



# Groom and Tack



# Presentation

# GROOMING AND TACKING RULES

- Grooming - the process of cleaning and caring for a horse's skin, coat, and hooves including currying, brushing and cleaning out their feet.
- 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 a 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 crosstie area/tacking stall, with their head facing the door, while on crossties.

# GROOM AND TACK RULES CONTINUED

- 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 a 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 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.



# GROOMING PROCEDURES CONTINUED

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.



# GROOMING PROCEDURES CONTINUED

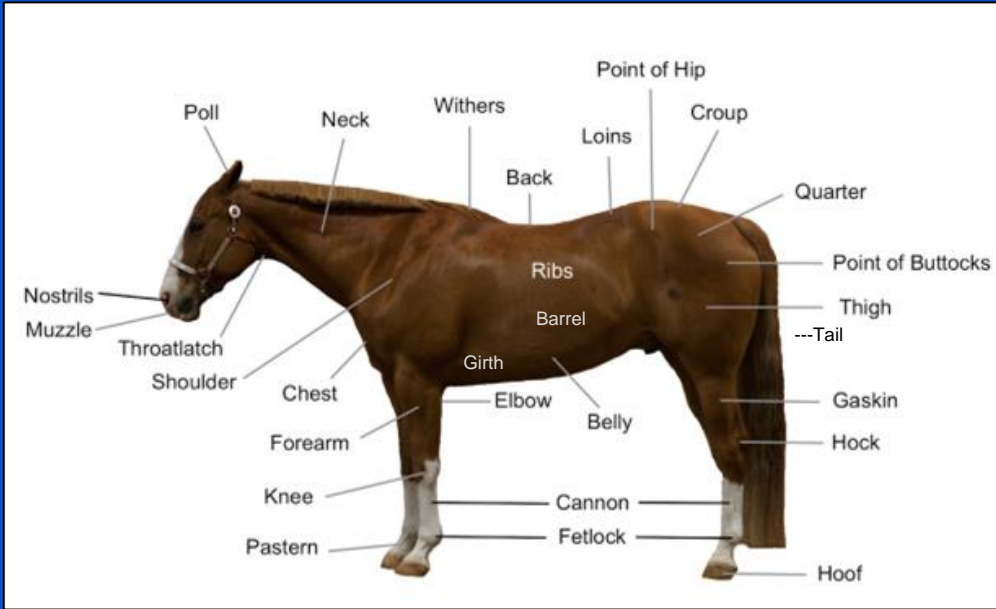
Next, use the mane and tail comb or brush to gently comb the horse's mane. Please do not brush out the horses' tails, the staff here at EQUI-KIDS are responsible for the tail grooming. If you notice large debris (sticks, hay, etc.) in the tail, you may hand pick it out.

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.

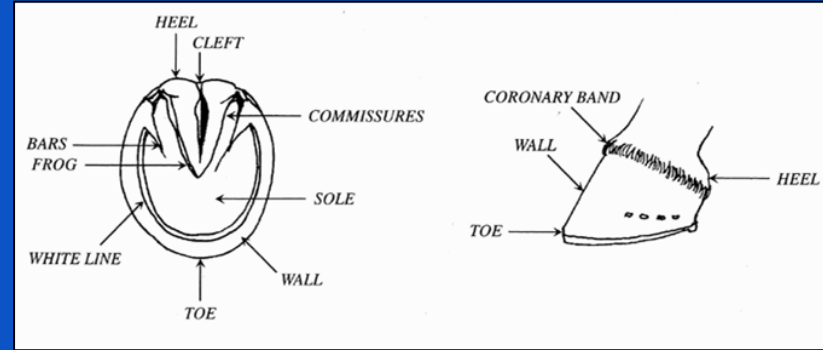
The last step is using a washcloth. A plain towel or clean rag will do, just wipe it over the horse's coat to bring out the shine. Use a soft cloth to gently wipe around the eyes, nose and ears.



# THE HORSE



# THE HOOF



# TACK & EQUIPMENT

There are many types of saddles used for various types of riding.

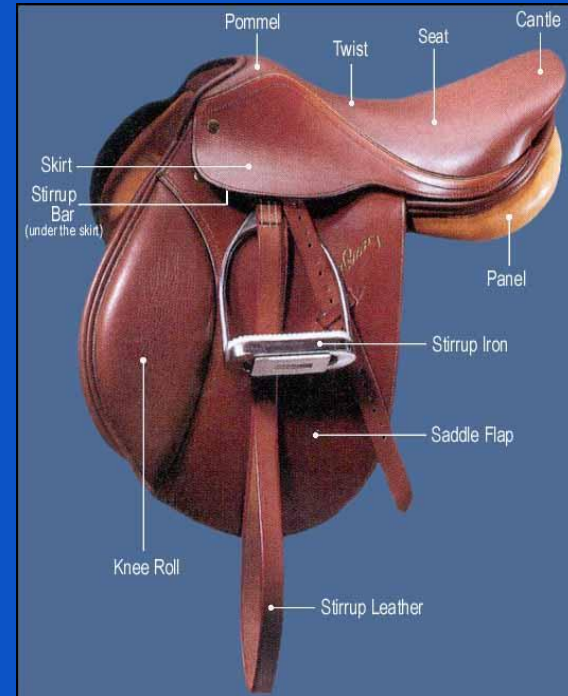
Saddles can be made of leather or a synthetic material.

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.

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.

## THE SADDLE





# TACK & EQUIPMENT CONTINUED



## English Saddle & Girth

The English tack is used more frequently for therapeutic riding. It is easier for the rider to mount, dismount, and do exercises on the horse and be able to have contact with the horse and its movements.



## Cotton Saddle Pad, Half Mattes & Rump Riser Pads

Help adjust the fit of the saddle to individual horses (each EQUI-KIDS horse has their own).



## Thin Line Pad

May be white/black-acts as a shock absorber to cushion horse's back from the rider's weight.



## Peacock Safety Stirrups

Peacock stirrups are similar to a regular stirrup iron. The inner side is the regular stirrup iron but the outer side is designed with a heavy rubber band attaching to the top & bottom of the stirrup. Used as a precaution for the rider: should the rider fall or the foot slide forward, the heavy rubber band will release, so that the foot keeps from being caught in the stirrup. **Rubber band should be on the outside edge of the rider's foot (faces the front of the saddle when no rider is mounted).**

# TACK & EQUIPMENT CONTINUED



## Cloth Saddle Cover & Blue Saddle Pad Covers

Help protect the saddle & pads from contaminants; (saddle covers are numbered and match the saddle number of each EQUI-KIDS horse).



## Bridle & Reins

The bridle is a head harness, which holds the bit for guiding a horse while riding.



## Halter

The halter has no bit and can be placed over the bridle. It is used to handle or lead a horse or pony.



## Lead Rope, Lead Line

A rope with a snap on one end used to attach to the halter for leading or tying a horse.



## Mounting Ramp

An essential piece of equipment, the mounting ramp aids the rider to mount and dismount the horse with the help of the instructor.

# 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 in order to work with or ride a horse safely. When we get a horse ready for lessons we “tack them up”.

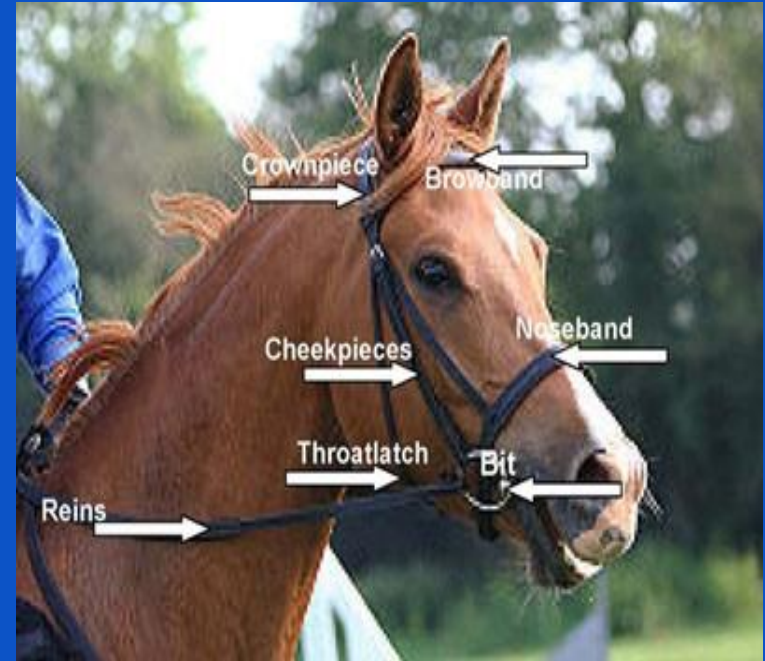
EQUI-KIDS has a specific way to groom and tack, which may be different from other farms you have worked at before. We ask that everyone follow our standards to keep the program safe and to provide consistency for our horses.

