



Manitoba  
Horse Council



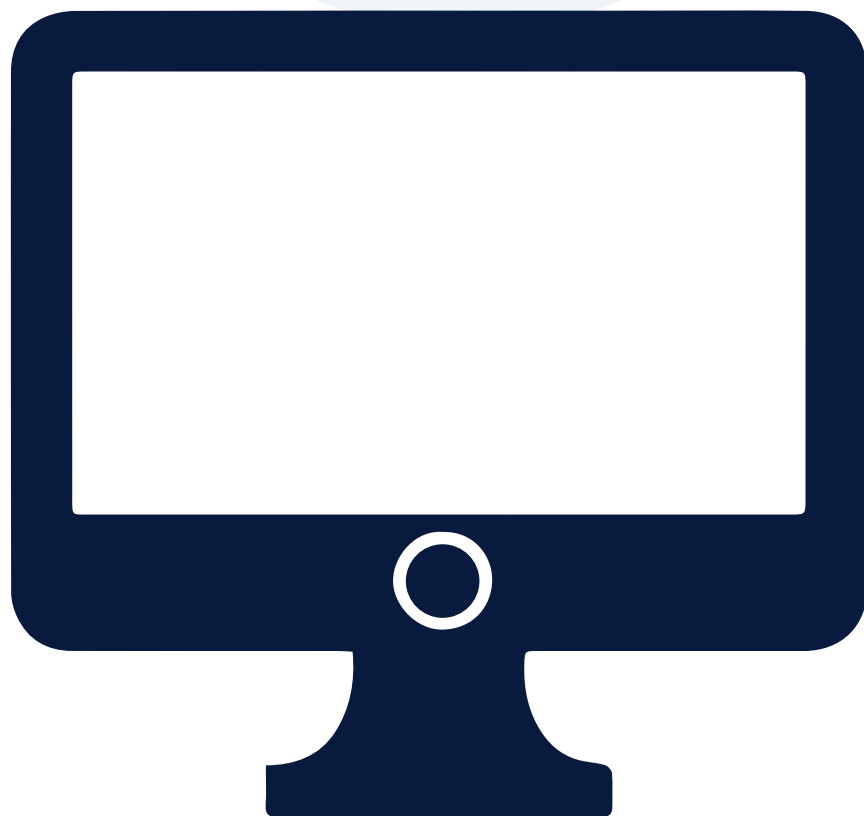
# A Guide for New Riders

Tips for first-time horseback riders and parents



# VISIT US --- ONLINE

[manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://manitobahorsecouncil.ca)



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# WHAT IS THE MANITOBA HORSE COUNCIL?

Manitoba Horse Council (MHC) is a not-for-profit organization representing clubs and individual members involved in equine activity in Manitoba. MHC is the recognized governing body for equestrian sport in the province; providing support, leadership and resources to develop athletes and protect the interests of Manitoba's equestrian enthusiasts.

## Membership Benefits

For both clubs and individuals there are many benefits to becoming members. Individual members of the Manitoba Horse Council enjoy the peace of mind of having automatic personal liability coverage with BFL Canada. Members also receive discounts and savings on a variety of products and services and are able to participate in a variety of riding and driving programs. All MHC members in good standing and therefore members of Equestrian Canada (EC) have access to excellent discounts through the EC Members First program. This is for ALL MHC members, not just EC Sport License holders! For a more complete listing of member benefits please visit the Manitoba Horse Council website [manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://manitobahorsecouncil.ca)

## HOW DO I CONTACT THE MANITOBA HORSE COUNCIL?

145 Pacific Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2Z6. Phone: (204) 925-5719 Fax: (204) 925-5703  
Website: [www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca)



## IS RIDING EXERCISE?

It sure is! Horseback riding has many great health benefits both physical and mental. It is a great way to combine a love of horses with the benefits of physical activity. In fact, some high schools may accept horseback riding as a gym credit. Consult with your child's gym teacher to find out if this applies to you.

