

The Riding Academy of GJ
February 2025 Newsletter
Theme: Connection & Communication

Dear Riders & Families,

Welcome to February at The Riding Academy of GJ! This month, we're focusing on expanding many new opportunities for everyone both in the saddle and out! Our theme this month is **Connection & Communication**, two vital aspects of horsemanship that go beyond the saddle. Whether it's learning to listen to our horses, improving our riding aids, or fostering teamwork at the barn, every rider & guest will be given opportunities to grow in their ability to connect and communicate effectively.

Academy Updates & Announcements

- **Winter Weather & Lesson Adjustments**
February can bring unpredictable weather, so please keep an eye on your emails and texts for any schedule changes due to inclement conditions. Safety and horse well-being are our top priorities!
 - **New Groundwork Sessions**
We're introducing short groundwork-focused lessons this month! These sessions will help riders build a stronger bond with their horses through body language, timing, and feel. If you're interested, talk to your instructor to schedule a session.
 - **Tack Room Reminders**
Please help us keep our space organized! All riders should return borrowed equipment and double-check that personal items are stored properly.
-

February Focus: Connection & Communication

Horses are masters of nonverbal communication. As riders, we must learn to **listen with our eyes, feel with our hands and seat, and respond with clarity and patience**. This month, we'll focus on:

- **Building a Soft, Effective Rein Contact** – Learning to communicate with subtlety rather than force.
 - **Understanding Horse Body Language** – Recognizing how our horses express their thoughts and emotions.
 - **Developing Clear Aids in the Saddle** – Refining our leg, seat, and rein cues to create effortless communication.
 - **The Importance of Groundwork** – Strengthening the partnership with your horse through leading exercises, lunging, and in-hand work.
-

Student Spotlights

👏 **Macy & Mouse** – Macy has been focusing on improving Mouse's conditioning through mindful warm-ups and work. Great job recognizing what your horse needs!

👏 **Twyla & Gracie** – Twyla is making huge strides in her confidence and balance over trot poles. Keep up the excellent work!

👏 **Lucia & Heidi** – Lucia is learning to guide her pony independently—such an exciting milestone!

👏 We have a couple new students who will be joining us this month - If you see them, please be sure to say "Hello!"

February Barn Challenge: Communication Without Words (Horses only)

This month, we're challenging all riders to practice communicating with their horses using as little rein and voice as possible. Can you ask your horse to walk, stop, or turn with just your seat and leg? Try it during your lessons and see how much your horse responds when you *listen* to their subtle cues!

Upcoming Events

🐾 **Mounted & Unmounted Horsemanship Clinics** – Stay tuned for dates! These sessions will dive deeper into groundwork, feel, and connection with our horses.

🐾 **Spring and Summer Camps** - Camps will be starting up soon, giving everyone a chance to use your skills learned over the winter to improve in fun and games with your barn friends or even outside students!

☀️ **February Training Tip:** *Good communication starts with patience. Before asking your horse for something new, take a deep breath and set them up for success with clear, consistent signals.*

💡 Have an idea for a new event, activity, or class you'd like us to offer? Let us know and we'll see what we can do!

Thank you for being part of The Riding Academy of GJ!

Keep learning, keep listening, and most importantly—keep enjoying the ride.

Happy February!

Get Those Riding Muscles In Shape!

Perfecting your riding experience starts with at home getting your horse riding muscles in shape—building strength and flexibility not only improves your performance in the saddle but also enhances your connection with your horse.

Countertop Squat



Use your countertop to balance yourself and squat down, just go halfway and slowly rise up squeezing your glutes (buttocks). Do 10 holding onto the counter, slow and steady, make sure you tighten those glutes on the upward lift.

Simple Bridge



The bridge is a strength exercise that involves lying on the floor and raising your hips. It activates your glutes and hamstrings and stabilizes your core. Lift using glutes and core and hold for 5 seconds, repeat 10 times.

Knee Fall Out



The bent knee fall out exercise is a core and hip strengthening exercise that can also improve balance and coordination. It can also help to reduce lower back pain, increase flexibility in the quadriceps, glutes, and hamstrings, and improve posture.

Seated External Hip Rotation Stretch & Piriformis Stretch



While sitting in a chair cross your leg with the ankle of one foot resting on the knee of the other. Next push DOWN (External stretch) & hold for 30 seconds, switch legs repeat 3 times each leg. Next, in same position pull knee up to opposite shoulder (Piriformis stretch) hold for 30 seconds, switch legs and repeat 3 times each leg