of spina bifida. Some babies are born with a thin-walled sack called a *meningocele* protruding from their back. When this sack contains a part of the defective spinal cord, it is called *myelomeningocele*. It occurs during the end of the first month of pregnancy. The child with spina bifida is likely to have a number of problems, including paralysis of the lower limbs, loss of sensation, lack of bowel and bladder control, deformity, susceptibility to infection, and hydrocephalus (excess fluid on the brain)

**Visual Impairments:** Visual impairments may be from birth or acquired secondary to injury or illness, and may be related to other health concerns such as stroke, diabetes, or brain injury. The vision of people who are blind ranges from severely limited to totally absent. The definition for legal purposes is 20/200 vision or less in the better eye after correction. This indicates that the person sees at 20 feet what the sighted person sees at 200 feet. Partially sighted persons have vision between 20/70 and 20/200.

Therapeutic Riding Benefit--Stimulates spatial awareness, posture and coordination, provides social outlet, structured risk taking and freedom of movement.

## **MOUNTING**

### **LEADER**

- ◆ After the rider is on the lift and ready for mounting, the instructor will ask you to lead the horse into the mounting area.
- ◆ Lead your horse into the space between the lift and mounting block. Make sure the horse is as close to the lift as possible.
- ◆ While the rider is mounting, stand facing the horse and slightly to the left of the horse's head so the horse can see you. Keep the horse as quiet and still as possible. All of the horse's attention should be on you — if not, give a quick pull and release with the lead rope to regain the horse's attention.
- ◆ Keep an eye on your horse's shoulder and the stirrups to make sure nothing gets caught on the lift.
- ◆ Make sure the horse's left front and hind hooves are away from the lift so they will not be touched as the lift goes down.
- ◆ Do not hold the bit since that may cause a horse to throw its head.
- ◆ Do not place your feet near or under the lift and keep both feet on the ground at all times.
- ◆ Please pay close attention to the instructor at all times.

### **SIDEWALKERS**

- ◆ During the mounting process, the side walker acts as a spotter. As a spotter, your job is to stand on the mounting block and assist the instructor in the mounting process. The side walker **ALWAYS** does a thigh hold during mounting and while walking into the arena.

### **LEADER AND SIDEWALKERS**

- ◆ Your attention should be focused on the rider and instructor at all times.
- ◆ After the mounting is complete; the rider will ask the horse to "Walk On."
- ◆ After the rider says "Walk On" the instructor will ask you to move the horse into the arena to adjust the stirrups. The instructor will tell the horse leader when to stop. The left side walker is responsible for putting down the lift as soon as the rider is mounted. The left side walker **ALWAYS** makes sure the gate is closed and locked after entering arena. The left side walker will then replace the instructor on the left side of the horse and the instructor will make the necessary tack adjustments. After the tack adjustments have been made, walk your horse around the arena and listen for further instructions.
- ◆ If the instructor needs to mount other riders, please walk the rider around the far side the arena away from

the mounting area. Be sure to stay clear of other riders as they enter the arena.

## WORKING IN LESSONS

### LEADERS

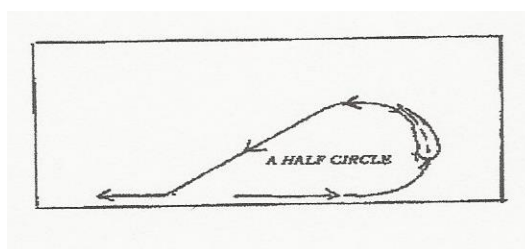
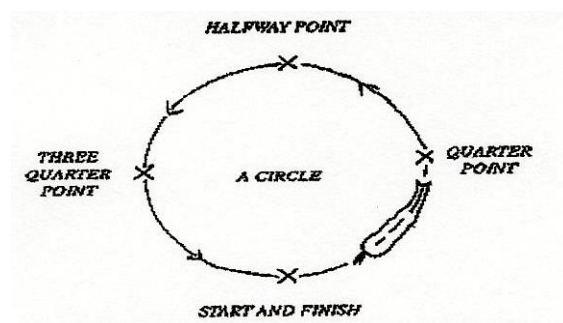
- ◆ We teach RTOR riders in the safest and most comfortable environment.
- ◆ The instructor is in charge of the lesson and must not be contradicted during a lesson.
- ◆ The instructor, leader, and side walkers all need to communicate and work as a team during lessons.
- ◆ If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask the instructor.
- ◆ The leader must pay attention to the horse, the instructor, and to the rider at all times.
- ◆ During the lesson the leader is in charge of the horse, but it is important to make the rider feel in control of the horse. Many of our riders do not have the physical strength or mental ability to control the horse on their own; that is why the rider needs your help. RTOR goal is for riders to ride as independently as possible, which will require more or less control from the horse leader.