### Health Benefits

While it may look like the horse is doing all the work nothing can be further from the truth. A one-hour ride can burn similar calories to that of jogging depending on the intensity of the ride. It is a cardio vascular exercise and many muscles are in use while on a horse. You may find that out after your first ride!

#### ***Physical benefits include:***

- Improved balance and muscle strength
- Improved coordination, faster reflexes and increased motor skills.
- Stretching of tight muscles
- Decreased spasticity
- Increase range of motion
- Improved cardio and circulation
- Improved visual-spatial perception
- Improved eye-hand coordination.

#### ***Mental benefits include:***

- Great way to develop focus and good judgment skills.
- Will help develop your planning skills,
- Will aid to develop flexibility in thinking, recall and improved attention.
- Assists with development of patience, emotional control, self-discipline and confidence.

Horseback riding is recognized as having excellent therapeutic benefits. Being outside and enjoying the fresh air and countryside is a great stress buster. Developing a relationship with your horse is highly rewarding. Learning to control and care for an animal will boost your confidence, develop respect and a sense of responsibility.



# LEARNING TO RIDE – FIRST STEPS

So your child loves horses and has expressed a desire to ride? Or maybe you as adult want to start the sport of riding and you are not sure where to begin? You don't have to incur the expenses of buying and boarding a horse to learn to ride. Taking lessons at a facility which offers school horses can be the best way for you and yours to begin their equestrian journey. Choosing a riding facility can seem like a daunting task but there are things you can look for and questions you can ask to help you make an informed decision.

## CHOOSING A RIDING FACILITY

### ***Does the facility and lesson program look professional, safe and well managed?***

Aisle ways and any areas where the horses are being handled should be tidy and free of objects which could be tripping hazards. Riders should be supervised by a qualified person while handling the horses, including grooming, tacking, mounting and dismounting. The instructor or coach should also do a safety check of the rider's tack before the lessons begin. The arena should be enclosed by a fence, wall or gates that are closed during the lesson, and only lesson equipment should be in the arena such as trot and jumping poles, jump standards, jump filler (boxes, flowers etc.)/safety cones/markers. Group lessons should not exceed 8 riders but any size group should have enough room to ride safely together. It's a good idea to visit several facilities before making a decision. Watch some lessons and observe the attitude and interaction between instructor and riders. Does the facility appear to be fun, welcoming and safe?

### ***What personal equipment do I need to ride?***

Riders should all have proper safe riding attire. All riders should wear long pants, fitted shirts, an approved ASTM riding helmet and boots with a half-inch to one-inch heel to avoid the foot from slipping through the stirrup. Riders should NOT wear running shoes, shorts or helmets made for other sports.

### ***Is the instructor/coach certified to teach riding lessons?***

Find out about the lesson program and the credentials of the instructors/coaches teaching lessons. Find out if they have experience teaching beginner riders and if they are certified and current. Manitoba Horse Council highly recommends working with certified coaches who maintain their "active" status to ensure their first aid certificate and training is current. All EC active certified coaches are listed on the MHC website at [www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca). Asking for references can also be helpful when looking for an instructor/coach.

### ***Do the school horses look healthy and well behaved?***

Horses used in schooling lessons comes in all shapes and sizes. The primary talents of a good beginner school horse are good manners and an even forgiving temperament. The horse should be well fed, relatively clean with no untreated cuts or wounds. They should walk freely and willingly (not lame).

### ***Are there rules about parental involvement, such as watching lessons?***

Stables and coaches will have different rules about how closely a parent or friend is involved during tacking, lessons and untacking. For your own safety and for the safety of others you should stay out of the ring or arena during lessons. Some facilities will have a designated viewing area where you can watch lessons.

