

# **Richland Riders Club**

**Serving Equestrians in the Tri-Cities Area since 1949**

## **Happiest When Horseback**

A Series of Blogs by a Horse-aholic

Authored by,

Rebecca Hull

June 10, 2019

## Secretariat's Spa Day

Advances in Equine Health Maintenance



Figure 1 Horse Getting Massaged

We ask a lot of our horses. From the trail boss to the FEI school master, our horses put their minds and bodies to work for us. We should do our best to make sure they are healthy and comfortable. Massage, chiropractic, and acupuncture sessions have crossed over from humans to the equine industry, and horse owners are singing their praises.

**Massage:** Equine massage has few scientific studies, but one [2016 study](#) did show that massage helped slow heart rates and relax racehorses. Massaging your horse is said to help in many areas.

“Many horses visibly relax during a massage session by dropping their head, licking or chewing, cocking a hind leg, swaying with the massage therapist’s movements, and even going to sleep”. (Cerulli, P. 2018) While more rigorous studies could be done on the effects of equine massage, the anecdotal evidence is overwhelming.

**Chiropractic:** Equine chiropractors are generally brought in when a horse is in neck or back pain. “It provides specialized evaluation and treatment of joint, neurological and muscle or skeletal disorders that are currently lacking in traditional veterinary medicine.” (Haussler, K. 2018) Like massage, much of the evidence is anecdotal. The biggest difference between getting your horse massaged vs. adjusted, is that a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) will perform the [adjustment](#).

**Acupuncture:** When eastern medicine crosses over into the equine industry, everyone takes notice. Some people may think you're crazy for having the vet stick needles in your horse for pain relief, and others may think you're a genius. Acupuncture is thought to help relieve pain "due to release of hormones, activation of nerve responses, or triggering of immune system function". (Kentucky Equine Research Staff, 2011). [Acupuncture](#) won't fix everything, and it may take several sessions to achieve your desired results.

Results from all three treatments vary from horse to horse should be done by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

### Possible Benefits:

Massage	Chiropractor	Acupuncture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Pain relief</li><li>✓ Improved range of motion</li><li>✓ Relaxation</li><li>✓ Build trust</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Pain relief</li><li>✓ Improved range of motion</li><li>✓ Improved uniform movement</li><li>✓ Improved posture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Pain relief</li><li>✓ Alleviate facial nerve paralysis</li><li>✓ Relief of systemic disorders</li></ul>

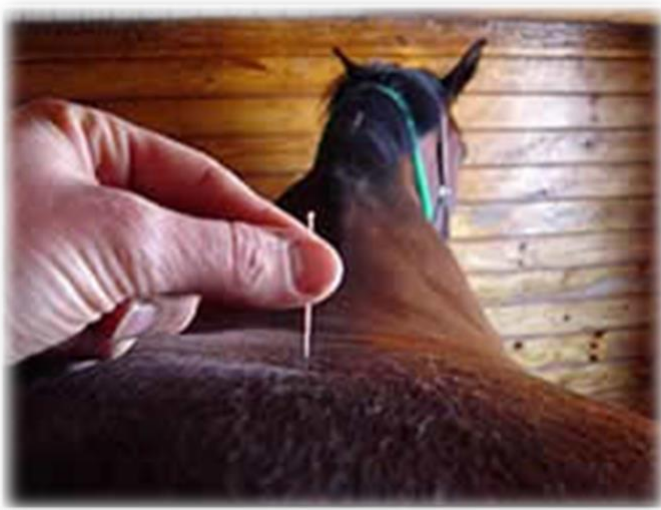


Figure 2 Equine Acupuncture

There is opposition with all three homeopathic treatments. Some say there's no proof that any of it works, no matter the anecdotal evidence. Whether or not you're a believer in naturopathic medicine for your horse, we can all agree that we want our horses to be happy and healthy. If any of these treatments help you achieve that, then you're on the right track cowboy.

June 8, 2019

## Prepared Like a Boy Scout

What to Bring for a Fun and Safe Trail Ride



Figure 3 Trail Riders Crossing River

Trail riding is a past time that any horseback rider can enjoy. Whether out for a short thirty-minute hack or a weekend packing through the mountains, there are a few items to never leave home without.

