

CENTRAL ILLINOIS

RIDING THERAPY

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



**Central Illinois
Riding Therapy**

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Welcome Volunteers!

We are delighted to have you!

Volunteers who drive the Central Illinois Riding Therapy (CIRT) program, are indispensable at all levels of the organization *and need not be equine oriented*. Some do bring skills in horsemanship, others bring leadership skills, and others simply bring many new ideas and insights to the program and frequently enlist their friends! Ask any CIRT volunteer and they will state that they gain as much, or more, than they give. As a volunteer, you will learn and achieve, as well! The information in this manual is designed to assist you in understanding CIRT's policies and procedures. This handbook is not all-inclusive and does not include every policy or protocol relating to volunteers at CIRT. Please feel free to ask staff members or seasoned volunteers if you have further questions or concerns.

Riding sessions take place on the following days and times. Please note the times are volunteer arrival times. Sessions start one-half hour later. You may work the full session or any part of it.

Monday 3:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Tuesday 3:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Wednesday 9:30 am – 5:30 pm
Thursday 3:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Volunteers are also needed on our “stall cleaning days”: Monday and Thursday and other days to clean. This aspect of the program will be explained at the Volunteer Orientation. Additional sessions or special events may be added during the year. They will be posted on the bulletin board. Please feel free to sign up for any session you can work. If you volunteer regularly and will not be able to work your usual session, we ask that you indicate this on the calendar and /or leave a message on the barn answering machine **309.699.3710**.

Remember even if riding is canceled due to weather etc. the horses still need grooming and the stalls need cleaning so we can always use your help.

Personal items are your responsibility

Please leave cell phones, purses, and any other personal belongings in your locked vehicle. If you need a place for your keys, ask a staff person for the best location. If you need to have your cell phone with you, please have it on silent and leave it in the office. No cell phones are allowed in classes, except the instructors and designated volunteer if going on the trail. We are not responsible for lost/stolen personal items.

Remember no cell phones are permitted while volunteering in the riding arena!

You may bring your own drinks or snacks. We usually have snacks for sharing on the counter. Please make sure your name is on whatever is yours. Volunteers also help us with items like paper towels, toilet paper, bottled water, etc., and of course, treats for the horses like apples and carrots. Check the wish list online or ask for what we may need.

You may use the Barn phone for a personal call. Please ask permission and remember to keep your conversation short.

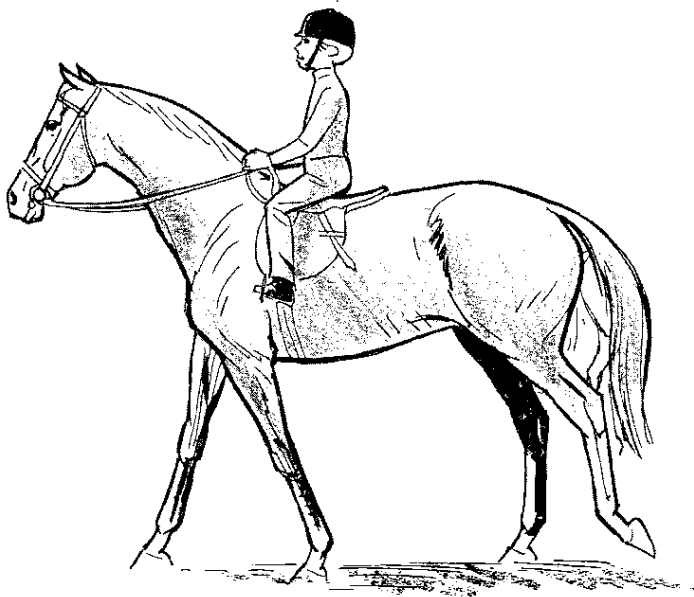
PURPOSE

Central Illinois Riding Therapy (CIRT) is a non-profit organization serving children and adults with disabilities from Tazewell and surrounding counties, in a comprehensive recreational and therapeutic horseback riding program.

Early in 1983, a large group of people from Peoria and Tazewell counties met for the first time to discuss the possibility of starting a handicapped riding program for the area. In October that year, CIRT began its first classes funded by seed money provided by 4-H. CIRT operates under the 4-H not-for-profit 501(C) (3) charter and in accordance with the guidelines established by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), now known as Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.). CIRT moved to various places throughout the Peoria and Tazewell County area until a permanent location was found in the spring of 1988. This was provided through an agreement with the Fondulac Park District, at our present location in Neumann Park at, 305 Neumann Drive in East Peoria, IL (off Route 150).

We are committed to the principle that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities and rights as their non-disabled peers. Our program provides activities that enhance physical and mental skills, aids in mobilization, promotes socialization and communication, and builds independence and self confidence.

Skills developed lead to integration into typical community riding programs, as well as transfer to other activities of daily living. Our mission is to enriching the quality of life of our participants while offering a unique experience.



BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

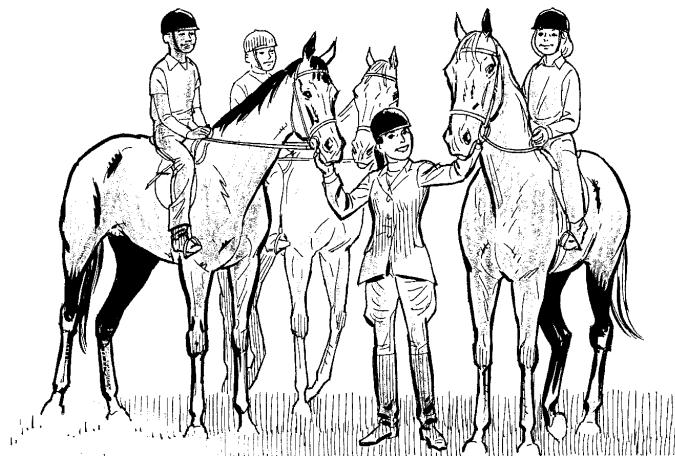
Horseback riding is strongly motivating for the person with disabilities. Participants are encouraged to reach their fullest capabilities through a non-traditional environment which promotes therapy and fun. The program is open to any person with a disability whose doctor determines that horseback riding could provide beneficial therapy. We serve individuals with a variety of physical, emotional and mental disabilities including Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Autism, visual and hearing impairments, learning disabilities and others.

The bond between horse and participant is unmatched. The horse's smooth, rhythmical, three-dimensional rolling movement promotes patterns which when paired with the warmth generated by the horse helps normalize muscle tone, strengthen muscles, promote good posture and facilitate normal movement patterns necessary for the development of gross and fine motor skills.

By using the horse as a therapeutic modality:

- increased range of motion in the pelvis, spine, and hip joints
- development of head and trunk control
- increased balance and righting responses
- improved upper extremity function
- relaxation and muscle re-education may occur
- confidence is built as each participant develops skills that demonstrate control over their horse
- responsibility is reinforced as each participant learns to care for a living animal

Communication increases as participants are challenged to give directions to their horse and independence develops as participants become confident and transfer their skills into other activities of daily living. Participants improve socialization skills by interacting as part of a group with their peers and volunteer assistants. Riding is fun and affords each individual a leisure time pursuit which can be shared with other family members and friends.



ACCREDITATION

CIRT is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) Premier Accredited Operating Center. PATH Intl. provides support through setting of safety standards, accreditation, instructor certification, insurance coverage, literature and seminars.

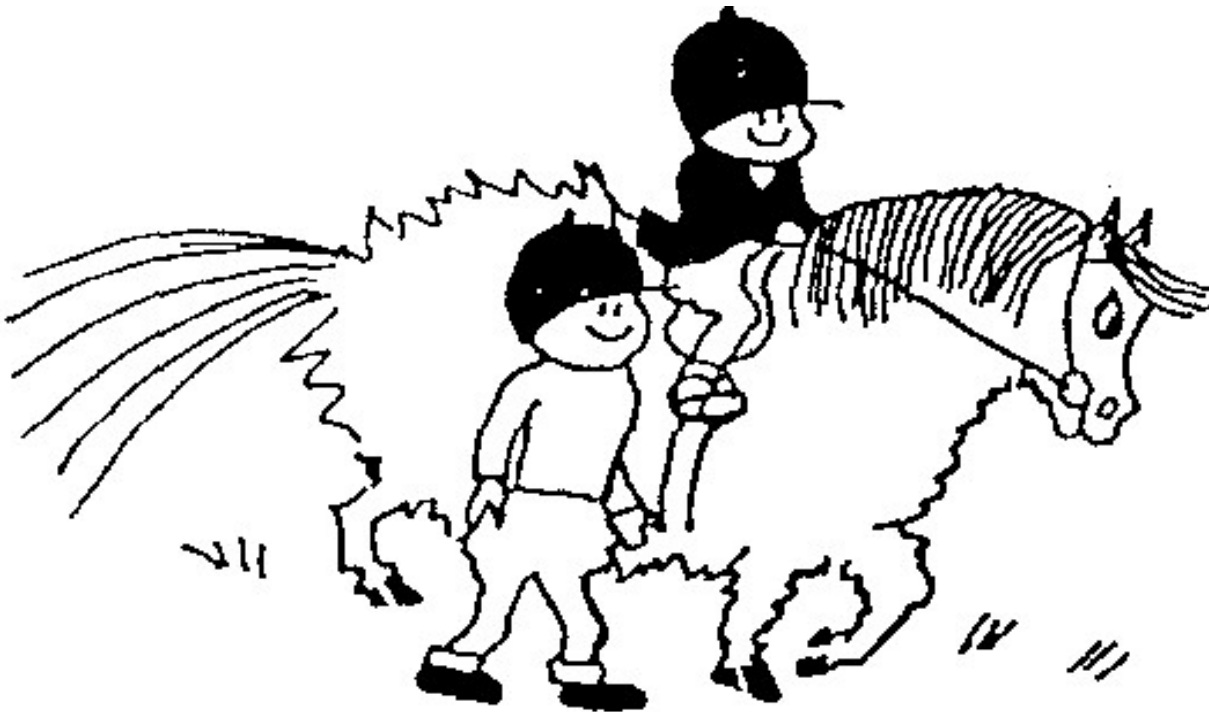
PHILOSOPHY

The program is dedicated to the growth and development of each individual with the goal for every participant to safely ride as independently as possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Central Illinois Riding Therapy is a 4-H affiliated organization that provides a service of therapy and recreation to adults and children with special needs. Participants and volunteers are 4-H members.

CIRT consists of a governing Board of Directors who are responsible for establishing the policies and rules that govern the program. The board consists of people from the community, parents of participants, and others who work to insure the success of the program. The Program Director, Volunteer Coordinator/Office Assistant, Equine Coordinator, and Instructors carry out the day-to-day operations.



RULES AND PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES at CIRT:

ATTENDANCE LOG BOOK: It is **essential** that you log in and out every time you come to volunteer. If you need verification of your volunteer hours for taxes, school, court, scholarships, etc., this is where we get the information. If you do not sign in, you do not get credit. We keep track of volunteer hours.

Name tags are required during class time. **Volunteers need to have a name tag on at all times.** If you lose or misplace your name tag, please let a staff person know so they can make a replacement for you.

It's your first day volunteering

Signed into the attendance log, put your name tag on, check the class list on the board outside the tack room, and check with the instructor for any information you may need. Next, simply introduce yourself and let them know you are new. You will be assigned to an experienced volunteer who will show you the ropes. You will probably be shown how we muck stalls, clean buckets or groom and tack horses. Your abilities will determine how long you will need to work with a partner. No worries, we want you to take all the time you need to be comfortable, safe, and confident. You may bring your own drinks or snacks. We also have some beverages in the refrigerator and usually snacks for sharing on the table. Please make sure your name is on whatever is yours.

You may use the Barn phone for a personal call. Please ask permission and remember to keep your conversation short. We have one line for incoming calls and emergencies.

SPECIAL RULES FOR PHOTOS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

You cannot take a rider's picture without permission. CIRT has permission to photograph all riders and volunteers, who have signed waivers, you do not. If you plan on posting the photo on a social networking site: like Facebook, Twitter, or post in any site, you must have specific permission to do this from anyone whose picture you have taken. **NEVER** identify a rider by name unless they (if an adult) or the parent gives permission.

REFUSAL POLICY

CIRT's right to refuse a volunteer includes, but is not limited to, the following reasons:

Criminal record or conviction of a felony for:

- stealing
- violence
- sexual offence
- etc.

ABSENTEE POLICY

IF YOU ARE SICK, PLEASE GIVE US A CALL AND STAY HOME.

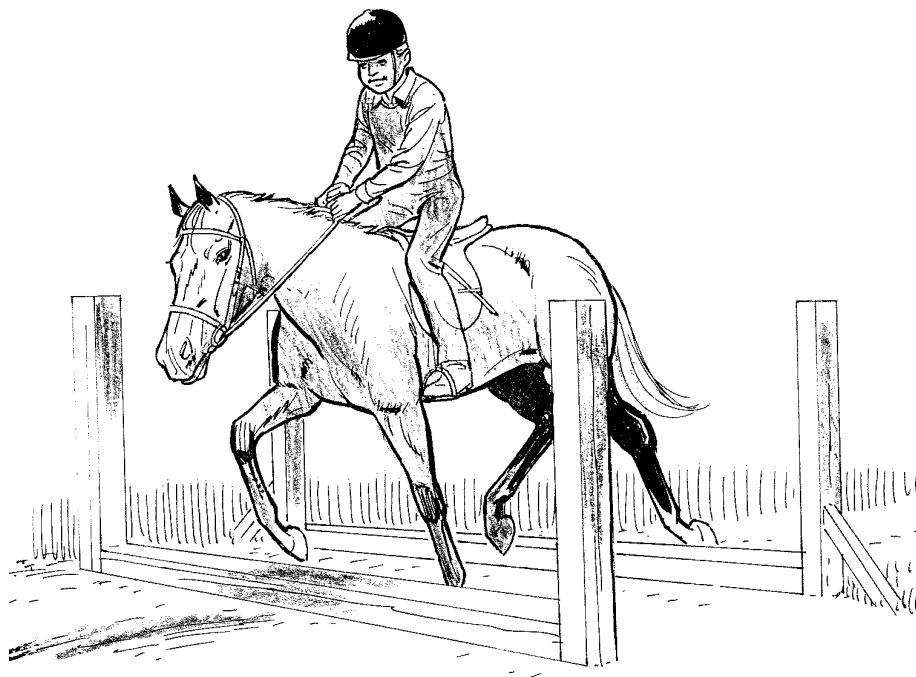
Consideration for CIRT's participants and staff is appreciated. Volunteers are asked to give at least 24 hours notice whenever possible, if unable to attend. We understand that you are busy and that things come up last minute; however, even if it last minute or after classes have started, call to let us know you are unable to volunteer that night. If volunteers know they will be absent on a future date, on the calendar by volunteer sign in, mark when you will be absent.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

The safety and good health of participants, volunteers, and horses are the most important concerns of CIRT. Class will not be held during the following conditions:

- Temperature extremes:
 - 91 degree heat Index or above
 - 30 degree wind chill or below
- High winds
- Lightning, thunder, and heavy rain
- Thunderstorm or tornado warnings
- Emergencies

CIRT will make every attempt to contact participants and volunteers if there is a cancellation. If for any reason you question if there is going to be classes, please feel free to call CIRT.



CENTRAL ILLINOIS RIDING THERAPY EMERGENCY PROCEDURE PLAN AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

(Include the following but are not limited to)

❖ Natural hazards

- Deer, geese, coyotes, and other wild animals coming into or around the arena. (Volunteers are warned of this possibility and told to be prepared of horse reaction.)
- Riding Trail - Signs are posted for non-use by motorized vehicles.
- Hail and high winds, heavy rains, lightning and /or thunderstorms – classes are cancelled.
- Poison ivy, oak, and sumac – activity areas are kept mowed and maintained; however these plants may grow anywhere. Participants, families, and volunteers are encouraged to stay away from areas it may be growing.
- Drivers need to drive slowly though the park as the posted speed limit is 10 miles per hour due to kids and animals in the park. The Farm Park has horses and other animals that we remind them to watch for if any animals are loose. **Drivers must be conscientious of their surroundings.**
- Gates are shut and secured during activities. When horses are out in the pasture, the gate is padlocked to prevent park visitors' access.

❖ Man-made hazards specific to the site

- **Tractor/Golf Cart** - It is used for pulling wagon, trailer, discing the arenas, and moving sawdust, etc. When tractor/golf cart is not in use the key is hung up in the lock box in Office. Tractor/Golf Cart and gas are stored in the shed outside of barn. Only these assigned personnel are authorized to use the Tractor/Golf Cart:
 - **Janet Allen**
 - **Jenna Walker**
 - **Rhonda Greene**
 - **Kathy Griffin**
- Fly spray and horse medicine supplies are kept in the locked cabinet in the tack room. Other horse medicine is kept in the backroom that is locked with only employee access. Horse Shampoo and other grooming supplies are in the Laundry room for employees only.
- **Storage Area** – It is used by Park District personnel at various times and is kept locked when not in use. They are aware of class schedules and are careful about causing any disturbances.
- **Electrical Outlets** - All open outlets in the barn, waiting area, and office have protective plug covers.
- **Park Play Ground and Open Area** – The park district is notified and appropriate changes are made if any activities in the park become problematic.
- **Off Limit areas** – Are secure and posted “Employees Only”.

- **Manure/Conveyor** – Has a safety key access and key is removed when not in use. Only these trained personnel can operate the Manure/Conveyor:
 - **Janet Allen**
 - **Jenna Walker**
 - **Rhonda Greene**
 - **Chase Crawford**
- **Exhaust Fan** – 2 Safety Switches. One on the Fan and the other between office and laundry room.
- **Fans** – Cleaned and maintained
- **Extension Cords** – Put overhead for safety when plugged in so horses don't step on them and people cannot reach to be electrocuted.
- **Electric Fence** - Maintained and hot. Only turned off, when being worked on.
- **Fly Tape** – Put up above the horses stalls out of reach of personnel.

❖ **Operation of facilities and/or equipment**

- **Off Limit Areas** – These areas are clearly marked with signs, gates, chain across, etc.
- **Cleaning Supplies** - These are kept in EMPLOYEE ONLY rooms. They are always kept in similar containers. No jars or bottles are unlabeled.
- **Horse Fly sprays, Medicine, etc.** – These are kept in a locked cabinet in the tack room. Only one person is assigned to spray horses for class. Medication of horses is maintained and administered by staff only.
- **Refrigerators (2):**
 - Lounge area - This refrigerator is used for lunches, food items, drinks of participants, families and volunteers.
 - EMPLOYEES ONLY Room – Any horse medications requiring refrigeration are kept in bottom drawer and labeled.
- **Barn Rules** - Are posted on the open tack room door and printed in the volunteer manual.
- **Loss of Power** – Flash lights are placed around the barn and emergency lights will automatically come on.
- **Loss of Water or Boil Order** – We are on the call list for East Peoria to be noticed if they have a boil order or need to turn off water so we can fill buckets of water for horses.
- **Electrocution** – All electrical items are on breakers and we have a breaker that will shut down the whole barn if needed. Breaker box is locked in employee only area in the office.

IN CASE OF FIRE.....

If there is a fire, do not yell or scream. Stay calm, work quickly, and *let the Instructor know immediately*. If the fire is small, try to put it out. Extinguishers work for all types of fires including electrical.

Locations of the Five (5) Fire Extinguishers

1. In the office by to the right of the exit door
2. In the tack room, on left side of door
3. On the wall between the horses stalls 5 and 6
4. On the wall by the water spigot between the office and the laundry room
5. On the pole by the grain freezer, back by the hay

Designated Person (as assigned by instructor) will call 911, tell them the situation, that horses are present, and give the location (emergency information is posted by the phone on bright orange paper). The fire procedure notice is in a red booklet on the wall by the Big Window, on the chalkboard by tack room door, and on the bulletin board behind the instructor desk.

If No Horses are being used...

- Designated Person (as assigned by staff) will call 911, tell them the situation, that horses are present, and give the location (emergency information is posted by the phone on bright orange paper). The fire procedure notice is in a red booklet on the wall by the Big Window, on chalkboard by tack room door, and on the bulletin board behind the instructor desk.
- Staff will tell you to get horses, put halter on and exit building farthest away from fire. Take horses to pasture. Watch for traffic. Stay with horses and let them graze. Do not take halters off and let go unless told to by staff, (the reason is, not all horses get along and we can easily see how many are out of the building). If we do not have enough people to get horses, please listen to staff. We will tell you where to put horses outside or to grab halters (do not put halters down as fire department will help assist when they get here) and push horses out into the back lot, shutting the bottom door to their stalls. We will take the horses we can out (especially Flurrie and Comanche, as they do not have a way out of the barn)
- The rest of the people will go to the park shelter and wait. You may be asked to move your vehicle. Please do not leave until you are given permission to do so, (watch for traffic).
- Do not go back into the building for any personal belongings.

If Horses are out and being used...

