

VOLUNTEER HAND BOOK

DISCOVER AND FULFILL YOUR POTENTIAL
THROUGH THE WAY OF THE HORSE





Welcome to Chariot Riders!

Thank you for interest in becoming a volunteer at Chariot. This manual will start you on the right path with the information and tools you will need to be an effective and productive volunteer. Our hope is that reading the manual and attending the orientation and training will provide you with a solid foundation that will enable you to become an important part of Chariot and that your time spent with us will be safe, fun and rewarding. Chariot Riders appreciates all of our volunteers. Without you and the gift of your time, energy and skills, we would not be able to offer these valuable services to our community.

About PATH

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, PATH Intl. is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists. Through our certification and accreditation programs, plus a wide variety of educational resources that includes an annual international conference that can attract close to 1,000 attendees, the association helps members start and maintain successful EAS programs. There are more than 61,500 volunteers, 4,776 credentialed professionals, 7,900 equines and thousands of contributors from all over the world at PATH Intl. Member Centers inspiring and enriching the human spirit. For more information about PATH visit their website at www.pathintl.org

Chariot Riders

Chariot serves approximately 100 participants each week. The disabilities you may encounter include: developmental delays, ADHD, traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities, Autism/PDD, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, sight or hearing impairment, spinal cord injury, stroke/CVA, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, arthrogryposis, angelmans syndrome, epilepsy, charge syndrome, speech and language delays, Prader Willi paraplegia, Russell-Silver Syndrome, Noonans syndrome, Fragile X Sensory integration dysfunction, Rett syndrome, and Klippel-Feil Static Encephalopathy.

Instructors

Chariot instructors are in charge of all lessons. All directions come from the instructor, including the assignment of rider to horse, volunteers to rider, method of mounting and the structure of the lesson.

Unless notified otherwise, all volunteers must defer to the instructor's decisions. This is extremely important to ensure everyone's safety. During therapy sessions the instructor is there to ensure the safety of everyone involved including the client, volunteers, therapist and horse. The therapist directs the session. At various times there may be a Student Instructor teaching the class, but always under direct supervision of a Chariot instructor. All Chariot instructors are NARHA certified.

Programs at Chariot

Therapeutic riding is a recreational program designed to provide beneficial physical activity and emotional benefit through learning and applying horsemanship skills. Although learning riding skills is the goal, riders may develop improved balance, stamina and coordination. The emotional or psychological benefits are many as the riders strive to meet the challenges of riding their horse.

Hippo therapy is a treatment tool whereby a licensed occupational, physical, or speech therapist uses a horse in sessions to help achieve a client's goals and objectives. Licensed therapists of each discipline are cross-trained in the movement and behavior of the horse and in the application of the horses' movement as an innovative tool in therapy. The three dimensional, rhythmic movement achieved while a client sits astride a horse is unique and facilitates improvements in motor, sensory and cognitive domains. The sensory input that a client is challenged with during a hippo therapy session cannot be reproduced in traditional clinic settings, making the horse a valuable part of rehabilitative treatment.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) incorporates horses experientially for emotional growth and learning. The participants learn about themselves and others by participating in challenging ground activities with the horses and then process or discuss the feelings, behaviors and patterns they observed.

Chariot Day Camp is an inclusive equestrian day camp for children with disabilities and able-bodied children. The camp has attained full approval as a youth camp from both state and county health departments. In addition to daily riding lessons and learning horsemanship skills, campers participate in games, crafts and other equine activities.

Vaulting is an interactive group session where participants learn gymnastics, games and social problem solving around and on the horse.



VOLUNTEERING AT CHARIOT

Commitment

Regardless of the service you perform, it is your commitment that needs to be stressed. A program without strong commitment from its volunteers will not survive. If you have made a commitment to assist during lessons, our riders and instructors rely on you to follow through. No one is more disappointed than a rider who comes for a lesson, only to find that he/she can't ride because of a lack of volunteers.

Please keep in mind:

Come each week on your assigned day. Plan to arrive at the time listed on the registration form which allows time for grooming and tacking the horses before the lessons begin. PLEASE **call** the office and mark the attendance sheets with a letter A (for absent) if you know you are going to be absent in advance. Please give as much notice as possible when you know you are going to be absent to allow the volunteer coordinators time to find a substitute. Remember that riders can be very disappointed when they are unable to ride due to a lack of volunteers.

Lessons are held rain or shine

Confidentiality

Chariot maintains a strict policy of confidentiality. All volunteers are asked to respect our clients' privacy in any setting away from lessons. This includes avoiding discussion of riders by name or in any way that might disclose their identity or their disability. Chariot preserves the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.

Physical Fitness

Volunteers assisting in our therapeutic riding lessons or hippo therapy sessions need to be able to walk with and/or help support a rider for up to 45 minutes, and in many cases will be asked to run along slowly as the horse trots for a few minutes at a time. If you have physical limitations that prevent you from meeting these requirements, you should ask your instructor to find you a less strenuous job such as grooming and tacking up horses for the next lesson, or ask to rotate with another volunteer.

Attire

Wear outdoor clothes suitable to the season, including comfortable waterproof footwear. Open toed shoes are prohibited. Because of temperature variations, layering of clothing is a reasonably sure way of being comfortable. High socks can offer some protection against ticks and overgrowth on the trails. Avoid wearing loose, baggy clothes and jewelry, which could get caught in the tack. Long hair should be pulled back. Avoid wearing any perfumes- this may irritate the horses and riders or attract insects.

Experience

Volunteers at Chariot come in all ages, 13 years and older, and a variety of experience levels. Many volunteers have no horse experience, while others may have years of experience. We strive for a TEAM approach to volunteering. Everyone's here to learn and to share his or her knowledge in order to make it a great experience for every volunteer and rider involved. We urge you to speak up if you are uncomfortable with a certain situation or rider. This is a "learning by doing" position. Do not feel intimidated if you don't know something- just ask- we love questions! We ask all volunteers, even those with horse experience, to do things the "Chariot way" to allow for consistency with our horses

Volunteer Input

Your comments about riders, instructors and/or horses are very valuable to us. If you have any concerns, suggestions, or comments, please feel free to contact your instructor or the Volunteer Coordinator. All conversations will be held in confidence. We are grateful for your willingness to share insights and information regarding our programs.

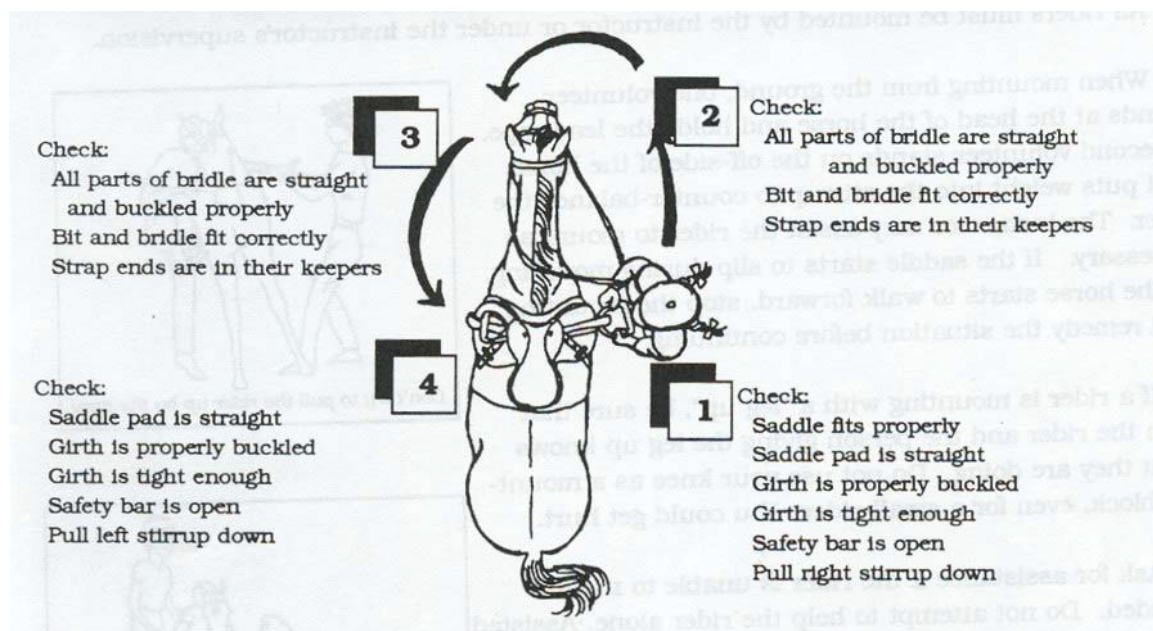
A Day in the Life of a Volunteer Arriving at the barn

Check off your name on the attendance sheet in the Lesson Book. Put on a nametag- it helps the instructor, other volunteers and the riders learn your name. Check the saddling list for horses to groom. Prepare the horse with a thorough grooming on the cross ties either in the aisle or the wash stall. Set out the tack for each horse at their stall. Tack the horse according to saddling list in the lesson book. When girthing a horse, the girth should be done loosely at first, then tightened in stages; never pulled tight all at once. It will be tightened a final time by the instructor just before entering the mounting ramp. Also be aware of the horse's long winter hair and try not to get it caught in the buckle!