### ARENA FIGURES

Many times during a lesson, you will be asked to perform different figures such as circles, half circle reverse, serpentine, figure eight or diagonal. Please familiarize yourself with these figures.

#### CIRCLES

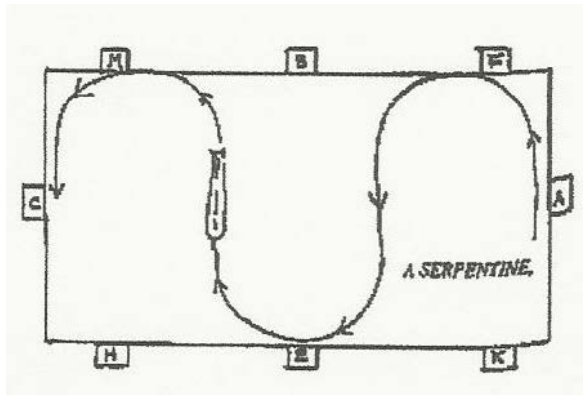
- ◆ Circles should be round, not oval or pear shaped.
- ◆ To make a good circle, pick a starting point and finishing point, a quarter point, a halfway point, and a three-quarter point.
- ◆ Look about a quarter of the way ahead as you ride through the circle.
- ◆ Try to hit each of these points and be sure that you finish by returning to the same start/finish point.
- ◆ Ask your horse to bend evenly around the circle and keep your speed even.
- ◆ Do not ask for too small of a circle as it may be difficult for your horse or rider.



#### HALF CIRCLE REVERSE

- ◆ To ride a half circle reverse; begin with a small to medium sized circle along the rail of the arena.
- ◆ When you are halfway through the circle, you will be near the center of the arena. Instead of completing the circle, you should aim your horse and walk back toward the rail on the diagonal.
- ◆ When you reach the rail, you will have turned around and changed directions.
- ◆ Do not make your half circle reverse too small as it may be difficult for your horse or rider. Generally, anything smaller than half of the short side of the arena is too small.



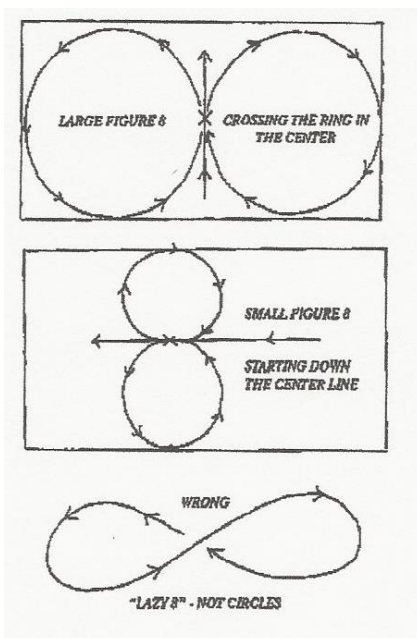


## SERPENTINE

- ◆ A serpentine is a snakelike figure that includes half circles to the left and to the right.
- ◆ To start a serpentine, begin on the short side of the arena (for example, tracking to the left).
- ◆ Ride a medium-sized circle to the left, and then ride straight across the center of the ring for a few strides. Then ride a matching half circle to the right.
- ◆ Go straight across the center, and then ride another half circle to the left, and so on, as long as you have space.
- ◆ Try to make all of the loops the same size.