- Designated Person (as assigned by instructor) will Call 911, tell them the situation, that horses are present, and give the location (emergency information is posted by the phone on bright orange paper). The fire procedure notice is in a red booklet on the wall by the Big Window, on chalkboard by tack room door, and on the bulletin board behind the instructor desk.
- Horse Leaders - Stay calm. Speak gently, and take horses out of barn through overhead door farthest from the fire. If there are participants on horses take the horse and participant up to the park shelter, dismount riders, go across the drive (watch for traffic) into the large pasture, and untack horses leaving halters on. Stay with your horse unless otherwise instructed.
- Sidewalkers - Stay calm. Escort your participant and his/her parents outside through doors farthest from the fire and across to the park shelter (watch for traffic). If participants are on horses, stay with leader and rider, unless instructed otherwise. Leaders will walk the horse up to the park shelter and dismounts will be done there. Stay with participant unless instructed differently (ie. You could be asked to help with other horses, riders, and/or volunteers)
- Do not go back into the building for any personal belongings.
- Staff will tell other volunteers to get horses, put halter on and exit building farthest away from fire. Take horses to pasture. Watch for traffic. Stay with horses and let them graze. Do not take halters off and let go unless told to by staff, (the reason is, not all horses get along and we can easily see how many are out of the building). If we do not have enough people to get horses, please listen to staff. We will tell you where to put horses outside or to grab halters (do not put halters down as fire department will help assist when they get here) and push horses out into the back lot, shutting the bottom door to their stalls. We will take the horses we can out (especially Flurrie and Comanche, as they do not have a way out of the barn)

***REMEMBER.... YOUR SAFETY IS MOST IMPORTANT.
DO NOT GO BACK INTO A BURNING BUILDING!!!***

THUNDER AND ELECTRIC STORMS

* Loud noises often upset and/or scare horses. If we are able we will cancel classes before storm. However, if a storm occurs while participants are on the horses riding, listen to instructor and pay close attention to the mood and actions of the horse. If needed, lead the horse into the center of the arena. The Instructor will tell you what to do and riders will be dismounted.

TORNADO/HIGHWINDS/EARTHQUAKES

- Designated Person - Bring portable phone and weather radio (to the right of the outside exit door in the office and on desk by tack room) into tack room.
- If no horses are out, everyone head to tack room.
- If horses are being used:
 - Sidewalkers - Stay calm. At the 3-minute warning siren, listen to instructor, dismount and escort participants and observers into tack room. Helmets should be left on participants. Volunteers can also put on remaining helmets to help prevent head injuries. Games can be played to help keep participants calm. Stay in tack room until danger has passed.
 - Horse Leaders - Stay calm. Stop your horse and listen to instructor. Once rider is dismounted, the instructor and other volunteers will help remove tack. Take the horse back to its stall. If there is not time, remove the horse's saddle and bridle and leave the horse in the arena. If time does not allow us to get all tack off, be sure to remove halter and bridles (anything on the horses head) so they cannot get hung up. Then go immediately to tack room and stay until danger has passed. Please listen very carefully to your instructor.

POWER FAILURE/BLACKOUTS

If no horses are being used. ..

- Flashlights are throughout the building
- Staff will check Fuse Box, located in employees only area in the office
- Staff will try to figure out what is going on.

If horses are being used...

- During Class - Instructor will give instructions as to what needs to be done. A battery emergency light should come on within a few minutes. It will illuminate the office door and front aisle and exits.
 - Sidewalkers - Stay calm. Reassure your participant using a calm voice and continue your hold or let your independent participant know you are close by applying the thigh hold. This will allow you to be in position and ready for any change. If your participant is dismounted, hold their hand or carry and walk out of ring/saddling area into the office.
 - Horse Leaders - Stay calm. Stop and stay in the same spot until further instructions. If participants are dismounted, remain with your horse using your touch and voice to reassure the animal. Remember, a horse has excellent vision and hearing and is probably not as worried about the situation as you are. They spend time in the dark here all the time. Wait for further instructions from the instructor.

Flashlights are located on all desks in office, on the light switch by the helmets' and in the tack room to the right of door.

LOUD NOISES AND QUICK MOVEMENTS

* Horses are sensitive animals that can startle easily. Sometimes when you least expect it, they will get upset over a sudden movement or a noise. If you ever feel that a participant's safety is at risk by the horse, tell the Instructor and bring the horse into the center of the arena (if possible). The Instructor will tell you what to do.

* A situation like this may also result if a participant is having problems or is upset while riding.

Hazards specific to the use of equines

Anything can be a hazard to horses. Horses can be unpredictable, so always be aware of situations and your surroundings. We take great care to maintain a clean and safe environment for our horses.

HORSES ATTEMPTING TO ROLL

* If you notice that the horse you are leading tries to lower his head close to the ground, get his head up quickly. This may be a warning that he is trying to get down and roll. Should the horse try to get down:

- Sidewalkers: get the participant off immediately and away from the horse.
- Leaders: keep moving to try to prevent the horse from going down. If the horse goes down, listen to instructor and wait for help to get the horse up on his feet, if possible.

* Horses that act this way should be kept moving to prevent this from happening. The horse may just be hot and itchy. However, it may also be a sign of other problems. Advise the Instructor or Director, who will then tell you what else to do.

ACTIVE SHOOTER

***HEAD TO TACK ROOM AND LOCK DOOR or away from the shooter if tack room is compromised.

- Sidewalkers - Stay calm, dismount and escort participants and observers into tack room. Helmets should be left on participants. Shut the door, spread apart and crouch down. Stay in tack room until danger has passed.
- Horse Leaders - Stay calm. Remove the horse's bridle/head gear. Leave the horses in the arena. Go immediately to tack room. Stay until danger has passed. Please listen very carefully to your instructor.

IN CASE OF A FALL FROM A HORSE:

*No one is permitted in the arena until the instructor asks for assistance as coming into the arena may worsen the situation or it may not be safe yet.

- Horse Leaders - The horse handler moves the horse away from the downed participant and then will turn the horse to face the situation. This will prevent the horse from accidentally stepping on the participant.
- Other horse leaders – if more than 1 rider is in class, will stop their horses and turn them to face the situation.
- Sidewalker - The sidewalker opposite the falling participant moves away, allowing the horse to move away from the participant.
- Sidewalker - The sidewalker on the side of the fall assists the participant to land as safely as possible, if they are able.

*Depending on the participant's level, there may be fewer than 3 volunteers assisting, perhaps even none. In the event of an independent participant facing what appears to be a certain fall, DO NOT run up to the horse. The Instructor will try to talk the participant through the difficulty and place available spotters as needed.

*In case of a loose horse. Do not try and catch a loose horse unless you can do so without putting your horse, yourself, participant, and other volunteers in danger.

*When a problem arises, all other horses should halt where they are. Facing these other horses toward the accident will help them stay calm. In the case of independent participants they may be instructed to turn their mounts toward the rail to impede their forward motion. Listen to the Instructor and assist in any way requested.

*Once a participant is down, do not attempt to move them. Ask them to remain still until the Instructor or designated other has assessed the situation. This is the case with anyone who has fallen or collapsed.

*In case of a medical emergency of a participant who is not yet mounted, staff or volunteer should seek the assistance of:

1) parent/guardian if present; 2) school or agency staff; 3) designated assistant.

*In case of any emergency, remain attentive and be prepared to act in any capacity requested by the Instructor. Volunteers who are calm will help the participants and horses to stay calm. Extra volunteers should make sure other participants are contained away from the incident.

*You may be asked to telephone for help (numbers and directions are located by the phone), or get the participant's emergency treatment form. Participant and volunteer emergency forms are in the office in the front of the black file cabinet in the drawer marked riders or volunteers. If away at a show, the papers are in the portable black file box, located in the CIRT truck, which is kept locked and staff have the combination.

Central Illinois Riding Therapy MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN

If there is an emergency while a lesson is in session, the following should occur:

1. Remain Calm!!!
 2. All horses will be halted.
 3. All leaders will maintain control of their horses.
 4. All sidewalkers will stabilize their participants.
 5. The instructor will supervise dismounting procedures verbally and/or personally
 6. If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, the participants will be escorted out first by their volunteers and the horses will be removed by their leaders to an appropriate place, after the participants are out of danger.
 7. The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting specific personnel.
 8. Continuance of lessons will only occur at the discretion of the instructor.
- The Instructor is in charge of all riding sessions emergencies.
 - NO ONE, including parents, is permitted in the arena or working area if an accident happens. Only those summoned by the instructor should be allowed to enter the area quietly.
 - There is to be no excessive talking or noise during an incident.
 - Participant assistants (volunteers) are to explain the situation quietly and reassure the other participants.

EMERGENCY DISMOUNT PROCEDURE:

Emergency dismounts are taught and practiced during the Volunteer Orientation and Training.

- If you are side walking next to a horse that becomes involved in an emergency, alert your Instructor and horse leader of the situation.
- If an emergency dismount becomes necessary, the side walker the rider is falling away from needs to remove the stirrup and reins from the rider, while the side walker towards whom the rider is falling needs to remove the stirrup then hug the rider around the trunk and under the arms, pulling the rider off, away from the horse and close to their hip.
- If the sidewalker feels he cannot bear the full weight of the descending rider, a controlled fall can be initiated, taking care to protect the participant and sidewalkers heads and roll with the fall as much as possible. You are just helping the participant to the ground and away from the horse; you are not lifting the participant, allowing gravity to bring them down.
- It is important that the sidewalker breaks the rider's fall as safely as possible and does not fall on the rider.

Emergency Medical Plan 1 (MAJOR INJURY)

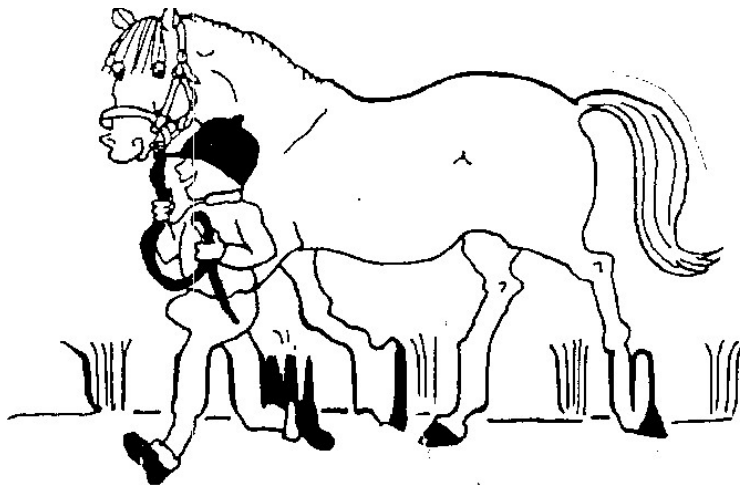
The Instructor/Director will appoint someone to:

1. Telephone 911 and read directions to CIRT that are by the phone.
2. Remain at the barn area to direct emergency personnel and reassure people in the area.
3. Get the Emergency Medical Release form for the injured participant out of the file, located in the black filing cabinet in the office, and give it to the instructor.
4. The Instructor will also appoint someone to:
 - a. Go to the road and wait for emergency personnel, stop the driver and have lights and sirens turned off and tell the driver where the accident is and how to get there.
 - b. Get the AED out of the office if needed.
 - c. Get First Aid Kit out of the office, in front of 1st desk, if needed.

Emergency Medical Plan 2 (MINOR INJURY)

We will try to meet the needs of the individual, i.e. band-aids, ice, rest, etc. ***Our participants are accompanied by a parent or caregiver who is responsible for taking care of incidents involving blood and bodily fluids. In the absence of such a person, the Program Director takes responsibility. If neither a caregiver nor the Program Director is available, the line of responsibility is as follows: Instructor, and Office Assistant. Plastic gloves, CPR face shields, and plastic bags for disposal are readily available in 1st bathroom and 1st Aid Kit in front of the first desk. Instructors, when going outside or on a trail, carry rubber gloves, CPR face shields, antibacterial wipes in a first aid pouch.

If the injured is a participant, the horse leader will remove the horse and appropriately care for it. The rest of the class should continue in an orderly manner.



All accidents that happen during a Central Illinois Riding Therapy function, no matter how slight must be reported, and an Occurrence Report must be filled out. If you witness, discover or are involved in an accident with a visitor or participant, report it to the Staff, or Instructor.

This plan may be initiated during situations such as hazardous weather conditions; mishaps resulting in the need for first aid treatment. Instructors and Staff are certified in first aid and CPR or unexpected events such as a loose horse in the arena.

911 is our Emergency number. Emergency information is on the bright orange sheet posted by the phones. Phones are on the desk by the brush box cabinet/green chalk board on the right side of the tack room, on the Director's desk and Coordinator's desk.

Human first aid supplies are located in the office in front of Barn Manager's desk. The AED is marked in the office. There are extra first aid supplies, such as towels, rubber gloves, etc. located in the first bathroom in the bottom file drawer. Equine first aid supplies are located in the tack room in the gray cabinet with the Red Cross on it, in a red container that reads Horse 1st Aid. Rubber gloves and CPR shield are located at the entrance to the arena in a red bag, and with the AED.

Accident prevention plan

Central Illinois Riding Therapy recognizes the need for prevention of accidents through identification and control of potential risks and hazards.

All instructors and volunteers assisting with the program will receive, as part of their training and orientation, the identification of potential risks to participants and others.

All volunteers will pay particular attention to the information involving elimination of risks to participants through following all required safety regulations. All volunteers, parents and participants are required to follow these regulations.

All volunteers are responsible for reporting any potential risks due to faulty equipment or unsafe handling.

In the event of an accident resulting in possible injury to a participant or volunteer, an occurrence form must be completed and kept on file.

Occurrence Report Policies

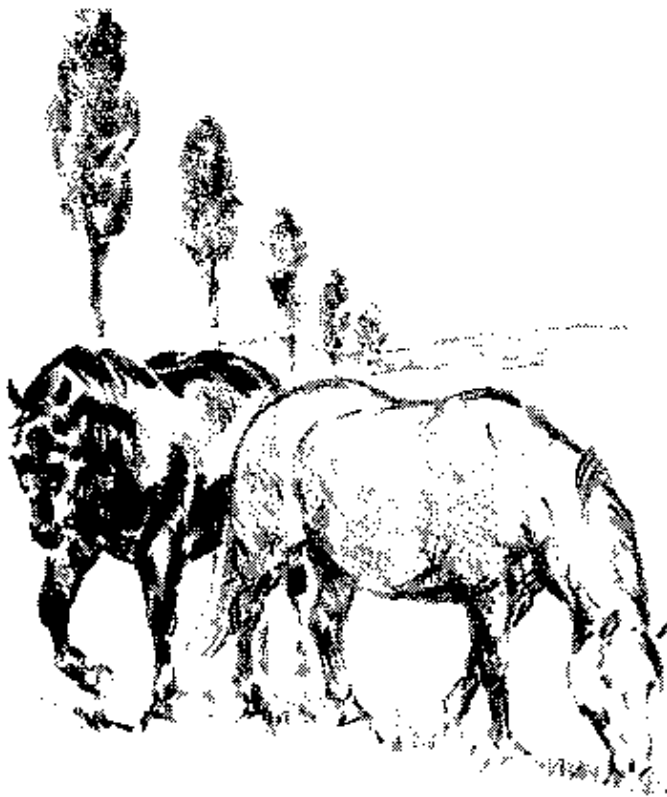
An Occurrence Report will be filled out whenever necessary to document circumstances, witnesses, and actions in a situation that result in or nearly results in, injury or danger to an individual or horse.

Personnel able to Drive Tractor, Truck, Trailers and Golf Cart:

These people are listed in the red booklet on the chalkboard in the barn, on the bulletin board by window and on the bulletin board above instructor's desk. Only Designated personnel are allowed to drive and operated machinery at CIRT. Therefore, please stay off and out of machinery.

Personnel Allowed to Mount/Dismount Participants

Only Instructors and specifically trained personnel are allowed to help with the mounting and dismounting. A list is contained in the red booklet on the chalkboard in the barn, on the bulletin board by window and on the bulletin board above instructor's desk. Volunteers are to assist the instructors and designated personnel with mounting and dismounting.



Conduct of Participants, Staff, Volunteers, Parents, Caregivers, Guardians, Visitors, Guests, and anyone who is involved with Central Illinois Riding Therapy.

CIRT is privileged to have wonderful people in our midst and we hold everyone accountable to a high standard of personal conduct.

Discrimination will not be tolerated against anyone due to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and/or social class, etc.

Inappropriate behaviors such as cursing, teasing, threats, name-calling, hitting, and anything sexual will not be tolerated.

Appropriate dress is expected. Short shorts, low cut tops, inappropriate language on clothing, holes in the personal places, etc., are not acceptable. Shoes with heels like boots or tennis shoes are recommended, but no shoes with open toes, or open heels are acceptable.

There is zero tolerance of drinking and drugs. Smoking is not allowed on the premise. A cigarette butt receptacle is located outside the barn for your convenience.

Noncompliance with the above stated rules results in the following:

1. A verbal warning.
2. A written warning.
3. Dismissal from any duties with CIRT.
4. Police action as necessary.

Behaviors leading to an automatic dismissal from all duties with CIRT and possible police action:

1. Consumption of alcohol
2. Use of drugs
3. Use of any illegal substances.
4. Stealing
5. Harassment, including sexual.
6. Threats.
7. Breaking any local, state, or federal laws.

Barn Rules

1. NO horses are to be worked without an instructor present or direction of CIRT personnel
2. Do not get horses out without an instructor or direction of CIRT personnel.
3. Do not tie a horse to stall door; only tie horse in designated areas (stall front or on steel beams by arena as long as no classes are going on or no horses are in the arena.
4. ASK staff before grooming.
5. Put all tack away clean, where you found it. Pads should be placed soiled side up.
6. Put all brushes back clean, where you found them.
7. Sweep up your own messes and manure and dispose in the muck tube back by grain bins or the muck bucket at the end of the arena.
8. Please ask permission before feeding the horses treats of any kind.
9. DON'T hand feed the horses (it encourages biting).
10. Be gentle with the horses.
11. All volunteers/personnel mounted must wear an ASTM-SEI Helmet when mounted. Any volunteer under the age of 14 MUST wear an ASTM-SEI helmet when mounted and/or when working around, with horses and they must be supervised by a trained adult at all times.
12. No Running in the Barn
13. No gum chewing or candy in the mouth (choke hazard)
14. No cell-phones past the chain or in the arena unless designated by instructor, your instructor will always have their cell-phone on them.
15. We are a guns free facility. That means no conceal carry guns either.
16. HAVE FUN!!!

CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS

VOLUNTEERS: You will be working in a professional setting. It is expected that volunteers will use good judgment in selecting appropriate clothing. When choosing your clothing- consider “Safety First”- inquisitive hands can pull off your jewelry, excessively baggy clothes can get caught on things, etc.

What to Wear:

- Appropriate dress is expected
- Shoes with sturdy soles or boots are recommended. Sandals or open-toed shoes or open-heeled clogs are not allowed to be worn by volunteers working with the horses. Lug soled hiking shoes, steel-toed shoes, sneakers or boots are ok. However Lug soled hiking shoes and steel-toed shoes are not ok for riders. There are both English and Western boots available in the office that can be borrowed for classes or shows.
- All volunteers/personnel must wear an ASTM-SEI Helmet when mounted. Any volunteer under the age of 14 MUST wear an ASTM-SEI helmet when mounted and when working around, with horses and must be supervised by a trained adult at all times.
- Avoid hooded sweat-shirts with strings; the strings can be pulled on or get caught.
- Comfortable clothes, appropriate to the season, that you don't mind getting dirty.
- Sunscreen, bug repellent (watch the smell), sunglasses, hat or visor
- CIRT name tag
- Long hair should be tied back
- Long pants that are not too tight or baggy (should be able to squat in them and/or not fall off)
- Shorts – hem no shorter than your finger tips with arms hanging straight down at your sides. Avoid Shorts if walking on trails because of possible exposure to poison ivy, poison sumac, insects, sticks, etc.