**Water:** Both you and your horse need to stay hydrated. If you're only out for a short hack, just bringing a bottle along for yourself should suffice. If you're trailering out to ride and you won't be near any bodies of water, packing water is essential for you and your horse. A [clean water tank](#) can be installed in your trailer, and portable versions are available as well.

**Food:** You may not get hungry on a short ride out, but if you're planning an all-day or overnight trip, you must bring sustenance for both you and your animal. Breakfast, a snack and dinner for you and breakfast and dinner for your horse, if staying overnight.

**Equipment:** [Insulated Saddle bags](#) for front and back of the saddle can carry the food and water for your round trip, or to your destination. If packing into a camp site (not driving), make sure you are not making your horse carry too much weight and that you have a pack animal like another horse or a mule. Your horse should carry no more that 20% of its body weight.

**Knife:** A sharp, [folding or pocketknife](#) can be invaluable in many situations.

**Cell Phone:** GPS and the ability to emergency call are important, especially if riding alone.

**Sun Protection:** Sun burns are no fun and skin cancer's no joke.

**First-aid Kit:** In case of an injury for you or your horse. Horse bandages and antiseptic can be used on humans and will save space by only packing for your horse.

**Duct Tape:** From emergency tack repairs to wrapping a horse's hoof if a shoe comes off, this product has a 1001 uses.

**Bug-Spray:** Depending on your location and time of day, bug-spray may be the difference between an enjoyable ride and an itchy mess.

**Toilet Paper:** Well...you know.



Figure 4 Saddlebags

Make a checklist before you head out. Look through your tack room and horse trailer. Think through your day from loading your horses into the trailer, setting up camp, trail rides, and loading up to come home. Is everything on your checklist packed? No matter what version of a trail ride sounds fun to you, your ride will be unsafe and unenjoyable if you venture out unprepared. (Fifty Trail Ride Tips and Tricks, 2017)

I have taken many spur-of-the-moment trail rides where I needed something I didn't have (notice I mentioned toilet paper). If you do not have property with trails attached to it and you trailer to your riding spots, I suggest keeping some basics in your trailer tack room (or Rubbermaid boxed and bungee-cord to wall if no tack room) such as a case of water and good 'ol TP. Pack safe. Pack smart. And have a great trail ride!

June 6, 2019

# Mamas...Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys

So, You Want to Buy a Horse



Figure 5 Anticipation-Young Cowboys

Maybe you grew up in the city. A horse-crazy kid with every model horse you could get your parents to buy, and now you're an adult who can buy a real horse. Or maybe you're the parent of that horse-crazy child. Whatever the case may be, there are a few things you should consider before your big purchase:

- ✓ How much does a horse cost up front and per month?
- ✓ Do I need to find a barn to board my horse and what will that [cost](#)?
- ✓ Do I have a veterinarian?
- ✓ Do I have a farrier (puts on horseshoes)?

These are just a few things everyone should have secured before ever trailering a horse home.

That sounds like a lot of time, commitment, and money, doesn't it? It is. There is another option if you're not ready to jump in the deep end quite yet.

## You Don't Have to Purchase

Leasing a horse is an excellent option for those that don't have property of their own and may not want all the expense and responsibility that comes with ownership.



Half Lease:	Full Lease:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Share time with owner/second rider</li> <li>✓ Share expense with owner/second rider</li> <li>✓ Restricted on when/where you can use horse</li> <li>✓ No traveling with horse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Full access/no shared time</li> <li>✓ Full expense</li> <li>✓ Less restrictions than with half lease</li> <li>✓ Require permission to travel with horse</li> </ul>

A half lease is a lease when you share time and expense with another rider or the owner. Half leases typically mean you have access to the horse a set 3 days a week along with use of the horse owners' saddle and other tack for the horse. With a half lease, board and vet care are not your full responsibility so your main expense is the monthly lease fee and any lessons you may be taking.

A full lease is like owning your own horse. You have full access to ride any day of the week, and you also have full responsibility financially. In either case, full or half lease, a contract is signed, and liability is presumed.

## Buying a Horse:

The biggest questions you must ask yourself when purchasing a horse are:

- ✓ What will I be using this horse for?
- ✓ How often will I be using the horse?
- ✓ How will you take care of the horse's [daily needs](#)?
- ✓ What [supplies](#) will you need?