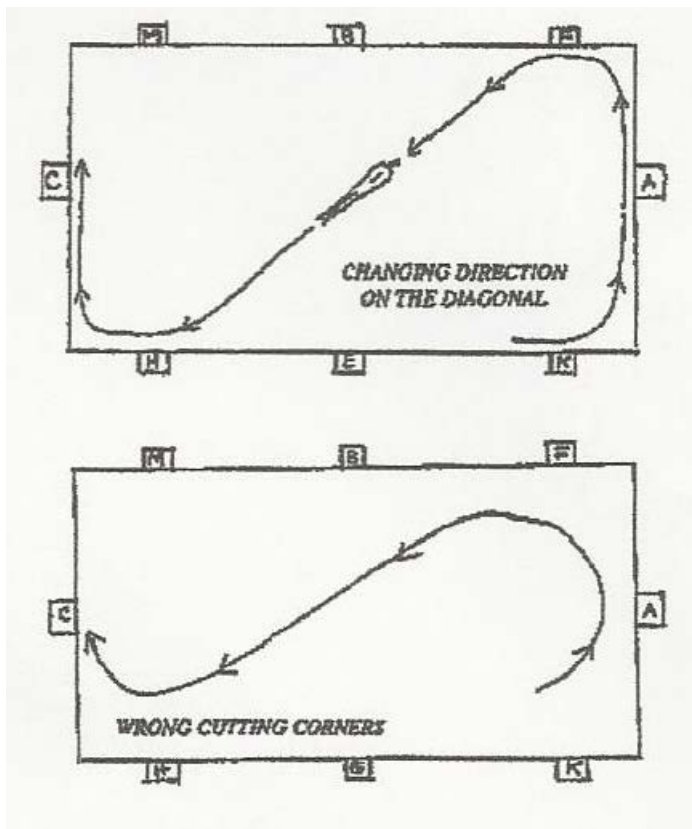
## Figure 8

- ◆ A figure 8 is made with two large circles touching. Make sure that it is **not** a lazy 8, which looks like two teardrops touching.
- ◆ Start by riding straight to the center of the ring a pick a center point (X) for your start and finish point.
- ◆ Make a circle to the left that takes up half of the arena, returning to the center point (X).
- ◆ No go straight for a couple of strides, then make a matching circle to the right, returning to the center point to finish (X).
- ◆ If the arena is big enough, can make a large figure 8 crossing the arena in the center (X) . Starting down the centerline makes a small figure 8.



## CHANGE OF DIRECTION ACROSS THE DIAGONAL

- ◆ Sometimes this is also called "change rein." To change direction across the diagonal, it is helpful if your arena has letters or markers.
- ◆ Ride through the short side of the arena (for example, tracking to the left).
- ◆ Just after you turn the corner, continue your turn and walk one to three strides down the long side of the arena. Then turn your horse to the left and walk on the diagonal toward the opposite corner of the arena.
- ◆ You should ride straight on the diagonal line until you reach the opposite rail of the arena just before the corner.
- At the corner, you will simply turn right and follow the rail around in the new direction.
- This way of reversing directions lets you keep going at a faster gait or allows a class "follow the leader" while changing directions.
- Do not let your horse cut corners or he will spoil your change of direction on the diagonal.



### *Things to remember...*

- ◆ Once the lesson has started, the instructor will tell you where you need to be in the arena. Always make
- ◆ Instructions will be given directly to your rider. Listen to the instructor and try to discourage conversation that does not pertain to the lesson so your rider can be focused on the instructor and the lesson with no distractions.
- ◆ Encourage the rider to ask the horse to "Walk On" and "Whoa" before you complete the task.
- ◆ When working in the lesson, give the rider the chance to complete the task asked of them. If they do not complete it within two to three seconds, you may complete the task with the instructor's permission.
- ◆ When halted for more than five seconds, the leader should stand facing the horse and slightly to the left of the horse's head to keep the horse from moving. If the horse is restless, you can give a quick pull and release with the lead rope in order for the horse to pay attention to you.