What NOT to Wear:

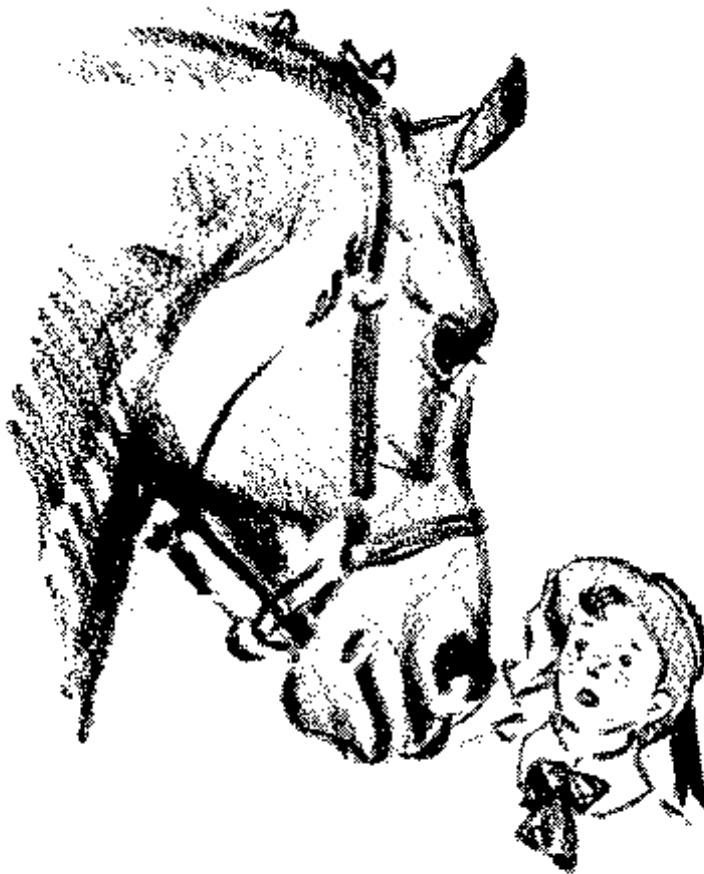
- Jewelry (necklace, bracelet, hoop/dangling earrings)
- Holey Clothes
- Excessively tight or baggy clothing
- Perfumes that can attract stinging insects
- Bare midriff or other revealing clothing, i.e. low cut tank tops
- Clothing with inappropriate slogans, decals, etc.
- Short Shorts – see guide above to measure length
- Opened toe shoes, sandals, clogs, or flip flops

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I am recognized as a volunteer of Central Illinois Riding Therapy. I understand that our purpose is to provide quality therapeutic riding classes and other horse related activities in a safe environment to CIRT participants.

Volunteers are a valuable part of the Central Illinois Riding Therapy Program and as a volunteer of Central Illinois Riding Therapy; I have completed available and appropriate training. I understand and agree that in the performance of my duties as a volunteer I must hold personal, medical, financial, and other sensitive information regarding participants/families confidential. Failure to do so may result in loss of privileges. Participant issues may only be discussed with the CIRT Director, Instructors, and Therapists.

I will endeavor to keep my standard of conduct high in order to uphold the quality of the Central Illinois Riding Therapy program.



VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Position	Commitment	Qualifications	Explanations
Side Walker (minimum age 14)	1 evening per week	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to walk 60 minutes. 2. Be able to jog short distances. 3. Be able to hold arm above shoulder height and support modest weight. 4. Do not have a fear of horses. 	Walk beside horse and support participant as needed. No horse experience necessary.
3. Horse Leader (minimum age 14)	1 evening per week	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to walk 60 minutes. 2. Be able to jog short distances. 3. Some horse experience needed. 	Lead horse and keep him under control at all times.
Educational Aide	1 evening per week	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoy working with children, 2. Patience. 	Assist instructor, Guide participants through workbooks, games, and other learning activities.
Play Area Supervisor	1 evening per week 6 week minimum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoy working with children. 2. Patience. 3. Be able to keep order and enforce rules in the play arena. 	Supervise participants not riding at that time and siblings of participants who come but do not ride in the program.
Office Worker	own time day or evening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have telephone skills. 2. Receive payments and give receipts. 3. Work on special projects. 	Answer telephone and take messages. Accept monies and give receipts for class fees, donations, candy sales. Help with mailings, displays, trophies, etc.
Barn Assistant	1 day or evening per week / 2-3 hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handle horses. 2. Scoop and bag manure. 	Help to clean stalls and turn out horses. Clean feeders, salt holders, and waterers.
Artist	own time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Artistic ability. 	Supply artwork as needed for the educational program and create designs for note cards, T-shirts, etc
Aide to Parent Coordinator	Own time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to communicate clearly. 	Make telephone calls to parents of participants.

Position	Commitment	Qualifications	Explanations
Aide to Volunteer Coordinator	Own time	1. Be able to communicate clearly.	Make telephone calls to volunteers informing them of anything the Volunteer Coordinator deems necessary.
Newsletter Worker	Own time	1. Newspaper or newsletter experience, journalism classes and layout experience helpful.	Edit; do page layout, proofread, write, copy, etc. May do some computer work for print. Sort pages and bundle for mailing.
Donor-Bake Sale	Own time	1. Be able to bake things for the concession stands or have items to donate for the garage sale.	Donate baked goods for fundraisers
Show Entry Worker	May CIRT Show	1. Write or print neatly. 2. Patience	Help take entries at our Annual Horse Show. Collect money, make change, and fill out entry sheets.
Concession	May CIRT Show, other concessions	1. Serve food. 2. Collect money.	Work at shows in concession serving food. Help set up and tear down concession stand.
Garage Sale and Tack Sale	Before, during, or after sale	1. Price items. OR 2. Work day of sale. 3. Box up unsold items.	Help set up for a garage sale. Watch, arrange, and collect money. Clean-up after sale and put things in order.



VOLUNTEERS

The support and participation of volunteers is an important and integral part of the success of the program. CIRT'S therapeutic horsemanship program is made possible with the assistance of many dedicated volunteers. Besides working in the arena with the horses and participants other volunteer opportunities include: horse care, stable maintenance, office work, videotaping of classes/shows and special event assistance. Volunteer training provides individuals the skills and confidence to successfully participate in the program at CENTRAL ILLINOIS RIDING THERAPY.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

The minimum age to volunteer in the ring is 14. Younger volunteers may assist in several other activities and helping to care for the CIRT horses. All volunteers **MUST** attend training.

Horse experience is desirable but not essential, as long as the volunteer has no fear of horses and is willing to learn how to work around and with them.

Volunteers, sidewalkers, and horse leaders must be able to work at least one hour and jog occasionally often on thick and uneven footing. Volunteers who cannot do this easily can help in other roles such as supervising and preparing participants waiting for classes, working at special events or serving on committees.

Volunteers must be willing to commit to their obligation. Promptness, regularity and reliability are the key to our program's success.

New volunteers will be asked to observe the first classes they attend. After this they will be matched with an experienced volunteer to assist them during their first working class. Therapeutic riding is not an activity in which everyone feels comfortable or functions adequately, even with the greatest of intentions.

Volunteers are required to sign time in and out on their attendance sheet.

Volunteers should not wear open toed shoes, sandals or open heeled clogs when working around horses. It is suggested that volunteers wear shoes or boots that offer foot protection. Long pants are more sensible than shorts, even on hot days, as long pants provide protection from insects. It is not recommended to wear dangling jewelry.

CLASS ROUTINE/VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

BEFORE CLASS

Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before class begins. This allows you time to sign in, put on your name tag on, assist with getting out equipment, reviewing participant information and assist with tacking horses as requested.

Please call if you are unable to volunteer on your regularly scheduled day. A twenty four hour notice will be greatly appreciated as we will have a better chance to find a replacement.

Check the class schedule in order to review participant and horse assignments and any adapted equipment needed.

Assist with class preparations and ask instructor about class assignment.

Most of our participants will need assistance to ride their horse. Some participants may only require one volunteer, others may need three. As a volunteer you are part of a team responsible for the safety of your participant and team.

PARTICIPANTS ARRIVAL

When participants arrive, assist them with buttons, helmet and other equipment as listed.

Sidewalkers should make certain the participant has a properly fitted helmet and any other safety devices needed.

Only after participants have their safety equipment in place, may they proceed to their horse and assist with grooming and tacking.

Leaders should make certain the horse is tacked properly.

All participants must wait until the instructor indicates time to mount. Participants will be called individually with their team, to be mounted only by authorized personnel.

DURING CLASS

During class, volunteers should refrain from unnecessary conversation as it distracts the participant. Use nonverbal communication whenever possible. **ONLY EXCEPTION: INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY OF ANY UNSAFE SITUATION.**

Pay attention to the instructor throughout the lesson.

In case of a problem (stirrup, girth, participant adjustment or sidewalkers changing sides) bring horse into center of arena. Avoid stopping on the rail, if possible, as this causes traffic jams.

Always notify the instructor of any changes in participant's behavior, drowsiness, seizure activity, irritation, etc. Be discreet whenever you need to discuss a participant in their presence.

KEEP ALERT!! You are responsible for the safety of your participant as well as others in the class.

Be relaxed, confident, positive and reassuring. Participants will respond accordingly. Expect good and appropriate behavior from your participant. If you have problems, notify the instructor. We do not tolerate hitting, biting, spitting, kicking, etc.

Our horses are our "teachers", "therapists" and our participants' "best friends". As such they must be sound, free from illness and injuries. Always notify the instructor of any change in the horses' behavior or movement.

DURING ACTIVITIES

Most classes will begin with a series of warm up exercises. This is an important time that allows your participant to relax and adjust to the motion of their horse. Encourage your participant to participate through nonverbal communication and/or demonstration.

A game or activity will follow the "warm ups". Sometimes the games may be simple or more complex depending upon the skill sought. The volunteer is an important part of every activity. Watch your participant to see if they understand the directions. It will help if you are excited too, but not so much that you play the game or do the activity instead of the participant. Allow the participant to do as much as possible for themselves. Help when needed but do not interfere with their independence.

Sometimes direction will be given by the instructor to the whole group or to an individual participant. It is important to listen clearly to the instructor and keep communications with the participant to only what is necessary. With so many people in the ring at one time, it is hard to hear and confusing to the participant when noise gets out of hand.

Use common sense. If a participant is becoming frustrated, of course you can give more help. The lesson should be fun but also educational. What may seem repetitive or boring to you is still a challenge and a chance to achieve for your participant. Give lots of encouragement and praise.

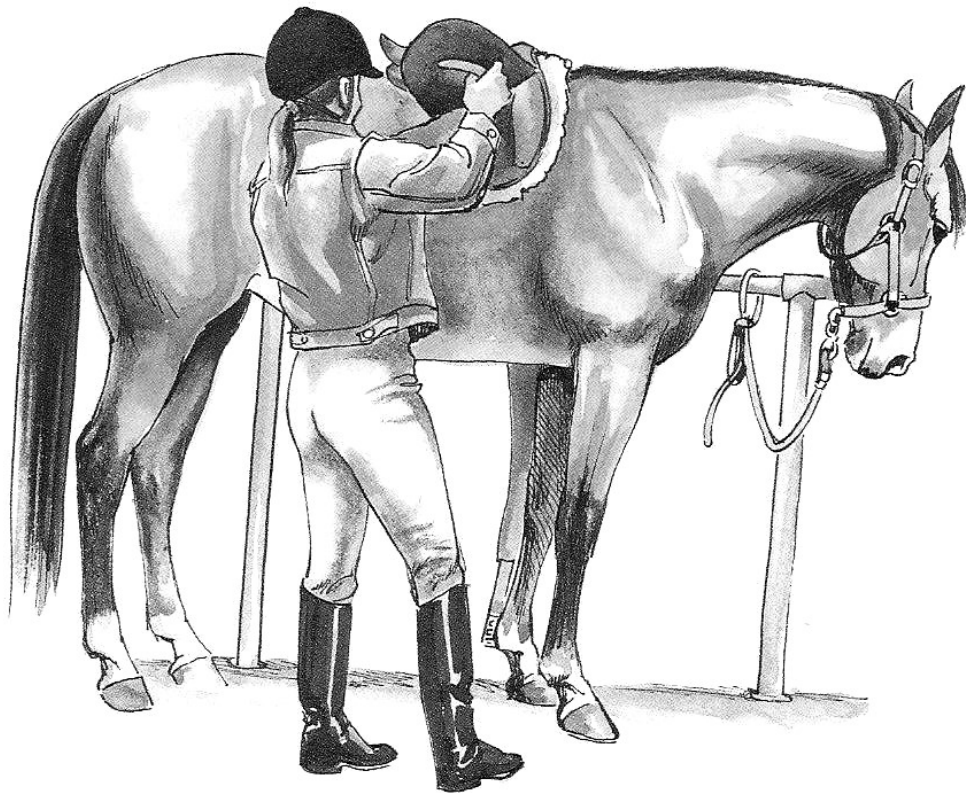
AFTER CLASS

After class activities, participants will be asked to line up for dismounting. Only authorized trained personnel may dismount participants.

Volunteers should assist participant with untacking their horse, changing tack if between classes and/or assisting participant with grooming then leading their horse to their stall. Participants must keep their helmet on until their horse is returned to the stall or they no longer are working around their horse, and they pass the chain between the waiting area and horse aisle.

Frequently participants bring carrots or apples for their horse. They are to be dropped into the feeders. Never feed the horse by hand. Hand feeding encourages biting.

We may not always be able to thank each volunteer before they leave, but it is not because we do not want to. It usually is because we are busy with a participant or their parent/caregiver and you had to leave before we were able to thank you. You are the core of our program. Without your assistance we would cease to exist. We appreciate you very much.



SAFETY CHECK LIST

1. Check the board for assignments.
 - a. Brush the horse and clean the horse's feet. **Check for any injury or unusual behavior. Report this to the instructor.**
 - b. Check to see if the instructor wants the participant to help groom and tack/untack the horse, so they are not just left waiting in the office.
 - c. If you get horses ready for the participants before their class, remember don't do it so far ahead of the class that the horses stand tied outside their stalls for long period of time. It makes them fussy during their classes.
 - d. The Horse Leader must remain with their horse at all times.
2. Sidewalker go to the lounge to help participants get helmets on and check fit (instructor will check final fitting) if they have already put them on. Bring him/her out to the horse area to groom.
3. After grooming, help the participants saddle his/her horse. **They should be finished and ready to go to the mounting area in 10 minutes or less. Report to the instructor any unusual behavior of the participant.**
4. Specifically, check these things: **Is the stirrup length correct? Count the holes from the bottom to make sure they are right. Is the cinch the correct length for the horse? Not too long, not too short? Cinch the horse loosely. If in doubt ask the instructor or the volunteer captain.**
5. Remember to wait for the instructor or intern to bridle and unbridle the horses.
6. Wait for the instructor to say it is time for the participants to go to the ramp and to bring the horses into the arena. **After taking the participants to the ramp, keep the participants behind the railing.**
7. Horse leaders, walk your horse until the instructor asks for a halt in order to tighten the cinch. **If the instructor overlooks tightening the cinch, please remind them.**
8. Take your horse to the ramp when the instructor asks you to. **After the participants mounts, they will be asked to come to the center of the arena for another cinch check. Sidewalkers may ask participants to start doing exercises while other/s are being mounted.**
9. **Horse handlers' main job is to focus on the horse and keep him under control. Horse handlers do not give instructions to the participants.**
10. The sidewalker helps carry out instructions from the instructor. If there are two sidewalkers, the one on the near side is the communicator. **There should only be one communicator on the team for each participant in addition to the instructor. Remember to give your participant time to process what the instructor says before repeating the instructions.**
11. After the class, take your participant and his/her horse to the tacking area. Wait for instructions as to whether the participants will help untack and groom. This is a good time to visit with the participant. Remember to include the participant in your conversations and not just visit among yourselves.
12. **Always be watchful for safety issues. Report anything you feel is risky to the instructor. Thank you, again, for your cooperation. Your help and observations are very valuable to us as instructors and to the progress of your participants.**

Helmets

A safety riding helmet is the single most important piece of equipment. It is important to understand that posture and balance of a rider will be directly affected by the fit of the helmet. An ill-fitting helmet will make proper balancing more difficult and will fail to protect the head during a fall. Overly large helmets are dangerous and uncomfortable. They may slip, obscure vision or fall off. A properly fitted helmet should be snug. The well-fitted helmet should stay on the head when harnessed without rocking or moving. A good way to check a helmet's fit is to have the rider bend down at the waist and shake his/her head. With the manufacturer's suggested adjustment, the helmet should feel secure to the rider. **All staff, riders and volunteers are required to wear helmets when mounted at CIRT and all volunteers under 14 years old when working with and around horses.**

HELMETS SHOULD BE FITTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

How to help a participant with his/her helmet:

- Place the helmet on the head sliding it from front to back. It should sit level on the head above the eyebrow level. Allow it to rest so there are two fingers between the eyebrows and the edge of the helmet.
- Loosen the inside adjustment with the two sides straps on the helmet or the back dial.
- Make sure the helmet is centered correctly, check the straps around the ears and fasten the chin strap. Just be sure it's tight enough so the helmet doesn't slip or fall.
- Ask the rider how the helmet feels.
- Practice fitting a helmet on a fellow volunteer.

Accent on Accreditation

Fitting the Riding Helmet

By Jean M. Tebay, MS
Drawings by Sue Tucker

With all of the confusion about which helmet is the correct one for your rider to wear (is it ASTM/SEI approved, USPC approved), the issue of correct fit may have become momentarily obscured. But FIT is important. An incorrectly fitting riding helmet can cause unwanted changes in posture and balance for your rider, adversely affecting those areas which you as a therapeutic riding instructor are working to remedy. Let's consider...

- What if the helmet is sitting too far back on the rider's head?
- What if the helmet is twisted to one side with the brim not straight in the middle of the rider's forehead?
- What if the helmet is pulled down over the rider's eyes?

- What if the helmet is too big, or too snug?
- Or what about the rider who is irritated by the chin strap?

Each of you, as a therapeutic riding instructor, has observed a rider in one or more of these situations. Each of you may have, at one time or another, been confronted with the problem of how to fit the existing helmet to a difficult-shaped head. But it is important to understand that the posture and balance of your student will be directly affected by the fit of the helmet.

Now try these...

- Put a helmet on, sliding it into position from back to front, so that it is sitting back on your head. Proceed, first at a walk and then a sitting trot around the ring. How do you feel?

Accent on Accreditation

- Now pull your helmet too far forward, so the front of the helmet is resting on your eyebrows. Again, walk and trot. How does that feel?
- Now try tipping your helmet to the left or right and walk and trot. Notice what happens to your seat bones in the saddle. Is your weight evenly distributed there? Do you feel in good balance?
- Now hold the brim of your helmet in one hand and twist the whole hat so that it is off center. What does that do to your feeling of good body alignment?
- Next, try all of the above with a helmet that is too small and that you have had to squeeze onto your head. Comfortable? How about your balance and posture now?
- And the too large helmet? How does that feel to you, especially at the sitting trot?

Finally, review all of the above and unfold (with a leader). The blindfold will allow you to concentrate even more.

Now do these...

1. Place the helmet on the head sliding it front to back and allowing it to rest so there are two fingers between the eyebrows and the edge of the helmet.

2. Check to make sure it is centered correctly and do up the chin strap. If there is a laced harness at the back, undo it before fitting the helmet and readjust it appropriately after the helmet is on. Look to check that it is correctly fitted and ask the rider how it feels.

3. The helmet should fit as snugly as the rider can comfortably wear it without it being uncomfortable.

4. For the rider whose head is a difficult size, try placing self-adhesive sanitary napkins inside the helmet at the troublesome spots.

5. Fit a hat on a colleague and get feedback about your technique.

Above all, remember that no matter what type of helmet you choose for your rider, a properly fitting and comfortable one provides the ultimate in safety and gives your rider a "head start" on his lesson! □



TOO FAR FORWARD



TOO FAR BACK



BRIM TWISTED TO ONE SIDE



TIPPED TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT



PROPERLY FITTED

LEADER- PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEADER IS THE HORSE

HOW TO LEAD A HORSE:

The proper position for the leader is to walk on the near side (left) of the horse, just back of the horse's head in the neck/shoulder area. Do not get in front or too far behind. When there are two sidewalkers present, the leader will walk more forward, toward the horse's head, so there is enough room for the sidewalker to walk comfortably. When there is only one sidewalker, the sidewalker should walk on the opposite side of the horse as the leader. It is important to keep 2 horse lengths between participants.

LEADING OR HOLDING YOUR HORSE

NEVER wrap the lead line or anything else attached to your horse around your hand, arm or waist. Hold the line in one hand - grip it if necessary, but **don't** wrap it. Then fold the extra rope into a figure eight (8) and hold it so you can release it immediately just by opening your hand. **The lead line should never be used to pull the horse forward.** For all practical purposes the horse should not know you have a lead - only that you are walking beside them. Care must be taken to ensure the horse's head is not up high in the air or too low to the ground as they may throw the participant off balance. Hold the lead line in the hand closest to the horse, approximately six to eight inches away from the ring or buckle. Hold the extra line in the other hand but **never wrap it around your hand**, just make a figure 8 loop and hold lightly. Keep your hand away from the horse's mouth. Our horses are patient, kind and gentle, however, when annoyed or out of sorts, they can and may bite. If nipping should occur when a participant is mounted, usually a firm snap of the lead and a sharp "NO" will eliminate the problem. Inform the instructor. In order for the participant to have complete freedom to use the reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line is not run over the reins. The lead line must be hanging between the reins and not over the top of them.

Remember just as the size of the mount varies, so do their steps. With some horses you will be able to walk faster than others. Adjust your step to that of the horse so you are not pulling forward or holding them back, but **do try to encourage a nice forward moving, steady walk.**

No matter how lazy the horse you are leading is, the leader should not try to take the place of the participant either by pulling the horse forward or turning or stopping the horse. **The participant is to be encouraged to do as much as possible alone.** When a participant is asked to perform a task, allow a reasonable length of time for the participant to accomplish it on their own before providing assistance.

