



# Volunteer Manual

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

General Information .....3  
Mission Statement  
About Free Rein Center  
What is PATH International

Programs & Services .....6  
Free Rein Programs  
Operating Hours & Contact

Volunteer Opportunities .....7  
Volunteer Job Descriptions

Volunteer Information .....8  
Volunteer Policies  
Working with Individuals with Special Needs  
Working with Horses  
Parts of the Horse  
Tack  
Horse Senses

**Appendix**

American Sign Language Basics .....19  
Glossary of Common Terms .....20

# Welcome!

Thank you for deciding to be a member of our volunteer team! Free Rein could not teach many of our students without your help. Volunteers are important for our lessons to operate safely and effectively. Riders, Groomers, and Instructors depend on you each week to have a fun, educational lesson. We look forward to working with you and teaching you the necessary skills to be the best you can be out at the barn! Always let us know if there are questions or concerns at any time throughout your volunteer experience because we want it to be enjoyable for you.

## General Information

### Mission Statement:

*Free Rein's mission is to serve the community by strengthening the spirits, minds, and bodies of children and adults through the interaction with horses.*

Our tagline is "Horses Helping Humans Heal".

### About Free Rein:

Established in 2000, Free Rein Center for Therapeutic Riding and Education uses the human-horse connection as the therapeutic agent in working with at risk youth, children and adults with a large variety of cognitive, emotional and physical diagnosis. Our service area is Transylvania, Henderson, and Buncombe Counties.

Free Rein is certified by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int'l). Our experienced instructors are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of Continuing Education each year.

In 2018, Free Rein assisted around 200 individuals, most of them school-aged from three of Brevard's Public Schools and Transylvania Vocational Services (TVS). Individuals are referred to us by their physicians, counselors, and teachers.

We continue to absorb most of the cost of lessons. Fees to families are assessed on a sliding scale, but nearly all of our students are on scholarship. (Total cost of a one-hour lesson – horses, Instructors, facilities – is just above \$150.) No one is turned away because of the inability to pay. 90% of our fundraising pays for program costs. Most of our work is done by 80+ volunteers.

### What is PATH International?

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International is a nonprofit organization that was started in 1969 to promote Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) for people with disabilities. PATH acts as an umbrella organization for therapeutic riding centers by providing accreditation to facilities and certification for instructors. They provide the facilities with standards that must be followed in order to assure quality horse care, program safety, and administrative responsibility. Free Rein has been a PATH Int'l Accredited Center for the past 18 years. All of our riding instructors are certified, meaning they have been trained to understand the different disabilities and how to adjust riding lessons and skills to best benefit each individual.

## Types of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT)

### Equine Assisted Activities (EAA)

Equine Assisted Activities are any specific center activity, e.g., therapeutic riding, mounted or ground activities, grooming and stable management, shows, parades, demonstrations, etc., in which the center's students, volunteers, instructors, and equines are involved.

### Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT)

Equines Assisted Therapy is treatment that incorporates equine activities and/or the equine environment. Rehabilitative goals are related to the student's needs and the medical professional's standards of practice.

### Equine Assisted Learning (EAL)

Equine Assisted Learning is an experimental learning approach that promotes the development of life skills for educational, professional, and personal goals through the Equine Assisted Activities. PATH Int'l provides standards of professionalism and safety for people working in the EAAT field and guidelines for those providing EAL.

### Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP)

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy is defined as an interactive process in which a licensed mental health professional working with a credentialed equine professional(s) with suitable equine(s) to address psychotherapy goals set forth by the mental health professional and their client.

### Therapeutic Riding (TR)

Therapeutic Riding is an Equine Assisted Activity (EAT) for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being of individuals with disabilities.

# Benefits of Therapeutic Riding and Non-Mounted Equine Activities<sup>1</sup>

The benefits of Animal Assisted Activities and Therapies have been recognized for a long time, but the specific benefits of interacting with horses may be less well known. Working with horses can have a major physical and emotional impact on people with a wide variety of disabilities. Some (but not all) disabilities and diagnoses for which Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) are useful are listed. The full description for the benefits of each diagnoses and disability is available in the Appendix.

- Amputations
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Blindness / Visual Impairments
- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Cerebrovascular Accident / Stroke
- Deafness / Hearing Impairments
- Developmental Delay / Cognitive Delay
- Down Syndrome
- Emotional Disabilities
- Learning Disabilities
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Spina Bifida
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Traumatic Brain Injury

**Physically.** It is the horse's movement which has dynamic effect on the rider's body. The horse stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. This movement can be used to produce specific physical changes in the rider including normalization of muscle tone and improvements in: posture, balance, coordination, and increased endurance.