- ◆ If your rider has side walkers, be cautious about where and how you lead the horse. Remember to give your side walkers plenty of room along the rail.
- ◆ If your horse is walking faster than other horses, you can pass to the inside of the arena or you can make a circle. Always communicate with the rider and side walkers so you do not surprise them when you make an unplanned move.
- ◆ When trotting with a rider, wait for the instructor's command and then wait for the rider to say "Trot". Before you trot, make sure the rider is balanced and ready and that the side walker(s) are ready. Start off trotting slow! The instructor would rather tell you to speed up than slow down.
- ◆ When leading in lessons, do not make abrupt movements, i.e. walk, halt, and trot or small circles.
- ◆ Try to do these movements smoothly and slowly so that you do not throw your rider off balance.
- ◆ Games are a very important aspect of every lesson. The leader plays an important role in games, so make sure that you and the rider understand the game.
- ◆ After the lesson, share any pertinent feelings or insights with the instructor. For example, if you like working with a specific rider or if you are uncomfortable working with a specific rider.

## **SIDEWALKING**

- ◆ May greet the rider and parent or caregiver and ask how rider is feeling. A rider may be having a good day, may be tired, or recovering from an illness; the lesson may be structured accordingly.
- ◆ Assists instructor with mounting and dismounting the rider.
- ◆ The side walker on the same side as the leader (typically the left side of the horse) is the lead side walker. In case of an emergency dismount, the lead side walker always dismounts the rider.
- ◆ Side walkers assist the riders in physically and/or emotionally supportive ways and should always be attentive to the rider, instructor, horse, and leader. The safety of the rider depends on the side walker.
- ◆ A side walker should help reinforce the instructor's directions and help the rider follow directions. For example, if the instructor asks the rider to go to B and turn right, you should help prepare the rider for the task. Sometimes you may need to help the rider hold the rein and turn the horse. Every rider's needs are different and the instructor will help you know what type of help the rider requires.
- ◆ Games are a very important aspect of every lesson and the side walker plays an important role in games. Please make sure that you and the rider understand the game so you can assist the rider during the game. Please stay with your rider and do not adjust cones or chase balls. The instructor will retrieve loose balls or adjust cones or T-poles as necessary.
- ◆ When side walking, remember to allow the rider to do as much as possible. It helps if you are enthusiastic, but do not do everything for the rider. Make the rider try, giving them two to three seconds to process the task before you assist. Remember, it is the rider's lesson, not yours!
- ◆ Do not distract the riders with conversations not pertaining to lessons. You can talk with the rider before or after the lesson about their week, school, etc., but when the instructor is in the arena, help the rider focus on the lesson.
- ◆ If your arm gets tired while side walking ask the leader to halt the horse and ask the instructor to help you switch sides. You never want to leave a rider unattended without a side walker.
- ◆ There are different side walking holds used for the riders and you may need to combine holds for some riders. The instructor will tell you what type of holds the rider needs. If your rider starts to lose their balance, get the instructor's attention. The instructor will assist in helping the rider with their correct balance on the horse. NEVER tug or pull on a rider to help them regain their balance.
- ◆ Be careful not to walk too far behind the rider's leg because then it is easy to bump the horse's flank. This is a very sensitive area of the horse's body.
- ◆ After the lesson, share any pertinent feelings or insights with the instructor. For example, if you want to work with a specific rider or if you are uncomfortable working with a specific rider.
- ◆ Communicates with rider and family at end of lesson. Encourages feedback in both directions.

## **THREE MAJOR TYPES OF SIDEWALKING HOLDS**

1) Floating – The role of the side walker is to encourage the rider and reiterate what the instructor is saying when appropriate. The floating side walker should be aware of the rider's position on the horse and encourage the rider to correct their position if necessary.

2) Ankle Stabilizer - The side walker assists a rider who has problems pushing their legs forward or backward. The side walker keeps one hand on the rider's ankle so that it stays in correct position. The ankle stabilizer hold helps keep the rider from "tickling the horse's sides" as well as help the rider's foot remain in the stirrup at all times.

3) Thigh-Hold - This hold is used for the rider who does not have the balance or stability to stay on top of the horse independently. Using the hand *closest* to the horse, grasp the knee-roll of the saddle, or the front of whatever type of tack is being used. Let your forearm rest gently over the thigh of the rider but avoid pressing onto the rider's thigh. Too much pressure is uncomfortable for you and the rider and could inhibit the horse's movement. Sometimes, the thigh-holder may also be asked to stabilize the rider's foot with the hand that's *away* from the horse. A thigh-hold is ALWAYS used when mounting a rider in the lift area, regardless of the rider's ability.