Many leaders forget that they have sidewalkers and get too close to the walls, fence, etc. Avoid sharp turns and cutting corners. These are hard on the participants and sidewalkers. **Look up and ahead – watch where you are going.**

Though none of our horses are known kickers, all horses will kick if pressured by a mount being too close to their hind legs. **Give yourself room from the horse in front of or beside you.** If your participant cannot maintain the safe distance, then you may always help. Remember, many of our participants have no space orientation and do not realize when they are too close to the horse in front of them. If this is the case with the participant you are leading, then be careful to watch for them. Use common sense, if you see your participant getting into trouble and not able to follow directions given by the instructor, you will need to help.

AT THE HALT

One of the most important tasks of the leader is at the time of a halt. Whenever the horse and participant are stopped, stand at a 45 degree angle from the horse's left shoulder, holding the lead or reins. Allow the horse some freedom to move their head but keep them quiet and calm by petting and/or softly speaking to them.

AT THE TROT

Often during a lesson the participant will be asked to trot. The instructor may give the participant individual instructions or instruct the entire class. **Before you trot, make sure the participant and sidewalkers are ready. Participants should be asked to hold the handhold (saddle horn, grip bar or leather), if needed.** Start your gait a little faster, lean forward, and say "trot". Most of our horses are good on voice commands, though you can always run into one that is lazy that day and just does not want to do more than walk. Do not pull the lead. This will only make the horse mad and they will fight it. When the command is given to walk or stop, do so in a steady, straight line so as not to unseat the participant.

MOUNTING

All participants will be mounted at either a mounting block or the mounting ramp by the instructor or other authorized personnel. Pay close attention to the instructor to know where to position the horse. You will want to place the horse as close as possible to the side of the block or ramp from which the participant will be mounting. Your responsibility is to keep the horse as quiet and still as possible. Stand to the side and face the horse with your hands on the lead or reins. You may need to lower the horse's head to make mounting easier for a participant whose leg must be passed over the neck or withers of the horse. After the participant is mounted and **before the stirrups are adjusted** you will be asked to move the horse forward.

IN THE ARENA

Once the stirrups are adjusted for your participant and the girth is checked for tightness, you may begin leading your horse around the rail. Be sure you are a safe distance from the horse in front of or beside you and avoid the mounting area if other participants are mounting. As the class begins, instructions will be given to the group or the participant, so be sure you know your participant's name. Try to discourage casual conversation and direct the attention of your participant to the instructor. Never let go of your horse!!!! A loose horse can cause all kinds of problems.

DISMOUNTING

Unless otherwise specified, the instructor will dismount all participants. You will receive specific instructions as whether to bring your participant to the mounting block or ramp or remain in the arena. Keep your horse quiet by standing at the ear and keeping him still while dismounting is taking place. The instructor will tell you where to put your horse after that.

When you are finished for the day and horses are returned to their stall, take a few minutes to make any notations in the notebook that you may have noticed about the horses you led, the tack you used, the participants you led, especially if you were a one-on-one with the participant. Your observations and comments help us to do the best job possible, use safe equipment, and insure a barn full of happy horses.

SECOND THOUGHTS

Falls are rare, but can and do happen. If your participant falls, your only concern is the horse you are leading. The instructor will take care of the participant. If another participant falls and their horse gets loose, **stop immediately** your horse and hold them as you would at the halt. Never let go of your horse!!!! A loose horse can cause untold trouble. **DO NOT PANIC IF THERE IS A FALL!** You have to remember our participants fall frequently in all types of situations. They fall on sidewalks, off swings, etc. A fall off a horse is really not any worse than any that might happen at home. **BE CALM.** The instructor is trained to handle any situation, so please keep your mount under control and allow the instructor to do their job. (Refer to EMERGENCY PROCEEDURE PLAN for more concise instructions to Horse Leaders in any emergency situation.)

The Role of the Leader

By Susan F. Tucker

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

common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along--head down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope--dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk

along side the horse, about even with his eye. This helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

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

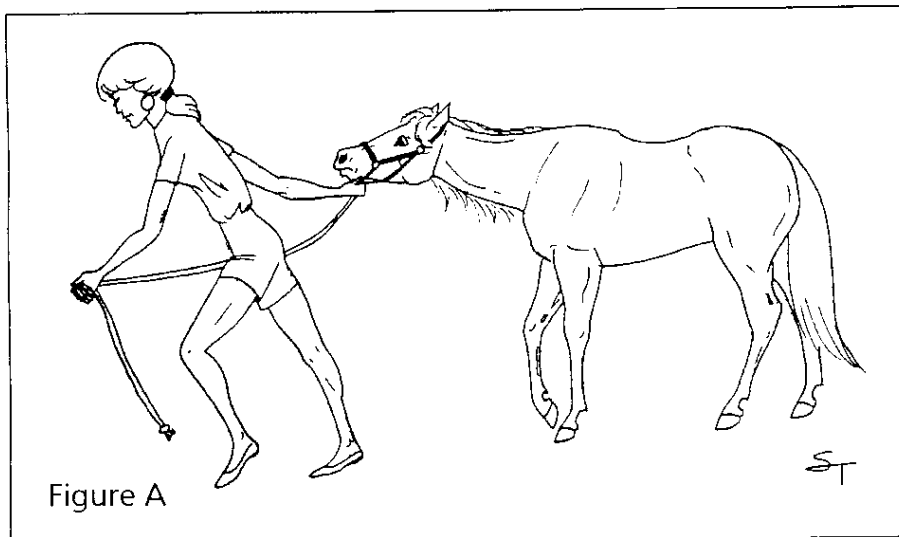


Figure A

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

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

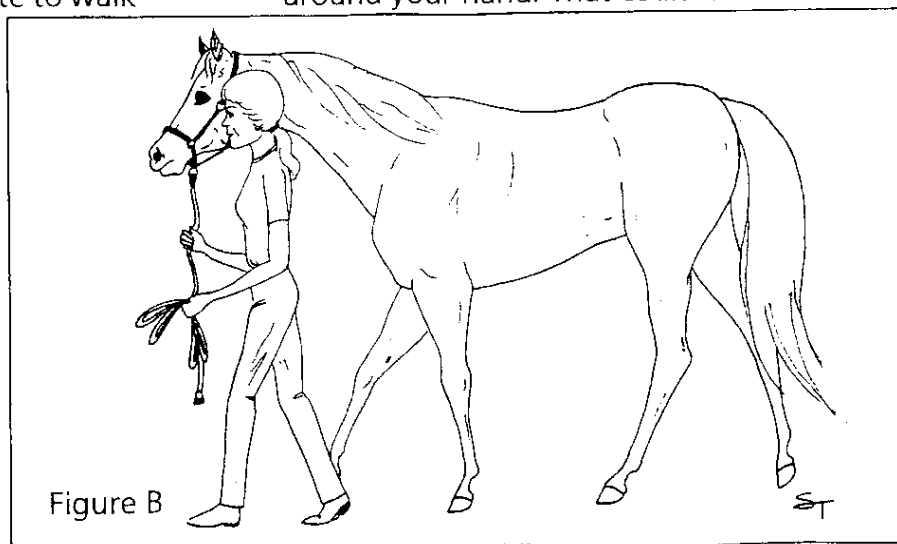


Figure B

relationship with your fingers!

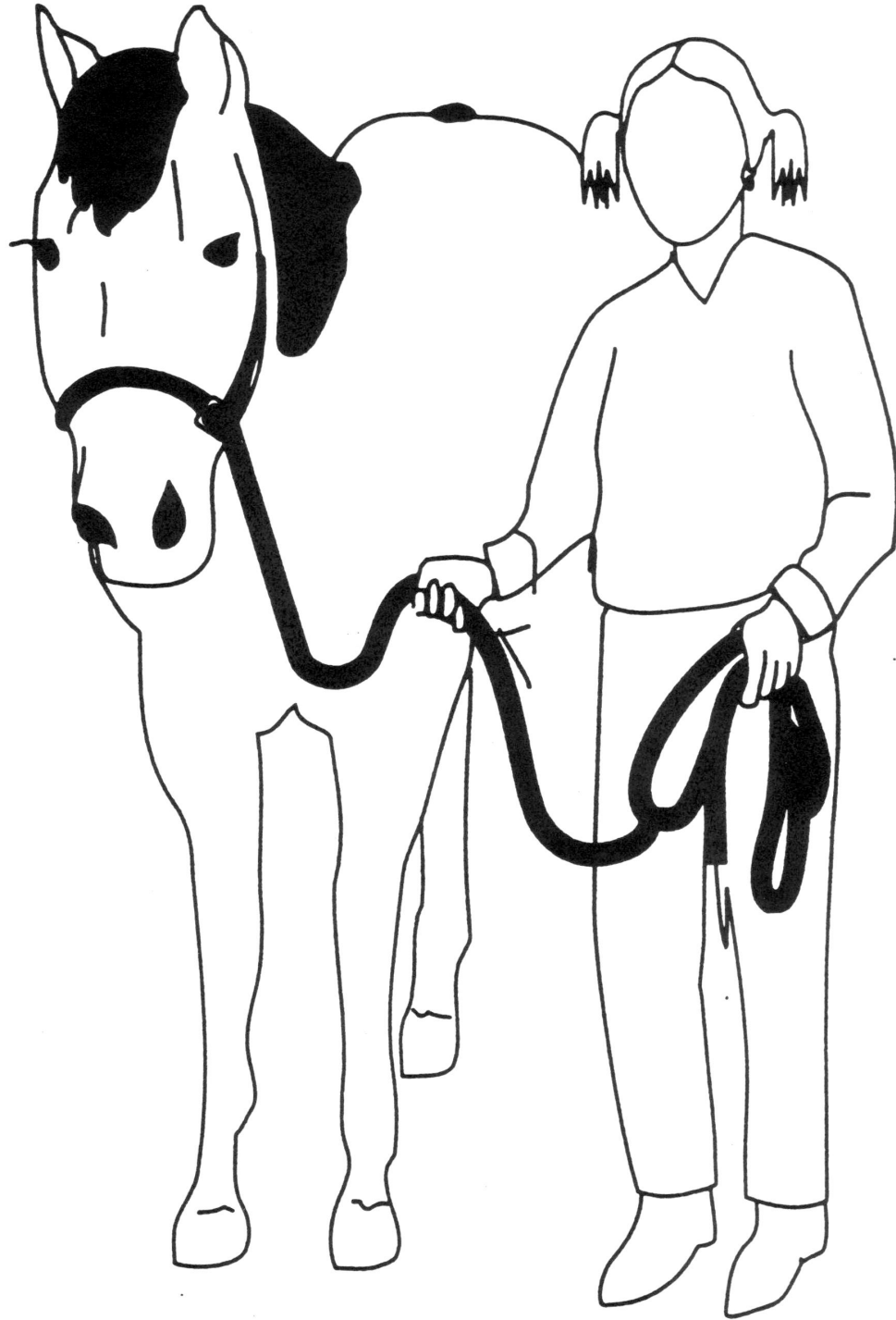
Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. Move out, about 1,000 steps per 15 minutes, to provide the most therapeutic benefit.

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

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

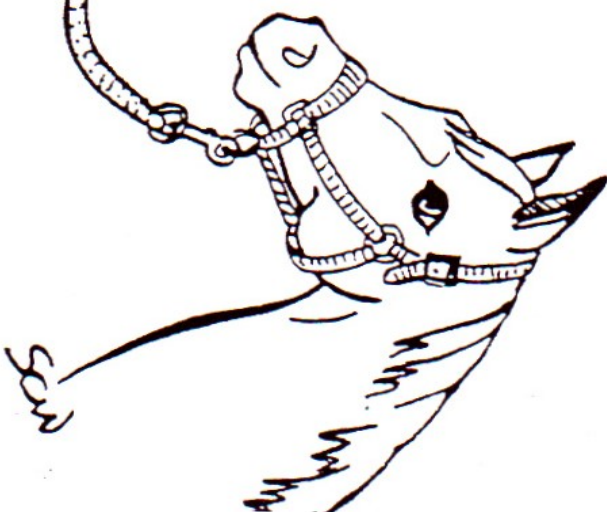
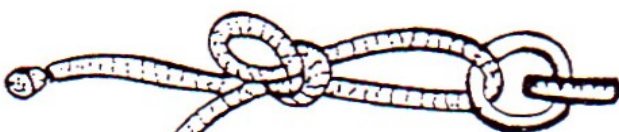
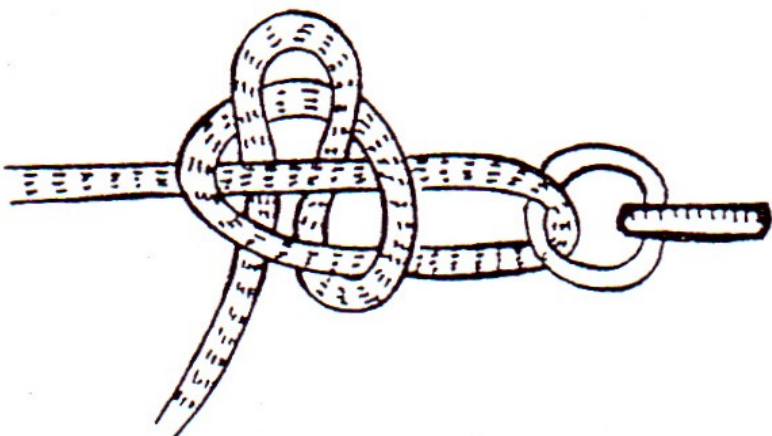
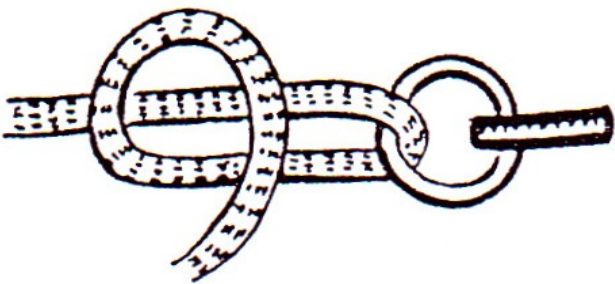
These suggestions can help you control your horse, be a good aide to a rider and be a valuable assistant to an instructor. You will provide real therapeutic input to your rider, as well as make it safe for him to have fun riding.

THIS KEEPS OUR HORSES HAPPY



LEADING OR HOLDING YOUR HORSE

NEVER wrap the lead line or anything else attached to your horse around your hand, arm or waist. Hold the line in one hand - grip it if necessary, but **don't** wrap it. Then fold the extra rope into a figure eight (8) and hold it so you can release it immediately just by opening your hand.



THE QUICK RELEASE KNOT

The quick release knot (Figure 3) is used at all times to tie horses. It is used on an object designed especially for tying, such as a hitching rack or a ring in the horse's stall. It is important to tie correctly. Make the rope that attaches to the horse's halter short enough so that the horse cannot step on it or get a foot caught in it. The knot will release when pulled; one can merely pull the end of the rope to release the horse if this becomes necessary.

SIDEWALKER

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SIDEWALKER IS THE PARTICIPANT

The sidewalker helps to maintain the balance of the participant when they cannot do so themselves. In addition, sidewalkers clarify instructions and direction when needed and provide reassurance to the participant. Some participants have a definite balance problem, off the horse as well as on. Others may have difficulty balancing when first mounting the horse. Depending upon the participant's balance, there will either be one or two sidewalkers assigned to the participant. For example, some participants will need to be held on by holding at the knee and ankle joints while other participants will not have to be held at all or will only need the reassurance of your arm on their leg. The instructor will inform you as to the requirements of your participant. You may also be asked to spot and assist with mounting your participant. If you are unsure, ask for instructions.

IN THE ARENA: Be alert to your participant at all times!! - Especially participants with balance problems. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the participant, the horse, the leader, the instructor, and other activities around you. Be careful not to walk with your eyes to the ground since you will not be able to observe the participant for any sudden loss of balance or be able to assist the participant if the horse should stumble or shy (move away from an object). It takes a while to get used to, but it is best to keep your head turned to your participant at all times. **Never leave your participant unless someone is there to take your place.**

If your participant starts to slip, do not grab but gently push them back into the right position. Let the instructor know. If necessary, ask the participant and horse leader to halt the horse so adjustments can be safely made. Sidewalkers are very important as they are constantly aware of the participant and what the participant is doing. The safety of the participant depends upon you.

Sidewalkers should position themselves at the participant's knee, facing forward. Stay close to the participant's knee at all times so the horse knows where you are. In this position you can easily and quickly place your forearm across the participant's upper leg to assist the participant with balance.

Since the sidewalker is always close to the participant you may find they will want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore direct questions but try to get your participant to pay attention to the instructor. Many participants have difficulty focusing on instructions so all talking should be kept to a minimum.

The sidewalker should be listening to the instructor's directions so they can be ready to reinforce the directions, assist the participant in carrying out the instructions, or direct the participant's attention to the task at hand.

A sidewalker may need to help the participant hold or position the reins, hold onto the handhold, or use the leg aids. Watch your participant carefully during exercises and assist as needed. Before trotting, make sure the participant is positioned squarely in the saddle and holding reins for proper control of the horse. Some participants may need to use the handhold for balance.

ASK THE LEADER TO STOP THE HORSE IF:

1. The participant is off balance and cannot regain balance while the horse is moving.
2. The saddle pad has slipped or the girth is loose.
3. The stirrups need adjusting.
4. The participant's helmet needs adjusting.
5. The participant is fatigued, in pain, or needs to stop for any other reason.
6. You need to change sides or you are having any difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort and safety.

Avoid twisting yourself or trying to walk in an awkward position. We do not want you going home with sore muscles.

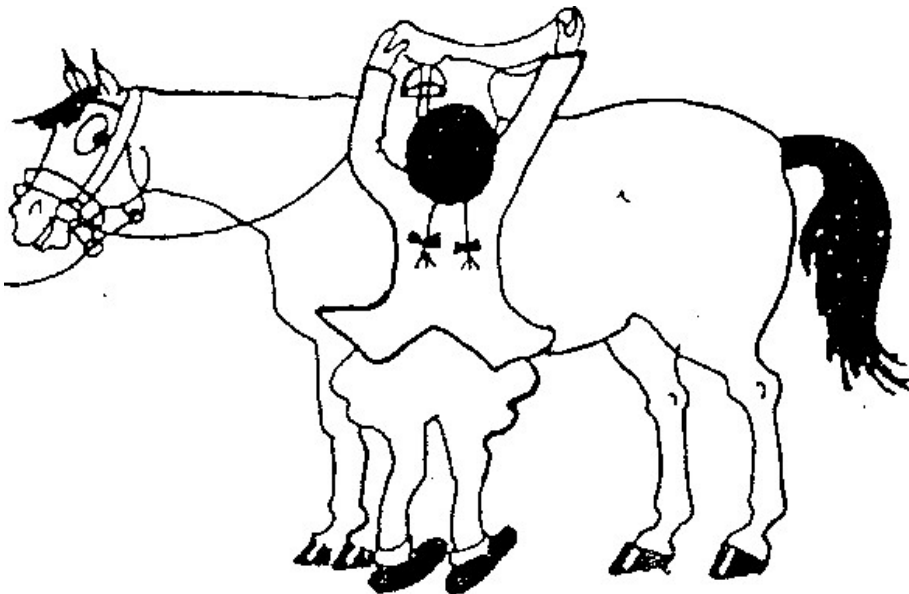
DISMOUNTING

The instructor will inform the participant and sidewalker of the correct procedure during the dismount. When dismounted, many participants are able to run up the stirrups, help with untacking, brushing the horse, and/or helping put their horse away. The sidewalker will remain with the participant. They will assist the participant and ensure safety around the horse, as needed, during these tasks.

When finished, accompanies the participant to the tack room to clean and return their tack to the proper hanger. Then the sidewalker will help the participant put their helmet away and walk with the participant to their parent/caregiver.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Ask any questions, share any ideas, problems, observations, or suggestions you have with the instructors. Be sure to write your observations down on the class sheet. Our volunteers are a vital part of the team and we do want to hear from you.



Effective Sidewalking

By Susan Tucker and Molly Lingua, RPT

Sidewalkers usually 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 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.