**Sensorial.** The horse and the riding environment offers a wide variety of input to participants. Movement exploration on the horse combined with so many other sights and sounds one encounters in the riding program contribute to the overall sensory experience.

**Emotionally.** The success of overcoming fear and anxiety and the ability to achieve riding and other related skills and tasks help individuals realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. For those involved with the various activities of a Therapeutic Riding Program, the companion animal bonding and development of new skills are critical components to the success of the experience offered. Relationships develop between participants, volunteers, horses, and staff and are an integral part of a positive, emotional experience provided by a Therapeutic Riding Program.

**Cognitively.** The horse provides a strong motivator for participants. Riding lessons incorporate activities and games on horseback designed to help achieve specific goals such as: following directions, staying on task, color and number recognition, and reinforcing existing skills as well as learning new ones.

**Socially.** Therapeutic Riding Programs and their associated activities provide an excellent opportunity for participants to interact with their peers, program volunteers, and staff in a positive and enjoyable environment.

---

<sup>1</sup>Full list of references available on PATH Int'l website: <https://www.pathintl.org/27-resources/general/194-eaat-benefits> Revised October 2011, by Health & Ed Advisory

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Free Rein Programs

Our programs utilize the human-horse connection as the therapeutic agent in working with diverse populations and individuals ranging in age from childhood to senior citizens. We have provided services to individuals and populations with a wide range of disabilities and diagnosis.

We also offer specially designed Therapeutic Riding and Groundwork programs Monday through Friday to groups from three local schools and to Transylvania Vocational Services (TVS), a sheltered workshop for adults with disabilities – at no cost to those groups/organizations. The Fall session begins in early September and the Spring session begins in early March. Both sessions are eight weeks long with an additional ninth week to make up any weather-related cancelled lessons.

Our Community Outreach programs support Free Rein's mission by increasing opportunities for new populations in our community to benefit from the horse/human bond. A Sensory Trail provides therapeutic riders as well as other program participants experiences of mindfulness, meditation and physical well-being. For at-risk youth, Free Rein offers an innovative program called Say Whoa to Bullying. Silver Saddles focuses on assisting seniors by increasing strength & mobility while helping with depression. Supporting therapeutic riding families is what SIBS (Sibling Support) is all about. Other services include Grieving Family Riding lessons and riding sessions for those with Post Traumatic Stress. Weight restrictions apply.

## OPERATING HOURS & CONTACTS

Free Rein is located at Rockbrook Camp's Equestrian Center for the months of September through May. The Program Director and Program Administrator are in the office 10-4, Monday-Fridays. Instructors, Office Manager, and Barn Manager are on-site at variable times depending on needs and duties.

Main Office Phone: (828) 883-3375

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1325, Brevard, NC 28712

Physical Address: 3460 Greenville HWY, Brevard, NC 28712

**Program Director**, Brittany McCathern – [programdirector@freereincenter.com](mailto:programdirector@freereincenter.com)

**Volunteer Coordinator**, Toni Garrett – [volunteers@freereincenter.com](mailto:volunteers@freereincenter.com)

**Office Manager**, Roberta Brownlee – [officemanager@freereincenter.com](mailto:officemanager@freereincenter.com)

## **Staff & Instructors**

Mary Stoehr, PATH Int'l Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (in 2011)

Brittany McCathern, PATH Int'l Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (in 2012), Program Director

Kara Franks, PATH Int'l Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (in 2014)

Rachel Evans, PATH Int'l Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (in 2015), Program Administrator

Amberly Ralston, Horse Care Coordinator

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## **Volunteer Opportunities are divided into three categories:**

1. Lesson Volunteers – Horse Leader and Side Walker
2. Barn Volunteers – Assist with horse and barn care.
3. Free Rein Ambassadors – SIBS, Silver Saddles, Meditative Walk, planning & working events, festival booths and other community activities.

## **Attendance & Commitment**

As a valuable member of the Free Rein team, it is important to us that you honor your commitments and attend regularly. Our students count on you for their lessons and like to build relationships with their volunteers. For this reason, it is recommended that you sign up only for what you can handle and commit. The same goes for the care of our horses, they rely on you just as much.

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### **Horse Leader**

A Horse Leader has had experience with horses and is comfortable dealing with them. This person understands the nature of the horse and can control it under unusual circumstances. This person will receive training from the instructors to perform the duties of the Horse Leader, including what to do in an emergency situation.

- **Takes responsibility of the horse at all times**
- Knows the Free Rein technique for leading the horses
- Knows the personality of the horse and any special character traits
- May have experience with riding, exercising horses
- Must be in good health and able to walk at least 45 minutes at a time in an arena, and jog if necessary
- Has worked with horses before learning to lead a horse with a rider
- Knows the program's methods of grooming and tacking a horse and proper position of the tack and adaptive equipment
- Knows the basic riding "aids". "AIDS" are the way the rider communicates with the horse by: hands, feet, voice, body position, etc.
- Knows the basic behavioral patterns of riders with emotional disorders and will be able to manage the horse if these behaviors occur
- Tells instructor if there is a problem with a horse and if necessary to stop the horse; go into the center of the arena
- Follows the directions of the instructor
- Knows general arena etiquette: pass on the inside, turn to the inside, inside vs outside, change direction across diagonal/center, etc.

## Side Walker

A Side Walker walks beside the horse at the rider's leg. This person helps with the rider's safety and helps the rider to carry out the instructions given by the instructor. There may be one or two Side Walkers for a rider, depending on their balance and core strength. The Side Walkers work together as a team to keep the rider safe and engaged in the lesson. Side Walkers need to feel comfortable walking next to a horse and be knowledgeable about the rider's disability or diagnoses.

- **Takes responsibility for the safety of the rider at all times**
- Has knowledge about the disability of the rider and the plan for this particular riding session
- Feels comfortable working closely with horse and rider
- Knows the appropriate support technique for riders with different disabilities
- Attends to the balance and position of the rider and is competent to assist when needed to prevent loss of balance or a fall, but does not interfere with the rider's ability to develop independent balance
- Is familiar with the use of special equipment
- Follows the directions of the instructor
- Learns techniques to help a physically involved rider sit correctly and knows when to ask the instructor for further advice or help
- Communicates with Horse Leader when the horse needs to be halted or slowed to allow the rider to regain position or balance
- Determines when his/her supporting arm gets tired so that he/she can switch sides or ask for relief

**\*\*If at any time you are unclear regarding your volunteer role or responsibilities, please direct your questions to the PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR or an instructor. During lessons, instructors are responsible for each rider, horse, and volunteer. All directions from the instructor must be followed including the assignment of riders, horses, volunteers, mounts/dismounts, and lesson structure and content. To ensure everyone's safety, it is important to adhere to the instructor's decisions and directions.**

## GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

### Volunteer Policies

Volunteers must be dependable and on time as instructors and participants depend upon them. If you are unable to attend a lesson, please notify the Program Administrator as soon as possible, preferably 24 hours in advance so that a substitute can be found.

Volunteers must have completed all volunteer release forms and be sensitive and understanding to the needs of individual riders and groomers. They should know where the First Aid supplies are located (inside each tack room door, left hand side), and know the location of the telephone (main office, first desk) and the numbers to dial for emergency help (911).



## Cancellations

If you are unable to attend your scheduled volunteer shift, please contact the program administrator ([volunteers@freereincenter.com](mailto:volunteers@freereincenter.com)) as soon as possible so that a substitute can be found.

The instructor or program administrator will contact you as soon as they learn of student cancellations, although there will inevitably be occasions where the students do not show or do not cancel with enough time to notify volunteers.

## Weather

The instructor will notify the volunteers and students as soon as possible by phone if weather prohibits lessons from being held. Conditions for weather cancellation includes, but is not limited to: lightning or severe storms, temperatures below 35 degrees, extreme winds, and unsafe roads.

## Attire

Volunteers should wear protective, yet comfortable clothing – no flapping shirts or open toed shoes or sandals. You will be provided a Free Rein t-shirt – please wear it whenever possible, as well as your Free Rein nametag. Shoes should be sturdy enough to provide protection. Please keep jewelry to a minimum; it can get caught in the tack or be grabbed by horse or rider. Remember sunscreen, bug spray, cold water or drink, as we do not have drinking water at the stables.

## Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

We understand that everyone has a cell phone in this day and age, but we ask that you please leave it on the volunteer shelf or in the car during your time at the barn. If you must carry it with you, you must place it on silent so that it does not disrupt the lesson. If there is an emergency, just let the instructor know so they can prepare for you to leave the lesson in a timely manner.

## Social Media Policy

It is very popular to share everything we do with social media outlets – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. Remember to respect other volunteers, staff, and student's privacy. Do not post anything that is questionable. Before you post, it is better to check with a Free Rein staff member to see if it is appropriate. You do not have permission to use Free Rein's logo in any format. Use your common sense and take caution with whatever you post on social media regarding Free Rein.

## Guidelines and Things to Keep in Mind

- Be open to working with a variety of participants, peers, and staff.
- NO ALCOHOL OR TOBACCO use on Free Rein property.
- Chewing gum and candy are not to be eaten while working with horses.
- No hand feeding Free Rein horses – use a frisbee located under the stairs in the upper barn.
- If you have a question, ask!
- Treat all others as you would like to be treated.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any sort is not tolerated and will result in removal from the program.
- Please stay calm and quiet in respect of the horses.
- NO DOGS on Free Rein property while riding lessons are taking place.
- This is not a place for POLITICAL or RELIGIOUS debates – please keep this a stress-free environment for the horses and participants.
- Be safe and have fun!

# Emergency Procedures

Emergencies can arise at any time and it is best to be prepared. Emergencies can include hazardous weather conditions to an injured horse or human. Telephone is located in the office. The horse and human first aid kits are located in each tack room to the left of each door, and one in the office on the top shelf to the right of the window.

## Universal Precautions

- Please use latex gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids or blood.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water.
- Resuscitation masks should be worn while performing CPR (if trained).

## Fire

A fire is very serious and can take over an entire barn in a matter of minutes. Please react quickly and follow these steps. Never put yourself in immediate danger.

- Remain calm and call 911, stay on the line to give proper directions to the barn to the dispatcher. (Emergency information is located above the telephone in office and on helmet cabinet outside the covered arena.)
- Remove all riders and families from the barn.
- Evacuate horses to the pasture – start with the horses closest to the fire. **Never put yourself or other personnel in danger by trying to evacuate horses from a burning barn!**
- Use fire extinguisher to help control a small fire if it is safe to do so.
  - Location of fire extinguishers: outside each tack room and one outside bathroom door in office.
- Make sure to be available when fire department arrives

## Severe Thunderstorms

In Western North Carolina, storms can pop up without warning or predictions. If there is lightning and thunder, lessons should be stopped or canceled until the storm has passed. Get yourself and others into the office for the duration of the storm, making sure to stay away from windows. Leave horses where they are – in stalls or out in the pasture. Do not put yourself in danger by trying to bring horses into the barn.

# Island Ford Rd.

- = Fire Extinguisher
- = Human Evacuation Route
- = Horse Evacuation Route

House Pasture

Golf Pasture

Student Parking

New Barn

Covered Arena

Lot #3

Lot #2

Lot #1

Round Arena

Old Barn

Office

Volunteer Parking

Corner Pasture

Lower Pasture

Hwy 276

# WORKING WITH A SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to get to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Physical or mental impairments may be present at birth, or may be due to injury, disease, or aging. Often, a major barrier for people with a disability is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat each individual with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

In relating to a person with a disability, it is important to be yourself and to treat them just as you would treat any person you have just met. They like to discuss the same things as you – weather, TV shows, music, sports, etc. Offer them assistance when asked or when it is obvious they need help. Do not overwhelm them with help and assistance. It is good for them to make an effort in order to increase their physical ability. Even if they seem to be very awkward, it is important for them to be independent. Be patient – it might take them longer to do something because of his/her ability level. Do not be afraid to ask them to repeat something if you do not understand. Never touch anyone without asking first – always tell them where and why you are touching them before you touch them.

## Wheelchair Etiquette

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair; please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the person if they would like your assistance before you help; be respectful – people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Do not hang on or lean against them unless you have permission; speak directly – be careful not to exclude the person in the wheelchair from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself onto their level.

## Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal directions or cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk a ½ step ahead and tell them of any ground surface changes, stairs, door jams, etc. They might also have a specific way preferred for assistance. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written or posted. If you are uncertain of what to do, ask the instructor or caregiver how you can be of further assistance.

## General Guidelines for Working with Hearing & Language Impaired Populations

Try to maintain good eye contact, look at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversations. Become familiar with hand gestures and body positions that the participant may be using to represent words or concepts. If you have any questions, ask the instructor. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, ASL, etc.). Alert the instructor if the participant is having difficulties with any hearing aids (i.e., ringing).

## Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression

Many of our participants are non-verbal or are limited in their verbal expressions. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce verbal communication and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL). Attached is a sheet of some common ASL used in Therapeutic Riding.

# WORKING WITH HORSES

## Horse Senses

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a Therapeutic Riding setting. Beginning the process of understanding the horse senses, instincts, and implications is a step towards predicting behaviors, managing risks, and increasing positive relationships.

### Hearing

The horse's sense of hearing is very acute. The horse may also combine their senses of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the "flight" response. When working with horses, note the position of the ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and/or interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, in-attentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion, or illness. Flattened ears, against the neck, indicate anger or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to them in a quiet, calm, and reassuring voice. Watch your horse's ears for increased communication and understanding.

### Sight

Horses' eyes are geared to finding danger. They don't have very accurate vision close up, but they can detect tiny movements at a distance. The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head which means good peripheral (lateral) vision but poor frontal vision. The lens of the horse's eyes don't change shape as humans do, instead, a horse focuses on objects by changing their head position and raising and lowering their head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not they see in color. The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on the trail is new or different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with before the rider gets on. The horse has good peripheral vision so consider a slightly looser rein/lead rope, enabling them to move their head when taking in new objects. Although the horse has good lateral visibility, consider two blind spots: directly in front and behind their bodies. The best way to approach a horse is to their shoulder. It may startle them if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse cannot see directly under their mouth area, which is why hand feeding is not as safe as letting them eat off a frisbee, out of a bucket or off of the ground.

### Touch

The horse's sense of touch is very sensitive. They can detect very light touch or pressure (i.e., fly landing on them). Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e., flank, belly area, and feet). Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horse and humans. Horses may also use touch to examine strange/new objects. They will look, sniff, and feel an object with their muzzle. The tongue, lips, and bars of the mouth are especially sensitive places, and we need to use caution when a horse has a bit in its mouth. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure and may be sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Handlers should treat horses gently but firmly. Riders may need assistance to reduce squeezing a horse with their legs. Ask the instructor for the best handling technique.



## Smell

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows them to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations. Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling. It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.

## Taste

Taste is closely linked with the senses of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. A horse might lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting. Keep fingers out of the area around the horse's mouth.

## "Sixth Sense"

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

## Flight as a Natural Instinct

Most horses chosen to work in a Therapeutic Riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. However, if frightened, horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. A frightened horse being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie them quickly and usually they will relax. If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear up, especially in a tight area like a stall. If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears in following section, pictures), alert program staff or instructor.

## Herd Animal

Horses like to stay together in a herd or a group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest. Some horses may not like to be alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride. Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse(s) that is following may also attempt to trot or canter after them. If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse's length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

# Horse Body Language

## Ears

- When a horse's ears are laid flat back, against the neck, it is usually quite angry and a bite or kick may soon follow.
- Always pay close attention to the position of the ears!
- When the ears are pricked forward, the horse is curious or alert.
- When a horse flicks its ears around when being ridden, they are usually very attentive to its rider's wishes.

## Eyes

- In a curious or alarmed state, the horse's eyes will widen.
- When they are tired or resting, eyelids will be droopy.
- Squinting denotes pain; it can also happen as a horse readies himself to attack or preparing to be stubborn.

## Head and Neck

- An outstretched neck usually denotes curiosity.
- If on the defensive or on the alert, the horse lifts and arches his neck and head.
- Nodding of the head usually denotes impatience.

## Lips and Teeth

- When a horse is extremely relaxed, the lower lip can be droopy.
- When stubborn, the lips are tightly drawn.
- An alert horse will have some tension in its lips.
- A horse with barred teeth means business and will likely attack and bite.

## Hooves and Legs

- As a threat, a warning to kick would be lifting the hoof off the ground and pinning the ears.
- However, merely lifting the hind hoof off the ground when the horse looks otherwise relaxed does not indicate a threat.
- Horses often rest one hoof while standing in a relaxed state of mind.
- When a horse paws at the ground, it is most often a sign of impatience.

## Tail

- When firmly clamped down, the horse is scared.
- When swinging side to side in a relaxed way, the horse is calm and happy.
- When carried up and somewhat away from its body, the horse is alert and/or curious.
- When held straight up, the horse is usually in high spirits and/or showing off.
- Tail swishing can mean either flies are bothersome or they may be slightly agitated.
- When the tail lashes violently at their sides, they are usually angry or in a state of extreme distress.

## Reading a Horse's 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 out 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.



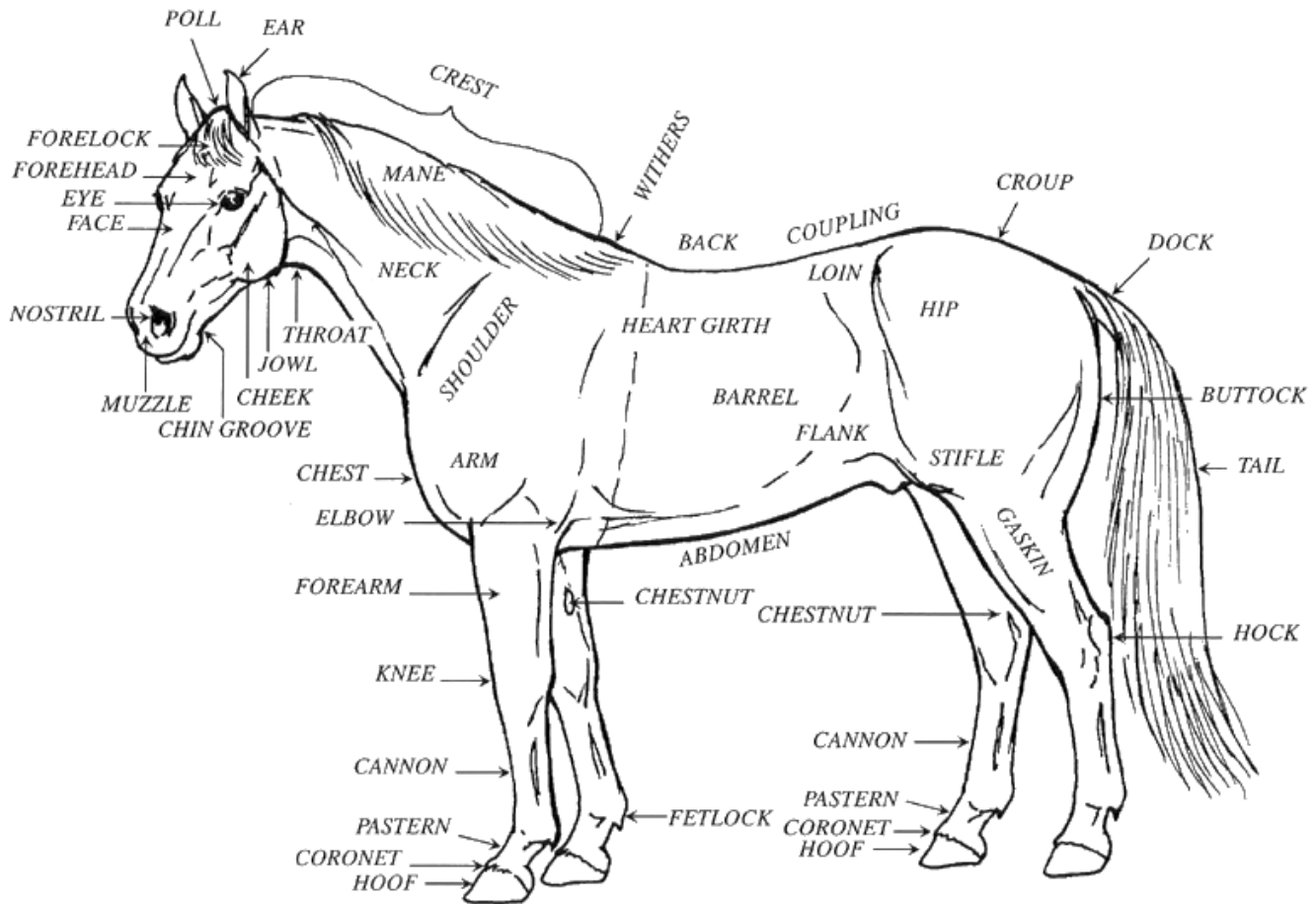
**Ears flattened against neck**  
violently angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

### OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

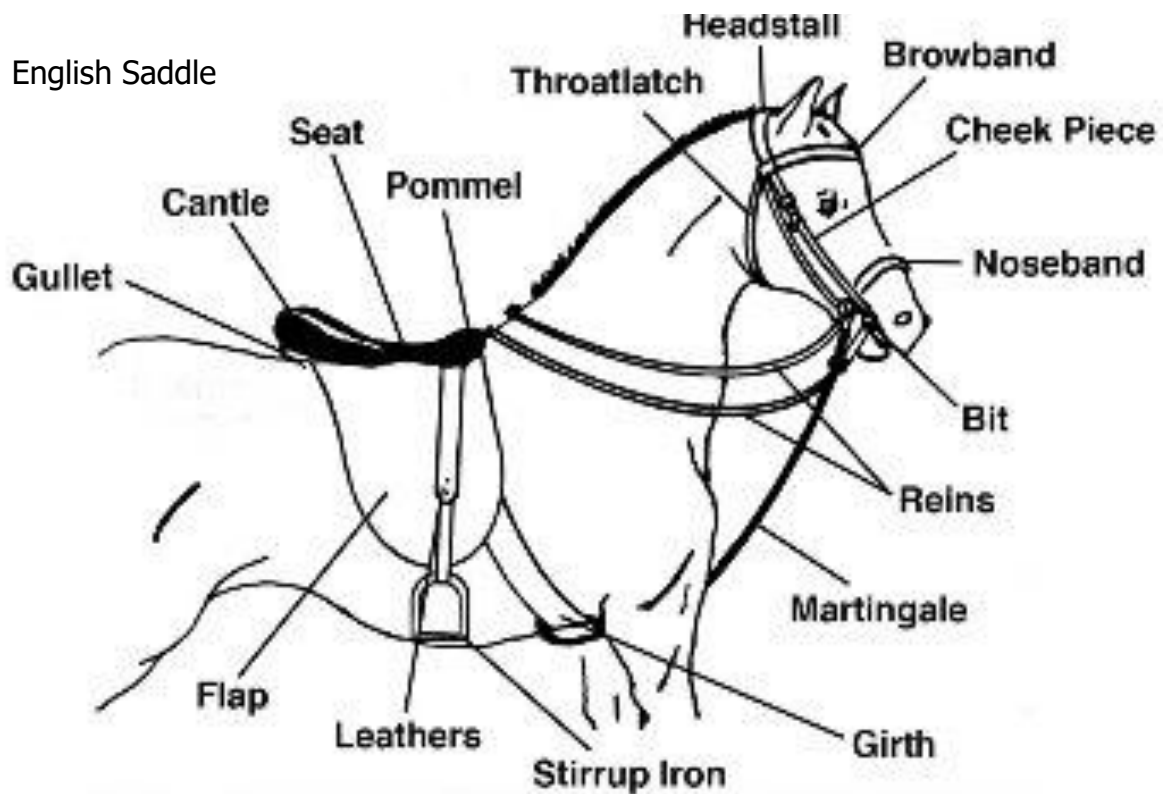
- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**  
Danger to the rear.  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.  
Watch out if ears are flattened too!
- **Switching the tail.**  
Annoyance and irritation:
  - at biting flies, stinging insects or tickling
  - bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears 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.

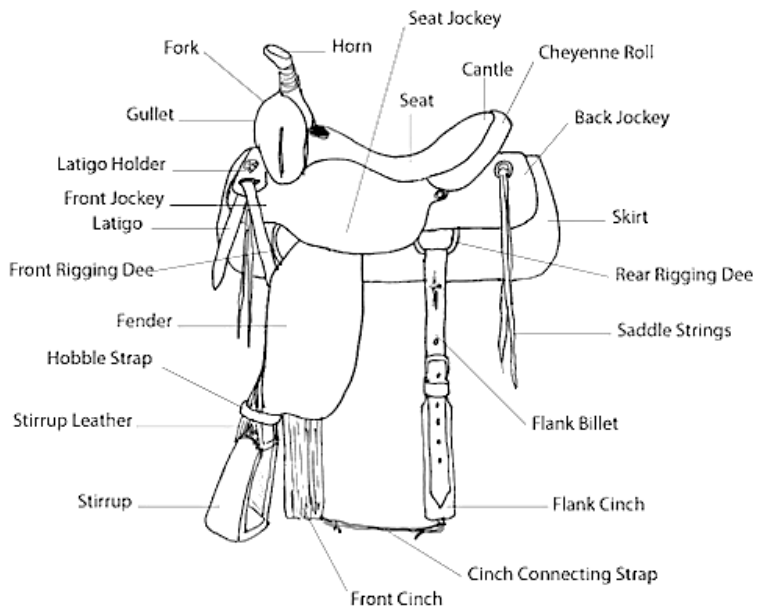


## PARTS OF THE HORSE



## Parts of an English Saddle



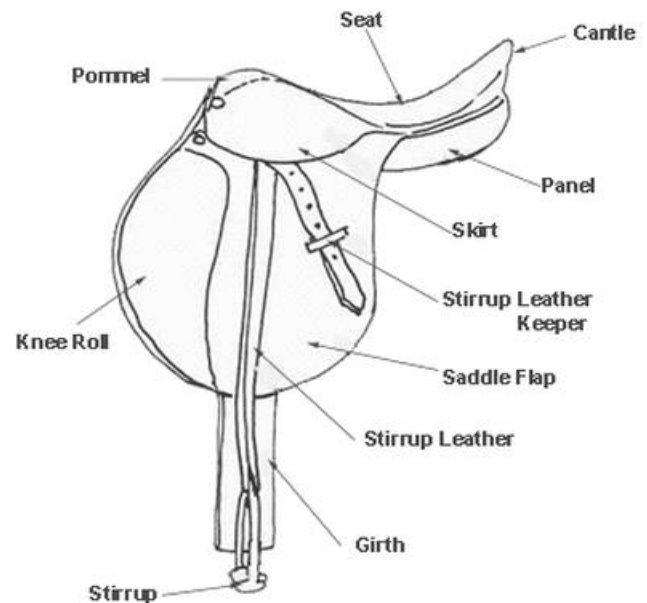


## Western Saddle

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

## English Saddle

A saddle with a moderately deep seat and knee rolls. It keeps the rider close to the movement of the horse while giving some support.



## Peacock Stirrups

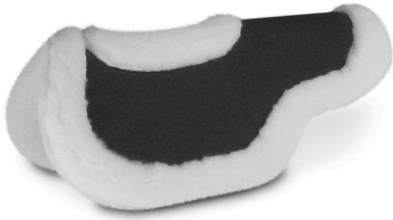
Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall. The safety feature should always face away from the horse when positioned on the rider's foot.

## "S" Shaped Stirrups

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



## Saddle Pads



### Wither Relief Pad

To give a little extra cushion to the horses withers and/or to lift the front of the saddle to keep the rider's hips from anterior tilting (tilting forward).