SAFE TACKING AND UNTACKING

- Think of a horse as having a 6-foot “danger zone” surrounding it. Within 6 feet, the horse can kick, buck, cowkick (kick to the side), bite, or rear – and you or a student can be seriously injured. Approach the “danger zone” with caution.
 - If you must walk behind a horse, approach from the side, touch the horse and speak to it. Keep touching it as you walk very closely around the horse.
 - Warn a horse that you are approaching. Use your voice and a gentle touch. Approach from the side, NEVER from the rear.
 - When standing next to a horse, stand VERY close. If the horse kicks, he can't kick very hard if you are close.
 - Keep your feet away from the horse's hooves and from beneath the horse. You might get stepped on.
 - Never walk under a horse's neck (it might rear from fright). Never walk under a horse. You might not be that short, but some children are.
 - Never stand directly in front of a horse except to hold the horse for a rider. Never stand behind a horse for any reason.
 - Hand feeding is an invitation to have your fingers bitten. After the food is gone, your fingers still carry the smell. A horse can't tell the difference between a carrot and a finger that smells like a carrot. Keep your hands away from the horse's mouth. ALL horses bite!
 - Don't yell, run or make sudden movements near a horse. Be slow and gentle.
- Keep horses well away from each other at all times. Fighting horses are a danger to everyone nearby. Keep an eye on their heads and rear ends. If the ears are flattened, the horse is about to fight. If he lifts his leg, he is getting ready to kick. **DO NOT ALLOW HORSES TO SNIFF EACH OTHER.**
- Never tie a horse to the arena or fences. Use the tie rails or hold the horse.
- Always use a halter to tie a horse in the crosssties. NEVER tie a horse by his bit. NEVER tie a horse by his reins.
- Always lead a horse by his lead rope and halter, not by the reins.
- If a tied horse rears or pulls back, or otherwise acts upset, **STAY AWAY**. Let the instructor handle the problem. A panicked horse is very dangerous.

HOW TO DO A SAFETY CHECK



Why do we do a safety check before we mount?

No matter how carefully we check when we saddle the horse, or how many times we have done it before, there is always the possibility that we overlooked something. An incorrectly fitted saddle or saddle pad can irritate or hurt the horse, and an unhappy horse may hurt the rider. A loose girth will cause the saddle to slip when mounting or riding. If the bridle is not properly fitted and buckled, it may come off while riding. An extra minute is all it takes to do a safety check by walking around the horse before mounting and following the steps shown above.

Mounting

Never mount a horse while the horse is tied. If the horse pulls back, the rider and the horse could be injured. Never mount next to a fence, car, another horse, or any solid object that the rider could be thrown into. Never mount on pavement.

Lead an unmounted horse on your right. Use two hands – the right hand should be about 6 inches below the snap, and the left hand holds the FOLDED (not coiled) end of the lead rope. Don't let the lead rope drag on the ground. It could trip you or your horse could step on it. Don't throw it over your shoulder. It could get tangled and choke you.

Always check the girth for tightness before mounting or helping a student to mount. Check that the saddle and bridle are placed properly on the horse, the stirrups are the correct length and are down, and that nothing is broken or worn. **MAKE SURE THE RIDER HAS HELMET ON SECURELY.** Don't assume that someone else will do this. Better to check twice than not at all.

All riders must be mounted by the instructor or under the instructor's supervision.

When mounting from the ground, one volunteer stands at the head of the horse and holds the lead rope. A second volunteer stands on the off-side of the horse and puts weight into the stirrup to counter-balance the rider. The instructor may assist the rider to mount as necessary. If the saddle starts to slip or the horse starts to walk forward during mounting, stop the mounting and remedy the situation before continuing.

If a rider is mounting with a "leg up", be sure that both the rider and the person giving the leg up know what they are doing. Do not use your knee as a mounting block, even for a small rider. You could get hurt.

Ask for assistance if the rider is unable to mount unaided. Do not attempt to help the rider alone. Assisted mounting from the mounting ramp is always done by the instructor or therapist. You may be asked to assist on the opposite side of the horse.

When assisting at the ramp, stand on the block, not on the ground. It is dangerous to be standing between the block and the horse, especially if the horse spooks or moves.

Students should never be in the arena other than when mounted except to mount or dismount and leave the arena, or as part of a supervised activity.

The arena gates must be closed and latched at all times when there are horses in the arena.

During the Warm up

Volunteers may hold conversations while the riders are warming up, but are urged to: Remain aware of the rider's safety at all times. Include the rider in the conversation. Choose appropriate topics, keeping the rider's interests in mind.

Leading

If you are leading a horse, walk between the horse's head and shoulder, NOT in front of the horse. When leading or holding a horse with a mounted rider, always inform the rider BEFORE moving or changing directions. Avoid sharp turns or sudden stops. Allow the rider to initiate all movement if possible. Give the rider time to give commands to the horse. ALWAYS let the rider do as much as possible.

Help your rider if he or she needs it, but first allow plenty of time for the rider to perform independently. Responses often take longer than we expect. Allow the rider to perform at his or her own pace. But do make sure the rider understands the instructor.

Riders should always stay at least 2 horse lengths apart from each other, whether moving or standing still. If your rider's horse gets too close to another horse, ask the rider to circle or cross to the other side of the arena.

When passing another horse, always pass on the inside (the side closest to the center of the arena) and at least 6 feet away from the horse being passed. Do not circle a horse near another horse. Watch that no other horses are in the way.

All horses should be going in the same direction. If one rider reverses, all riders must reverse. A reverse is always made by turning in toward the center of the arena. Never trot a horse up to or past a walking horse. Never canter up to or past a walking or trotting horse. When leading a rider in the arena, always walk on the inside (closest to the center of the arena). Do not allow the horse to get too close to the fence.

In The Arena

It is very important to pay attention to the rider and instructor. Don't chat with riders or other volunteers while the class is in session. Be friendly, answer direct questions from the rider briefly, but keep your ears on the instructor and your eyes on the rider. You may reinforce what the instructor is saying by showing the rider or touching the appropriate area. Try not to talk. If you are talking, you might miss an emergency instruction.

Never *yank* on the reins or lead rope to stop the horse. Pull slowly and steadily on the lead rope or reins. Yanking frightens the horse and can cause rearing or backing up. If a horse pulls back, do not resist. Move with him, holding the lead rope. The harder you pull a horse, the harder he will resist you.

NEVER HIT OR KICK A HORSE. If a horse is misbehaving, call the instructor for help. If the horse or rider you are working with is nervous or upset, walk the horse to the center of the arena and ask the instructor if you should dismount the rider. Horses should be calm and riders should be alert. If this is not the case, bring it to the instructor's attention immediately. If you aren't comfortable for any reason with your horse or rider, tell the instructor immediately. You are often the first person to be aware of a potential problem. Trust your instincts.

During classes, horses should not stand at the rail (fence) except under the instructor's directions. If your rider needs to stop, come off the rail and move to the center of the arena so you don't block the movement of other riders. If a horse is running away, (with or without a rider) STAY CALM. Do not yell and do not run. Halt *your* rider and stay with him/her. Wait for instructions from the instructor.

If you are not with a student, but are spotting, walk slowly toward where the horse is running to and wait for instructions. If another rider has a problem or a fall, DON'T rush to assist. Stay with your rider and listen for instructions. The instructor will handle the problem and ask for assistance if needed. The rider you are assisting is YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY.

If your rider falls, the horse leader or leader/side walker is responsible for the horse, not the rider. A loose horse is a danger to every rider in the arena. Stop the horse, get it away from the rider and call for the instructor. The side walker stays with the rider until the instructor arrives, and then follows the directions of the instructor.

When dismounting to the ground unassisted, make sure the rider takes BOTH feet out of the stirrups before lowering himself to the ground. Assisted dismounts should always be done by the instructor.

During the Lesson

To avoid distracting or confusing the rider, volunteers are asked to talk only when necessary once the lesson starts. The instructor will advise volunteers how to appropriately interact with the rider. Volunteers may need to prompt the rider and will be instructed as to the proper method to use. It is important to remember to give the rider time to process the request or command- some may need more time to process information and then respond. It is very important that only one side walker interacts with the rider- people talking from both sides may only confuse the rider. The instructor cannot see everything that is going on. Relate pertinent observations to the instructor.

Have fun!

We value the observations of the volunteers participating in lessons. Feel free to talk to the instructor before or after lessons if you have questions/comments about any student's progress. Every effort should be made to keep the lessons running on schedule. Work as a team when making tack or horse changes for maximum efficiency.



The Tack Room

The tack room is the building where we store saddles, bridles, reins and other horse related equipment, collectively known as “tack” A well-organized tack room makes the job of the volunteers easier. Knowing your way around the tack room and keeping things in order is vital to the smooth running of the program.

Rules for the tack room:

All saddles are numbered, as are the saddle racks. Saddles are to be stored on the same numbered rack. They are placed on the rack facing the wall, with the rear of the saddle facing you. Saddles can be covered by dry saddle pads to keep them free of dust. Saddle pads must be allowed to dry out before putting them away. English and dressage girths are stored separately from the saddles. DO NOT leave them attached to the saddle. All girths are numbered. Try to put them back on the girth rack in numerical order. EG girths are English Girths and are stored on the top rack. DG girths are Dressage Girths and are stored on the bottom rack.

