

EQUESTRIAN GUIDE



Equine Nutrition

One of the more complex aspects of owning a horse is knowing how to properly feed him. The equine food market is flooded with options of feed, supplements and hay, some of which can actually be detrimental to the health of your horse.

Commercial horse feed manufacturers are required by law to list information regarding their product on an attached or printed-on feed tag. But translating this information to what it means for your specific horse can be a difficult task. If you're stumped on the details, reach out to your feed company. It has nutritional consultants on staff who can help clear up any questions you may have.

BASIC NUTRIENTS

In most cases, a horse's diet needs to meet six basic nutrient categories: Carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals and water. Is your horse taking in enough of those key nutrients? Visit the National Research Council's database to input your horse's age, weight, status and workload, as well as its specific nutritional needs for macronutrients (<http://nrc88.nas.edu/nrh/>). Seek the help of professional equine nutritionist if you have questions on your horse's dietary needs.

HORSE INSTINCT

Allowing your horse to graze and eat at its own pace can be key to avoiding obesity and lameness, according to



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Juliet M. Getty, Ph.D. and owner of Getty Equine Nutrition in Waverly, Ohio.

"When they are forced to eat on our schedules, they quickly become out of touch with that innate ability to eat slowly, a little at a time, and stop when satisfied," she said. "Instead, they eat quickly, ravenously, with barely a breath in between each bite."

Getty advises owners to be strategic when it comes to when and how they feed their horses, especially if weight loss is a priority.

"You should not put your horse in a dry lot or a stall with no hay," she said. "You should test your hay, make sure it is suitable for the horse (low in sugar, starch, and calories) and put it in lots of slow

feeders, placed everywhere you can – encouraging your horse to move."

Even a small amount of exercise, Getty says, can make a difference in helping a horse lose weight or obtain greater overall health.

WATER

A normal, healthy horse will

consume 5 to 15 (or more) gallons of water per day, depending on temperature, humidity and activity level, according to the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Equine experts recommend clean water be provided daily and made readily available at all times.

Trailering Safety Tips

Even if your horse is a homebody, it should be familiar with being loaded, transported and unloaded in a trailer. Teaching it these skills ahead of time will optimize the safety of you and your horse in case of an emergency trip to the veterinarian.

Safe trailering can also open up enjoyable chances to travel the country for participation in off-site shows, trail rides and special training. If your horse has never been trailered, it is important to remain patient while it learns its new trick.

LOADING YOUR HORSE

Load your horse one step at a time with the help of a friend, family member or neighbor.

Once your horse is in the trailer, make it a positive experience. Offer it hay and slowly exit the forward escape door, all the while encouraging your horse and holding onto his lead. Once you exit, have your helper snap the butt-strap and calmly secure the rear doors. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) suggests that you never tie a horse in a trailer before securing the butt-strap and back doors. This can cause your horse to panic and attempt to back out of the trailer, falling and injuring itself.

THE TRANSPORT

Don't simply forget that your horse is a passenger on your trip. Offer it water at every bathroom or fuel break, and check it over for signs of fatigue, cuts or excess sweating. Perspiration can be caused by stress, as well as warm conditions, so allow your horse to rest in the trailer until its coat dries before hitting the road again.

UNLOADING

Once you've reached your destination, the ASPCA recommends you hand-walk your horse for five to 10 minutes after safely unloading it from the trailer. This will help relax its muscles and help you in identifying any changes in its movement that may be a sign of injury. If your transport was a lengthy one, allow your horse a little extra time before hitting the trail.



Equine Basic First Aid

Preparation is key when knowing how to deal with a horse emergency. Do you know how to care for a deep laceration to your horse's leg? What about an eye ulcer?

We reached out to Dr. DeAnn Hughes, a veterinarian with Southern Equine Veterinary Services in Knob Lick, Ky. Her tips below are focused on some of the more common cases of equine emergencies that her office handles. She urges horse owners to consult the help of their local veterinarian to learn about how to react in critical situations and how to build their own equine emergency kit.

COLIC

Colic encompasses all forms of gastrointestinal conditions and can be rather painful for horses. Hughes classifies colic as an emergency in terms of needing to seek professional help quickly to ease your horse's pain.

"Never feed a colicky horse," Hughes said. "Things already aren't going right in their gut, so adding more food to their stomach is only going to make things worse. You don't want to have to pump food back out."

EYE INJURIES

Many people are quick to call their vet in the case of an eye injury, and rightfully so, Hughes said. "You definitely want to have a professional evaluate any eye injury. The



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last thing you want to do is wait to seek treatment and then lose an eye."

LACERATIONS

Just like in humans, the key to treating a cut to your horse's skin is stopping the bleeding and applying pressure, according to Hughes. "If the laceration needs to be sewn, it is important to do it within two to four hours. If you wait too long, you're going to have to recreate the

wound to do it properly, and no one wants that, especially your horse."

