

## Preparing the horse-Tacking Up

- Locate grooming bag, bridle, saddle, girth, pad(s), lead rope etc
- Is horse in stall or paddock? Is halter on? Use cross ties or tie in stall.
- Remove blanket, fly sheet, or mask. Set aside, out of the way or hang up
- Groom horse: Curry 1st, then stiff brush, then soft body brush. Start on left side at shoulder, then neck, front legs, back, barrel, belly, rump, back legs
- Use fingers for mane and tail: untangle, remove dirt, grass, other stuff.....
- Clean brushes outside or in stall: rub two together or against rough surface
- Pick hooves-then sweep up mess and put in muck bucket
- Use fly spray in summer. Start at the feet, shoulders, then work towards tail.
- Apply splint boots if needed.
- Place saddle pad. If using thick fleece pad, use first, then add thin square pad. Place saddle just behind withers, pull pad(s) into gullet of the saddle so not touching withers. Make sure all pad keepers are in place.
- Attach girth to the RIGHT side and run through pad keeper. Check saddle placement by measuring distance between leg and hanging girth...need 4 inches or one hand width
- From left or near side, tighten girth very slowly, buckle loosely.
- Put on helmet, gloves and half chaps
- Detach left side cross tie and hook halter around horse's neck. Unbuckle reins and put bridle on, *careful to avoid scraping eyes*. Pull forelock out of headstall
- Fasten noseband (caveson) and throat latch if available.
- Check browband for straightness. Use keepers to secure all straps. Remove halter and hang up. Return cross tie snaps so they don't touch the ground.

## Arena Use and Riding

- Before entering the arena, announce "DOOR". Wait for a response.
- If needed, get whip from rack
- At mounting block, run stirrups down and adjust length. Tighten girth, then buckle the reins and place them over horse's head
- Mounting- always from the NEAR side, place left hand with reins just in front of the saddle, place right hand on the cantle (back) of the saddle.
- Make sure horse stands still until YOU ask to walk off.
- Riding- Warm up and cool down at walk on a long rein at least twice around. Pass left shoulder to left shoulder, unless circling. Pass with plenty of space between horses. Communicate with other riders in the arena (announce circling, changing rein). Dismount on the NEAR side.

## Un-tacking

- After you dismount, un-buckle reins, run up stirrups, return whip to rack, pick out hooves before walking down aisle.
- Return to cross ties and place halter over your shoulder
- Un-do throat latch and noseband. Remove bridle- if using a bit, allow the horse to drop it slowly to avoid hitting his teeth-do not pull.
- Put halter on immediately after removing bridle and attach cross ties.
- If using a bit, clean off in water bucket. Hang up neatly. The bridle should hang on the hook with the browband facing out.
- Detach girth from both sides and remove pad keepers. Return saddle and pads. If you are leaving the saddle on, please loosen the girth 2-3 holes.
- Remove splint boots.
- Brush horse to remove any saddle marks.
- If horse is sweaty, hose off or use clean water in a small bucket and a body sponge. Sweep the wash rack before hosing.
- Put on blanket or fly sheet.
- If returning horse to paddock, (in summer put fly mask on), check outdoor water. Be sure gate latch is closed!
- If returning horse to stall, check water and hay. Pick out stall if necessary. Remove halter and hang up.
- Make sure all gates and doors are closed (stalls, paddock, bathroom, etc)
- Return to arena to clean up manure. Return ground poles if used

Optional but helpful barn chores: sweeping, removing cobwebs, filling water buckets, filling wheelbarrows with bedding chips, tack cleaning, manure clean up anywhere, anytime.

**IMPORTANT: Ask questions!**

**Praise horse often!**

**Have fun!**