Each horse has his own bridle combination and bit. They are stored on bridle racks on the wall. Each rack has a horse's name above it. . Please be careful to put the bridles away under the correct name. Reins are stored on their own rack. DO NOT leave them attached to the halter. Grooming tools are kept in grooming box. The tools are shared by all the horses. After you use a tool, please put it back in the grooming box. Thank you for keeping our tack room neat and clean.

Always leave tack/barn area clean

After lessons

Return all tack to its proper place.

During hot weather horses may need to be walked until they are cool or bathed.

Brush or wash the saddle area if needed.

Assist the instructor in turning out the horses Return your nametag.

Sweep Barn area

Record your hours in the community service book. If you would like to receive credit for community service hours, it is **YOUR** responsibility to fill out the appropriate form and have it signed by a Chariot staff member each time you volunteer.

The Equines at Chariot

All program horses are evaluated before being accepted into the program and are trained to accept new equipment and props they may encounter at Chariot during their trial period. They receive regular schooling and conditioning and are evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they remain appropriate for the program. Always remember horses are horses, with the nature and innate responses of a horse. Humans must learn to understand “herd mentality”. The horse should respect the human handler as if he or she were the lead horse. Leaders during lessons must learn to be the alpha horse to gain the respect of the horse they are working with. This must be done with confidence and without using force or aggression. Horses are easy to handle if they are trained consistently and if you understand why they behave as they do. If you're not consistent with the horses they may become confused or unwilling. Chariot strives to keep all handling of the horses the same.

“Horse Sense”

Horses are herd animals with a distinct pecking order. Horses, being a prey animal, react to danger by fleeing.

Horses can't see directly in front of them or directly behind them. Horses are creatures of habit and learn best by repetition.

Horses move away from pressure and resist force.

Horses show their moods by their ears and by their body language.

Horses are inclined to take cues from an identified leader, whether horse or human.

Horses learn to trust and follow the lead of the one in the herd that has earned their respect.

Horses are highly social animals.

Horses not only respond to voice commands, they also respond to “tone of voice”.

Horses instinctively know when another horse (or human) is their equal, their superior, or one that can be dominated.

To the horse, you are just another two-legged animal.

Body language

Horses communicate with each other using body language. Humans can also communicate with horses using body language. Horses learn to read humans quite easily. In a herd, horses will take their cue from the lead horse and react accordingly. In our situation, the person leading the horse should be the "lead horse". A strong and confident leader will tell the horse that he or she should be following the cues of the human leader. Precise and consistent cues from the leader will keep the horse alert and responsive to what is being asked of them. There must be no confusion over who is in charge. It is not about physical size and strength, it's about confidence. Humans ask for respect from horses, just as horses ask for respect from humans. It starts by respecting their space- don't always be in their face, don't reach into their stalls and don't groom them

in their stalls unless absolutely necessary. Firm and consistent handling in the ring allows horses to respond in calm and respectful way. It is a mutual respect that provides the best relationships between horses and humans!

Horse Lingo

A big part of being consistent with the horses is using the same language. If everyone uses the same words and terms during all handling the horses will better understand what is being asked of them.

Walk on is used to ask the horse to move forward at the walk.

Whoa (or Ho) is used to stop the horse.

Easy is used when you want the horse to slow down.

Stand is used when a horse is fidgety and not standing quietly.

Trot is used to ask a horse to trot.

Tone of voice is also very important. A quiet, gentle tone can be used to soothe a nervous horse. A firm and assertive tone can command a quick response from the horse. These words should be used while grooming and tacking, in the warm- up and during the lessons. Consistency is the key to success with this herd.

The Movement of the Horse

The horse's movement is the key to what happens in hippo therapy at Chariot. The horse's walk provides sensory input through movement that is variable, rhythmic and repetitive. The horse's walk is also similar to the way a human pelvis moves while walking, allowing the movement of the horse (the horse's walk) to "teach" a human pelvis how to walk. The movement can be modified or adjusted for each client's specific needs. The horse's movement becomes a very valuable therapy tool. It is the responsibility of the leader to create the highest quality movement with each horse. Quality movement is easy to attain if the leader handles the horses in a manner consistent with Chariot training.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Leader

Volunteers who come to our program with horse handling experience may be asked to be horse leaders. As a leader, the volunteer is responsible for handling the horse throughout the mounting procedure, the lesson and dismounting.

Horses are extremely aware of and sensitive to the person leading them. A leader's manner of walking on briskly or just sauntering along can greatly affect how the horse will respond and how effective the rider's lesson will be.

Methods of Leading

Active leading - The leader is totally responsible for all movements of the horse. The horse is getting all aids from the leader, not the rider. This type of leading is primarily used in Hippo therapy, for riders doing exercises or brand new riders. Program horses are trained to look to the leader for directions if none are coming from the rider.

Supportive leading - The horse is still on lead, but the leader is not actively giving the horse aids. The rider will be giving the horse aids for walk-on, halt and rein aids for steering, but may not be proficient enough to be completely independent. In this way, the rider can practice skills while the leader makes sure the horse is following the cues given by the rider.

Passive leading on or off lead - The leader continues to stay by the horse's head, but virtually does nothing to control the horse. When the rider is ready the lead line will be removed. This is a big step for many riders. It's their first big move to independence and while they are actually riding independently, the leader is still very close by to help out when necessary.

Spotter - the leader is asked to take the horse off lead and stand in the center of the ring. Spotters watch one rider/horse at all times during the lesson. While it may seem a non-active job, spotters are extremely important to independent riders. They must be ready to assist instantly if the rider or instructor needs their help. The primary responsibility of the leader is the horse and: making sure the horse is groomed and tacked properly, warming up the horse in the ring before the lesson, to control and calm the horse in an emergency situation, and **to help the horse follow the cues from the rider or in hippo therapy, to follow the directions of the therapist.**

Most riders who have leaders are unable to fully control their horses. It is the leader who must help in guiding: stopping and starting without making the rider feel that they are simply a passenger. The rider must be allowed to do as much as possible with the leader helping only when necessary.

Do's and Don'ts of Leading

Do walk the horse actively in the ring before the rider mounts. This loosens up the horse's muscles and "wakes him up" so he will be ready to work when the rider gets on.

Do lead the horse as close to the mounting ramp as possible and help him to stand squarely. Stand in front of the horse to keep him still while his rider mounts. Stand in front of and facing the horse whenever the horse is asked to stand still for any period of time.

Don't ask the horse to walk before making sure the rider is ready to move and the instructor has given the o.k.

Don't give the horse a command before the rider has had a chance to try it himself, but...

Do encourage the horse to follow the rider's command as soon as possible.

Do watch the rider and allow the horse to follow the rider's cues.

Do keep your focus on the horse but be aware of the rider as well.

Don't wrap the extra lead rope around your hand, instead... Hold the lead rope in two hands with the extra lead folded in your hand.

Don't have a "death grip" on the lead rope too close to the horse's head.

Do allow the horse's head to move in a natural rhythm.

Don't let the extra lead rope dangle where it might trip you or the horse.

Don't drag the horse behind you...

Do use short quick forward snaps of the lead to get the horse to move quicker.

Do lead from between the horse's head and shoulder, on the side of the horse nearest the center of the ring.

Don't lead the horse too close to the wall...this squashes your side walkers and makes them quite unhappy.

Do use the entire ring... don't cut corners.

Do lead at an even, steady pace.

Don't stop suddenly.

Don't make sharp turns. Always have two horse lengths between you and the horse in front of you.

Do get your horse in a brisk walk before asking him to trot.

Don't pick up balls, cones, poles etc. - remain focused on the horse during activities.

Do alert the instructor immediately if the horse is being difficult, making you uncomfortable, or if you see **ANY** unsafe situation.

Don't pull against the horse if they are scared and backing up in a panicked state. Instead follow them speaking to them in a calm voice while gently asking them to stop with the lead rope.

Do wait until all riders have left the ring and then lead your horse back into the barn. Check the list, then untack him and put him in his stall if he won't be used for the next lesson. If he will be used again, check the list to determine if a tack change is necessary. Horses that will be used for the next lesson should stay in the ring or return to the ring after tack changes.

Side walker

Side walkers are volunteers who directly assist the rider during the lesson. A side walker's responsibility is the safety and well being of the rider at all times. Side walkers can be actively involved in maintaining the rider's balance, reinforcing the instructor's directions or giving the rider moral support. Riders may be assigned 1 or 2 side walkers depending on their needs. Some riders do not require any side walkers. The side walker's attention must at all times be focused on the rider. Communication between side walkers should not interfere with the instructor's directions. Side walkers may communicate with the horse leader or each other in regard to the rider's balance. In an emergency situation, the side walker stays with the rider unless otherwise directed by the instructor.

Methods of Side walking

Single Arm lock - the side walker places their forearm closest to the rider over the rider's thigh, grasping the front of the saddle, pad or surcingle with their fingertips.