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) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider's thigh. Be careful that the elbow

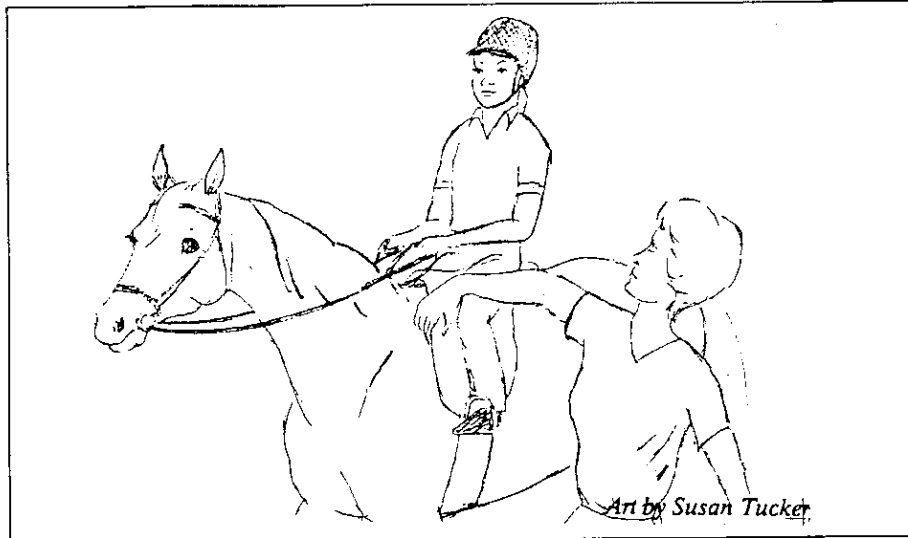
doesn't accidentally dig into the rider's leg.

Sometimes pressure on the thigh can increase or cause muscle spasticity, especially for riders with cerebral palsy. In this case, the

therapeutic hold may be used. Here, the leg is held at the joints, usually the knee or ankle. Check with the instructor or therapist for the best way to assist. In the (unlikely) event of an emergency, the arm-over-the-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 student to use his own trunk muscles to the best of his abilities.

If the instructor chooses to use a transfer 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 this, so rather than grip the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and finger together around it. This puts you 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. Then trade sides, one



at a time, with the other sidewalker. If the rider has serious balance problems that warrant a transfer belt, two sidewalkers should be used.

During exercises, pay attention to the 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 effort to win.

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

Accent on Accreditation

Position of the Rider

By Lorrie Renker and Martha Biery

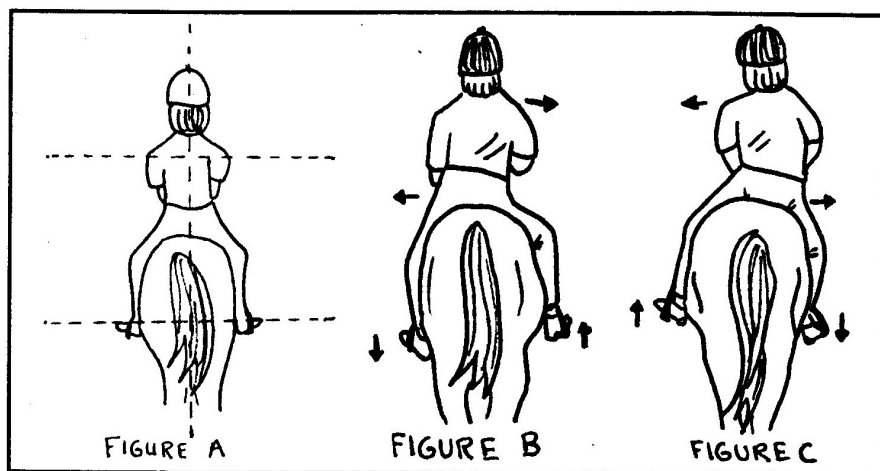
All riders strive toward the "ideal" riding position. It should be no different for riders with disabilities. Instructors often appear afraid to make position corrections. Not all of your riders will be able to achieve the ideal position, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. The rider's position has little to do with look-

strengthen muscles evenly. Correcting this position usually requires aligning the rider's base (get the butt square in the saddle).

2) When viewed from the side, the rider should sit as straight as possible (Figure D). Videotapes often show riders in the "sofa seat" or C curve (Fig-

ure E). Often the rider will sit up if asked. Sometimes the position will reflect the rider's posture off the horse. Encouraging elongation of the leg usually improves the posture. To achieve a better position, it may be necessary to evaluate the type of saddle being used. Is the saddle level on the horse so that it will encourage a good position? Just placing a bounce pad or lollipop under the saddle does not insure a level saddle. Often the weight of the rider compresses the pad completely, resulting in a saddle sloping backward. It is literally impossible to keep the leg positioned under the rider's pelvis in these circumstances. Use of a denser foam pad will help. Ideally, the saddle should be fitted correctly to the horse and the rider.

3) Figure F shows a rider with a toe down and the leg pinched up. This could indicate a rider with tight adductor muscles, an extreme forward-seat saddle or stirrups that are too short. The rider should be encouraged to lengthen his

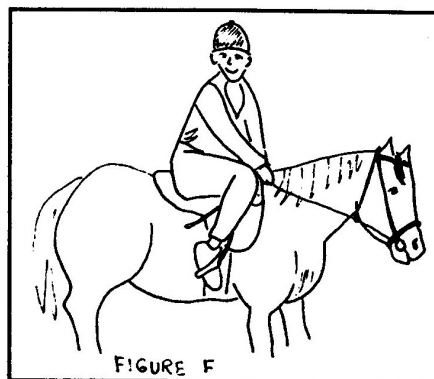
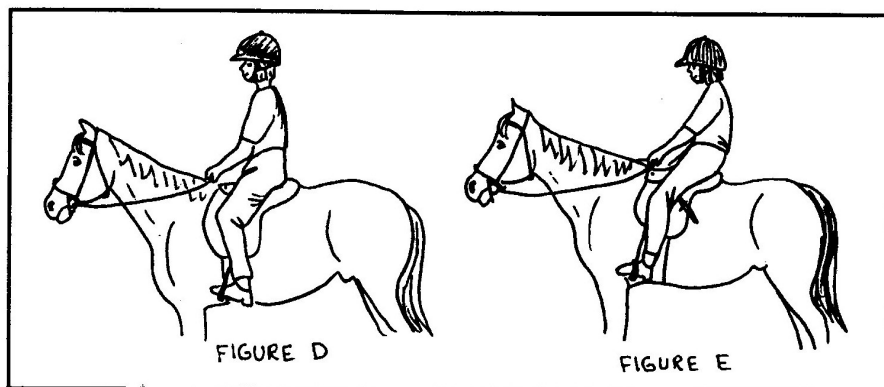


ing good and everything to do with being in balance and moving in harmony with the horse. The better the body alignment, the better the therapeutic benefits.

The best way to evaluate the rider's position on the horse is to step back and view the rider from all angles. The rider may look great from the side but could be off center when viewed from behind. Don't be afraid to make corrections. Video tapes often show a rider in a poor position for the entire lesson with no attempt made to improve the position.

Here are some common problems to look for:

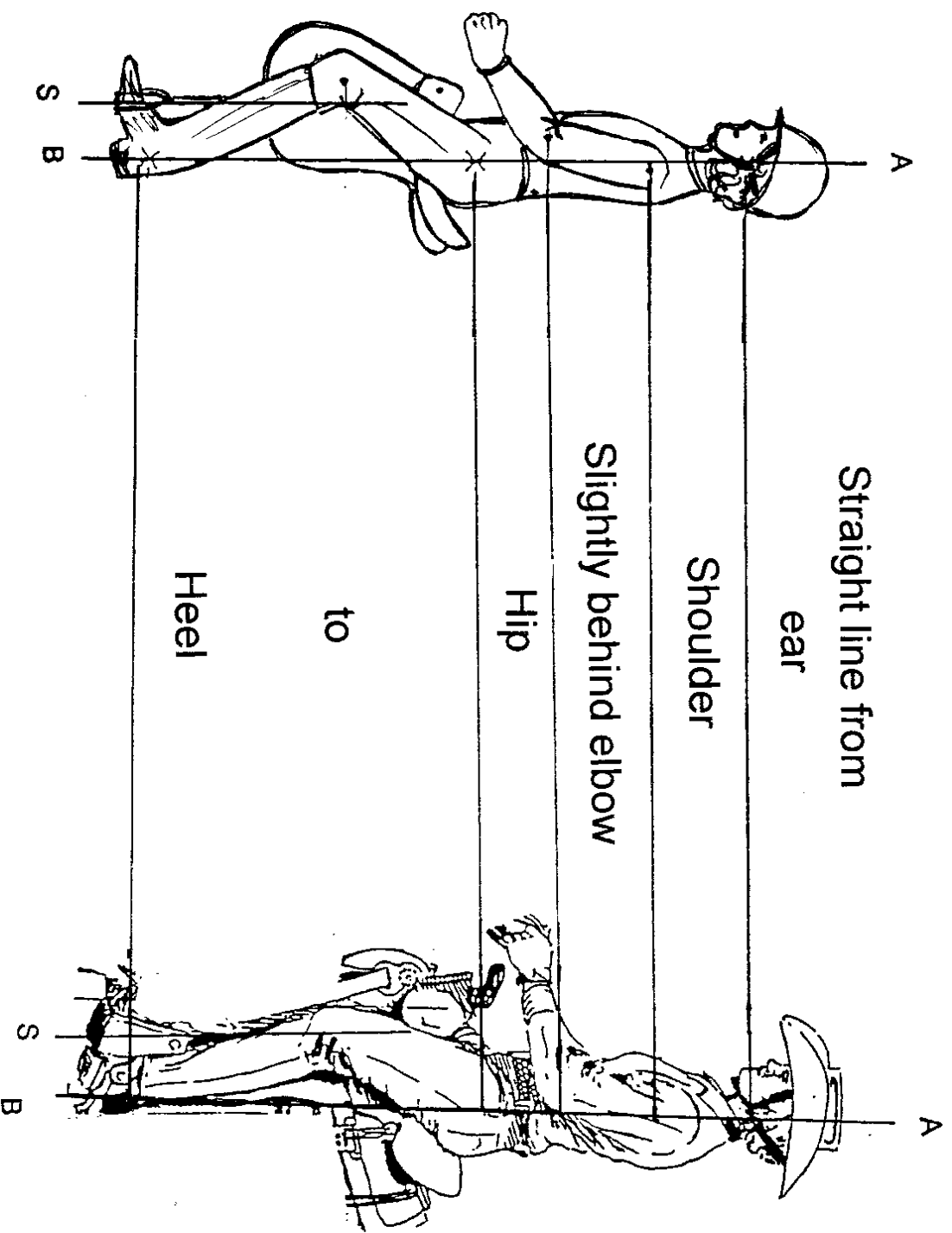
1) When viewed from behind, the rider should sit as straight as possible (Figure A). Many riders will sit to one side and then have to make corrections in the rest of the body to maintain balance. When this happens, one foot will appear lower than the other. Figure B shows a rider with the left foot lower, the pelvis leaning to the left, and the upper body correcting to the right. Figure C shows just the opposite—the right foot lower, the pelvis leaning to the right, and the upper body correcting to the left. This position does not help the rider



leg. This could be achieved by riding without stirrups or by trying a different style of saddle.

The important thing to remember is to constantly evaluate the rider's position. Consider all factors, such as disability limitations, posture off the horse and equipment used. Then work toward improving the rider's position. §

The Correct Balanced Seat and Posture



The points of alignment from A to B give the basic upright position

Understanding Horse Behavior

The beneficial interaction and relationship with the horse lies at the core of all work at CIRT. Our horses are valued partners and members of the team. Their health, safety and welfare are a primary responsibility of the CIRT's leadership. Horses are not tools or "beasts of burden"; they are valuable assets, with individual personalities, talents and aptitudes that they bring to this difficult work.

Communication is the key to developing relationships and working with horses. It is critical to providing a safe environment for equine-assisted activities. Learning to understand horse senses, instincts, and body language is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and positively influencing relationships.

Sense of Smell

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and allows the animal to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations and people.

Implications

- Smelling allows horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment.
- Do not carry treats in your pockets since horses may attempt to retrieve them. Do not feed treats without permission.
- Volunteers should not have food or gum in the arena.
- Avoid wearing strongly scented products.

Hearing

The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alarming sounds. The situation of a horse "hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the *Fight & Flight response*. The position of the horse's ears communicates attentiveness, interest, distress, and aggression. Reading your horse's ears is learning his language. Your horse's ears and actions are the key to their emotions. Horses can tell you what they are paying attention to just by the way they use their ears and the way they acts:

- Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest.
- Stiffly-pricked ears indicate interest and alertness.
- Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness, exhaustion, or illness. An inattentive horse can be easily startled.
- Flattened ears indicate anger, threat, or fear.
- Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

Implications

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet, calm, reassuring voice.
- Always avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can upset or scare the horse.

Sight

The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head. There is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. Horses focus on objects by raising and lowering their heads. Horses see quite well in the dark due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color, but most believe they do see shades of red, yellow, pink & green.

Implications

- The horse may notice if something in or out of the arena is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- Horses have two blind spots - directly in front and directly behind the horse. The best way to approach a horse is at the shoulder. It may startle a horse if you approach from behind or directly in front.
- The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when feeding.

Touch

Touch is used as a communication between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands and legs.

Implications

- Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly.
- Horses have sensitive areas. It is important to be familiar with them. (I.e. flank and belly areas, ears, under tail), and to be careful when brushing and touching these areas.
- Watch the rider's leg position. The rider may need appropriate assistance to reduce tightening of the legs, sometimes referred to as the "clothespin effect". Ask the Instructor what is the best handling technique for this situation.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.
- Watch the participants that they are not constantly kicking or squeezing the horses.

Taste

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications

- A horse may lick or nibble when becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful—this could lead to possible biting.

Sixth Sense

Horses do have a “sixth sense” when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for its sensitive response to the rider. At times, there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important for the Instructor to know if you're having a difficult time relating to or getting along with a particular horse.

Other Signs to Watch for

- Tucking the tail down tightly indicates danger to the rear. The horse may bolt, buck or kick. Watch out if ears are flattened too!
- Switching the tail indicates annoyance and irritation at biting flies, stinging insects, tickling or bothersome actions of a rider, another horse, or you.
- Droopy ears and cocking one hind leg to rest on the hoof reveals a calm, resting horse that may be dozing. Don't wake the horse up by startling them!
- Wrinkling up the face, ears flat back against the head, and swinging the head is the threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse. Watch out for biting or kicking and inform the instructors.
- Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions that can be practiced.
- Knowing how to read your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your “mutual” relationship. If you are uncomfortable working with or handling an individual horse, please speak to an Instructor or Staff.

The Horse's Lifestyle

In addition to understanding the horse's sixth sense and how they communicate with us, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse's lifestyle. This will assist us in responding to the horse's reaction to situations.

Flight & Other Instincts

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than to face and fight it. Remember, in the wild, horses are prey animals. They run for survival.

Implications

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly, might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie the horse quickly and it will usually relax. Learn how to use the quick release ties.
- Never stand directly behind the horse. When walking around the horse: directly touch the horses rear end with your arm or walk 12 feet way from the horse rear (an arm length and tail length way from the horses rear).
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall, so always use a halter and lead rope when you are in the stall with a horse.
- If a horse is nervous or fearful, it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse handler to lead.
- Most horses working in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

The Herd Animal

Horses like to stay together in a clearly defined herd or group where one or two alpha horses are “in charge” and the rest of the group lives in an established social hierarchy. It is not unusual for horses in a long, established herd to have “separation anxiety” and be barn sour (where are horse wants to go able to their stall).

Implications

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. That is a consideration when horses are leaving the ring or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.
- If the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least two horse lengths between horses when riding within a group to respect the horses' space and hierarchical order.

SAFETY AROUND HORSES

- Always speak to the horse as you approach or before touching them.
- **PLEASE DO NOT PET AND RUB THE HORSES FACE AS IT ENCOURAGES BITING. PET ON THE NECK AND SHOULDERS. NEVER ALLOW HORSES TO LICK OR CHEW ON FINGERS OR CLOTHING.**
- Always approach the horse at the shoulder area, never from the rear, as they cannot see you.
- Let the horse know where you are and what you are going to do. Example: run your hand down the leg before you pick up the foot.
- Always tie a horse using a safety knot.
- Never duck under the lead rope (between the horses and where they are tied).
- Never leave the reins or lead rope hanging on the ground.
- **NEVER** wrap the lead rope or the reins around your hand, wrist, or any part of your body.
- If a horse becomes frightened or nervous, halt and talk to them reassuringly, stroking him on the neck or shoulder.
- Never tease a horse. Your safety may be threatened.
- When grooming, always maintain a position that allows you to move quickly should the horse move suddenly and never get on your hands and knees.
- Be sure stall doors are all the way open with the door latch back and down when leading horses in and out! (They could hurt a hip or shoulder)
- Always lead the way through openings. Never let the horse start ahead of you as you could be kicked or rammed into the door or gate post.
- Open gates wide and be sure gates do not squeeze or bump the horse as they go through. They could run over you if they think the gate will hurt them.
- If another horse gets loose or loses its participant, halt your horse, remain calm and wait for instructions. Do not let go of your horse.
- Be cautious of loose dogs in the park as they may run up barking and startle the horses. Please be sure to ask permission before bringing your pet to the barn for a visit. However service animals are always welcome.
- Pay attention to footing - the riding ring and road can become slick if wet or snowy, especially if your horse has shoes on.
- Horse Leaders – Stay with the horse, the horses is their responsibility. Leader is at the head of the horses and on the same side as participant and sidewalker. The participant should always be between 2 sidewalker or sidewalker and horse leader.
- If you have any questions, ask the instructor.

HORSEMANSHIP PROCEDURES

PRIOR TO GROOMING

All horses should be tied to the bars of the stalls (never to the doors) or to the rings on the arena pillars for grooming (not the fence).

Leaders should stand by the horse's head, watching the horse during grooming, while sidewalkers assist participant (when applicable) with grooming procedures.

GROOMING

Horses should be brushed to remove all dirt before tacking. Brushes for the horses are available in the labeled cabinet by the desk outside the tack room.

Rubber curry brushes are used in a circular motion to loosen the hair and dirt. Never use a curry brush on the horses' lower legs.

Body brushes are used to remove the loosened dirt and hair brushing in the direction of hair growth, i.e.: toward rear of horse.

Ask before picking horses feet. Horses hoofs only need to be done once per day and when necessary. Hoofs should be picked out with the horse's hoof pick attached to their stall door. Stand next to the leg you plan to clean. Run you hand nearest to horse down the leg and allow the horse to pick up their leg, squeeze the fetlock, lean against the horse, move your hand under their hoof to hold it and with your other hand, pick the dirt away from the frog.

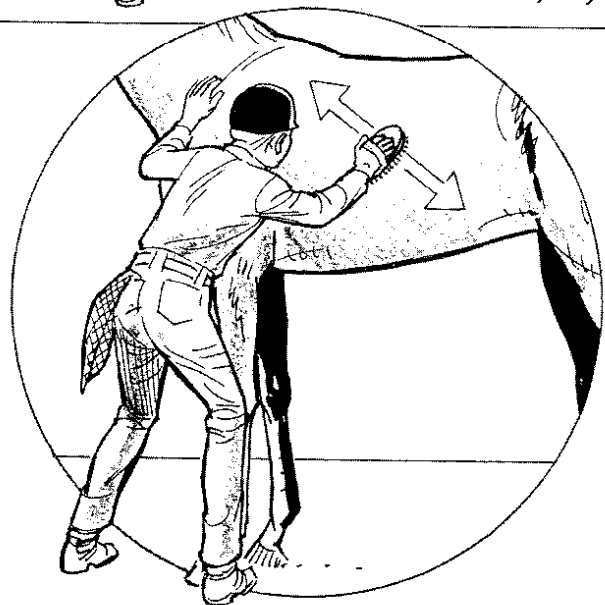
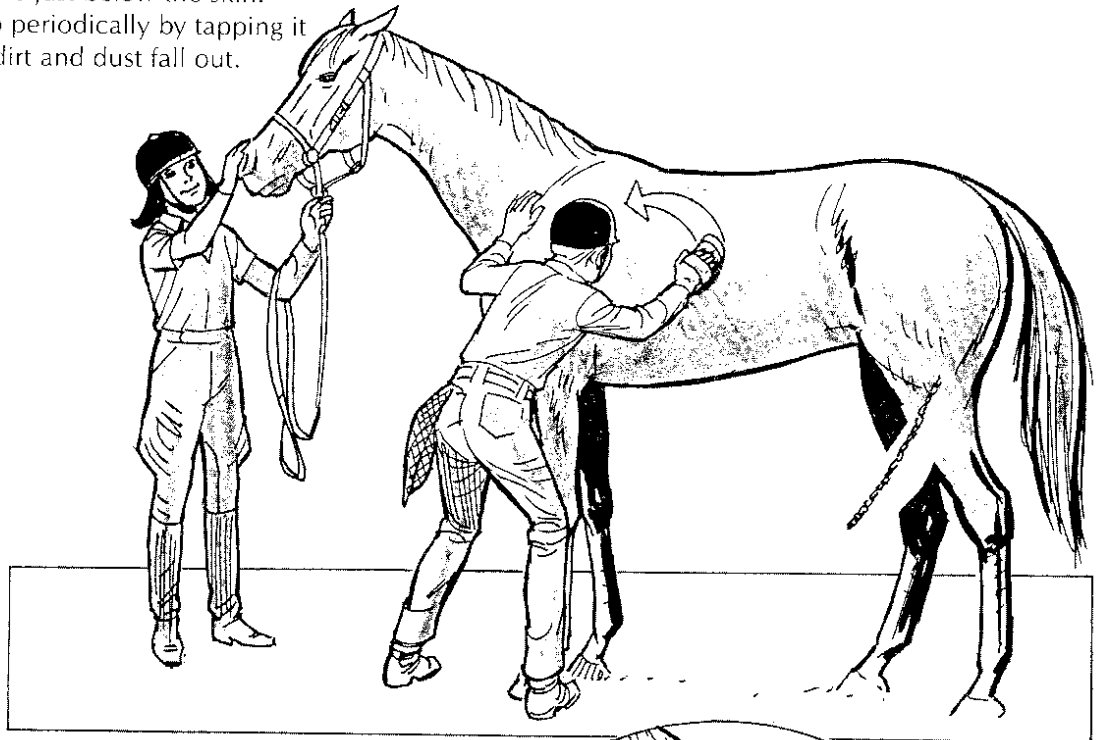
At end of class, horses should be brushed where the saddle and girth touched the horse. Any dirt should be removed from legs, etc. On hot days, the horse should be sponged off or bathed at the instructor's direction.