### ***Observe a beginner lesson. How does the instructor/coach interact with the riders?***

There are many teaching styles among coaches. A good coach or instructor will recognize the needs of their students and make adjustments to help them learn and be successful. You should discuss your expectations with your prospective coach and, when watching their lesson, look for a theme or goal in the lesson. Some coaches will be more explicit than others, but it helps the students if they understand the goals of the lesson and how the exercises help achieve that goal. It may be a good idea to take a friend with you to observe especially one that is acquainted with horses and riding. The personality of the coach is paramount; the rider should be able to get on with the coach, be able to ask questions and get reasonable answers. How does the coach interact with children? In group lessons does everyone get a reasonable amount of time?

## WHY CHOOSE A CERTIFIED COACH?

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is a government initiated program designed to give the public safe, qualified instructors and coaches at every level of all sports. Teachers have a significant responsibility. With thousands of Canadian children and adults involved in riding lessons yearly, the stables, instructors and coaches that service these riders have a duty to provide, safe qualified and professional service.

## WHAT IS A CERTIFIED COACH?

Manitoba Horse Council follows Equestrian Canada Guidelines for coaching certification. Certification as an Equestrian Instructor or Coach demonstrates that the individual is professional and accountable, and abides by the standards of ethics and the Equine Code of Conduct. They are also skilled in first aid and safety procedures. A certified instructor or coach also has the equestrian knowledge, technical competency, as well as a commitment to completing the testing process and continue to maintain skills through ongoing training and education. If the riding facility you decide to use does not offer EC certified coaches, do the necessary homework to investigate thoroughly the coaching program from which their coaches are certified.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF COACHING CERTIFICATION?

### ***INSTRUCTOR OF BEGINNER***

This program is focused on those who wish to take on the instruction of children and adults learning to ride with the goal of teaching foundational riding skills with an eye on safety.

### ***COMPETITION COACH***

This program is focused on those who are interested in coaching riders in the competitive environment. Competition coaches have more advanced skills in the development of training programs tailored for individual competitors and can provide performance analysis and assist with mental preparation for competitions.

### ***COMPETITION SPECIALIST COACH***

This program is a further progression of the Competition Coach program and is focused on riders competing at the provincial and national levels. In addition to the skills of a competition coach, a working knowledge of the Equestrian Canada competition rules for the level and discipline they are teaching is required.

### ***HIGH PERFORMANCE COACH***

This program is administered by Equestrian Canada. These coaches specialize in developing athletes who are preparing for competition at the national and international levels.

For a list of certified coaches please visit us at [www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca)



## RIDER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

So your child loves horses and has expressed a desire to ride? Or maybe you as adult want to start the sport of equestrian and you are not sure where to begin? You don't have to incur the expenses of buying and boarding a horse to learn to ride. Taking lessons at a facility which offers school horses can be the best way for you and yours to begin their equestrian journey. Choosing a riding facility can seem like a daunting task but there are things you can look for and questions you can ask to help you make an informed decision.

Riders who want to track their progress and test their skills may want to participate in a rider certification program.

**P'tit Trot** is an introductory program for children 5 years of age or older who love horses and want to learn about riding and caring for horses. The P'tit Trot handbook introduces beginners to the basics of English and Western and how to care for a horse or pony. This program is fun and educational, designed to introduce children to horses, to prepare for activities offered at riding camps and as preparation to begin the Equestrian Canada Learn to Ride program.

**Learn to Ride** is a non-competitive national program for both English and Western riders to teach safe horsemanship and practices. Both recreational and competitive riders are rewarded with Certificates of Achievement for advancing their learning.

**Western Learn to Ride** is based on the Western Learn to Ride and Intermediate Rider manuals which evaluate an individual's skills through levels 1-4, as well as an intermediate level and covers a variety of areas.

**English Rider** Level 1-10 has been designed to help riders who would like to advance their riding skills on the flat but may not want to continue to over fences. Participants will have the option at Rider Level 3 to either take the full riding phase or only the flat section.