Double Arm lock - The side walker places their forearm closest to the rider over the rider's thigh and the other hand holds the rider's heel or ankle in place.

Ankle Hold - The side walker holds the rider's ankle to stabilize the rider's lower leg.

Passive Side walking - The side walker walks alongside the rider and is available for moral support, reinforcing directions or physical assistance when needed.

Spotter - The side walker is asked to spot the rider from the center of the ring. Safety belts- Waist belts are sometimes used for a rider that needs more trunk support. It is important to remember not to pull down on the belt as this may unbalance the rider.

Riders with two side walkers that are providing arm locks for the entire lesson may need to change sides to avoid tired arms. To do this: (a) ask the horse leader and rider to halt in the middle of the ring, (b) side walker "one" walks to the opposite side and takes over that side, (c) *then* side walker "two" walks around to the other side, (d) riding resumes. The rider should never be without one side walker providing an arm lock while at the halt. If a rider has 2 side walkers and the instructor asks for his/her instructions to be reinforced to the rider, only one side walker should do the talking so the rider does not get confused.

Dos and Don'ts of Side walking

Do talk to your rider in the mounting area before he is mounted, and in the ring before lessons begin,

Don't talk about inappropriate subjects or use inappropriate language.

Do ask the instructor/therapist what type of hold the rider requires.

Don't change the hold because your rider tells you to, always check with the instructor first.

Don't use too much or too little pressure when performing an arm lock; allow the weight of your arm to rest on the rider's leg

Do an immediate arm lock on any rider if an unexpected situation arises.

Do let the instructor/therapist know if your arm is tired and you need to switch sides.

Do make sure both side walkers are doing the same hold.

Don't rest your arm on the horse's side or hindquarters or lean into the horse with your elbow.

Don't hit the horse or "tickle" it in the flank to get it to trot.

Don't lag behind.

Don't pull on clothing or waist belt of the rider as this unbalances him.

Don't talk to the rider or other volunteers during the lesson while the instructor is talking, but...

Do reinforce the instructor's directions if necessary, and

Do give appropriate praise to the rider.

Do redirect the rider's attention back to the instructor if they are not paying attention.

Do have only one side walker assist the rider verbally... too many people talking may just confuse or overwhelm the rider. Give only as much support as the rider requires, both physically and cognitively!

Do allow the riders to attempt to perform each activity as independently as possible. Let them be challenged!

Do keep your focus on the rider at all times.

Don't stop to tie your shoelace without warning.

Do let the instructor know if the rider is becoming agitated or seems nervous.

Don't allow the rider to dismount until the instructor is at his side; and

Do not remove the rider's feet from the stirrups until the instructor has asked you to.

Do alert the instructor immediately if you see **ANY** unsafe situation with your rider or another rider.

After dismounting,

Do walk with your rider back to the lobby, help him put away his helmet, and find his parent/guardian before you leave him.

Don't reprimand a rider- bring any behaviors to the attention of the instructor.

General Dos and Don'ts

Do remove the lead rope after the horse is secure on the cross ties.

Don't put a horse in the stall unattended with a bridle on.

Never attach cross-ties to the bit. Always attach to the halter.

Do approach any horse from the side or front, speaking to them to alert them to your presence. Never approach them from the rear.

Do put the bridle on last, and take it off first.

When working with a rider grooming or tacking the horse, always stay by the rider's side to reinforce safety rules.

Don't play with the horses' faces or mouths.

Do make tack changes as quickly as possible between lessons.

Do alert the instructor if you find a piece of tack that is broken or needs repair.

Don't change assignments without the instructor's approval.

Don't coach the riders- let the teacher teach the skills.

Don't talk about horse behaviors in front of the riders or comment in a negative way to others.

Do open the stall doors all the way when taking a horse through, and close the doors all the way when leaving the stall after you've put the horse back in.

Do allow the horses to have "quiet time" in their stalls. Try to groom and tack all horses on the cross ties whenever possible. Let their stalls be the place where they can relax and not be bothered by humans.

Do not change the bridle- if you have a concern with the way a bridle fits, bring it to the attention of the instructor.

Do use the 15 minute break between lessons to get a quick drink.

Do feel free to make any suggestions/comments to the instructor or ask questions after the lesson, out of the presence of riders and their parents.

Do HAVE FUN!

From the Therapy Horses Point of View

We, the hard-working therapy horses at Chariot, have a few pet peeves we'd like to share with you. Not that we're complaining mind you, it's just that we'd like for you to try to understand our point of view. We love our jobs! We enjoy people and are very proud that we can help so many of our riders accomplish so many things! But we do get burned out...

Groom on the cross-ties

Our stalls are our sanctuary- it's where we can go to get away from everybody and relax. Just imagine having 3 or 4 people crowd into your space and invade your privacy or "quiet time". This is why we ask that you groom and tack us on cross-ties. Respect our privacy.

Leave my face alone!

Please know that you may be invading my personal space when you constantly bother with my face. I may love having it brushed but please don't poke and prod me in the face. When you fuss with my mouth I think you want to play with me because that's how I play with my other horse friends, but I'm afraid that I may get too rough and bite you or one of my riders!

Don't smother me when I am fidgeting

Sometimes I get impatient and want to walk away or not stand quietly when I am supposed to. Please don't hang on my face to keep me standing quietly- I hate that and want to get away from you even more. Instead tell me to "stand" in a firm voice. DO NOT HIT ME- this only makes me more nervous and fidgety!

Don't cut off my air supply

We would appreciate it if you would attach the girth just tight enough to keep the saddle on during the warm-up. And be careful when buckling the girth- I may have long winter hair and there's nothing worse than when it hurts to walk because my hair is pinched in the buckle!

Make sure my clothes fit

Please make sure that the saddle pad you are using fits properly. It should extend 2-3" beyond the front and back of the saddle. If the pad is too short and ends under the saddle it rubs me and creates a really sore spot on my back!

Bridling

Putting a bridle on is a skill that every person should know how to do properly. Jamming the bit against my teeth will not make me open my mouth, in fact, I will probably lift my head to get away from you next time! Slide your finger into the corner of my mouth and “tickle” my tongue to get me to open my mouth. Then gently slide the bit in while raising the bridle over my ears. Also be careful when taking off the bridle. Gently slide the bridle over my ears and let it slide down along my face so the bit drops gently out of my mouth. Bringing the bridle forward away from my face twists the bit in my mouth and hurts the roof of my mouth and my teeth.

“Whatever”

Inconsistency is the biggest annoyance with us horses. We’ve got many different people doing the same thing many different ways- that’s really hard for us! We thrive on consistency. We need to know what is expected of us and need to have our boundaries clearly defined. That’s why the staff wants you to do things their way.

Respect

Respect our space and we’ll respect yours. Be aware of personal space at all times especially when leading.

Leading

Leading is such an important job! It’s important for you to understand what makes a good leader. A good leader is somebody who is very aware of me and what I am doing at all times. I admit that sometimes some of us are lazy... but constantly dragging us to make us go faster isn’t going to work! I outweigh you by 1000 pounds- do you really think you’re going to “pull” me faster? When you drag me, my head goes up and my back hollows out- this really makes it uncomfortable for the rider and will eventually lead to a sore back for me. Remember the quality of the movement is what makes therapeutic riding and hippo therapy work. Ask the instructor or a staff member how to make a lazy horse move along better. Use your voice as an aid and use your body language to let me know what I am supposed to be doing. Don’t just slam on the brakes when the instructor says stop. Shift your weight back and apply several gentle downward tugs on the lead before asking me to halt. It’s as if you need to give me a hint before you ask me to do or change something. Same thing when we are going to go faster- ask me to walk at a brisker pace and then glide into the trot- don’t burst into the trot! When we halt, respect my space and don’t hang onto my head. If you stay calm and cool chances are I will too! The key to a good leader is communication between you and the horse. Think of it as the human leads, the horse follows. We prefer you to be as gentle as possible but as firm as necessary.

Side walking

Again, respect my space! I know that sometimes you need to provide lots of support to your rider but don’t forget about me! It’s really, really, really uncomfortable for me when you jab me with your elbow or when you constantly bump into my side. Horses find it much easier to do their job if you do yours properly and with consideration.

Understanding the Riders

In an effort to help volunteers understand why riding is so important to us, we would like to share some of our thoughts... First of all you should know what riding a horse does for us. Riding a horse is hard work and allows us to use many different muscles in different ways. The movement of the horse is the key to hippo therapy and even to therapeutic riding. There are so many physical benefits to riding a horse. The rhythmical and constant movement allows tight muscles to relax and weak muscles to strengthen. A horse’s pelvis moves in the same way that a human pelvis moves. Putting a human with walking difficulty

on a horse enables the horse to “teach” the human pelvis how to correctly move. Then there are the cognitive benefits... The movement of the horse can help stimulate areas of our brains or even help us organize our thoughts better. And wow, the incredible power we feel when we make the horse do something all by ourselves! The sense of accomplishment when we learn a new skill is amazing for our confidence and our egos! We can go on and on about all the good things riding does for us, but we need your help too! We depend on you to help us feel safe even when we’re nervous or scared. Sometimes if too many people are talking to us at once we’ll just tune everybody out- our brains just can’t handle it. We will not be able to process anything at all! It’s much easier for us if just one person works with us and helps guide us. We might depend on you to help us learn a new skill, but remember, if you always do it for us we’ll never be able to do it on our own and we really want to do it for our own satisfaction. Don’t feel bad for us if we fail some times- it may take us a while to get something but when we do imagine how great we will feel! Oh, and be very careful when you are holding the waist belt- sometimes it’s all we can do to maintain our own balance without somebody accidentally pulling us to one side!

We all like to have fun and hope that you have fun too, but remember that we are here to do more than just ride a horse: we are here to build muscles and coordination, learn skills that can carry over into our everyday lives, to be more independent and to be able to do things on our own! So please respect us and help us, but don’t do everything for us... Celebrate our accomplishments with us!

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency during a lesson, all leaders must immediately stop horses and assume halt position in front of horse. Side walkers must assume double arm-lock position on all riders.

If a rider loses his/her balance during a lesson:

- Leader stops horse.
- Side walkers try to keep rider in the saddle by stabilizing rider with arm-locks over the rider's thighs.
- If possible gently push the rider back into the saddle.

If a rider must be removed from the horse (Emergency Dismount):

- Leader should stop the horse and the rider will be dismounted to ground quickly and quietly. Designate which side walker will do the emergency dismount. This is most often the tallest/strongest or in some cases the one who is on the side that the rider is already falling to.
- Rider's feet should be removed from the stirrups. 2nd side walker will assist rider's leg over the horse.
- If the horse will not stand quietly; the leader should circle the horse around him/herself as the stronger side walker hugs the rider around the waist from behind and slides the rider off and away from the horse.
- Once rider has been dismounted, leader should circle the horse away from the rider (so hindquarters are NOT towards the rider) or back the horse away from the rider.

If a rider falls from the horse:

- Side walkers should make sure both of rider's feet are out of the stirrups.
- Side walkers should try to soften the rider's fall if possible.
- Leader should halt the horse and move the horse away from the fallen rider by either circling so that hindquarters are NOT towards rider or backing the horse away.
- NEVER move a fallen rider- wait for the instructor.

Things to keep in mind:

- Communicate with everyone involved in the emergency in a calm, concise manner.
- If a horse suddenly pulls backwards, DO NOT pull against him. Slowly and calmly follow the movement of the horse until he stops.

IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

The safety and well-being of all individuals is a priority. By following basic safety procedures, most emergencies can be avoided. However, if an emergency does occur, please try to remain calm. Take a deep breath. In all emergencies, only a trained individual may apply first aid (a staff member who is certified in first aid is always on site during program activities). A volunteer may be called upon to assist.

Below is a general list of guidelines to follow during an emergency:

1. Survey the scene for safety.
2. A staff member trained in First-Aid/CPR attends to the rider.
3. A volunteer may be asked to retrieve the First Aid kit and the blanket from the box in the tack room, or from the lounge.
4. The horse leader attends to the horse, leading it far from the rider if there has been a fall. Talking to the horse in a soft, soothing tone may assist in calming it.
5. If other participants are present, they should stop what they are doing and leave the scene if possible. The instructor will decide on a plan of action.
6. If further assistance is needed, a designated person will be instructed to call 911 and tell the dispatcher what happened, the condition of the injured person, what help is being given, the location of the injured person and directions to Chariot. Information is posted by the First Aid kit. A designated person will retrieve the injured person's medical file so that it is available for emergency and medical personnel.
7. A person will be designated to open all gates from accident site to end of driveway after all horses have been secured. This person will wait at the top of the driveway to tell EMS to turn off lights and sirens, and to direct them to the injured person.
8. Notify parent/guardian.

What to do when there's a Loose Horse What to Expect from a Loose Horse

- A single horse may want to remain with other horses.
- A horse will have a tendency to remain near or return to the barn or pasture area.
- If a group of horses are loose, try to identify the lead horse(s). If the lead is caught the rest of the horses may follow.

If a Horse is Loose

- DO NOT CHASE IT!
- Walk slowly, approaching the horse from the side.
- Talk in a low, soothing tone of voice.
- It may help to look at the ground when approaching the horse, so you are not a "threat".
- A small amount of grain may encourage the horse to wait or come to you.
- Put the lead rope over the horse's neck first, then put on the halter with the lead rope attached.
- Do not lead the horse with just the halter and no lead rope. You could be injured if the horse bolts.

Loose Horse in the Ring while other horses are being ridden

- **Have all riders halt on the rail.**
- **Horse leaders should attach lead ropes, if not already, and stand in front of the horse's head.**
- **Side walkers should remain with their rider and use an arm lock and prepare to assist with dismounts if the instructor decided to do so.**
- **If necessary, horse leaders will be asked to lead horses from the ring. Side walkers or designated volunteers will be asked to assist the riders to a safe location.**

Loose Horse in the Barn

- **If participants are in the barn an instructor, staff member or designated volunteers should lead them out of the barn to a safe location or into the tack room.**
- **Remove any horses from cross ties.**
- **Close all barn doors leading to open areas.**
- **Attempt to herd the loose horse into an empty stall.**

EXCITED HORSE PLAN

If a horse becomes overexcited the side walkers should place an arm lock on the rider, but if the rider seems to be able to handle the situation and is stable, they should remain on the horse. This puts side walkers in the best position for their own security, for the riders' safety and for keeping up with the horse. If necessary, the instructor may ask for an emergency dismount.

In the Event of a Fire:

1. Evacuate all participants. If a class is in session the instructor will give directions and will take responsibility for evacuating participants. Once all riders have left the barn, horse handlers will walk horses outside to the nearest paddock.
2. Instructors/staff will designate someone to call 911 - see chart next to the phone & First Aid.
3. Survey the scene to make sure it is safe to enter.

A staff member or instructor will designate persons to begin evacuating horses when all participants are out of the barn.

Evacuate horses through the nearest door beginning with horses closest to the fire.

Lead horses to the nearest paddock, if possible.

Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls... talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. It may be necessary to cover their eyes.

If a horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave stall, leave door open and move to the next horse. Once outside a horse may try to run back into the barn, be aware of that possibility.



IN THE EVENT OF THUNDERSTORMS or HIGH WIND

In the event of a ***rapidly approaching thunderstorm or extreme high winds*** during a lesson: dismount all riders immediately under the direction of the instructor. Side walkers should take riders into the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors. When riding in ***indoor ring***, Leaders should return horses to stalls and proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors. When riding in ***outdoor ring***, leaders should return horses to barn. If time does not permit this, untack horses in ring and turn out in pasture or ring, then proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors. In the event of a ***rapidly approaching thunderstorm or extreme high winds*** and there are no lessons taking place: *If horses are outside, leave horses in pasture.* Close barn doors and take shelter in the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors. *If horses are inside, close barn doors* and proceed to the waiting area outside the office, sit near the walls and away from windows and doors.

PREVENTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION

The risk of getting a disease while working with or caring for a rider is extremely small. The following precautions should be taken to further reduce the risk: before you begin your volunteer session, cover any cuts, scrapes, or skin irritations you have in order to avoid contamination. Notify your instructor immediately if the rider you are working with has any sudden health issue, such as a bloody or runny nose. Avoid contact with blood and other body fluids. If contact is unavoidable, use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care. Hands should also be thoroughly washed after working with each horse and rider, before working with another horse and rider.



READING HIS EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



Ears forward but relaxed interested in what's in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed listening to his rider or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward alarmed or nervous about what's ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right relaxed, paying attention to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back annoyed or worried about what's behind him; might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears calm and resting, horse may be dozing.



Ears flattened against neck violently angry, in a fighting mood. May fight, bite or kick.

OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**
Danger to the rear.
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- **Switching the tail.**
Annoyance and irritation:
at biting flies, stinging insects or tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
Watch out for biting or kicking.

Grooming the Horse

TOOLS:

Rubber Curry: Usually shaped like an oval or circle, has soft rubber "teeth".

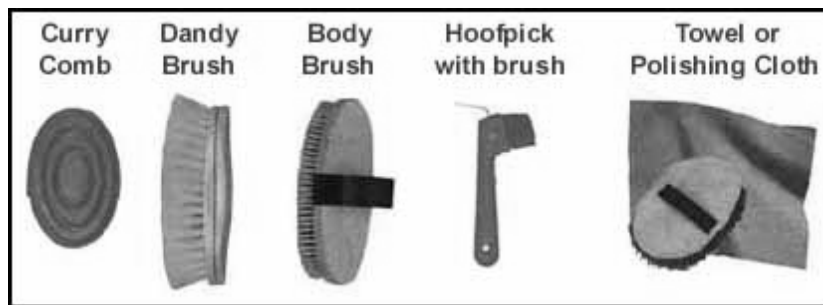
Dandy Brush: Stiff bristled brush.

Body Brush: Soft bristled brush usually made of horse hair.

Hoof Pick/Brush: The hoof pick/brush combo can be found at most tack stores.

Mane Comb: Plastic is used, as it is less likely to break the hairs.

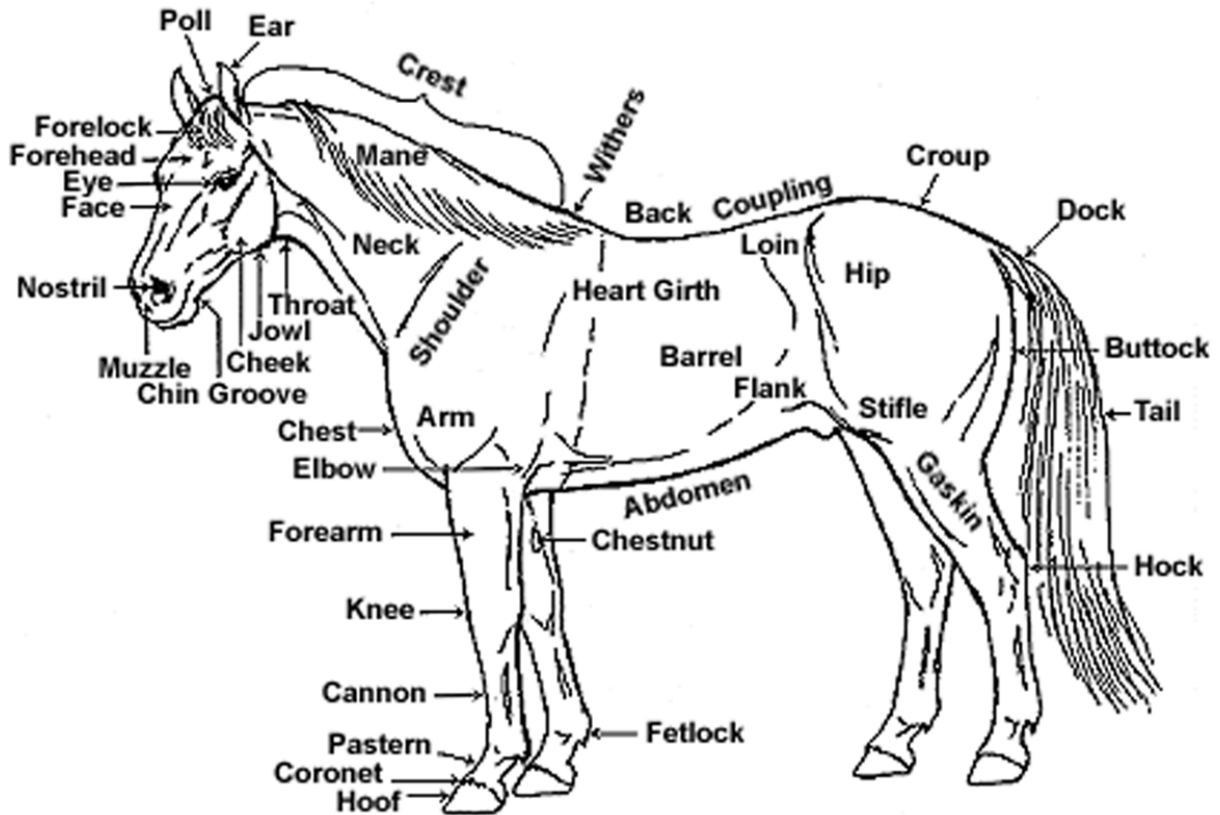
Towel: Polishing towel/rag helps remove sweat marks and gives the coat a nice shine after brushing.



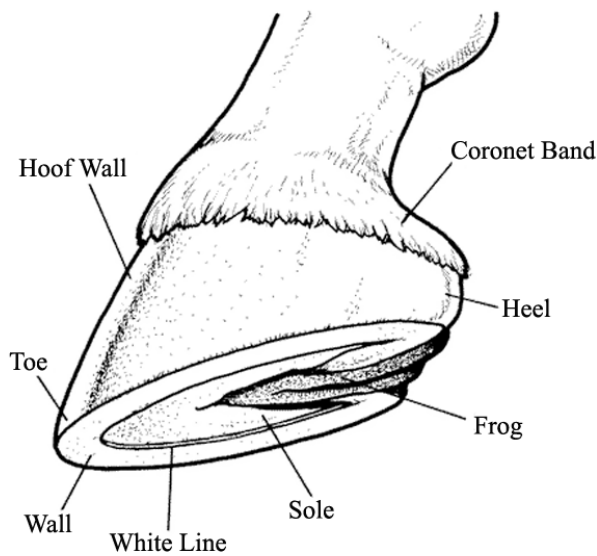
Grooming:

When grooming a horse, start at the top of his neck and work your way to his rear, then switch sides and repeat.

1. Start with the Rubber Curry. The rubber curry should be used in a circular motion to loosen dirt that has settled under the horse's hair. NOTE: be very careful and gentle around bony areas of your horse's body (such as his back or shoulders). Don't use a Rubber Curry on your horse's legs unless you can be extremely gentle with it. Never use a Curry or any stiff brush on your horse's face. It's too easy for your horse to injure his eye on the rubber curry or stiff bristled brush.
2. Next, use the Dandy Brush. The motion for this brush is like the same motion you would use when sweeping a floor. You 'flick' the brush away and up from the coat so that the dirt comes off of his coat.
3. Then, you use the Body Brush. The body brush is meant to smooth down the hair and to get rid of any traces of left-over dirt after you have thoroughly used the Dandy Brush. With the Body Brush, you do not use a 'flicking' motion; instead, you smooth it flat over the horse's coat to flatten the hair.
4. Next, use the Mane Comb (or Brush) to gently comb the horse's mane. Use the Dandy Brush to brush the horse's tail. Many people use the comb to brush their horse's tails, but we don't use a comb since it breaks the hairs more easily. If you want the horse to grow a long, flowing tail, you can use the Dandy brush or the Mane Comb.
5. You should first have an experienced volunteer show you how to pick up a horse's feet. Usually, this can be done by running your hand down your horse's leg, then gently squeezing his fetlock (ankle). When you use the hoof pick, always scrape away from you, just as you would if you were using a carrot peeler. You don't want to accidentally injure yourself or your horse if he suddenly moves or pulls his foot away. It is important to thoroughly clean out the hollow areas on both sides of the frog, and around the sole of the foot.



Parts of the Horse

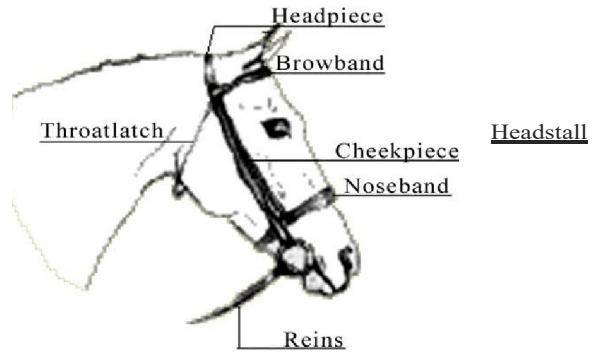


Parts of the Hoof

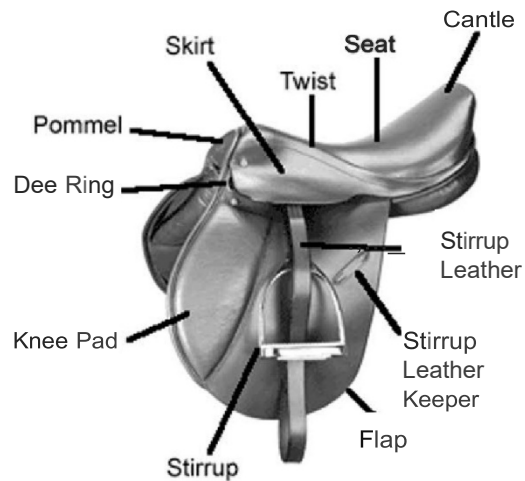
Saddle and Bridle Parts

Special Equestrians uses different kinds of tack (equipment for saddling and bridling a horse), depending on needs of the horse and rider. Here are three of the most commontypes of tack used at our center.