At no time should a horse be put back in the stall if hot or wet. Time should be taken to walk the horse until cool or grazed until dry from being bathed.

Correctly use a curry comb.

TASK ANALYSIS

- a. Identify the use of a curry comb.
- b. Select a rubber or plastic curry comb.
- c. Move curry comb in a light, circular motion across the horse's hide.
- d. Break up caked mud, dried sweat and matted hair.
- e. Do not use curry comb on the horse's head, below the knees of the forelegs, or on or below the hocks of the hindlegs: these are very sensitive areas where the bone is just below the skin.
- f. Clean the curry comb periodically by tapping it on a hard surface so dirt and dust fall out.



Correctly use a body brush.

TASK ANALYSIS

- a. Identify the use of a body brush.
- b. Select a body brush.
- c. Hold the brush in the hand nearest the horse's head.
- d. Brush the horse using firm strokes in the direction that the hair lies.
- e. Brush the horse in this manner: front to back and top to bottom.
- f. Clean the brush often with a curry comb.

TACKING UP THE HORSES

BRIDLE

Every horse will have their name on their bridle. Bridles are hung in the tack room on the bridle rack by horses' names.

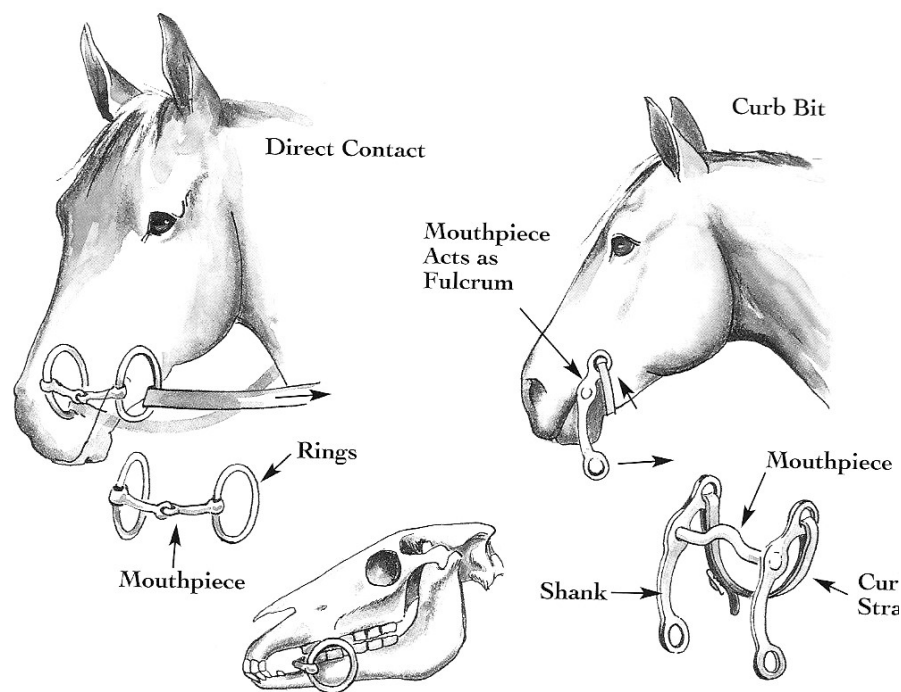
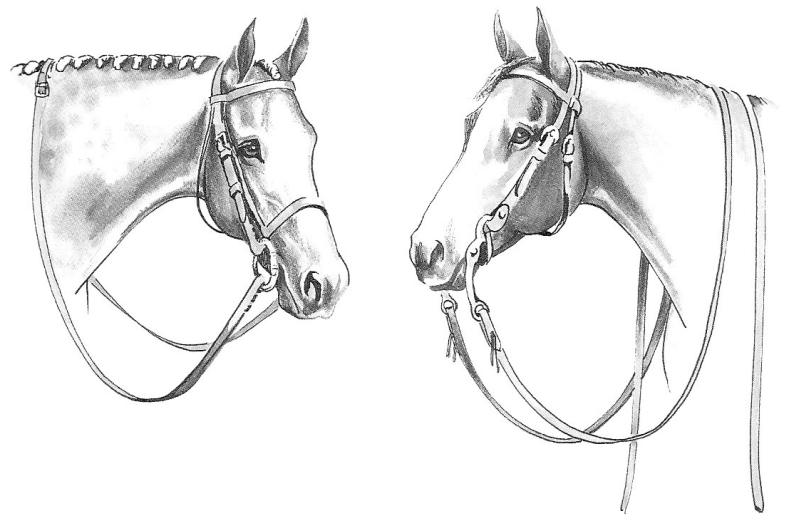
Bridles are put on over halters, unless otherwise instructed. Reins should be placed over horse neck. While standing on left of horse, hold crown piece in right hand and lay bit flat in left hand.

While gently pulling upward on crown piece, bit should be slipped into horse's mouth. The thumb on the left hand may need to be placed in corner of horse's mouth to encourage opening for bit.

Once the bit is in place, crown piece should be slipped gently over horse's ears.

Buckle throat latch and slide keepers into place. Throat latch should be approximately 3 fingers width loose. If a cavason is used the nose band should be fairly tight. Be sure that the halter does not cause pinching between the noseband and the bit.

If a horse does not take the bit readily, ask the instructor to assist. Use the lead rope on the halter to lead the horse into the arena.



SADDLE

Saddle should be raised above horse's withers and gently slid into place directly behind the withers. This prevents hair from being pushed forward under saddle.

Saddle pad should be smoothed and unwrinkled prior to tightening the girth/cinch. Make sure pad is even so that all areas under the saddle are protected.

Girth (English saddle) should be buckled first on the right (far) side of horse. Walk around the horse, **always** keeping yourself between the participant and the horse. Walking back around the horse, buckle the girth on the left side.

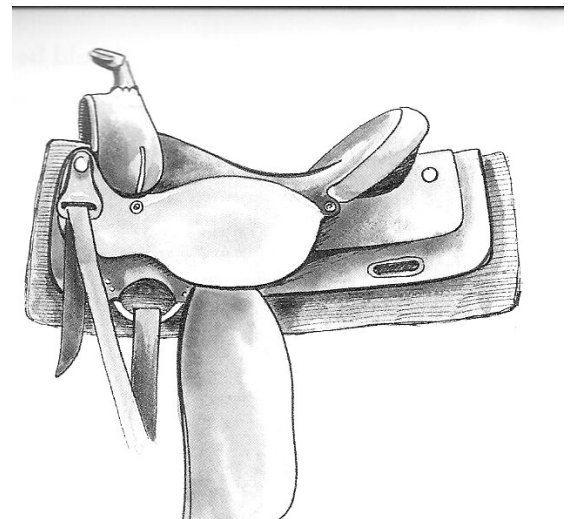
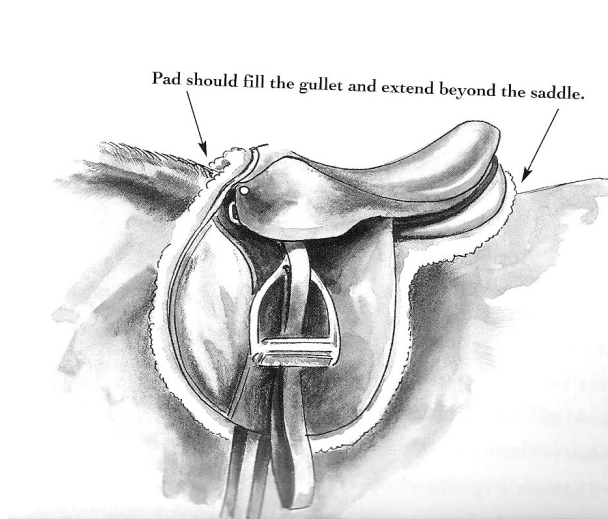
Cinch (Western saddle) should be buckled in the latigo chinch strap if the cinch ring has a buckle tongue on the left (near) side. If not, the cinch is secured with a cinch knot, which is similar to a neck tie knot. The right side of the cinch is left attached but may need to be adjusted so the cinch rings are at an equal distance from the saddle on both sides.

After tightening, pull the horse's front legs forward, by lifting at the knee, helps to smooth the skin under the girth or cinch and prevent pinching.

Saddle should be snug but not tight. Instructor will make the final check and tighten the girth/cinch before mounting the participant.

Never leave the horse if the saddle on the horse's back is not secured by the girth.
Not even for a moment.

If the saddle you are using is not equipped with safety stirrups, be sure that your participant has on hard soled shoes or boots with a heel. If he does not, stirrups need to be changed to safety stirrups or participants should come into the office to get boots to wear for the class.



CARE OF TACK

Saddles should be taken to the tack room and returned to their proper place.

Saddle pads should be laid on top of saddle with the dirty side up, clean side against the saddle.

Girths should be hung up on the proper hooks by non-elastic end. Western cinches remain attached to the saddle, but the free end of the cinch should be placed in the stirrup to keep it off the floor.

Be sure that the stirrups are not left hooked over the saddle horn on the Western saddles.

Bridles should be hung up in their proper places.

MOUNTING

Participants may use mounting block or ramp.

Prior to mounting, instructor will check the girth for tightness.

Before participant is mounted, pull down stirrups, being sure stirrups are even and place reins over horse's neck.

Once participant is mounted by instructor, assist participant to put feet in stirrups if needed. Move away from the mounting area as instructed by the instructor.

DISMOUNTING

Prior to dismounting, sidewalkers may need to assist participants to remove feet from stirrups.

Instructors will dismount all participants but may ask sidewalker to go to the off side to assist participant to raise leg over back of horse or forward over withers depending on the participant.

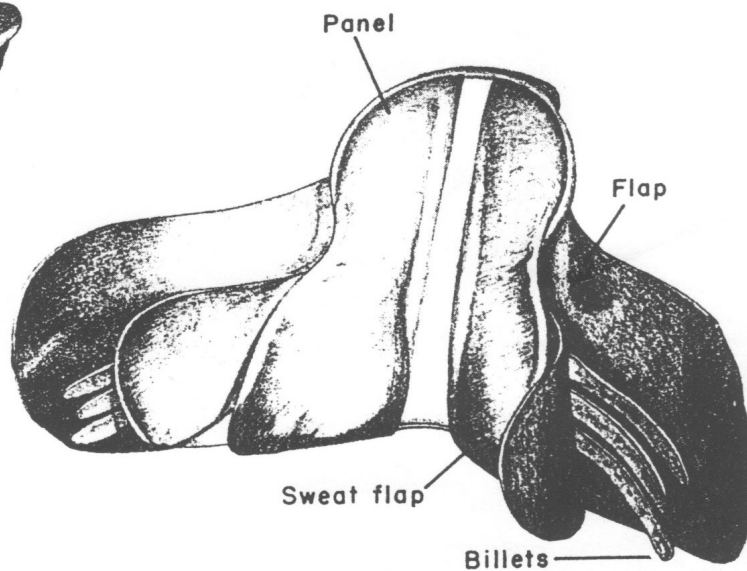
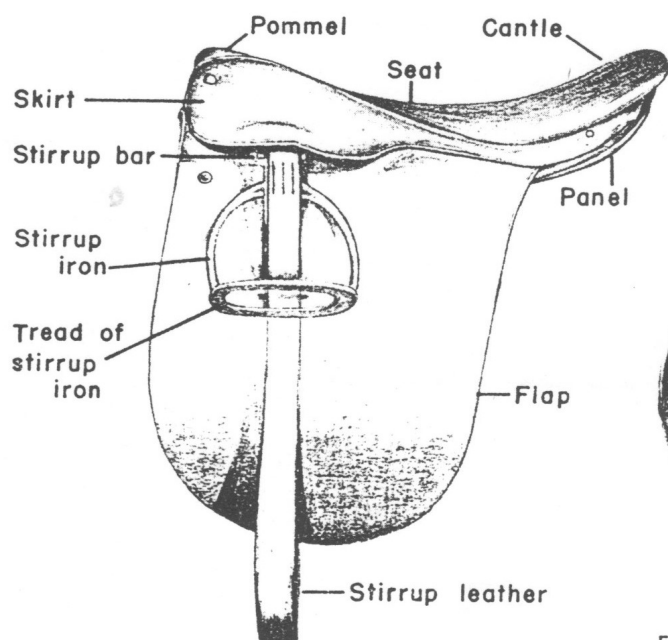
Once participant is dismounted, run stirrups up or assist participant to do so on the English Saddles.

Horses are then led out of the arena after all participants have dismounted. They are taken back to the stall or arena tie rings for untacking.

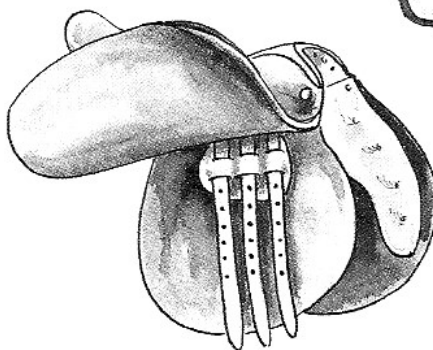
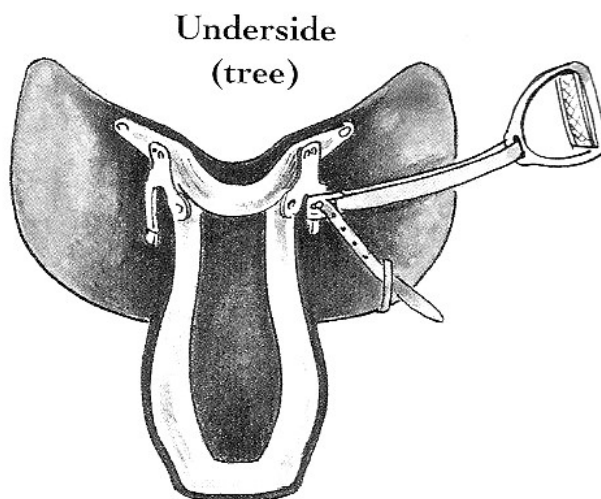
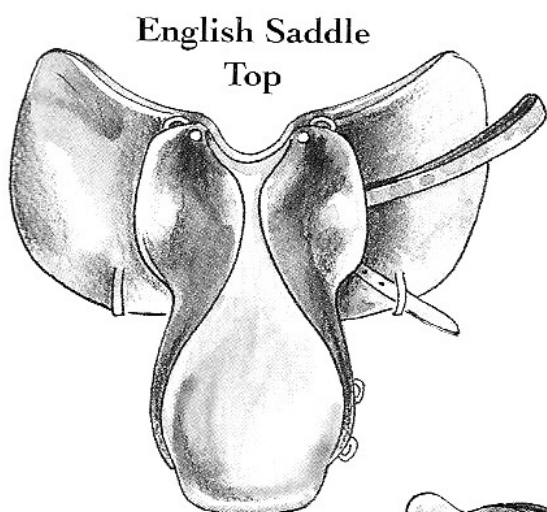
The girth should be unbuckled on the left side only and guided down underneath the horse. Never drop the girth/cinch allowing it to swing and hit the horse in the leg. On English saddles, the girth should be completely removed and hung in the tack room. On Western saddles, the cinch is put over the saddle to keep from dragging while being carried to the tack room.

With two hands the saddle should be raised up and slipped toward the participant. Some participants may require help in carrying their saddle or may only be able to carry the cinch or pad, etc. Never put the saddle on the ground.

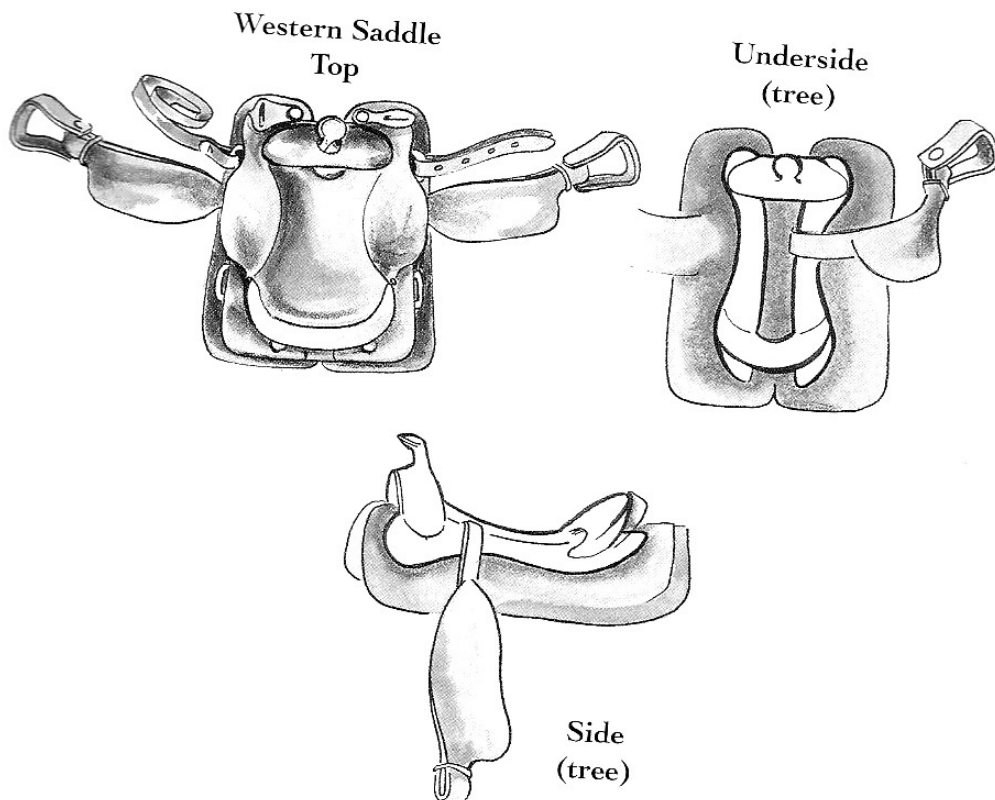
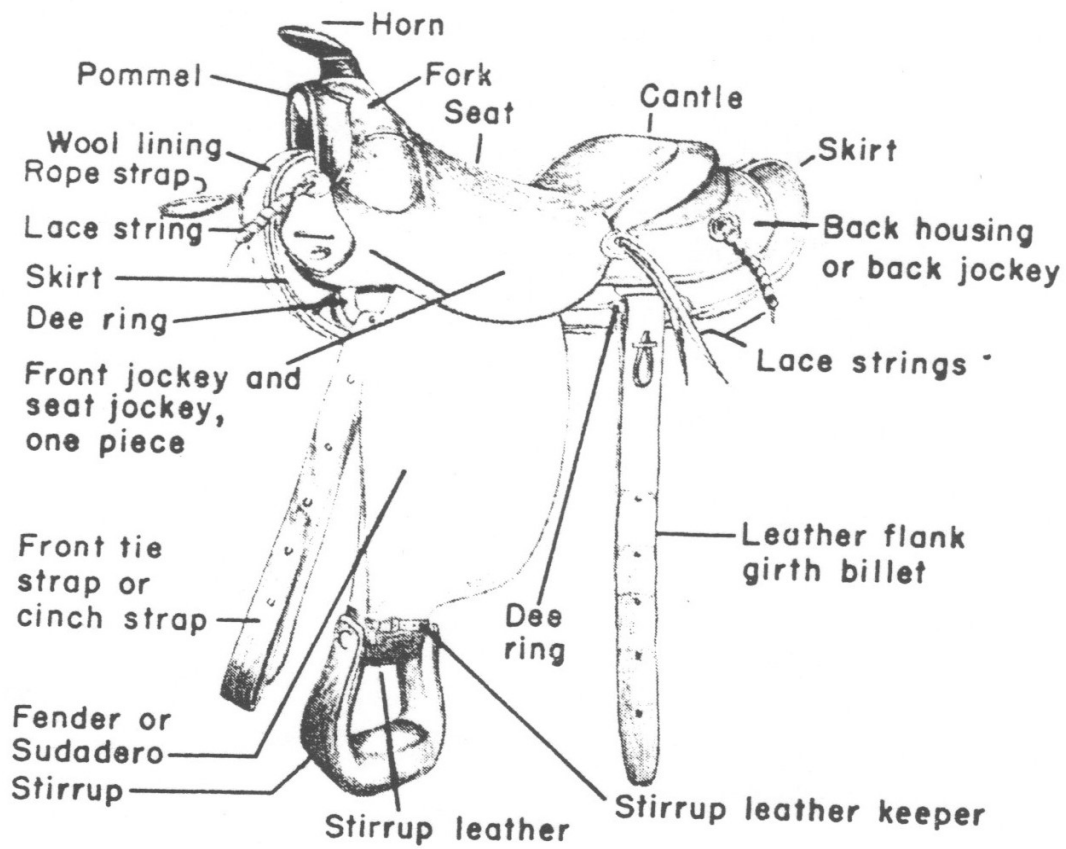
ENGLISH SADDLE



ENGLISH SADDLE



WESTERN SADDLE



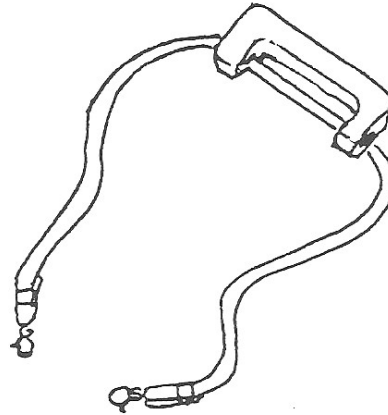
THERAPEUTIC RIDING ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

REIN HANDLES

To control the horse with one hand, the rein handle allows direct reining as well as neck reining.