- Always have a halter on the horse when working around them. When tacking in the tacking stall or crosstie areas, 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 ensure they are properly prepared before entering the arena for their warmup before the start of the lesson.
- The instructor will *always* check a horse’s tack before a rider mounts.
- If you run into any trouble during grooming and tacking always ask for assistance.

# TACKING PROCEDURES CONTINUED

Proper fit of the bridle:

- 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 ½ 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 except for 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.



# TACKING PROCEDURES CONTINUED

## Handling the Bridle:

- Always hold from the top at the crownpiece, this will prevent it from tangling.
- To prepare the bridle before putting it on the horse, undo 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.
- Place the reins over the horse's neck and clip them to the cheekpieces on either side of the halter.
- Remove the halter by unbuckling the crownpiece on the left side. Put the halter over your right arm. The reins should still be over the horse's neck.
- When placing 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.
- Once the bridle is on, put the horse's lesson halter on over the bridle. If the horse is not sponsored and has no lesson halter, put his working halter back on over the bridle. Make sure the reins are connected to the halter that is on the horse.
- Buckle the throatlatch and cavesson of the bridle.
- Attach the lesson lead rope to the halter.
- Never put the horse in crossties with the bridle on. Always take the bridle off first.
- 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.

# ORDER OF TACK

First



Halter  
(should be on before tacking)

Next



Cotton  
Saddle Pad

+



Thin line  
pad

+



Half Mattes  
pad

=



All saddle  
pads

+



Saddle & Girth

+

=



Last

Attach reins to my halter, then my *Horse Leader* may remove my halter, put on my bridle, put my halter back on over the bridle & attach the lead line



Reins



Bridle



Lead  
line



# UNTACKING

## Untacking the Horse:

- After bringing your horse back to the crosstie 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 the horse's ears and allow the bit to slowly release from the horse's mouth so that it does not bang against 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.
- Now you can unbuckle your girth slowly from the right side and then move to the left side of your horse and unbuckle it from the left.
- 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 of your saddle/saddle pads with your right hand. Gently lift the saddle and pads up off the horse's back, and now your saddle, pads, and girth are ready for the cleaning station.

# RINSING

- Occasionally, especially during the hot summer days, you will be asked to rinse your horse off. This helps them cool down, and it removes any dirt and sweat that may be built up from working.
- The horse should be in cross ties in a designated wash stall.
- Check that the water is not warm or hot. The water in a hose that has been left out in the sun becomes hot quickly and can burn or irritate the horse's skin.
- The water temperature should be cool, but not cold.
- Check that the hose nozzle setting is on shower. You don't want to use a setting that is pressurized enough to cause the horse discomfort.
- Start rinsing the horse at the front hoof and make your way up the leg to the shoulder. Continue to rinse all over the horse's body, and switch sides when needed. Keep the stream of water steady. Shaking the hose can startle or bother the horse.
- It is important to avoid the face and the ears – no one likes water in their eyes, ears, or nose. If needed, you may use a damp sponge to wipe sweat stains off the face.
- Use a sweat scraper to remove excess water from the horse's coat.
- Remember to turn off the water and replace your tools.



# FLY SPRAYING

- During the summer, and parts of the spring and fall, it is important to fly spray your horse before bringing them into the arena for their lesson.
- It is important to do this properly so that the horse has proper protection from flies and is not irritated during their lesson.
- Do not surprise the horse with the fly spray. Start at his shoulder, avoid the face, and spray the rest of their body, including the legs.
- Hold the spray bottle 12-18 inches away from the horse to allow the spray to spread evenly over the horse's coat.
- Staff will take care of applying fly spray to the horse's face, head, or ears.



Thank you for viewing the Groom and Tack Training presentation! We are excited to have more helping hands out in the barn getting our herd ready for lessons!



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our volunteer department.

[volunteer@equikids.org](mailto:volunteer@equikids.org) | (757) 721-7350 | [www.equikids.org](http://www.equikids.org)