**Pony Club** is a member-based national association mandated to serve the needs of Canadian youth, ages 6 to 25 years of age, who are interested in riding, learning about and/or caring for horses or ponies. The Canadian Pony Club curriculum has been carefully designed to give members a solid foundation of Horsemanship and Stable management knowledge and skills. The gradual progression of difficulty guides and prepares members to successfully achieve testing levels from Beginner through to Advanced. Although testing is not mandatory, it is encouraged to help set benchmarks for members. The program is often compared with grade school through to University.

There are also Learn to Ride programs currently under development for the disciplines of Saddle Seat, Driving and Endurance.

If you or your child is interested in learning more about the above programs please visit the Manitoba Horse Council's website at [www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca](http://www.manitobahorsecouncil.ca) or call 204 925-5719





# WHAT TO WEAR TO YOUR FIRST RIDING LESSON

While it isn't necessary to go out and purchase a full riding wardrobe for your first lesson, there are a few must haves which will make your experience safe, comfortable and fun.

## **ASTM CERTIFIED RIDING HELMET**

This is the single most important piece of equipment you need to own. Approved ASTM riding helmets must be properly fitted to the rider so they don't slip or fly off during riding. Riding helmets are designed specifically for riding and the types of injuries a rider could experience. Substituting a non- sport specific helmet such as a hockey helmet is NOT recommended and is to be avoided. Borrowing or purchasing a used helmet which could have structural damage not visible to the eye should be avoided. A reputable tack shop will carry certified helmets and will be able to assist you in selecting a properly fitting helmet.

## **PROPER FOOTWEAR**

While wearing a pair of riding boots is a good idea they are not essential. Wear shoes/boots that have a one half to one inch heel which will prevent your foot from slipping through the stirrup. Make sure the sole is not too thick so you can easily remove your foot from the stirrup.

## **CLOTHING**

Fitted jeans or long pants will be sufficient when starting out. Avoid loose fitting clothing and fabrics such as leggings which can be slippery in the saddle. Avoid shorts as they offer no protection for your legs from the potential rubbing and pinching of the saddle.

Refrain from wearing scarves, jewelry or loose fitting clothing which can get caught while working around or riding the horse.



# HELMETS-SAFETY 101

While it isn't necessary to go out and purchase a full riding wardrobe for your first lesson, there are a few must-haves which will make your experience safe, comfortable and fun.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU WEAR A RIDING HELMET?**

Wearing a properly fitted riding helmet is essential to keeping your head safe while riding or driving. A fall from a horse or carriage can cause traumatic brain injury (TBI) which can negatively affect cognitive functioning as well as personality. TBI ranges from mild to severe and varies with regard to side effects. "Severe brain injury is responsible for over 60% of all equestrian-related fatalities. The rehabilitation for a severe TBI can cost from \$1.5 - \$3 million, and a full recovery is rare." It is important to keep in mind that not all helmets are created equally. Riding helmets are designed with the latest in safety technology and are tested to international standards so that they are guaranteed to offer the most comprehensive protection possible. Helmets designed for other activities such as bicycling or skiing, are not tested for the same fall scenarios that an equestrian will encounter. Wearing a riding helmet can protect other riders in addition to you. Wearing a helmet can set an excellent example for fellow equestrians, and you could save their lives if they follow suit and strap on a helmet as well.



## **HOW DO I PROPERLY FIT A RIDING HELMET?**

While most riding helmets are certified to meet at least one safety standard, the safest helmet is the one that fits properly. When you start the search for a helmet, take into consideration your discipline, the level at which you compete, and what your budget is.

### **Ensure the Correct Fit**

Keep in mind that different makes and models of helmets will fit differently, so it is important to try on several helmets.

Start by measuring the circumference of your head by wrapping a tape measure around where the helmet will lie: one centimeter above the brow and around the slight bump at the base of the skull. The circumference in centimeters will determine the size range that your helmet will fall into.

- 1** Do you wear your hair up under your helmet when you ride? If so, make sure you wear it up when measuring for the correct size and when trying on new helmets. If you ride with your hair in a low ponytail, be sure that the elastic is not on the inside of our helmet.
- 2** When you try on a helmet for the first time, take it on and off at least three times to allow the helmet to mold slightly to your head. Keep in mind that a new helmet will feel snug in the same way that a new pair of boots feel. Both will break in and mold to your head or feet respectively as they are worn. However, a new helmet should not have any pressure points. You should also not be able to rock it forward and back on your head when the chinstrap is unbuckled.
- 3** The chinstrap of the helmet should be snug with just enough room to fit two fingers between it and your chin.
- 4** Each helmet manufacturer can provide a helmet manual that details how to fit and care for your helmet.

***HOW DO I CHECK THE CERTIFICATION?***

All riding helmets should be certified by SEI to ASTM F1163, which means that their ability to protect against traumatic brain injury has been tested. If a helmet has been approved by the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) that it meets the ASTM standard, it will have a logo visible on the lining of the helmet. Some companies also test to multiple additional standards to ensure a wider range of protection across a variety of fall types. These range from a fall on hard ground or concrete to an impact on a sharp surface, such as the edge of a jump.

***HOW DO I CARE FOR MY HELMET?***

Helmets are sensitive to extreme heat (70°C+/158°F+) and should be stored out of direct sunlight. Helmets should also never be dry-cleaned or put in the dishwasher. If your helmet becomes wet, allow it to fully dry before storing it.

***HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO REPLACE MY HELMET?***

If you have hit your head in a fall, your helmet should be replaced. Even if there is no visible damage to the outside of the helmet, the material inside the helmet can be compressed upon impact and will no longer offer you the same protection should you fall again. It is also recommended that you replace your helmet every five years even if you have not fallen in it.



You want to learn  
to ride a horse?  
Have fun with

**P'tit  
Trot**



**English riding**

Including the 120 page  
colour manual and a  
colouring book.

← **OR** →

**Western riding**

Including the 98 page  
colour manual and a note  
pad with tracing patterns  
OR a colouring book.

**To order:**

**[www.ptittrot.ca](http://www.ptittrot.ca)**

**MANITOBA HORSE COUNCIL**

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# SAFETY FIRST

Horses can be tons of fun but they are large animals and even a quiet horse can accidentally hurt you. Here are some safety tips you need to remember when you are at a stable.

- Move quietly and try not to startle the horse. Make sure the horse sees or hears you approach.
- Don't wear sandals or go barefoot when grooming or tacking up a horse.
- Don't sit or kneel when working around a horse's legs. You need to get out of the way quickly if your horse moves.
- Don't wear anything that dangles such as long necklaces, scarves or earrings that can be caught up when working around a horse.
- Tie your horse with a safety quick release knot to a solid object that won't let go if the horse pulls back.
- When tending your horse make sure the lead is not long enough for the horse to get its legs tangled.
- When leading your horse, walk on the left side between the head and shoulders, and always turn the horse away from you.
- Never wrap a lead rope or reins around your hand, arm or any part of your body. If the horse spooks you could be dragged or seriously injured.
- Always be calm around your horse. Speak quietly and firmly.

## EXPECTATIONS – RIDER PROGRESSION

Many people wonder, when they begin a new sport or activity, how fast they should be progressing with their training and skills development. While each person should be allowed to learn at their own pace, there are some general guidelines you can use to manage your expectations.

Riders taking one lesson per week can expect the following:

### **UP TO FIRST MONTH:**

Introduction to horses

Introduction to basic horse handling with emphasis on safety

Basic horse equipment and care

Riding Skills: mount, dismount, position, how to ask the horse to walk, stop and turn

### **UP TO SIX MONTHS:**

Improvement on theory

Introduction/practice of riding patterns

Confidence gained in horse control

Riding skills: introduction/ practice of lateral work, gait transitions, balance, two point position (English), riding with one hand (Western)

### **UP TO ONE YEAR:**

Independently able to tack up horse

Improving knowledge of equipment and horse anatomy

Riding skills: walk, trot and posting trot (on correct diagonal), canter/lope (learning correct leads/changes), introduction to sport specialization, introduction to the show ring, understanding of rein effects, introduction and practice of bending, straightness and impulsion

These guidelines will vary from individual to individual. Factors such as frequency of riding lessons and opportunities to practice can also impact how fast a rider progresses. Riders with above average athletic ability may also progress more rapidly.

It is important to remember that you should be challenged, but not pushed beyond your mental and physical limitations. A good riding instructor will know what is best for you and will tailor a lesson program to suit your abilities and goals.

The Equestrian Canada Long Term Equestrian Development (LTED) model will also outline stages of development for riders of all ages and involvement.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Q** *What can I expect at my first riding lesson?*

**A** Riding lesson formats vary. You may not even ride at your first lesson. Initial lessons typically focus on grooming and handling in order to teach the preparation of the horse for riding and safe handling techniques on the ground. Ask your instructor or coach when you schedule your first lesson how long the lesson will be and what you can expect to learn.

## **Q** *Will I need to buy a saddle or a bridle?*

**A** Your riding school should provide all the necessary tack for the horse you will be riding.

## **Q** *My child wants to ride and I would like to try it too, are riding lessons just for kids?*

**A** At Riding lessons are for everyone! Regardless of your age or experience level, riding lessons will enable you to develop correct skills in a safe environment. A certified instructor/coach has the training necessary to tailor a lesson plan to your needs, learning style and abilities. MHC has individual and family memberships!

## **Q** *I am not interested in showing. Should I still take lessons?*

**A** Of course! Everyone has their own riding goals and a certified instructor/coach will be able to design a lesson program to help you achieve them. Riding lessons give you the knowledge and skills needed to be a safe and effective rider no matter what discipline you ride or how you choose to enjoy your horse. Goal-oriented riders may be interested in a rider certification program. For more information, see page 8.

## **Q** *How old does my child need to be to participate in riding lessons?*

**A** A certified instructor/coach can help you determine if, and when, your child is ready. The age at which a child is ready to take riding lessons depends on the individual. Every child matures differently, both physically and mentally, and this needs to be taken into consideration.

## **Q** *How old is too old to take up riding?*

**A** Riding has no age restrictions, it's for the young and the young at heart! There is something for everyone whether you choose recreationally or competitively. The bond and mutual trust between horses and humans can be absolutely amazing. Why not give it a try!

## **Q** *Should I buy a horse?*

**A** Horse ownership is extremely rewarding. However, it also requires a major commitment. Financial considerations such as keeping the horse at home, outdoor boarding and indoor boarding will have an impact. In almost all cases, expenses to be considered are boarding, hay, bedding, feed, supplements, water, equipment such as hoses, shovels, pitch forks, etc. Keep in mind that horse owners should always have a bank account reserved for unexpected expenses, such as emergency veterinary bills, dental, farrier and yearly vaccines. Leasing or part boarding a horse is also an option that may make the investment easier.



Steve Carmichael - Solo Snapshots  
MHJA Jump Into Fall

# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT RIDING DISCIPLINES

It isn't necessary as a beginner rider to select a specific riding discipline. However, as you develop your riding skills you may want to know more about the many equestrian disciplines available to you. A partial list below may help you in your selection process.

## **BARREL RACING**

A rodeo event in which a horse and rider attempt to compete a clover leaf pattern around three preset barrels in the fastest time.

## **CUTTING**

A Western riding event where a horse and rider are judged on their ability to separate a calf from a cattle herd and keep it away for a short period of time.