Buckles are needed on both sides of the reins to allow for shortening and lengthening of the reins.

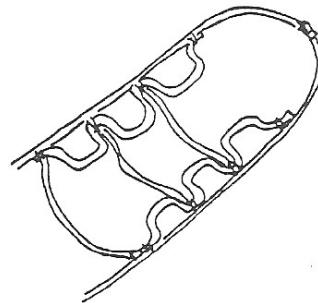
A TETHER from the rein to a breast plate will keep the reins within reach should the rider drop the handle for any reason.



LADDER/LOOP REINS

For a rider who cannot grip a traditional rein, the entire hand can be slipped through the leather loop allowing pressure from the wrist to control the horse. The series of loops allows the rider to "climb the ladder" to shorten or lengthen as needed.

Caution: The loops must be large enough to allow the hand to slip out easily in an emergency. Again, a tether is recommended in case the rein is dropped.

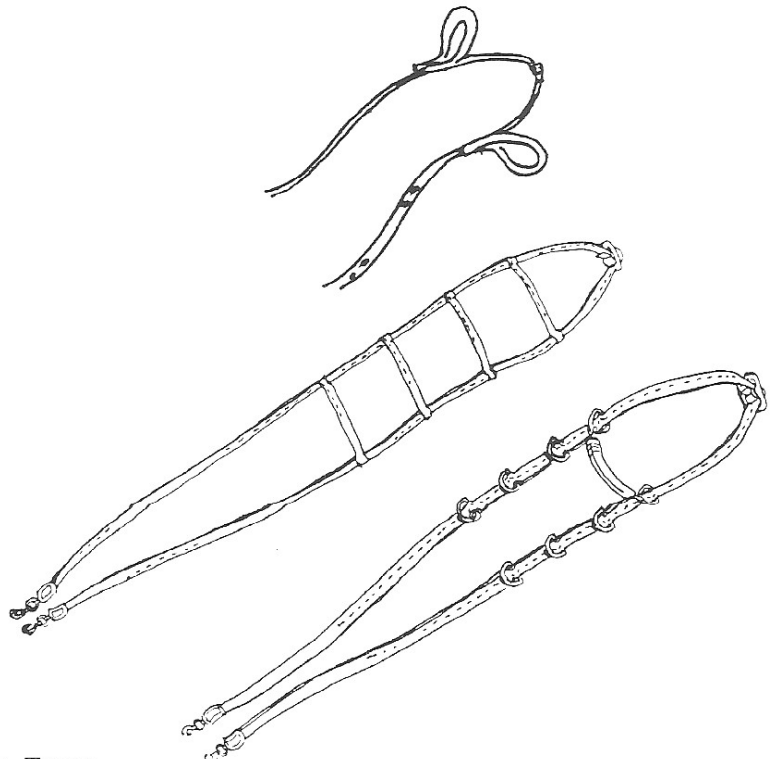


CUFF REIN

Using the Velcro quick-release loop around the wrist, a rider with no gripping ability can control the horse without losing the reins. Several snaps along the rein allow repositioning of the cuff for lengthening and shortening as well as an added safety release point.

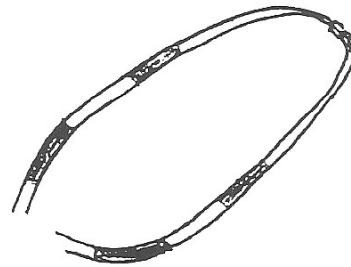
LADDER REIN

With the ladder rein, the rider with limited dexterity has control using gross hand motor skills only. A tether is recommended in case the rein is dropped.



RAINBOW REINS

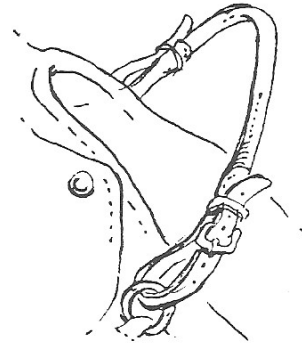
To teach proper use of the reins, the instructor can direct a rider to "hold in the green" or "hold in the red". The rider can then feel an appropriate response to their aids and have a guide for proper positioning.



HAND HOLD - to channel reins

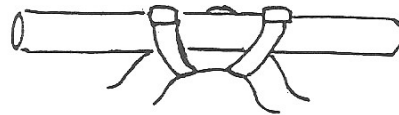
For a rider whose handling of the reins tends to be high due to spasticity or whatever, channeling the reins through a hand hold can maintain a more natural line from the bit.

Note: A completely natural line may not be feasible. The more acute the angle of channeling, the more severe the pressure on the bit.



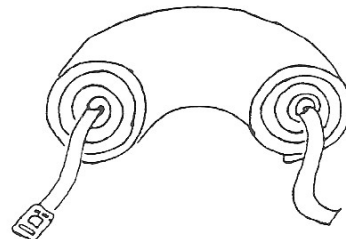
POMMEL SUPPORT

For riders lacking upper body stability, the PVC pipe support can be attached to a Western saddle horn to provide a weight-bearing surface.



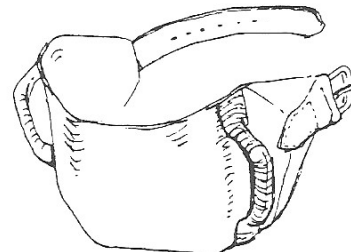
FOAM WAIST-ROLL

The large, soft foam roll offers comfortable support and upper body stability. It is held in position by a belt passed through the roll and around the rider's waist. (The belt can also be used by sidewalkers to aid upper body control.)



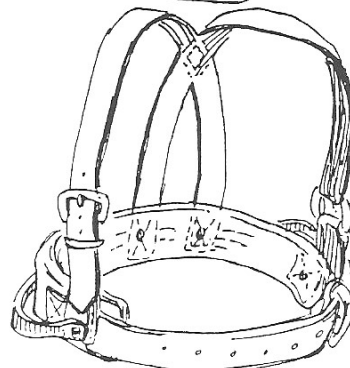
WAIST BELT

This is a belt that the rider's wear which allow the sidewalkers to render support, or for the instructor to use during the mounting process.



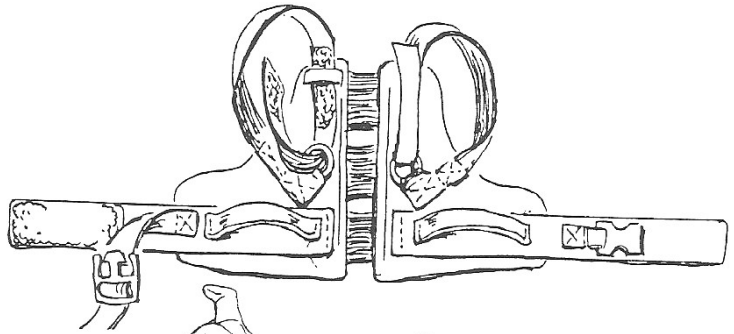
HARNESS

The harness has hand holds on the waist belt of the harness, and the straps help stabilize the waist belt and distribute the pressure over the shoulders.



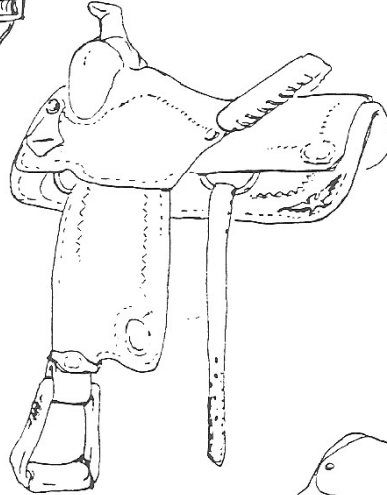
VESTS

A custom made vest will allow for the rider to be given more trunk support from sidewalkers, while distributing the pressure around the trunk and shoulders. The handholds are higher on the vest than the harness



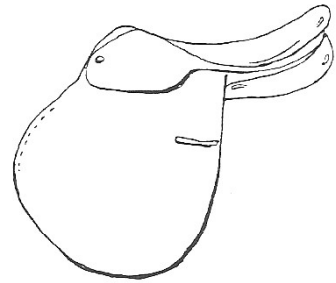
WESTERN SADDLE

A western saddle can give a rider more support with the deep seat, cantle and fork. It may be difficult to mount some riders with high tone because of the horn.



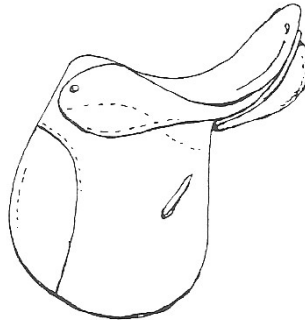
CLOSE CONTACT JUMPING SADDLE

This English saddle provides maximum feel of horse and rider while minimizing stress to the rider's adductors and hips.



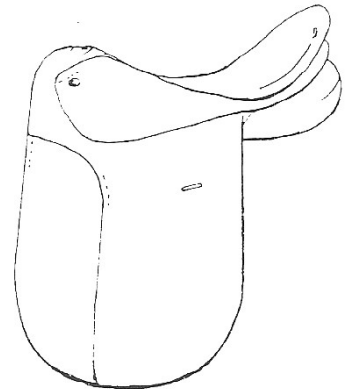
ALL PURPOSE JUMPING SADDLE

A saddle with a moderately deep seat and knee rolls. It will offer more support than a close contact saddle.



DRESSAGE SADDLE

With the long flap and deep seat, this saddle will encourage correct, balanced position and offer more support to the rider than a close contact jumping saddle.



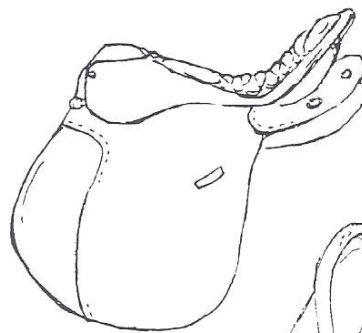
AUSTRALIAN STOCK SADDLE

A saddle that can provide a deep seat, high cantle, and thigh supports for a rider that needs a saddle with more support.



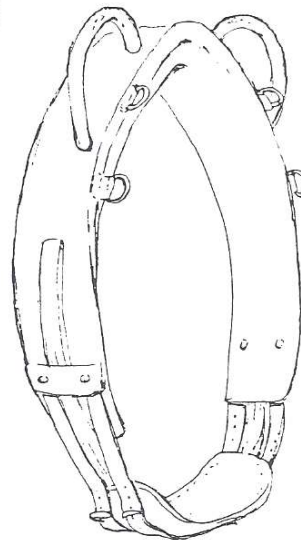
ENDURANCE SADDLE

An English type of saddle with more padding on the seat, and a higher cantle. It is a comfortable saddle that distributes the rider's weight over a larger area of the horse's back.



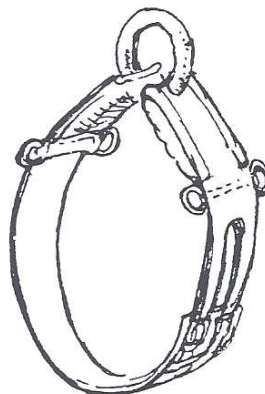
VAULTING SURCINGLE OR DOUBLE HANDLED SURCINGLE

Used over a bareback pad or over the pommel of an English saddle. This surcingle has two handles.



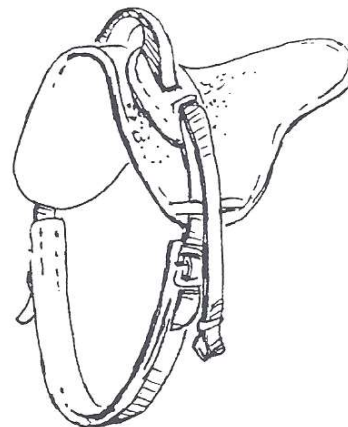
ANTI-CAST SURCINGLE or SINGLE HANDLED SURCINGLE

Also used over a bareback pad or the pommel of a saddle. It has a single center positioned handle.



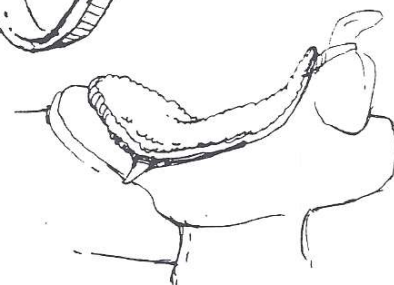
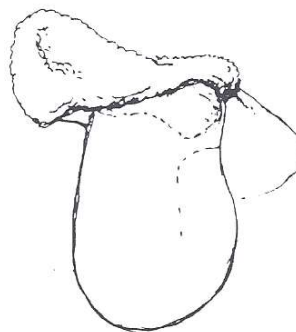
NATURAL RIDE

This combines the features of a bareback pad and the anti-cast surcingle. The hand hold is lower than on the surcingle and is solid so can be utilized better by leaning on it rather than by holding on to it.



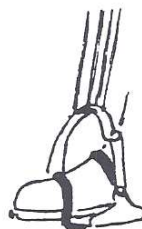
SEAT SAVERS

Padded seat cover which reduce stress on seat bones, help in preventing pressure sores and increase rider comfort. They are made of fleece, gel, or closed cell foam. English and Western styles are available. Full saddle fleece pads are also available.



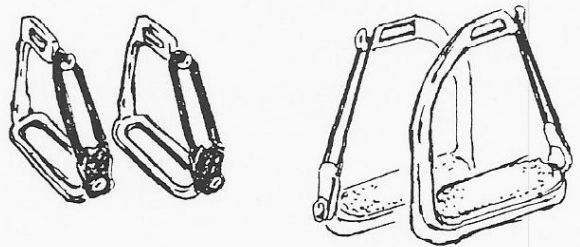
RUBBER BANDS

To assist a rider who cannot keep feet in stirrups due to spasticity, lack of sensation, etc.. The rubber bands afford security with a quick-release capability in case of emergencies.



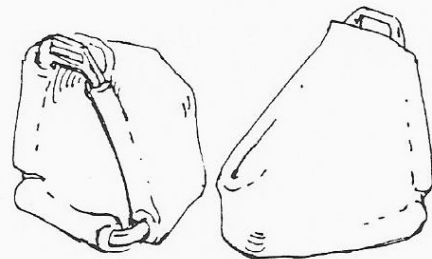
PEACOCK STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall. The safety feature should always face away from the horse when positioned on the rider's foot.



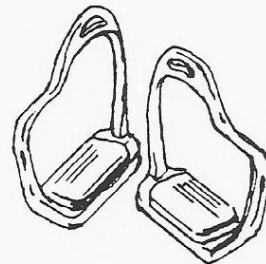
DEVONSHIRE BOOTS

A hooded stirrup with a closed platform that prevents the rider's foot from moving too far forward.



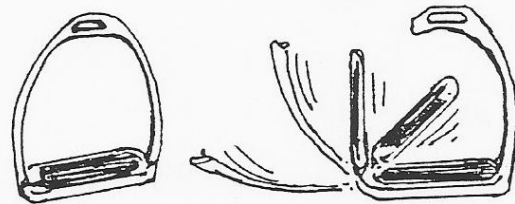
"S" SHAPED STIRRUPS

Stirrups that have a safety feature of a curved outside bridge that will allow for the rider's foot to fall free from the stirrup if a fall should occur. The safety feature should be positioned on the outside of the riders



"QUICK- OUT" STIRRUPS

These stirrups have a safety feature where the outside bridge will release when pressure is applied, while at the same time, lifting the foot up from the platform.



Mounting Follies, Part I

Prepared by the
NARHA Accreditation Committee

Members of the Accreditation Committee see many mounting and dismounting methods as they review videotapes for accreditation. Accreditation procedures require that all riders shown in a video demonstrate their mounts and dismounts.

In most cases, you should dismount riders to the ground because dismounts to the ramp can be hazardous. Dismounting to the ground consists of swinging the right leg over the horse's back or over the neck. In either case, *remove both of the rider's feet from the stirrups before you swing the leg over!* An off-side assistant can brace the horse so the rider's descent is controlled against the horse.

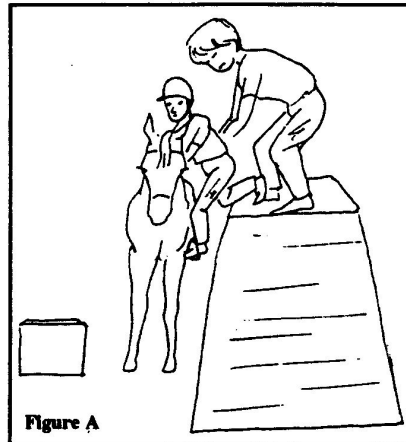
In rare circumstance, dismounts to the ramp may be appropriate. These circumstances may include the dismounting of very heavy riders who may not be safe dismounting to the ground. Individuals with multiple sclerosis riding in a therapy session may need to dismount to the ramp to reduce the stress that may be created when dismounting to the ground. Evaluate all riders to determine the safest methods of mounting and dismounting. Therapists and riding instructors must openly discuss the safety issues for each rider.

In the following discussion, some references are made to dismounting to the ramp, however, please remember to do so as a last resort. Most riders do better dismounting to the ground!

The following drawings show six mounting techniques that you should avoid. In Part II, which will appear in the July/August issue, we'll show you three more techniques to avoid and two that are recommended. We'll also include a drawing of an ideal mounting ramp.

Please note: In some drawings, leaders and off-side assistants are omitted for the sake of clarity! Leaders and off-side mounting assistants should always be used.

Figure A: This sketch shows a ramp that is too high for the horse. A similar scenario may occur at a standard-height block when an adult mounts. Whenever the rider's foot falls between the block or ramp and the



horse's barrel, the rider's foot, ankle and perhaps lower leg are at risk of becoming crushed if the horse moves suddenly. This is a very serious safety hazard that you should always avoid.

When the rider's leg is likely to hang below the platform of the block or ramp, ask the rider and/or the sidewalkers to hold the rider's leg(s) up out of the way until the horse and rider have left the block or ramp. Don't forget to repeat this exercise if the rider returns to the block or ramp to dismount.

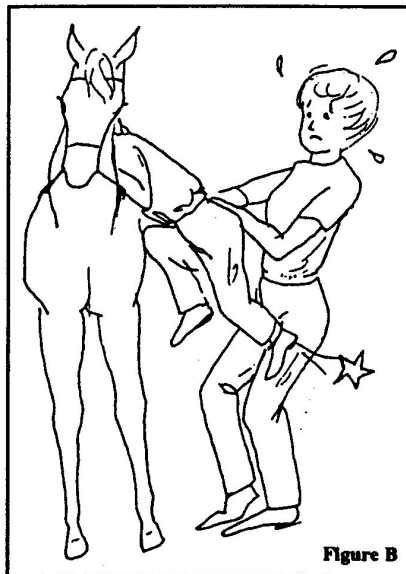


Figure B: Here the rider is climbing the instructor to get on the horse. This technique presents many opportunities for an accident to occur. The use of a block or a ramp is recommended. If the rider is going to mount via a "leg

up," then both the rider and the instructor should be familiar with the correct technique.