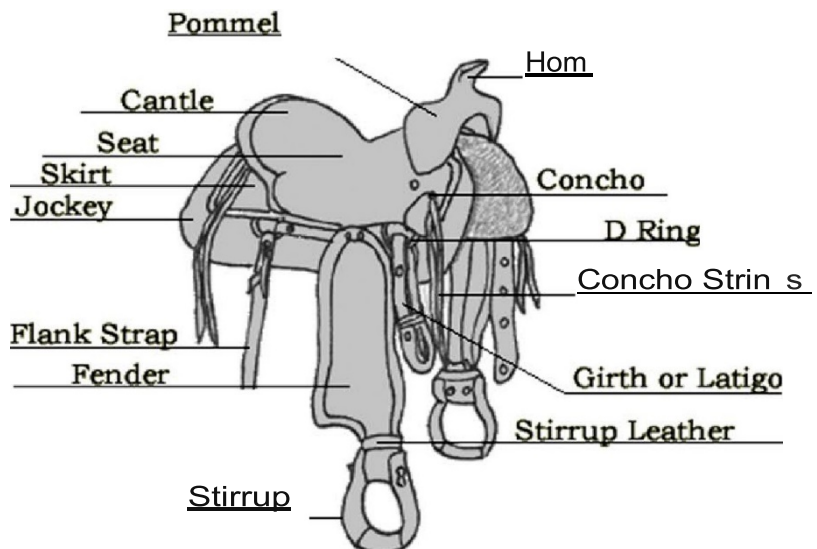
Bridle



English Saddle



Western Saddle

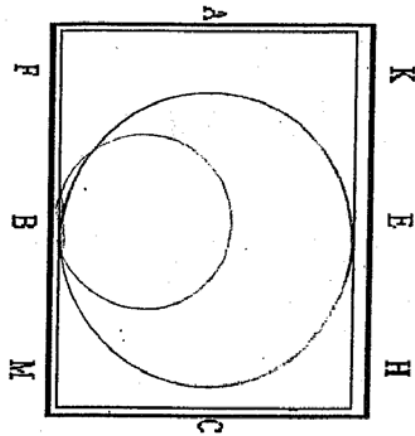




Chariot Riders

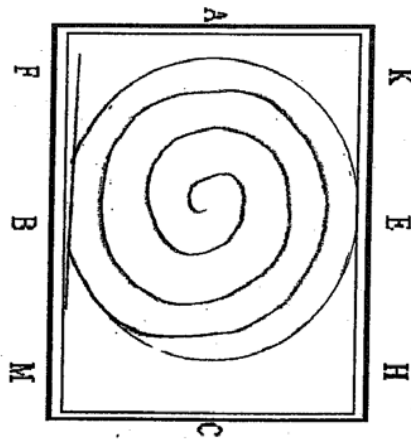


Equestrian/Therapeutic Academy for Everyone!



A large circle stretches from one side of the arena to the other, it requires consistent bend through the horses' neck and body. The leader should be sure not to pull the horses' head to the center of the circle.

A small circle generally goes from the wall to the centerline. This requires a greater degree of bend from the horse.



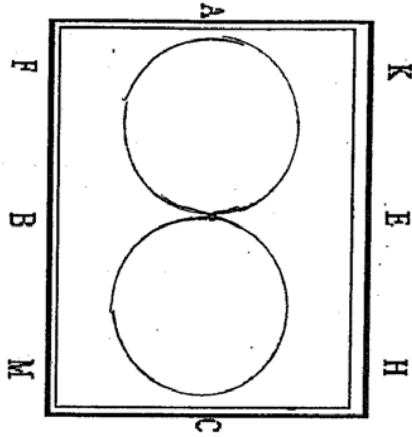
A spiral is a large circle that gradually tightens to a small circle. A spiral should have symmetrical turns from the largest to the smallest circle. The leader should be sure not to pull the horse into a tight turn that destroys the bend. The spiral should begin and end on a large circle.



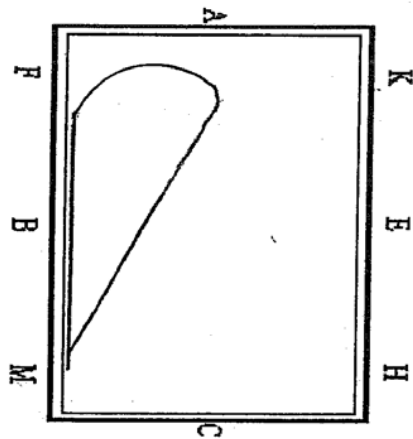
Chariot Riders



Equestrian/Therapeutic Academy for Everyone!



A figure eight is comprised of two equal circles in each direction. A figure eight has several straight strides before the change of direction. A figure eight can use the whole ring with the change of direction between B and E or the figure eight can be small with the change of direction on centerline.



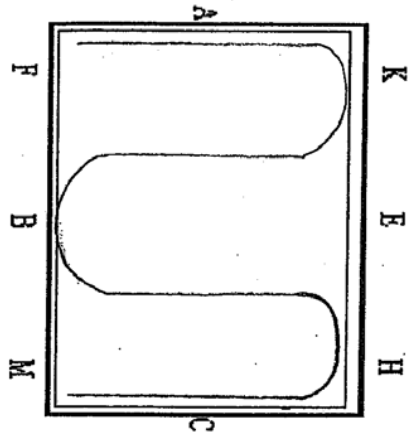
A half circle is the customary way to change direction. It involves making a half circle or turn away from the arena wall and then making a diagonal line back towards the wall. This accomplishes a change of direction and incorporates a bend and straight line.



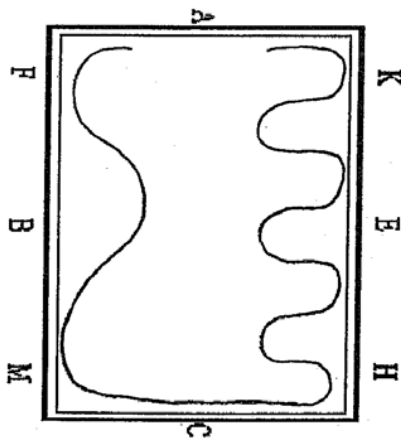
Chariot Riders



Equestrian/Therapeutic Academy for Everyone!



A serpentine involves three bends and three straight lines. A serpentine should have equal size bends and straight lines across the center of the arena. The leader should ensure equal bending and allow the horse to travel straight across the center of the ring. A serpentine has three loops, if more loops are desired it will be asked as a 5 loop serpentine, etc. Serpentine has two turns to one direction and one turn to the other direction.



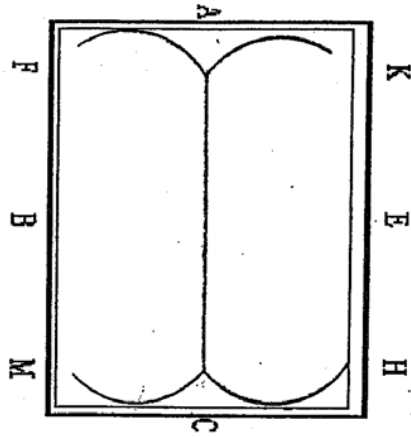
A weave is made of small tight turns along the straight side of the arena. Each turn should be symmetrical and lead into the next turn without abruptness. The weave is like turning through slalom poles. A weave can be very tight or loose turns with more space in between each turn.



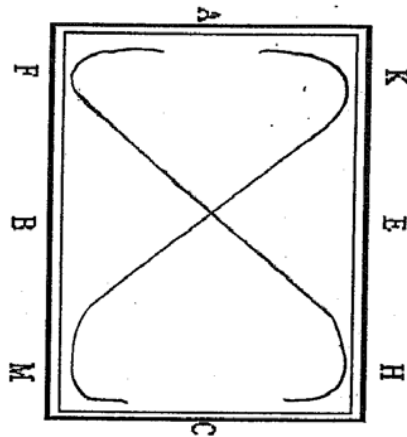
Chariot Riders



Equestrian/Therapeutic Academy for Everyone!



Traveling down the centerline means traveling from A to C or C to A. This can be used to change direction or the direction may stay the same. When traveling down centerline ensure that the horse is moving straight and not bending or wavering.



Turn across the diagonal always changes direction. It involves traveling from K to M, M to K or F to H, H to F. You may turn across the diagonal at K or F from the letter A, but never from B or E. The turn across the diagonal involves a bending turn and long straight line before another bending turn. The leader should be sure to allow the horse to bend in each direction and travel straight on the diagonal line.

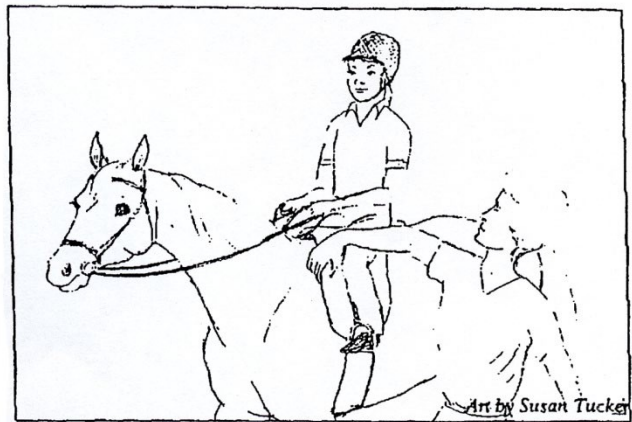
Effective Sidewalking

By Susan Tucker and Molly Lingua, R.P.T.

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally do 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 have perceptual problems, it can be very overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one should be the designated talker to avoid this situation.

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 rider seems confused 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 not paying attention.



It's important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it 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 common used is the "arm-over-thigh" hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle with hand close 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 leg can increase muscle spastically, especially with the cerebral palsy population. 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 for the best way to assist. In the event of an emergency the arm-over-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 pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Encourage your student to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities.

If the instructor chooses to use a safety belt on your rider, be careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires it's hard to avoid this, so rather than gripping the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and finger together around it. This way you are 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 of your arm, ask the leader to stop and trade sides, one at a time, with the other sidewalker.