SNAKE BITE

For trail horses, a snake bite to the face can be downright dangerous – and not necessarily because of harmful venom.

"Horses are obligatory nose breathers, meaning they are designed to only breathe out of their nose," Hughes said. "If a horse is getting a drink on

the trail, gets bit in the face and has his nostrils swell up, he can have big problems breathing."

Hughes suggests bringing along some sort of tubing or pieces of garden hose to place in each nostril to help your horse breathe in the case of a snake bite to the face.

FIRST-AID KIT

Hughes suggests the items below for every equine first

aid kit, as well as various single doses of basic medications and sedations, chosen with the help of your vet. "All horse owners should know how to give an injection," she said. "It can make a big difference while you're waiting for professional help to arrive.

- Bandaging materials
- Thermometer
- Stethoscope
- Duct tape (for keeping bandages on)
- Flashlight

Equine Photography

Capturing amazing equine photos is an art form – one that requires more than a simple point-and-shoot technique.

Alyssa Tisdell, founder of EquiChoices Horse Advertising and Say Carrots Photography in Denver, possesses nearly two decades in the horse industry and has taken thousands of high-quality photos for her clients. She recently shared some insights into how and when she gets her best shots.

First of all, the equipment – how important is a great camera and what do you recommend?

Depending on the type of photos you need, most of the time a normal digital camera will work just fine. The angle of the horse, the background, and the overall structure of the photo can be greatly improved by changing external factors, rather than purchasing an expensive camera. For people that are looking for a step up toward the professional level, a great camera to get is the Nikon D5100. It is very user-friendly and does a very nice job capturing the more intricate details of each horse.

Is there a certain time of day/season that makes for the best shots?

In the spring, after the horses shed their winter coats and once the mud dries up. Spring can be an excellent time to have a session. But make sure it isn't too early, or you will end up trying to take photos of a half fuzzy/half shedding horse that is covered in mud.

The summer is the most popular time to get shots. The horses are often in show condition, have nice muscling from spring work outs, and the landscape generally looks nice to use as a



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background.

When the leaves are changing is the best time to take photos in the fall season. Otherwise, once the leaves have fallen, you will end up with a dreary photo and a horse that is starting to grow a winter coat.

In the winter, snow photos can be absolutely spectacular. But keep in mind, during the winter unless you blanket, stall or clip your horses, the photos won't be the best as far as showing off the conformation or show potential of your horse.

What are some quick tips on taking a great equine photo?

Think about what is in the background. You may not notice that "Bob" is standing in the background wearing flip flops or the kiddie pool is partially in the shot, but everyone else looking at the picture will.

Also, have someone help you. You need someone to assist you in moving the horse for action shots and setting them up squarely for conformation/

headshots. Make sure your helper has attention-getting tools, such as a whip with a plastic bag on the end, a noise-maker or treats. These will help with perking the horse's ears, as well as getting movement shots.

How can people prepare their horses for photos?

Give your horse a bath. Do a full show grooming – full body brush and spray show sheen for an extra shine. Clip ears, nose, face, legs, and bridle path. Brush and clip mane and tail as needed. Add any braids that are acceptable for the specific discipline. Do some ground work or do some warm-up exercises under saddle in order to make sure your horse will be responsive to you.

What is the difference in strategies between shooting stationary vs. action?

For stationary shots, have your helper set up the horse so they are standing squarely, looking in the direction you want with perked ears. Since the horse is standing still, you have the chance to make sure that everything is perfect. Make the horse stand in the exact place that you want and take photos from several different angles as you go along. Double-check that everything in the background is neat and tidy.

Action shots are different because you don't have as much time to set up and adjust the shot/lighting. You need to "snap" the photo the split second the horse is in the right phase of movement or if they are doing something particularly impressive.

What are some keys to keeping a horse patient during a photo shoot?

Keep photo sessions short and make them interesting. If your horse has a tendency to fall asleep during photo shoots, bring something new that they haven't seen before, like an umbrella or a large beach ball. If your horse has a tendency to be anxious and not want to stand still, practice ground work the week ahead of time, asking them to stand still in a place they are comfortable in. First ask them to stand still for 20 seconds, then increase it to five minutes, or 10.

TAKING A GREAT ACTION SHOT

Photographer Alyssa Tisdell says the hardest part about action shots is getting the photo at the right time.

- At a walk: This is a four-beated gait. You can take a photo at almost any time, but when one of the front legs is stepping forward tends to look nice.

- At a trot: This is a two-beated gait, so try to time your shot for when the horse has one diagonal set of legs going forward.

- At a canter: This is a three-beated gait and is the hardest to capture correctly. Try to time your shot for when the horse's weight is back on his/her hind end. This creates a more balanced and pleasant image.