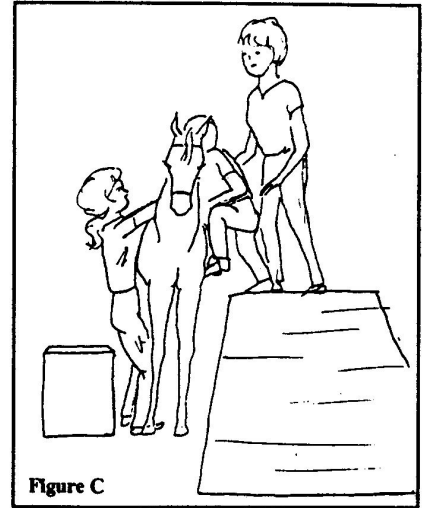
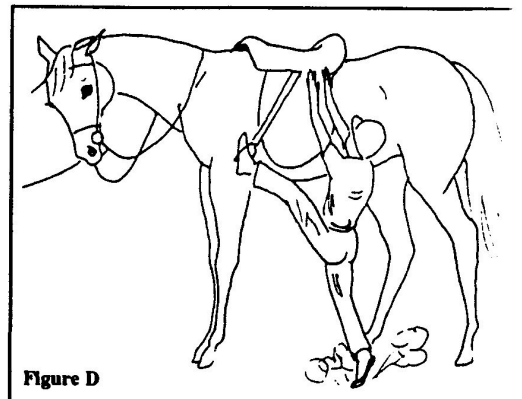


Figure C: When the mounting assistant stands between the off-side block and the horse, she places herself in a dangerous position. This is also true when the instructor stands on the horse's near side between the block or ramp and the horse. At no time should anyone stand between a horse and the block or ramp. To do so puts that person at risk of becoming trapped or crushed if the horse suddenly spooks. In addition, if the instructor places himself between the block or ramp and the horse on the near side, he encourages the horse to stand too far from the mounting surface for the rider to mount.

Figure D: This rider has left his foot in the stirrup upon dismounting. Remove both feet from the stirrups before the rider swings his right leg over



the horse's back (or neck) to dismount. If a rider leaves his left foot in the stirrup to assist swinging the right leg over the horse's back, he risks being dragged or could lose his balance and topple over.

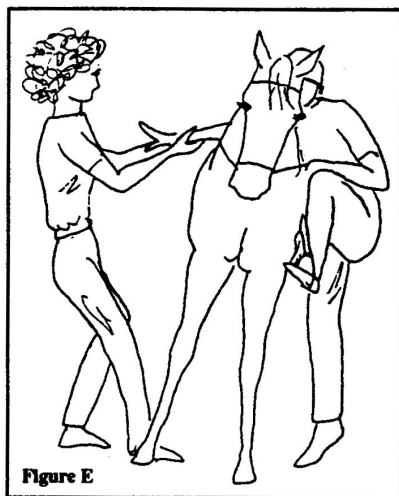


Figure E

Figure E: The instructor is attempting to assist the rider in mounting by tugging on his right arm. This technique is not effective and places the rider at risk of neck, shoulder, elbow and/or wrist injury. Enlisting an assistant to spot the rider on the off side is a better alternative.

With this method, the instructor can assist from the near side by giving the rider a little lift when he attempts to mount. It is usually more effective to assist via a small push rather than to pull a rider. This is also true when assisting riders back to the middle of the saddle when they are sitting asymmetrically. Many riders will pull away from someone pulling on them.

Figure F: In this sketch, the leader has started off without checking to see if the rider is balanced in the saddle and

ready to begin. The leader should wait for a verbal cue from the rider or confirm the rider's readiness before walking on.

Special thanks to Susan F. Tucker of Colorado Springs, CO, for creating the artwork for this article.

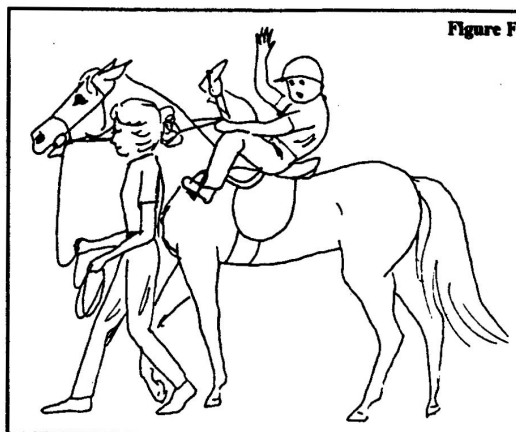


Figure F

Mounting Follies, Part II

Prepared by the NARHA Accreditation Committee

Members of the Accreditation Committee see many mounting and dismounting methods as they review videotapes for accreditation. The following drawings show two mounting techniques that you should avoid, two that are recommended and the last drawing is of an ideal mounting ramp. In Part I, which appeared in the May/June NARHA News, we reviewed six techniques that should be avoided.

In most cases, you should dismount riders to the ground because dismounts to a ramp can be hazardous. Dismount-

do so as a last resort. Most riders do better dismounting to the ground!

Please note: In some drawings, leaders and off-side assistants are omitted for the sake of clarity! Leaders and off-side mounting assistants should always be used.

Figure A: This rider is under the control of strong extensor tone. It is better to use mounting methods that help riders control their tone. Methods that promote flexion are useful with riders who have

high extensor tone. If a rider has high flexor tone that draws him into a fetal-like position, use mounts and dismounts that promote extension. You can mount the rider in the sketch from the block or ramp by having him sit on the saddle and swing his leg over the horse's neck. This pattern promotes flexion and helps the rider control his tone.

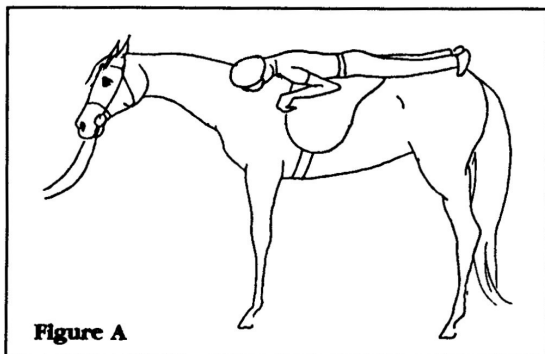


Figure A

ing to the ground consists of swinging the right leg over the horse's back or neck. In either case, *remove both of the rider's feet from the stirrups before you swing the leg over!* An off-side assistant can brace the horse so the rider's descent is controlled against the horse.

In rare circumstance, dismounts to the ramp may be appropriate. These circumstances may include the dismounting of very heavy riders who may not be safe dismounting to the ground. Individuals with multiple sclerosis riding in a therapy session may need to dismount to the ramp to reduce the stress that may be created when dismounting to the ground. Evaluate all riders to determine the safest methods of mounting and dismounting. Therapists and riding instructors must openly discuss safety issues for each rider.

In the following discussion, some references are made to dismounting to the ramp, however, please remember to

Figure B: The horse in this sketch is stepping away from the ramp at just the wrong moment. An off-side barrier encourages a horse to stay parallel to a block or ramp platform. An off-side block is more effective than having a person perform this. If the horse has developed a habit of moving away from the rider during mounting, check tack and equipment for proper fit and re-tune the horse's training at the block or ramp.

Figure C: This sketch shows the leader assisting with the mount. If the rider

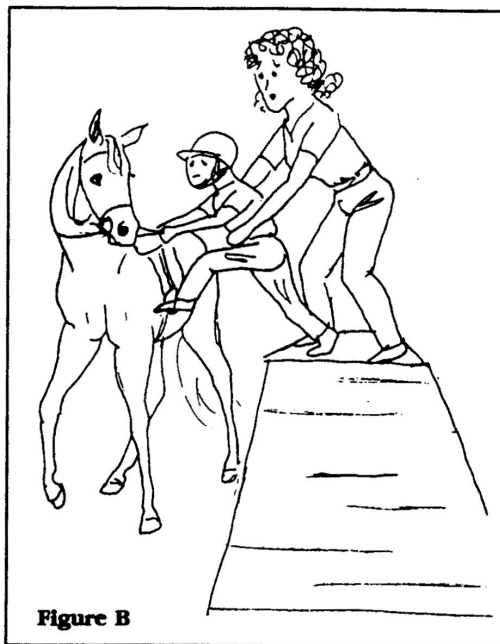


Figure B

requires help, enlist another person to assist. When the leader steps away from the horse's head, the horse is invited to step to the side or forward.

Figure D: This rider is demonstrating a correct mounting technique. He has stepped to the edge of the platform and is about to swing his right leg over the horse's back. Note that the rider is holding the reins and has his hands on the horse. This is a very important first step

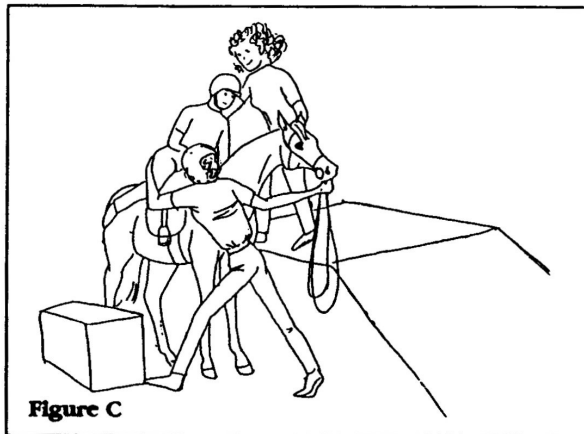


Figure C

Accent on Accreditation

Mounting Blocks and Ramps

By Gigi Sweet

The subject of mounting blocks and ramps seems so basic that the particulars are often overlooked. There is usually an eager volunteer who steps right up to construct one for you. Though obtaining a block or ramp is often an easy task, getting the right equipment requires planning and communication. There are many variations of blocks and ramps that are safe and serviceable, but some guidelines need to be followed. These guidelines are designed for new centers and for existing centers to evaluate their equipment.

The necessity for an operating center to have mounting equipment cannot be over emphasized. Your particular needs will be dictated by your rider population. If you have riders who use aids for mobility and can't negotiate steps, a mounting ramp is advisable. If these riders are small enough that you can safely do a one- or two-man lift from the ground, you may do without a ramp.

Before you think of reasons not to have a ramp, however, remember a goal of all operating centers: To increase the independence of riders with disabilities. When a rider is an active participant in the mounting--perhaps independently legging over or doing his own chair-to-saddle transfer--many therapeutic objectives are met.

Construction of the ramp warrants planning. It should be of a height adequate for all the horses that will be mounted from it. A ramp is generally higher than a block so you will not have the rider use the stirrup to mount from the ramp. If you have a gradual rise to the ramp, it may be possible to mount riders from locations along the ramp--this gives you a variety of heights to work from. Some ramps have a lower platform a short way down from the top platform.

The ramp should be constructed so the instructor or sidewalker can walk down the ramp as the horse departs. There should be no railing beside the horse. The gradient of the slope should encourage independence for the riders--it should not be too steep that those with crutches or electric wheelchairs can't maneuver themselves. An off-side barrier is desirable to encourage the horse to enter and remain straight. Ideally, another ramp on the offside can be used

by riders who may need to mount from the right. Electric wheelchairs tend to have the driving mechanism on the right, making it desirable to transfer from the left side of the chair onto the horse--an offside mount.

If not a second ramp, a mounting block is helpful, as it places the volunteers at a level that allows better leverage to assist the rider's mount. A wall or fence should never be used as the offside barrier.

The ramp should be located outside the arena and situated so that it provides a straight line from the chute into the arena. A straight line is important for those first strides as the rider is settling in. Ramps located in the arena can hinder full use of the arena.

A mounting block should be part of every operating center that does not have a ramp. Mounting using a block is better for your horses, saddles and your backs. It also encourages a rider to be more independent getting into the saddle, and the walk up a properly constructed block is itself therapeutic.

Blocks should be of solid construction, stable and finished against your particular weather conditions. Thickness of surfaces must be at least 7/8 inches and 2 x 4s should be used for supports. The rise of each step should not exceed 8 inches, less if indicated by rider needs. Steps should be wide enough for two to walk up and deep enough for the full foot

length. A stopper that keeps the foot from slipping through under the next step is desirable. The platform needs to be large enough to comfortably accommodate two adults and allow freedom of movement. The height should be suitable to your horses and enable the riders to leg over with minimum assistance. The rider should never place a foot into a stirrup that is below platform level. Some sort of railing away from the horse may be indicated to further rider independence.

As with ramps, the block should be located outside the arena and allow a few straight strides on the depart. Place the block to enable the instructor or sidewalker to walk down the steps as the horse walks out.

In summary, don't be afraid to ask your "carpenters" to follow your guidelines. They'll be only too happy to create a ramp or block that is safe and optimally functional. §

to mounting. Also note that he is *not* about to place his left foot in the stirrup before mounting. The instructor is spotting the rider with her hands at his pelvis, which allows her to guide him and assist him with balance.

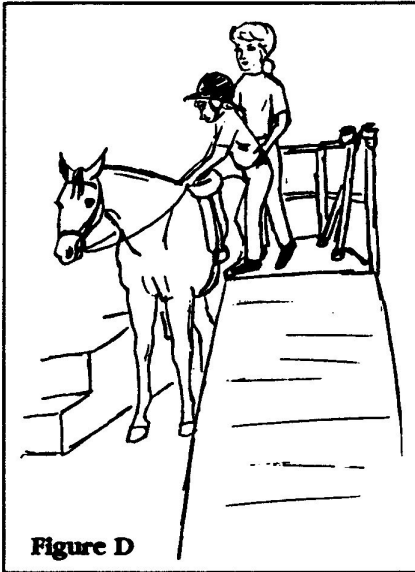


Figure D

This sketch could also be interpreted as demonstrating a correct dismounting technique. The rider has taken both feet out of the stirrups, has swung his right leg over the horse's back and has just stepped down onto the ramp. He continues to hold the reins and will take his hands off the horse as a last step.



Figure E

Figure E: This sketch shows a correct mounting technique from a wheelchair. Note that the instructor's back is straight, her head is up and she is doing most of the lifting with her legs. Also note that her feet are pointed in the direction of the action so that she does not have to twist. The off-side assistant has grasped the rider's pelvis so she can help the instructor place the rider's seat on the saddle. The rider is not hugging the instructor's neck, but puts one hand on the instructor's shoulder to help balance himself. Again, this sketch could be interpreted as demonstrating a correct dismounting technique.

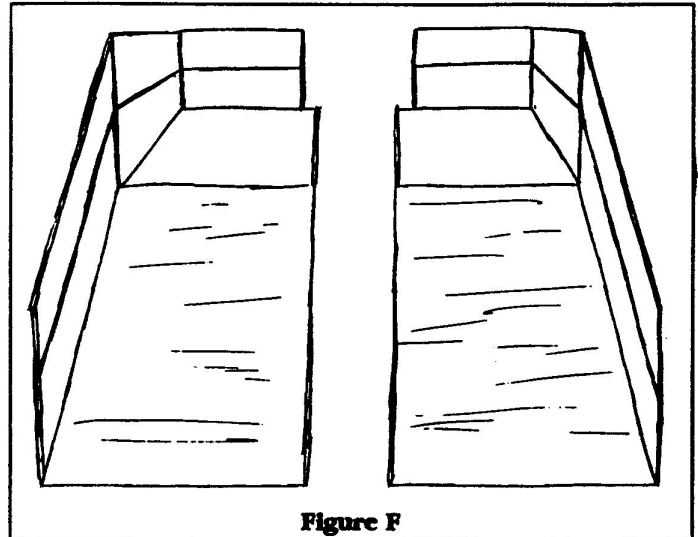


Figure F

Figure F: This is an ideal mounting ramp arrangement. The ramps should be approximately 29 inches apart. Note that the handrails of the platform end just about a foot short of the platform edge. This allows the horse and his tack to enter and exit without risk of becoming tangled. The horse should face us as he is mounted and face away from us as the rider dismounts. Also note that the handrails go to the very end of the ramp portion and that there are no railings that would impede access to the horse and rider team. Remember, you should make the ramp surfaces skid-resistant with some special material, or paint with sand paint. If you use sand paint, paint the surface first and then throw the sand on the wet paint. If you mix the sand into the paint, the surface will still be slippery when it is wet.

One of the best ways to assess your mounting and dismounting techniques is to videotape them and watch them yourself. The tape can also be

shown to the rider's or program's therapist for recommendations.

Special thanks to Susan F. Tucker for creating the artwork for this article.

OVERVIEW OF DISABILITIES

Suggestions on How to Relate to Individuals with Disabilities

A person with a disability is an individual first and is entitled to the same dignity, respect and considerations expected by anyone. A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends. But, until your relationship is that, show a friendly interest in him/her as a person. Be yourself when you meet him/her. Talk about the same things as you would with anyone. Help him/her only when he/she requests it. If a person with a disability falls down, he/she may wish to get up on their own. Be patient. Let the person with a disability set his/her own pace in walking or talking. Don't be afraid to laugh with him/her. Don't stop and stare when you see a person with a disability you do not know. He/she deserves the same courtesy any person should receive. Don't be over-protective, over-attentive, and don't shower the person with a disability with kindness. Don't ask embarrassing questions. If the person with a disability wants to tell you about his/her disability, he/she will bring up the subject themselves. Don't offer pity or charity. People with disabilities want to be treated as an equal. He/she wants the chance to prove him/herself. Don't separate the person with a disability from his/her wheelchair, walker, crutches, etc. unless asked. Instructor may want their assistive devices within reach. Don't make up your mind ahead of time about a person with a disability. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging his/her interests and abilities. Enjoy your friendship with the person with a disability. His/her philosophy and good humor may give you an inspiration. When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, remember to get down to his/her eye level. Inappropriate behavior is the same for persons with or without a disability.

Overview of Disabilities

The following is a brief, nonmedical description of some of the disabilities and conditions of participants. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability but rather as a general overview, along with an explanation of how therapeutic riding is beneficial.

- **Cerebral Palsy:** "CP"- a non-progressive disorder of movement and posture thought to be due in part to loss of oxygen to the brain. Speech, hearing, vision, learning and/or memory deficits may be present. However, normal intelligence is generally not affected unless further brain damage has occurred. There are three main types of Cerebral Palsy:
 - Spastic: Occurs in approximately 70% of all cases. It may affect motor function in one or more limbs. The muscles stay flexed and/or tense and the facial muscle involvement may affect speech.
 - Benefits: Riding may improve balance, posture, and the ability to relax. It also strengthens weakened muscles.
 - Athetoid: Occurs in approximately 20% of all cases. It manifests in slow, jerky, involuntary movements of arms and legs. It appears more obvious during periods of emotional tension. Speech functions are usually involved.
 - Benefits: Riding may improve balance, relaxation of muscles, and posture.
 - Hypotonic: Occurs in approximately 10% of all cases. Weakness, poor coordination, and difficulty with quick and fine motor movements result in loose, "rag doll" appearance.
 - Benefits: Riding may help strengthen and tighten loose muscles, balance, posture and fine motor skills.

- **Down Syndrome:** Is one of the more easily and widely identified hereditary disabilities. Individuals may have impaired intelligence and poor muscle tone.
 - Benefits: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, and coordination.

- **Emotional Disabilities:** "ED"- A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies. In general, individuals have trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relationships. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited.
 - Benefits: Riding can provide structure to a disorganized thought pattern, increase feelings of self confidence and self awareness, and provide appropriate social herapy.

- **Hearing Impairment:** Hearing impairment may vary from mild to severe and may be congenital or acquired. True deafness is defined as hearing loss in both ears severe enough to prevent communication through the ear with amplification. Communication may involve lip reading, finger spelling (the manual alphabet) or sign language.
 - Benefits: Riding helps increase self confidence, balance, posture, and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interaction.

- **Learning Disabilities:** "LD"- Learning disabled is a catch all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills. New learning generally takes time to be integrated and may need to be reviewed frequently to insure retention.
 - Benefits: Riding may increase attention span, group activity skills, cooperation, receptive and expressive language skills, posture, and coordination.
- **Mental Retardation:** "MR"- is a condition involving subaverage intellectual functioning. It may also involve delayed physical and emotional development.
 - Benefits: Riding helps increase group activity skills, coordination, balance, and posture, gross and fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and attention to tasks.
- **Multiple Sclerosis:** "MS"- An autoimmune, neurological disease which usually occurs in adults between 20-40 years of age and more frequently in women than men. Symptoms and manifestations include weakness in one or more limbs, visual impairment, minor gait disturbances, weakness on one or both sides of the body, emotional highs and lows, and inattention. MS runs a course of progression with periods of remission. There is no known cure for MS.
 - Benefits: Riding maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for improved self esteem.
- **Muscular Dystrophy:** "MD"-A hereditary condition usually appearing in infancy, early childhood, or adulthood. It is characterized by progressive skeletal and muscle deterioration.
 - Benefits: Riding may slow muscle tone degeneration and maintain muscle function. Riding provides appropriate opportunities for social interactions and elevate emotion depressions.

Disclaimer:

Information and Graphics found throughout the Handbook were from:

- Album of Horses, Edition of 1964, By Marguerite Henry, Illustrated by Wesley Dennis
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NOTES:

