



Groom and Tack Training Manual

EQUI-KIDS GROOMING AND TACKING RULES

Grooming - the process of cleaning and caring for a horse's skin, coat, and hooves including currying, brushing and cleaning their hooves.

- Do not go into a horse's stall without being asked to groom the horse.
- Always put the halter and lead line on the horse while in the stall.
- ONE MUST BE A HORSE LEADER, or a Team Leader must be there to supervise to halter and lead the horse.
- Only one person touching the horse at a time. No more than 1 person in a stall at a time, unless it is a team leader or staff member. Keep the conversation around the grooming area to a minimum.
- Keep the horse positioned in the middle of the stall with the head facing the door while on crossties.
- Move around the front of the horse to get to the other side. Do not walk behind the horse, or under its neck.
- If you notice anything unusual about the horse while grooming, please alert the Team Leader, Barn Manager, or Instructor on site.
- If the horse is pinning its ears back while you are working with it, leave the stall (horse on crossties) and alert the Team Leader or staff member..
- Always remain cautious when working around the horses. Pay attention to what you are doing and how the horse is responding.
- Be calm around the horses when grooming them. They will respond more favorably to a calm environment than a rushed chaotic environment.
- Ask questions. This is your time to learn and practice. Your help during lessons by grooming and tacking is really appreciated.
- Remember - Safety is most important for everyone involved.
- Report any injuries (no matter how small) to the Barn Manager or staff member on site.

GROOMING TOOLS

Grooming Bucket - each horse has their own bucket of grooming tools.

Curry Comb - a round or oval rubber utensil used in a circular motion to remove caked on mud and improve circulation.

Body Brush - a large oval shaped brush with a hand support strip which is used to remove dirt, dust and dandruff from the horse's coat; the length of the bristles determines the stiffness of the brush. Use the hard bristle brush first and follow up with the soft brush.

Mane and Tail Comb or Brush - used to comb tangles out of the mane and tail.

Hoof Pick - metal pick used to remove debris from the bottom of the hoof.

Shedding Blade - used to remove excess dead hair during shedding season.

Sweat Scraper - used to remove excess water from the horse's coat (for after lessons).

Wash Cloth - used to gently wipe horses face, around eyes, nose and ears. A damp washcloth is the best way to remove sweat from the horse's face. They are available in the laundry room for after your lesson.

GENERAL GROOMING AND TACKING PROCEDURES

When grooming a horse, start at the top of his neck and work your way to his rear, then switch sides and repeat. Remember to put the horse's halter on and have them on crossties before you begin grooming.

Start with the curry comb. 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 the bony areas of your horse's body (such as his back). Don't use the curry on your horse's legs unless you can be extremely gentle with it. Never use the curry or any hard brush on your horse's face. It's too easy for your horse to injure his eye on the rubber curry or hard brush, and eye injuries are usually serious, needing immediate veterinarian attention.

Next, use the hard 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 his coat. Unless your horse is already extremely clean, you should see a slight cloud of dust with each stroke. If you don't, you need more "flicking" action with this brush. If you don't use this "flicking" motion, the dirt will just get pushed back under the hair, potentially causing irritation to the horse.

Then, you use the body brush (soft brush). The Soft 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 hard brush. With the body brush, you do not use the flicking motion, instead, you smooth it flat over the horse's coat to

flatten the hair. This brush often gives the horse a shiny, clean appearance (but only when the brushes are used in this order!) This can be gently used on the face to clean dirt.

Next, use the mane and tail comb or brush to gently comb the horse's mane. Please do not brush out the horses' tails, the staff here at EQUI-KIDS are responsible for the tail grooming. If you notice large debris (sticks, hay, etc.) in the tail, you may hand pick it out.

Now, on to the hoofs! This can be done by running your hand down your horse's leg, then gently squeezing his fetlock (ankle). Be sure not to pick up the horse's foot too high, or he might lose balance. 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 of both sides of the frog, and around the sole of the foot. When done gently lower the hoof to the ground, do not drop it. Watch the positioning of your feet so that you are not in the same area where he will be dropping his hoof.

The last step is using a washcloth. A plain towel or clean rag will do, just wipe it over the horse's coat to bring out the shine. Use a soft cloth to gently wipe around the eyes, nose and ears. Thanks for taking the time to learn and practice your skills!

TACKING PROCEDURES

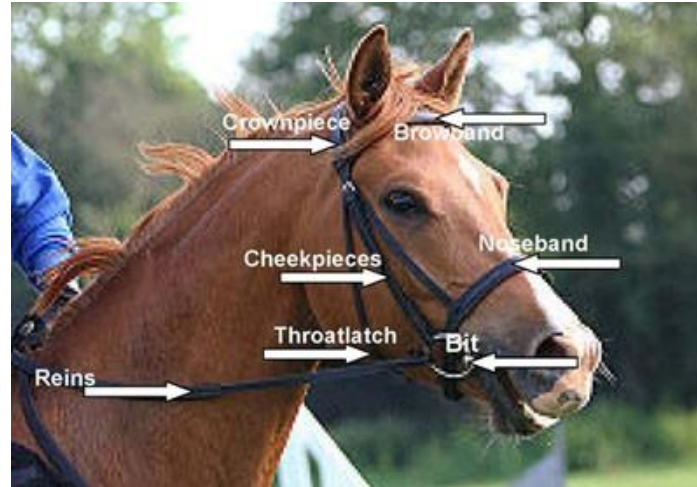
Tack - short for "tackle", includes the halter, saddle, pads, stirrups, bridle, bit, reins, lead rope, and other equipment put on horses that are needed to work with or ride a horse safely. When we get a horse ready for lessons we "tack them up".

EQUI-KIDS has a specific way to groom and tack, which may be different from other farms you have worked at before. We ask that everyone follow our standards to keep the program safe and to provide consistency for our horses.

- Always have a halter on the horse when working around it. When tacking in the tacking stall, put the saddle on first, put the bridle on last.
- The girth will be tightened once the horse has moved around some before the rider mounts, trying to pull it tight right away will result in a cranky and sore horse.
- Team Leaders are required to re-check horses as they exit the barn to assure they are properly prepared for the instructor to begin the lesson.
- The instructor will make an equipment check as well.

***If you run into any trouble during grooming and tacking always ask for assistance.**

The Bridle



Proper Fit:

Cheek pieces have one or two spare holes above the buckle when the bit is correctly adjusted.

Crownpiece and brow band fit without rubbing or pinching ears.

Noseband typically lies $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (one finger) below the cheekbone and should be fitted snug but not tight enough to be uncomfortable. You should be able to slip a finger under any part of the bridle.

Throatlatch – you should be able to fit a fist between the throatlatch and horse's neck/cheek. Ensure all buckles are fastened and keepers are in place.

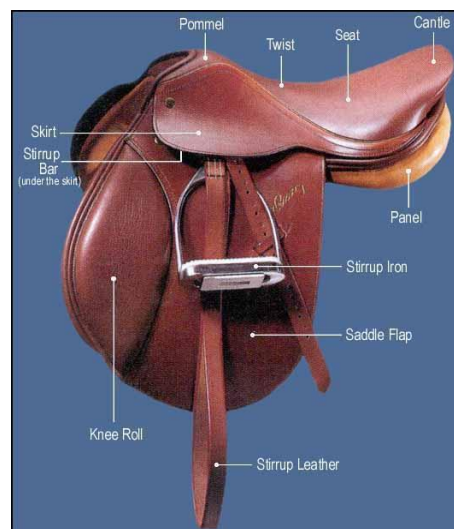
Do not unbuckle any piece of the bridle but the noseband and throatlatch as each bridle has been specially fitted to our horses. If you have questions about the fit, please see a staff member.

Handling the Bridle:

- Always hold from the top at the crownpiece, this will prevent it from tangling.
- To prepare the bridle before putting on the horse, unlatch the throatlatch and noseband, leave all other latches secured.
- If it is cold out, please be kind and warm up the bit by holding it in your hands for a couple of minutes. Do not put it in their mouths freezing cold.

- When placing the bridle on the horse, be very careful not to hit the eyes and do not bang the horse's teeth as the bit goes in the mouth.
- Never let the reins drag on the ground as the horse may trip on them.
- Never pull on the bit when it is in the horse's mouth.
- When removing the bridle allow the horse to drop the bit slowly out of its mouth; do not pull it.
- Bridles will then be placed at the cleaning station for proper cleaning. When storing the bridle after it has been cleaned at the cleaning station, "figure 8" it, staff will show you the proper technique. Hang by the crownpiece in its proper place. This will help it keep its proper shape.

The Saddle



There are many types of saddles used for various types of riding. Saddles can be made of leather or a synthetic material.

Proper fit of a saddle is essential to the comfort of the horse and the ability of the rider to find and ride in a balanced seat position. The saddle should fit the horse and rider.

Before each use check the saddle for signs of wear and tear. Check leather straps and billets. The saddle is the most expensive piece of tack used on the horse. It should be well taken care of for years of use.

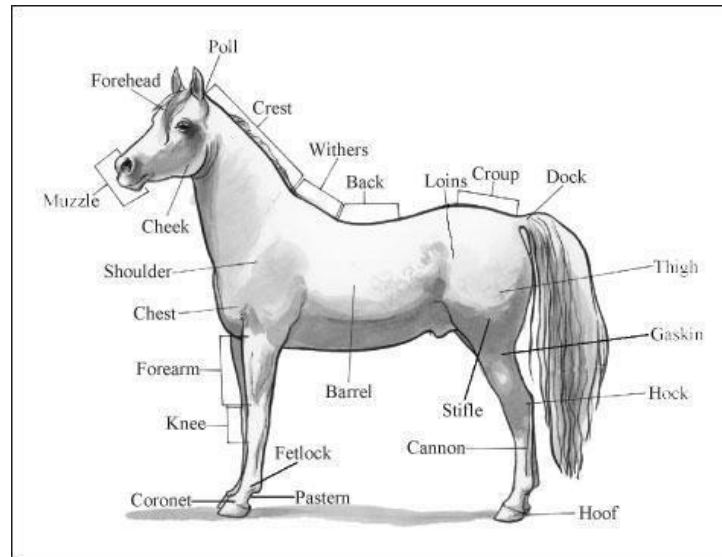
Caring for the saddle includes:

- Saddles will be cleaned at the cleaning station after each use..
- Properly store the saddle using a saddle rack to keep its shape. Do not lay it on the ground.
- Saddle pads and girths will all be cleaned at the cleaning station after each use.
- The tack cleaning instructions are posted in the tack cleaning area and are updated as needed.

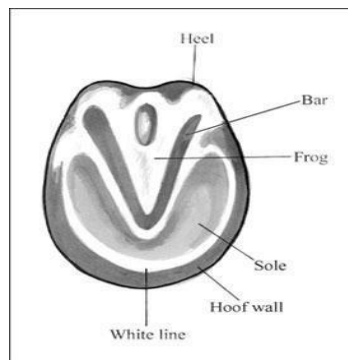
Untacking the Horse:

- After bringing your horse back to the crossties area, undo the halter at the buckle and place the halter on your arm.
- Unbuckle the throat latch and nose band on the bridle.
- Grab on either side of the cheek pieces and slowly remove the bridle from behind their ears and allow the bit to slowly release from the horse's mouth so as to not bang their teeth.
- Once the bridle is removed, place the halter back on your horse and then hook up the crossties to their halter.
- Now that your horse is back on the crossties, unclip your reins from the halter and now your bridle and reins are ready for the cleaning station.
- At this time, unbuckle your girth slowly from the right side and then move to the left side of your horse.
- You can now place your girth on top of the saddle and grab the front of the saddle/saddle pads with your left hand and the back with your right hand. Gently lift up off of the horse's back, and now your saddle, pads, and girth are ready for the cleaning station.

The horse



The Hoof



Training our volunteers proper horse handling skills helps us to run a safe therapeutic riding program.