## **DRESSAGE**

Dressage, from the French word for "training", is often described as the art of dancing on horseback or ballet on horseback and is often compared to the freestyle of figure skating. The art of dressage is a harmonious blend of power, beauty and precision. The sport of Dressage is designed to improve a horse's balance, suppleness and flexibility, as well as improve the communication between horse and rider. In competition riders are required to complete predetermined movements and are judged on the accuracy, suppleness overall balance of horse and rider. The Freestyle is a class whereby riders incorporate movements to music.

## **DRIVING**

Driving is the world's oldest equestrian sport and consists of eight disciplines. The challenge of driving is that the drivers can control the horses only through their voice and hands.

## **ENDURANCE**

An endurance ride is an event in which the same horse and rider compete together over a marked trail, within a specific maximum allowed time. There is no minimum time requirement. The horses are examined by veterinarians before the ride, throughout the competition at regular intervals, and after the ride to assure their health and safety. To be successful the competitor must have knowledge of pace and efficient and safe use of his or her horse across country as distances cover from 25 to 100 miles.

## **EVENTING**

Eventing is often described as an equestrian triathlon, featuring three very different types of tests over three days. The Dressage test is followed by Cross-Country which is a course of solid obstacles specially constructed from materials such as wooden logs and stone walls with natural elements, including ditches and water increasing the technical difficulty.

## **CROSS COUNTRY**

Cross-country tests the speed, stamina and jumping ability of the horse. Penalties are incurred for refusing an obstacle and exceeding the time allowed. Jumping is held on day three which consists of a course of obstacles designed to fall down when knocked in order to test the accuracy and jumping technique of horse and rider. Traditional jumping rules apply, with penalties incurred for knocking down or refusing obstacles, and exceeding the time allowed.

## **HUNTER**

Hunter is a jumping-related discipline where performances are judged subjectively, with a variety of factors being taken into consideration, including the horse's style, movement, jumping technique, and conformation (depending on the class). Hunter divisions include over fences classes (jumping obstacles) and hack classes (gaits, including walk, trot and canter).

## **POLE BENDING**

A timed Western event that features a horse and mounted rider running a weaving or serpentine path around different sized poles arranged in a line.

### **POLO**

A team sport played on horseback on a large grass field in which the objective is to score goals against an opposing team. Players score by driving a small white plastic or wooden ball into the opposing team's goal using a long-handled mallet.

### **REINING**

A judged event designed to show the athletic ability of a Western type horse in a show arena. In reining, competitors are required to run one of several approved patterns. Each pattern includes small slow circles, large fast circles, flying lead changes, roll backs, 360 degree spins done in place, backups and exciting sliding stops.

### **ROPING**

A rodeo event that features a calf and a mounted rider. The goal of this timed event is for the rider to catch the calf by throwing a loop of rope around its neck, dismount from the horse, run to the calf and restrain it by tying three legs together in as little time as possible.

### **SADDLE SEAT**

A style of riding within the category of English riding that is designed to show off the high trotting action of certain horse breed, notably the Saddlebred.

### **SHOW JUMPING**

Jumping is one of the three Olympic equestrian sports. Like all equestrian disciplines, jumping is a gender neutral sport with men and women competing against each other equally. Jumping entails an exciting mix of technical skill, control and courage. Riders guide horses over a course of obstacles, designed to fall down when knocked. Faults are incurred for knocking down or refusing an obstacle, and exceeding the allotted time to complete the course. The fastest time with the least number of faults determines the winner.

### **TEAM PENNING**

The object is for three team members on horses to collect three head of cattle with the same numbers on them from a herd of 30 cattle located at one end of an arena. The team attempts to put these three head of cattle into a small pen at the other end of the arena. All this is to be done in 0 seconds or less.

### **THERAPEUTIC**

Therapy in which disabled individuals ride horses to relax, develop muscle tone, coordination, confidence and well-being.

### **TRAIL RIDING**

Riding outdoors on natural trails and roads as opposed to riding in an enclosed arena. Trail rides may be informal activities by an individual or small group of people, or may be larger events organized by a club. Some trail rides may even be directed by professional guides or outfitters, particularly at guest ranches. There are competitive events, which test the ability of horse and rider to navigate obstacles commonly found on the trail such as opening and closing gates, crossing streams, etc.

### **VAULTING**

The performance of gymnastic and dance-like movements to music on a moving horse.

### **WESTERN PLEASURE**

A Western style of competition that evaluated horses on manners and the suitability of the horse for a relaxed by collected gait of cadence and relatively slow speed of gait, along with calm and responsive disposition.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ABOVE DISCIPLINES AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED PLEASE  
CONTACT THE MANITOBA HORSE COUNCIL  
AT [WWW.MANITOBAHORSECOUNCIL.CA](http://WWW.MANITOBAHORSECOUNCIL.CA) OR CALL US AT 204 925-5719**



# OWNING YOUR OWN HORSE. ARE YOU READY?

Many adult beginners and parents whose children want to ride are under the misconception that they must immediately incur the costs of purchasing a horse. Or, they have taken some riding lessons and think the next step must be to purchase a horse. While most riders dream of owning their own, purchasing a horse is not a decision which needs to be or should be hurried.

Horses are a lot of work and the responsibility and owning one costs considerably more than just taking riding lessons.

Even if you are ready to take on the cost and the time investment to own a horse you must have the necessary skills and knowledge to care for and safely handle it. The good news is that there are options for riders who want a taste of horse ownership without the long term commitment.

## **PART BOARD**

Part boarding is an arrangement whereby a rider enters into an agreement with the horse owner to share the use of the horse for a specified time period each week. For example, a typical part board can be 3 days a week one of which the part boarder is required to take a lesson. The owner is responsible for the financial cost of the care and upkeep of the horse. This can be an ideal situation for both owner and rider who cannot commit the time required to keep a horse fit on their own.

## **LEASING**

Leasing is an arrangement which more closely resembles horse ownership. Some horse owners will lease horses for a specified time such as six months or a year. During that time the lessee will be responsible for the care and upkeep of the horse including housing and feed, veterinary costs and farrier. Leasing is often chosen when riders are ready to move up a level and need a seasoned horse to help them achieve their rider goals. Whether you decide to own, part-board or lease a horse, consult with your riding coach/instructor first. They will be able to assess your abilities and requirements that will enable you to move up to the next level. It is essential to have a knowledgeable, trustworthy horse person to help you find a horse that is a good physical match and fits your personality, skills and goals. They will help you determine if the horse is healthy and capable of doing what you will be asking it to do.

The best way to develop your skills and help you determine your ideal horse partner is to ride a variety of horses. Riding different horses will develop skills, make you adaptable and gives you the opportunity to meet different types of horses.

# DO YOU SPEAK HORSE?

Horses are very sensitive animals and have an uncanny knack of picking up on the feelings of its riders and handlers. The best horse whisperers are ones that can read a horse's body language, who understand their nature and act calmly and quietly around them. Horses are herd animals and feel most secure when they are in that environment. They are timid and their instinct is to flee when sensing trouble. Their hearing is very acute and so is their sense of smell which enables them to detect things from far off. Here are some signs which may let you know how your horse is feeling.

**EARS ALERT AND FORWARD** Ears pricked alert and facing forward indicates the horse is happy and interested.

**EARS FLAT AND BACK** Ears laid flat back against the neck show the horse is unhappy or annoyed.

**EARS LOWERED** Ears lowered slightly to the sides show the horse is relaxed, bored or may show it is unwell.

**FLICKERING EARS** Flickering ears indicates that the horse is listening and attentive.



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## BACK TO LESSONS PACKAGES

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## LADIES' SHOW APPAREL PACKAGE

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