### Fitted Pad

To give the horse's back a little extra padding.



### Square Pad

Basic saddle pad used for all types of English saddles.



### Gel Pad

To give a horse the most comfort, used mostly for older horses.



### Riser Pad

Used to lift the back of the saddle to keep the seat level and not put rider's hips in posterior tilt (tilting backwards).

## Grooming Tools/Brushes



Curry Comb



Hoof Pick



Dandy or Hard Brush



Mane and Tail Comb



Soft Brush

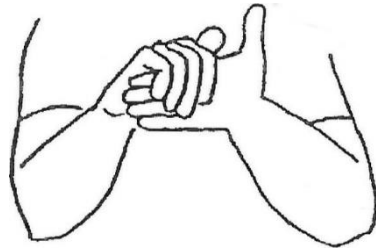
# APPENDIX

## American Sign Language Basics for Riding



### Walk On

Hands are palm down, wrists go up & down.



### Saddle

Fingers of right hand hook over a flat, palm-in left hand.



### Trot

Close fists with thumbs across fingers, motion up and down from wrists



### Ride

Straddle palm-in left hand with first two fingers of right hand and slide.



### Halt/Stop

Side of right, flat hand strikes left, flat palm.



### Sit Tall

Sign "sit" and "tall".

# Glossary of Common Terms

- Aids – signals used by a rider to communicate instructions to the horse. Aids may be natural – hands, legs, voice, seat, or artificial – crop, spurs.
- Bit – used to communicate with the horse and generally made of metal, bits attach to the bridle and are placed in the mouth.
- Bridle – the complete unit of headstall, bit, and reins that goes on the horse's head while riding to guide and communicate with them.
- Canter – a three beat gait of the horse, faster than a trot but slower than a gallop.
- Cantle – the back of the saddle behind the seat.
- Chestnut – growth on the inside of each leg on a horse – said to be the remainder of a third hoof before they evolved one hoof per leg.
- Conformation – structure and general make-up of the horse's skeletal and muscular structures.
- Diagonal – when posting at the trot – rising with the correct set of diagonal legs (rise and fall with the leg on the wall).
- Farrier – professional trained to trim and shoe horses.
- Gaits – various movements of the horse at different speeds, i.e.: walk, trot, canter, and gallop.
- Gelding – a male horse that has been neutered or gelded.
- Girth – the long belt that attaches with buckles to both sides of the saddle (billets) to hold it in place.
- Ground Poles – usually wooden poles, between 8 and 10 feet in length that are used to create obstacles in the arena for horse and rider to navigate.
- Grooming – the act of brushing a horse to get it clean and picking their hooves to make sure no rocks or sticks are stuck.
- Half Circle & Reverse – change of direction by turning the horse to the inside/center of the arena and back to the rail.
- Halter – leather or nylon harness that goes on the horses' head to attach lead rope to while walking/working a horse.
- Half Seat or 2-point Position – a position where the 2 points of contact with the horse is each foot – the rider hovers hands over horses' neck and stands up out of saddle to get the riders' weight off of the horses back – jumping position.
- Hand (hh) – a standard unit of measurement equal to 4 inches, used to determine the horses' height from the ground to the point of the withers.
- Hoof or Hooves – the structure at the bottom of each leg that serves as the horses' feet.
- Inside – refers to the middle/center of the arena.
- Lead Rope – used to lead the horse, a cotton or nylon rope with a snap on one end that attaches to the halter.
- Long Side – the long side of the arena.
- Lungeing – exercising/riding a horse by placing it on a lunge line, and having the horse go around in a circle.
- Mare – female horse over 2 years of age.
- Mounting Block – set of 2-3 steps that are used to mount the horse.
- Mounting Ramp – area used to mount the rider onto the horse.
- Near Side – refers to the left side of the horse – also called "on-side".
- Off-side – refers to the right side of the horse.
- Outside – refers to the part of the arena closest to the wall/fence/rail.
- Posting – a rider moving up and down in rhythm with the horse at the trot.
- Rail – the outside of the arena – also called fence or wall.

- Reins – long, usually leather, straps attached to the bit and held by the rider to communicate with the horse.
- Saddle – usually leather, sets on the horses' back for rider to sit on.
- Saddle Pad – cloth pad used under the saddle to protect the horses' back.
- Stirrups – made from iron, they hang from the saddle and is where the rider places their feet.
- Tack – term used to refer to all riding equipment.
- Trot – a 2 beat diagonal gait, faster than a walk but slower than a canter.
- "Walk-On" – command to horse to start walking.
- Withers – point between the shoulders on a horses' back, usually where the mane stops.
- "Whoa" – command to horse to halt or stop.