

Mounting

Things to Remember:

1. The horse should only be mounted if the horse is not tied to a fence, if the horse is not near other objects or horses, and if the horse is on soft ground.
2. Always double check the tack! Make sure everything is fitted and that everything is buckled.
3. Always check the girth 2-3 times before a client mounts the horse.
4. Always check that the helmet is on securely.

Leading the Horse

The responsibility of a horse leader is to control the horse. The rider has a leader because they are unable, at this time, to control the horse fully independently. The goal is to allow the rider to be as independent as possible. Although the leader is responsible for guiding the horse, stopping and starting, the leader should allow the rider to do as much of this as possible, assisting only when necessary.

Things to Remember:

1. When a rider is mounting at the mounting ramp or block, lead the horse to the start of the ramp, then move to the front of the horse and walk backward into the ramp corridor, leading the horse as close to the ramp as possible. Remain standing in front of the horse and keep them as still as possible during the mounting.
2. Walk next to the horse's neck, between the horse's head and shoulder. Do not drag the horse or walk ahead of it. If necessary, slow your speed to that of the horse.
3. After the rider cues the horse to trot, gently tug the lead rope and move into a gentle trot (not a run) next to the horse. Remain alongside the horse's neck during the trot. Control the speed with a tug backwards on the rope if the horse goes too fast.
4. Pay attention to the instructor at all times. It is important that you not engage in conversation when leading, as this will interfere with your knowing what is going on. H. The instructor will tell the riders to walk, trot, turn right or left or halt. The leader needs to hear these commands so as not to interfere with the rider's efforts, and to supplement them if needed.
5. Be aware of other horses in the arena, and do not let the horse you are leading approach another horse too closely. There should be a two-horse distance between riders at all times. If your rider's horse gets too close to another horse, ask the rider to circle or cross to the other side of the arena.
6. If a rider should fall, the leader is responsible for the horse only. Keep the horse calm and move it away from the fallen rider. Stay with the horse. The instructor will take care of the fallen rider.
7. When passing another horse, always pass on the inside (the side closest to the center of the arena) and at least 6 feet away from the horse being passed.

8. Never yank on the reins or lead rope to stop the horse. Pull slowly and steadily on the lead rope or reins. Yanking frightens the horse and can cause rearing or backing up. If a horse pulls back, do not resist. Move with him, holding the lead rope. The harder you pull a horse, the harder he will resist you.
9. Never hit a horse. If a horse is misbehaving, call the instructor for help.
10. If you aren't comfortable for any reason with your horse or rider, tell the instructor immediately. You are often the first person to be aware of a potential problem. Trust your instincts.
11. If a horse is running away (with or without a rider), remember to stay calm. Do not yell and do not run. Halt your rider and stay with them. Wait for instructions from the instructor. If you are not with a student, but are spotting, walk slowly toward where the horse is running to and wait for instructions.
12. Wait for a staff member to assist with dismounting. You should never dismount a client with staff assistance.

Sidewalking

The responsibility of the sidewalker, first and foremost, is the safety of the rider. Sidewalkers assist the riders to the degree necessary. The sidewalker walks next to the rider's leg, helping to support the rider's balance if necessary. The Instructor will inform you if you need to use a support hold. There are two support holds, as follows:

1. **Arm-Over-Leg support:** This position provides support for the rider without interfering with the rider's trunk control, allowing the rider to build up strong trunk support. Facing toward the rider's head, the hand closest to the horse holds the front of the saddle, with the arm resting lightly across the rider's thigh. In the event that the rider slips, a gentle downward pressure with that arm will support the rider in place.
2. **Ankle support:** This is the least restrictive form of support, allowing the rider to use all muscles to provide his or her own support. Facing the front of the horse, the hand closest to the horse encircles the rider's ankle lightly. In the event that the rider slips, a light tug will bring the rider back into alignment with the saddle. Do not yank on the ankle. Do not keep constant pressure downward on the ankle. If the rider loses balance forward, gently moving the leg forward will counterbalance the rider. If the rider loses balance backward, gently moving the leg backward will also counterbalance the rider.

Things to Remember:

1. Be aware that it may be necessary to change sides frequently if your arm gets tired. If this happens, ask the leader to stop, and tell the other sidewalker that you need to change sides. As the other sidewalker to support the rider as you move around to the other side. Take the support position on the new side and support the rider while the other sidewalker moves to the opposite side. When the other sidewalker has indicated he or she is ready, inform the leader that you can resume walking.

2. At the trot, the sidewalkers must trot alongside the rider at the rider's leg. If providing support, use the arm-over-leg position, holding firmly to the front of the saddle. Additional support may be provided by gentle downward pressure on the rider's ankle with your free hand.
3. If a rider starts to fall, try to push the rider back into the saddle. If this is not possible, the next best thing to do is to try and break the fall. To do this, the sidewalker on the side of the horse that the rider is falling toward turns and puts his or her back against the rider and goes down to the ground with the rider. This not only slows the fall, it prevents the sidewalker from being injured in an attempt to save the rider.
4. Once a rider has fallen, the sidewalkers stay with the rider while the horse leader moves the horse out of the way. Do not attempt to help the rider – this is the responsibility of the instructor. Be prepared to go for help at the direction of the instructor.
5. Other responsibilities of the sidewalkers include encouraging the rider to pay attention to the instructor, helping the rider to follow directions, showing the rider which side is right and left, assisting in games, demonstrating to the rider where to place the legs and how to keep heels down, encouraging the horse to keep moving (by gently prodding the horse in the side) and providing encouragement and enthusiasm for the rider's efforts.
6. It is important that the sidewalkers pay attention to the instructor at all times. Conversations should be non-existent when instruction is taking place. Sidewalkers reinforce, but do not teach, so restrain the urge to tell the rider what to do and how to do it unless the instructor tells you to do so.
7. If there is only one sidewalker and no leader, the sidewalker takes on the additional responsibility of control of the horse in the event that the rider has trouble controlling his mount. This is only done when the rider's balance is sufficient to not need support and the rider is beginning to ride independently.