You may have the portfolio of Bill Gates and be able to afford any horse you want. That does not mean that you have any business buying any horse you want.



Figure 6 Looking Down Barn Aisle

What is the purpose of buying this horse? Do you need a beginner-friendly horse for your child to start riding lessons on? Did you grow up with horses but haven't ridden them in years, and just want a buddy to hack down trails with?

How often will you ride? Daily for lessons or only a couple times a month on lazy trail rides?

You are not a Grand Prix master looking for their next million-dollar baby, so these are the realistic questions you need to answer.

Once you have that figured out, then you can begin your hunt!

Setting a monthly budget is important. “Responses to a horse-ownership survey from the University of Maine found that the average annual cost of horse ownership is \$3,876 per horse, while the median cost is \$2,419. That puts the average monthly expense anywhere from \$200 to \$325 – on par with a car payment”. (Annual Cost, 2012)

Owning a horse is a huge responsibility, just like owning any other animal. Horses come with their own set of expenses, and it is the unprepared owner that ends up having to choose between feeding their horse, or getting their feet trimmed. Just like dogs and cats, horses end up in rescues too. It is your responsibility to make the smart decision for your family and your future horse.

### Leasing vs. Buying:

Leasing	Buying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ No long-term commitment</li><li>✓ Low up-front cost</li><li>✓ Low risk of vet bill (cost cap)</li><li>✓ No hassle to sell horse when lease is up</li><li>✓ Lease a nicer horse cheaper than buying</li><li>✓ More costly in the long run</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Full-time commitment</li><li>✓ Higher up-front cost</li><li>✓ Responsible for all vet bills</li><li>✓ Cheaper in the long run</li><li>✓ Responsible for selling when no longer wanted/needed</li></ul>



## References

- Cerulli, P. (2018). The Benefits of Equine Massage Therapy. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanveterinarian.com/news/the-benefits-of-equine-massage-therapy>
- Haussler, K. (2018) Equine Chiropractic: General Principles and Applications. Retrieved from: <https://aaep.org/horsehealth/equine-chiropractic-general-principles-and-applications>
- Kentucky Equine Research Staff. (2011) Acupuncture in Horses: What's the Point? Retrieved from: <https://ker.com/equinews/acupuncture-horses-whats-point/>
- Thorson, J. (2017). Fifty Trail Ride Tips and Tricks. Retrieved from: <https://www.equisearch.com/discoverhorses/fifty-trail-ride-tips-and-tricks>
- University of Maine. (2012) Annual Cost of Owning a Horse and 6 Alternatives to Buying. Retrieved from: <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/1004e/>
- Figure 1. Hull, R. (2019) Horse Getting Massaged. Retrieved from: [https://horse-canada.com/magazine\\_articles/treat-your-horse-to-a-simple-massage/](https://horse-canada.com/magazine_articles/treat-your-horse-to-a-simple-massage/)
- Figure 2. Hull, R. (2019) Equine Acupuncture. Retrieved from: [http://www.ssequineclinic.com/pages/services\\_acupuncture\\_info.html](http://www.ssequineclinic.com/pages/services_acupuncture_info.html)
- Figure 3. Hull, R. (2019) Trail Riders Crossing River. Retrieved from: [https://www.allparkcity.com/summer\\_recreation/horseback\\_riding.php](https://www.allparkcity.com/summer_recreation/horseback_riding.php)
- Figure 4. Hull, R. (2019) Saddlebags. Retrieved from: [https://www.sstack.com/dura-tech-supreme-trail-saddle-bag/p/30187/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI4oDC4p7x4gIVD8JkCh2B3Q3\\_EAQYBCABEgIjifD\\_BwE](https://www.sstack.com/dura-tech-supreme-trail-saddle-bag/p/30187/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI4oDC4p7x4gIVD8JkCh2B3Q3_EAQYBCABEgIjifD_BwE)
- Figure 5. Mosher, A. (2018) Anticipation-Young Cowboys. Retrieved from: <https://anitamosher.com/workszoom/2445671#/>

Figure 6. Hull, R. (2019) Looking Down Barn Aisle. Retrieved from:

<https://thehorse.com/19822/selecting-a-horse-boarding-barn/>