## **SAFETY BELTS**

Occasionally a rider may require the use of a safety belt. The instructor will advise the volunteer side walkers if this is needed and demonstrate how to put the safety belt on the rider. Once a side walker is comfortable fitting the rider, they may fit the rider with the safety belt prior to the lesson. The safety belt will be used as a back handhold during the rider's lesson. Be careful of the horse's back and sides while supporting a rider. Volunteers may accidentally hit their elbows into the backs and sides of the horse, which causes pain and discomfort to the horse. Holding the rider by the safety belt along their back and simultaneously doing a thigh hold might become tiring for the side walker. Please let the instructor know if your arm is tired and you need to switch sides with the other side walker.

## **DISMOUNTING**

### **LEADER**

- ◆ Leaders will receive instruction about where to bring the horse and rider for dismounting.
- ◆ Dismounting is usually in the middle of the arena with the horse facing the gate.
- ◆ Remember to stand facing the horse and slightly to the left of the horse's head and wait quietly.

### **SIDEWALKERS**

- ◆ Unless otherwise specified, the instructor will dismount the rider.
- ◆ The instructor will give the side walkers directions so they can assist the instructor with the dismount.
- ◆ Never grasp onto the rider's arm as they are being dismounted from the horse.

### **PUTTING THE HORSE AWAY**

- ◆ The horse leaders will return the horses to their stalls
- ◆ Take the saddle or special equipment off the horse and put it on the saddle rack outside the horse's stall.
- ◆ Take the bridle off:
  1. Undo the throatlatch.
  2. Gently take hold of the crown piece.
  3. Pull the bridle forward off the horse's ears while gently lowering the bit out of the horse's mouth.
- ◆ Untie the horse and remove halter.
- ◆ Put tack, reins, bridle and halter away in their appropriate places in the tack room.

## **AFTER THE LESSON**

- ◆ After the lesson, you may need to put your horse away, get another horse ready, or move on to another lesson. It is important to stay on schedule.
- ◆ Look at the “Rider Roster” to see if you will participate in another lesson or check with the Stable Manager for any barn chores that need to be completed.
- ◆ After your volunteer shift is over, please remember to sign out and return your nametag.

## **TRAIL RIDE PROCEDURES**

- ◆ Prior to leaving the arena for a trail ride, the instructor will inform the volunteer team to be extra attentive. The instructor will review emergency procedures and leader/side walker roles. The instructors/therapists on trail rides must be a NARHA Certified Instructor or accompanied by a NARHA Certified Instructor at all times.
- ◆ The instructor will ask volunteers to assist with keeping an eye out for traffic both ways on the trail. The instructors will always go to the front of the trail ride group in order to check for cars (if on the road) or other activity on the trail. The instructor will continuously check behind the horses and riders for any activity on the trail, or the instructor will designate a volunteer to be the “watch person” for traffic coming from behind.
- ◆ Horse leaders should not let horses trot down or up hills.
- ◆ Instructors or therapists will carry a walkie-talkie on them at all times when walking along the trail.
- ◆ The instructors or therapists will also carry their cell phone (on vibrate/silent) on a trail ride in case of an emergency. If the horse shies or is having behavior issues on the trail ride, the instructor will immediately have the leader stop the horse, and wait until the horse is calm. If the horse still seems uncertain, the team will return to the arena, and dismount riders if necessary.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- All Emergency numbers are posted in the tack room or office area.
- A Fire Extinguisher is located in the aisle at both ends of the barn.
- A Human First Aid kit is kept in the tack room and the office area.
- Emergency information for riders and volunteers is kept in binders in the office.

