

Grooming and Equipment

Grooming promotes circulation, improves appearance, gets horses clean, ensures there will be nothing irritating under the saddle or bridle and allows you to check the horse for cuts, swelling, heat. Notify the Instructor of any concerns.

Work from front to back, near (left) side then off (right) side.

1. Start with the hooves: standing close to the horse's side facing towards its tail, with your feet parallel to the horse, pick up each hoof in turn and hold it firmly with one hand while cleaning it with the other. Make sure one hand is supporting the hoof. Some students will be unable to pick out hooves so the volunteer can pick the hooves for them. Work **hoof pick** from heel to toe, away from you, to remove the dirt, stones, etc.; avoid the frog, the sensitive central part of the hoof. Check for injuries, loose shoes, tenderness (notify the Instructor of any concerns). Work from left front, left hind, right front, right hind.
2. Use a **rubber curry comb** in a circular motion to remove dirt/mud and stimulate circulation. Use only on fleshy parts of the body, avoid lower legs, face or spine.
3. Use **dandy brush** to remove dirt and dandruff brought up by curry; use short brisk flicks only on fleshy parts; brush in direction of hair growth, draw dandy brush across curry comb every stroke to clean - do not use curry or dandy on mane tail.
4. Use **body brush** to clean off remaining dirt on all parts of the body, including mane and tail; clean on curry every few strokes. It also helps spread natural oil over the entire coat. Face brush can be used, if desired, to clean off the horse's face.

In line with our "Space by the Face" philosophy, no brushing, touching or standing in front of horses faces. They work hard and need their space.

Run bare hands over the horse's body paying special attention to where the saddle, girth and bridle will sit to make sure there is no dirt remaining.

Watch for signs of irritation from the horse: ears pinned back, tail swishing, stomping - some horses have sensitive or ticklish areas that should be avoided.

Special Equipment

If ever you are asked to retrieve specialized equipment from the Tack Room, pictures on the wall identify each piece of equipment which allows for easy identification but here are some of the main special equipment we may use in lessons:

Neck Strap: A piece of leather fastened around the base of the horse's neck. It provides extra support for the rider when practicing 2-point (jumping or ½ seat) position and trotting. When in place you should be able to fit your hand comfortably between the strap and the horse's neck.

Rainbow Reins: Reins with strips of different colour. This helps the rider understand where to hold and maintain the reins at the proper length. Additional types of reins are used and names of each are indicated in the tack room.

Enclosed Stirrups: Keeps rider's foot from slipping through the stirrup. For participants wearing running shoes or who tend to point their toes down, have weak ankles, decreased strength and/or sensation in legs.

Surcingle and Pad: For participants with high tone in their leg muscles and may have difficulty fitting into a saddle, or other conditions where they may benefit from the closer proximity to the horse. Used in physiotherapy/hippotherapy.

Sheepskin Pad: Put over the saddle to provide protection for riders with sensitive skin or those without a lot of muscle covering the seat bones. Can also provide more warmth.