Horse Treat Recipes

We love treating our horses, and fortunately horses love treats! There are many horse-pleasing options from your local shop, but whipping up your own treats can be both fun and cost-effective.

Anytime you are adding a new food to your horse's dietary routine, it is important to watch for signs of negative reactions. And it is never a bad idea to consult your veterinarian before you offer your horse a new treat. Below are three easy recipes from the Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

HORSE COOKIES

- 1 cup uncooked oats*
- 1 cup flour*
- 1 cup shredded carrots*
- 1 teaspoon salt*
- 1 teaspoon sugar*
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil*
- ¼ cup molasses*

Mix ingredients in bowl as listed. Make little balls and place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

CARROT APPLE DELIGHT

- 3 carrots chopped into small pieces*
- 3 apples cut into small pieces*
- 1 cup oats*
- Molasses*

Drench cut-up carrots and apples in molasses. Roll molasses-covered carrots and apples into oats. Put in refrigerator.

HORSE MUFFINS

- 1½ cup of bran*
- 1 cup whole wheat flour*
- 1 teaspoon baking soda*
- 1 teaspoon baking powder*
- ¼ cup skimmed milk*
- ½ cup molasses*
- 2 tablespoons corn oil*
- 1 egg, beaten*

Stir together bran, flour, baking soda and baking powder. Mix together milk, molasses, oil and egg. Mix wet ingredients into dry ingredients. Bake in greased muffin tins at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.



Thoroughbred Adoption

The average racing career for a thoroughbred can be as short as two years and as long as 10 years. With typical thoroughbreds living more than 20 years, there is plenty of post-career life to enjoy.

Organizations like the Thoroughbred Adoption Network are focused on making sure every thoroughbred finds a safe, positive home environment once their racing days are behind them. And with a slew of participating organizations across the nation, it is likely you will be able to find one near you with that perfect thoroughbred for your farm.

POST-CAREER

The plight of the retired thoroughbred has been well-documented, with instances of abuse, neglect and even slaughter for human consumption. The more fortunate thoroughbreds are often retired to breeding farms, kept by owners or delegated to the riding stables. Thoroughbred Adoption Network and other like-minded groups have been able to rescue thousands of horses from dangerous situations and place them in loving barns. And the adoption process is not as complex as you may think.

ADOPTION

The Thoroughbred Adoption Network collaborates with the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation to make sure adoptable horses are turned over to a suitable, caring home. Interested adoptees must simply complete an application, provide references and be prepared to showcase their farm to a Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation employee. Stabling arrangements must be secured before an adoption can be finalized.

COST AND DETAILS

Upon approval, you will be matched with a horse that best suits your needs – a process that can take a month or longer. The Thoroughbred Adoption Network's tax-deductible, non-refundable adoption fee can range from \$500 to \$5,000, based on the condition and potential of the horse.

After the adoption has been completed, the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation requires your veterinarian to provide annual reports on the horse's condition and vaccination history. It is an ongoing relationship, with the health of your horse at the forefront.



Put Your Best Hoof Forward

The wellness of your horse stops and goes with his feet – literally. And when it comes to horses, the health and care of their feet can be surprisingly complex.

“Foot care is so important to everyday health,” said Dr. Stephen O’Grady, a veterinarian, professional farrier and owner of Northern Virginia Equine in Marshall, Va. “A horse can go to a show with skin bumps or a snotty nose. He can’t go if he’s limping.”

Practices like O’Grady’s are crucial to diagnosing, treating and maintaining a variety of foot conditions. He and his staff have solved serious hoof issues throughout the world through their consultative services. The horse foot is highly complex, O’Grady says, and serious issues can result from a poor shoeing job or inefficient farrier performance.

Not only are they complex, these issues can also be hard to detect by the common horse owner.

“It is a very difficult situation to be in for a horse owner because you’ve really got to trust that your farrier knows what he or she is doing,” O’Grady said. “Unfortunately, there is a sliding scale of skill sets out there. Some owners are fortunate enough to find a highly qualified farrier, while others will have trouble.”

Demand is the biggest issue facing the farrier industry, O’Grady says.

“A lot of times, the top far-



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riers aren’t taking on any extra work,” he said. “They’re in demand of the upper-level competition horses and aren’t willing to travel out to your farm to take a look at a pasture horse. For those owners, you’ve got to do

your research to make sure you’re getting good service.”

O’Grady advises horse owners to reach out to their local veterinarian to first find out if he or she is also a certified farrier. “Not many

of us are, but it helps to have an understanding of the medical physiology and the mechanics of the foot.”

For owners in rural areas, O’Grady suggests calling equine veterinary practices in the closest big city. “You

may be closer than you think to a certified farrier.”

The American Farriers Association and The American Association of Professional Farriers have lists of certified professional farriers on their websites.