## **EMERGENCY DISMOUNT**

- ◆ Instructors/therapists will always advise when an emergency dismount is necessary. In the event that a rider needs to dismount from the horse, please do the following:
  - ◆ Halt the horse.
  - ◆ Notify instructor/therapist of the immediate situation.
  - ◆ Have the rider take their feet out of the stirrups with the side walkers assisting if necessary. In case of an emergency dismount, the lead side walker (i.e. the volunteer on the same side as the leader – typically the left side of the horse) will dismount the rider, with the permission of the instructor/therapist.
  - ◆ Make sure the rider puts the reins up toward the horse’s head.
  - ◆ To dismount a rider use either a croup or crest dismount as described below:
    - ◆ Croup dismount: Have the rider lean forward on horse's neck, placing their head to right side of the horse's neck and bring their right leg around the horse's croup. Gently let the rider down to their feet.
    - ◆ Crest dismount: Have the rider lean back and bring their right leg around to the front of horse. Roll the rider onto their stomach and gently let the rider down to their feet.
  - ◆ The horse leader should move the horse away from the rider by turning horse’s head toward the rider and pushing the hind end away from rider. Then the horse leader should lead the horse to a neutral corner of the arena or remove the horse from the arena at the discretion of the instructor/therapist.
  - ◆ Side walkers and/or the instructor/therapist should stay with the rider. They should support the rider emotionally and physically if necessary. Try to keep the rider calm.
  - ◆ When the instructor/therapist advises, remove all riders and horses from arena.

## **LOOSE HORSE WITH RIDER**

- ◆ Immediately stop the class.
- ◆ Give simple quick instructions to the rider such as "Sit up! or Pull up!"
- ◆ The volunteer team should quickly and calmly approach the horse and regain control of the horse.
- ◆ Do not step in front of the horse because the horse may swerve and potentially dislodge the rider.

## **LOOSE HORSE WITHOUT RIDER**

- ◆ Immediately stop the class.
- ◆ All leaders and side walkers should stay with their riders. Leaders should assume leader halted positions and side walkers should do thigh holds.
- ◆ The instructor/therapist or designated volunteer will catch the loose horse.

## **RIDER FALLS FROM THE HORSE**

**DO NOT PANIC** if there is a fall and listen to the instructor/therapist for instructions.

- ◆ In case of a fall, the instructor/therapist should immediately go to the rider and talk to them, the leader should keep the horse under control, and the side walkers should help keep the rider calm and follow instructor/therapist instructions. This will allow the instructor/therapist to assess the situation and give directions efficiently. The instructor/therapist and the rider's side walkers should remain with the rider at all times.
- ◆ The instructor/therapist or designated volunteer will call the Stable Manager on the walkie-talkie and mention calmly that there is an emergency. They will ask the Stable Manager to come to the arena or trail, and will indicate what is needed; such as, rider's guardian/caregiver/staff, First Aid kit, rider file and/or cell phone.
- ◆ The fallen rider should remain lying down and still for at least ten minutes or until they can be checked for signs of injury. An individual onsite with the most advanced medical training (instructor, therapist, or nurse) will be summoned to examine the fallen rider.
- ◆ 911 will be called if the injury is serious.
- ◆ Signs of serious injury include:
  - a) Unconsciousness (even for a moment)
  - b) Bleeding or fluid draining from the mouth, nose, or ears
  - c) Serious bleeding (apply direct pressure)
  - d) Limb at unnatural angle or pain on pressure with pain on movement (do not move)
  - e) Pupils contract unevenly
  - f) Signs of shock (paleness, mottled color, sweating, nausea, fainting)
  - g) Consider the possibility of head injury and/or spinal injury in ANY fall. If it is suspected, keep the rider absolutely still.

## **THE INSTRUCTOR/THERAPIST MAY ASSIGN A VOLUNTEER TO:**

- √ Retrieve the First Aid kit located in the office or the cabinet in the arena.
- √ Retrieve the rider's file from office (files are organized by day of the rider's lesson).
- √ Call 911 from the telephone located in the arena. The caller should follow operator's instructions and stay on the telephone until operator tells you to hang up. Give directions to the farm; directions are posted by the telephone located in the office and in the arena waiting area.
- √ Take the rider's parent, guardian, caregiver, or any other person who brought the rider to RTOR to the rider in the arena or on the trail. Make sure to involve the parent, guardian or caregiver because they know the rider best. If necessary, contact the fallen rider's parents, guardian, caretaker, or emergency contact. This information can be found in rider's file located in the office.

If the instructor/therapist thinks the rider is injured and needs medical attention but 911 is not required, then strongly encourage the rider to be taken to the doctor, urgent care facility or the hospital (depending on the level of medical attention needed). If the rider does not have visible injuries, suggest that the rider be taken to a doctor for evaluation as a precaution.