During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do 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 all-out effort to win. The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as normal as he can possibly be. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

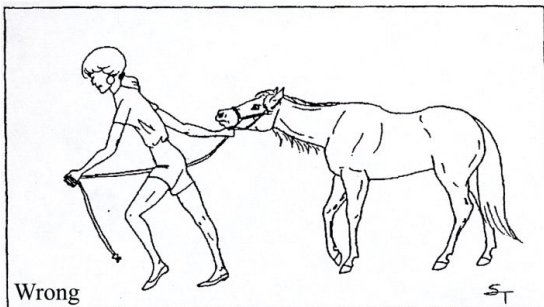
Follow the Leader

Susan F. Tucker, PATH, Intl. Accreditation Committee

As a volunteer, one of the most challenging duties you could be assigned is the position of leader. A leader's first responsibility is the horse but must also constantly be aware of the rider, instructor, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. In addition, you must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.

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 enough 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 become confused by too much input and not know who's in charge. **(Instructors and experienced horsepersons often make terrible leaders because they can't keep their mouths shut.)**

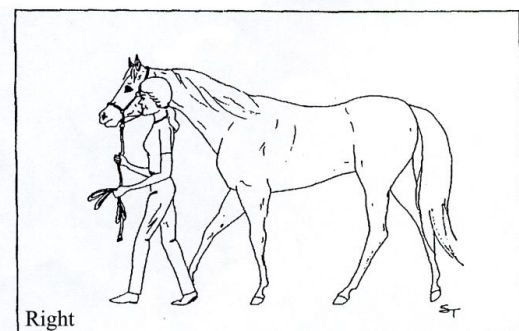


The first picture depicts a few faults common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along - head down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope - dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk alongside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

The next picture shows the correct position for leaders. The lead rope is held with the right hand 12-18 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 relationship with your fingers!



When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse, slightly off to one side. Standing in front is a psychological barrier to the horse and he will stand more quietly than if he has an easy chance to move out. You can see the entire environment around the horse and rider and can easily see if any situation needs to be corrected. If something needs to be corrected, please mention to the instructor and have the instructor change the situation.)

1. Fill in the blanks with the following Horse Lingo
 - a. _____ is said to ask the horse to walk forward
 - b. _____ is used when the horse is fidgety or not standing quietly
 - c. _____ is used to ask the horse to trot
 - d. _____ is used to stop the horse
2. The primary responsibilities of the leader are:
 - a. Making sure the horse is groomed and tacked properly
 - b. Warm up the horse prior to the lesson
 - c. To control and calm the horse in an emergency situation
 - d. To help the horse follow the cues from the rider
 - e. All of the above
3. The primary responsibilities of the side walker are:
 - a. To provide physical and moral support to the rider
 - b. To secure the rider in an emergency situation
 - c. To assist with therapy activities
 - d. To help the rider guide the horse
 - e. To allow the rider to learn by their mistakes
 - f. All of the above
4. T or F: Always stand in front of the horse when the horse is stopped or standing.
5. T or F: Leave some slack in the lead rope and allow the horse to move his head while walking.
6. T or F: It is okay for the leader to pick up a fallen toy or ball and to hand props to the rider.
7. T or F: Call in as soon as possible when you are going to be absent to give the Volunteer Coordinator time to find a replacement.
8. T or F: Both side walkers should do the same hold.
9. T or F: It is okay for a volunteer to dismount a rider at the end of a lesson
10. T or F: Tickle the horse in the flanks or hit the horse if it won't trot.
11. T or F: Do an emergency dismount any time a rider loses his/her balance.
12. T or F: Never allow the rider to make a mistake.
13. T or F: Always leave 1-2 horse lengths between horses.
14. T or F: It is okay to put a horse back into the stall with the bridle on.
15. Therapeutic riding is:
 - a. A riding lesson for people with special needs.
 - b. A therapy session with a horse.
 - c. A fun activity for a person with a disability who likes horses
 - d. A and C
 - e. B and C
16. Hippo therapy is:
 - a. A riding lesson for people with special needs.
 - b. A therapy session with a horse.
 - c. A fun activity for a person with a disability who likes horses
 - d. A and C
 - e. A and B

17. If a rider falls from a horse:
 - a. Move them out of harm's way
 - b. Take off their helmet
 - c. Help them stand up
 - d. Do not move them and wait for the instructor
18. In an emergency, you need to dial _____ to call 911 from the barn.
19. Do an arm lock if:
 - a. The rider loses his balance
 - b. The horse spooks
 - c. The horse seems nervous or upset
 - d. Other horses in the ring are upset or nervous
 - e. All of the above
20. The order of evacuations for a fire is:
 - a. Horses, staff, volunteers, participants
 - b. Participants, staff, volunteers and horses
 - c. Volunteers, participants, staff, horses
 - d. Participants and volunteers, staff and horses
21. To prevent disease transmission, you should:
 - a. Cover cuts or scrapes you may have
 - b. Notify the instructor if the person you are working with has a runny nose
 - c. Wash your hands after touching every horse and every rider
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
22. If you want to know about a specific riders' disability:
 - a. Just ask your rider
 - b. Ask another volunteer in the class
 - c. Avoid discussing disabilities
 - d. Ask the instructor but know that Chariot cannot tell you due to confidentiality, but will help you understand how to work with the riders
23. The horse's ears position will be:
 - a. Pricked forward if he is alert
 - b. Flat back if he is angry
 - c. Back or to the sides if he is listening to you
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
24. You had a great experience at Chariot. You want to tell everyone about it! You should remember:
 - a. to keep it to yourself, remember confidentiality
 - b. spread the word, tell everyone the good news that you are volunteering
 - c. tell only your close friends and family the story
 - d. tell others, but leave out details, such as names, age, or any personal information

**Bring this quiz with you to the training.
We will review these questions and answer any questions you may have at that time.**

Glossary of Disabilities

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

Arthritis

Inflammatory disease of the joints.

Types: Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.

Characteristics: Pain, lack of mobility, deformity, loss of strength.

Benefits (of therapeutic riding): Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility and relieve pain.

Autism

A self-centered mental state from which reality often tends to be excluded.

Characteristics: Unresponsiveness to the presence of others; withdrawal from physical contact; severely delayed and disordered language; self-stimulating behaviors; unusual or special fears; insensitivity to pain; unawareness of real dangers; hyperactive; passive; unusual behaviors such as smelling/tasting/licking or mouthing all objects; ritualistic behaviors; developmentally delayed; unusual response to sounds; clumsiness; social withdrawal; resistance to change.

Benefits: Interactions in a group setting stimulates interest away from self and toward others and the horses. Postural and verbal stimulation.

Cerebral Palsy

Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

Types and Characteristics:

Spastic – hyper tonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

Athetoid

Extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

Ataxic

Poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a “rag doll” appearance.

Benefits: Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination.

Associated Problems: Seizures; hearing defects; visual defects; general sensory impairment; perceptual problems; communication problems; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; learning disabilities.

Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA or Stroke)

Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May cause mental impairment, impair speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization.

Developmental Disabilities (DD)

A general term applied to children functioning two or more years below grade level. **Characteristics:** Varied, but can include slow physical, motor and social development.

Benefits: Provides arena for success, opportunity for sport and recreation, stimulates body awareness.

Down Syndrome

Condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome, resulting in mental retardation and developmental delay.

Characteristics: Broad flat face, slanted eyes, neck and hand are often broad and short. Usually Hypotonic, have hyper mobile joints and tend to be short and slightly overweight. Prone to respiratory infections

Benefits: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, muscle tone, and coordination.

Emotional Disabilities

A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

Characteristics: Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia and schizophrenia may be exhibited.

Benefits: Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provides appropriate social outlet.

Epilepsy

Abnormal electrical activity of the brain marked by seizures with altered consciousness.

Types and Characteristics:

Petit Mal: Brief loss of consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements, blank expression.

Grand Mal: Loss of consciousness and postural control. Usually preceded by an aura. (Note: an active seizure disorder is a contraindication for horseback riding.)

Hearing Impairment

Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.

Characteristics: Communication difficulties – may use lip reading, finger spelling or sign language. Often phase out and have attention deficits.

Benefits: Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.

Characteristics: Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

Benefits: Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination.

Mental Retardation (MR)

Lack of ability to learn and perform at normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profoundly retarded.

Characteristics: Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span.

Benefits: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation.

Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40 year old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Associated Problems: Visual impairment, emotional lability, and impaired bowel and bladder function.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD)

Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

Characteristics: Progressive muscular weakness, fatigues easily, sensitive to temperature extremes.

Benefits: Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free of assistive devices.

Associated Problems: Lordosis, respiratory infection.

Polio

Infectious viral disease.

Characteristics: Flaccid paralysis, atrophy of skeletal muscle, often with deformity.

Benefits: Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates posture.

Scoliosis

Lateral curve of the spine with C or S curve with rotary component.

Characteristics: Postural asymmetry. May wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery.

Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry. Strengthens trunk muscles.

(Note: Severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding.)

Spina Bifida

Congenital failure of vertebral arch closure with resultant damage to spinal cord.

Characteristics: Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss.

Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, improves muscle strength and self-image.

Associated Problems: Hydrocephalus, incontinence, urinary tract infection, , lordosis, scoliosis, and hip dislocations.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.

Characteristics: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells.

Characteristics: Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech and/or vision. May have psychological effects.

Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

Visual Impairment

Moderate to total loss of sight.

Characteristics: Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity, fearfulness and developmental delay.

Benefits: Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture and coordination. Provides social outlet, structured risk taking and freedom of movement.