- ◆ If the instructor/therapist thinks the rider is uninjured, then they should walk the rider to the RTOR waiting area. The rider should be reassured and the instructor/therapist will discuss with the rider what caused the fall. When the situation is under control, reassure the rest of the class and explain to them what caused the fall.
- ◆ For ANY injury an instructor/therapist is required to fill out an Occurrence Report with the entire volunteer team, rider and parent, guardian or caregiver, per RTOR Occurrence Report Procedures. All parties must sign the form, and then the form should be given to the Executive Director.
- ◆ The instructor/therapist should follow up with the rider's parent, guardian or caregiver within six hours of the incident, and again within 24 hours of the incident. All encounters should be documented and given to the Executive Director to be put with the Occurrence Report.
- ◆ The instructor/therapist should make the Executive Director and Head Instructor aware of any injury at RTOR immediately in order to discuss if further actions need to be taken.

### **OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

- ◆ If the horse is loose, the leader should capture the horse and remove the horse from the arena.
- ◆ The rider's side walkers and the instructor/therapist will stay with the fallen rider.
- ◆ All other leaders and side walkers should stay with their riders. Leaders should assume leader halted positions and side walkers should do thigh holds.
- ◆ If there are other riders in the arena or on the trail they should be dismounted, reassured, and taken to the RTOR waiting area in the arena. All side walkers should remain with their rider and keep them calm.
- ◆ After the rider is dismounted, the horse leader should lead the horse to a neutral corner of the arena or remove the horse from the arena at the discretion of the instructor/therapist.

### **IN CASE OF FIRE**

- ◆ Evacuate the riders and volunteers calmly and quickly out of the barn or arena through the nearest exit. Keep everyone quiet and under control.
- ◆ Call the fire department (911). Give the operator your name, the farm name, and the location. All this information is located by the telephone in the office and the arena. Stay on the telephone until the operator tells you to hang up.
- ◆ With the instructor/therapist's permission, evacuate horses if possible. Get a halter and lead rope for each horse and lead them to the pasture.
- ◆ Do not let the horses loose outside of the barn since they may try to return to the barn. If the horse will not lead, blindfold the horse with a towel, a sack, or coat. If possible, wet the blindfold in the horse's water before putting it on the horse's head.
- ◆ Make sure the driveway is clear for fire equipment.
- ◆ Save equipment from the barn or tack room only after horses are out and if your safety will not be compromised.
- ◆ Use fire extinguishers located in the tack room, the office, or the arena if your safety will not be compromised.
- ◆ Once help arrives, immediately check the horses for injuries. Call the vet if horses are burned or have inhaled a lot of smoke.

### **IN CASE OF SEVERE WEATHER** (i.e. high winds, thunderstorms, or tornadoes)

- ◆ Lead riders and volunteers as quickly and quietly as possible to the designated safe area, which is the Reins To Recovery office.

- ◆ Instruct everyone to sit down, put their heads between their legs, and cover their heads. Leave helmets on the rider's head protection.
- ◆ If there is not enough time to put horses in stalls, leave them in the arena with the gate closed.
- ◆ Remain in the designated safe area until the storm is over and the "All Clear" signal is given by the instructor/therapist.
- ◆ Put horses back in their stalls when the severe weather threat is over if they are still in the arena.
- ◆ When the severe weather threat is over, inspect the premises for downed power lines before permitting riders and volunteers to leave.

## SEIZURES

- ◆ Sometimes you or the rider can tell if a seizure is going to happen, other times you cannot.
- ◆ The main thing to remember is to *not* restrain a person when they have a seizure. Simply keep the rider safe until the seizure is over.
- ◆ If a volunteer or a rider knows that a seizure is going to happen, the instructor/therapist should be notified and the rider should be dismounted as quickly as possible. The rider should sit or lie down in a comfortable and safe place.
- ◆ If a seizure happens when a rider is on the horse, a volunteer should notify the instructor/therapist immediately. Have rider lean forward on the horse's neck with his or her head off to the side of the horse's neck.
- ◆ The instructor/therapist will evaluate the rider after the seizure is over. The rider will either be dismounted or will continue with the ride.



**Thank You For Helping Us  
Change Lives  
One Ride At A Time!!!**