



Volunteering at RideAble

Welcome!! We are very excited to have you with us! Over 90% of the hours at RideAble are volunteered; instructors are only paid for their teaching hours and the program director receives a small stipend. We are all here because we believe in the program.

PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS at any time. There's no such thing as a dumb question!

RIDEABLE'S BASIC POLICIES:

- 1. SAFETY FIRST-Everyone's!** Always think safety.
- 2. Animal Health-**If the animals are not physically, mentally, & emotionally healthy we cannot be safe.

BE AN OBSERVER. Please follow all guidelines for everything. Look for and read all signs, instructions, and directions. All of us (humans & animals) are living breathing emotional creatures; consistency is very important to everyone's safety. Because life changes daily look for changes in the routine due to weather and herd health. We will do our best to post and tell you of any changes.

PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS.

The staff are always working with many others behind the scenes to improve the program. We try to examine each situation in detail before deciding ***"how it will be done"***-Please respect this. We have many tasks to do at the barn. ***If we ask you to help with a task that you have never done before at RideAble, please remind us!*** We are more than willing and happy to help you learn the **"RideAble way"**. Instructors and all the other volunteers are here to teach you, assist you, and be a great resource for learning and support.

We hope that this volunteer experience is a fun one! ~ Thank you for volunteering at RideAble. *"We should always be open and willing to consider new ideas. Personal growth is always good!"*

❖ When you arrive at the barn –

- Greet everyone, especially the instructor and **Sign-in**.
 - Volunteer Sign-in is located in the volunteer room of the (RV) office. This information is very important.
- First check the lesson board(s) and with the other volunteers to see where to begin.
 - If there are no other volunteers around start by preparing horses for the next class.
- Barn Chores are to be done if there are no lessons and no horses to tack immediately.
 - The chore list is posted on the volunteer board by feed room.

❖ 2) Working with Students- **Consistency is very important for everyone-students & horses.**

- Coming to the barn is a fun activity for our students; it is important you have fun with the students and engage them in the activities around them while maintaining safety first. Our students are all working on skills, but this work should be somewhat masked by the fun they have at the barn.



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- All students must follow the barn rules and procedures.
As a volunteer you are here to help them accomplish this; as well as to help them remember and complete all the tasks that their lesson includes, i.e. grooming.
- When in the arena or on the trail volunteers are generally asked to assist the student as:
 - Horse Handler- leading the horse
 - Sidewalker- walking by the student with a hand on them for balance
 - Companion- someone to walk next to them merely keeping an eye on them
 - You may also be asked by the instructor to help in other ways.
- **When volunteering during lessons, you are an extension of the instructor.** It is helpful for you to gently remind the students of the directions instructor has given. For example if the instructor is working on keeping heels down the volunteer could say “Suzie, remember to keep your heels down.” Please don’t feel like you need to remain silent, however **teaching your own lesson is not appreciated**, instead assist the instructor by re-enforcing what is being taught and assist the students in following the instructor’s directions.

❖ 3) Fitting Helmets-

- Helmets are in the black/tan cabinet. - On the wall next to the helmet cabinet is a step-by-step guide to fitting helmets for a visual aid.
 - Helmets should fit snugly, but not tight.
 - They can wiggle a little bit from side to side
 - Should not fall backwards or forward on the student’s head
 - Student should be able to see well not looking up to see
 - You should be able to fit a finger between the chin and the chinstraps
 - There is a box of pads on top of the cabinet to help the helmets fit all shapes of heads.
 - Helmets are **VERY** important and the right fit keeps our students safe so if you have any questions please ask.

4) **IF THE HORSE SPOOKS-**

Take the student out of the stall or away from the area quickly.

Your first priority is to protect the students.

❖ 5) Grooming-

- Use the rubber currycomb to curry in circles going in the opposite direction of the hair. This loosens dirt and dead hair.
- Use a stiff brush, brushing in the direction of the body hair, vigorously to get the dirt out. Soft brush for the face.
- Comb the mane and top of tail-work from the bottom up, be gentle, like combing your hair
- Pick the hooves, and then brush them out. It is important to get the area on either side of the frog clean. Please ask if your not sure if the hoof is fully clean



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- **Students know how to brush but may need to be reminded which direction to brush.** Not all students can pick hooves; when time permits teach them how to the best of their ability. If you're not sure which students can pick hooves, please ask.
- The horses should also be lightly brushed after the saddles come off.
 - Grooming is not just about cleaning the horse, but also looking for wounds so be very thorough in the first groom of the day. If you find a wound please notify the instructor.

❖ 5) Saddling Horses-

- **Students riding for an hour usually tack their horse with your assistance.**
- All students' riding information is in the small binder titled "Rider, Horse, & Tack" on the small table between the blanket racks. It will tell you which size helmet they wear, horse they ride, the saddle that they use and all of the sizing information for the saddle.
- Each saddle has a specific rack that it should stay on and is color coded with its corresponding rack.
- Saddle pads need to stay organized and neat. English pads with English pads, Navajos, western pads and bareback pads together all grouped together. Pads should be placed dirty side to dirty side and clean side to clean side.
 - Please do everything from the left side of the horse, (as if you are sitting on the horse looking at the back of their head). While most of our horses will tolerate being saddled from both sides we need to set proper examples for our students on horsemanship practices.
 - When putting the pad and saddle on the horse put the blanket and saddle up higher on the withers than they should be and then pull back to smooth the hairs in place.
 - Saddle fit is extremely important, please ask for assistance until you are confident.
 - Pull the saddle pads up lightly into the gullet of the saddle to give some airflow under the saddle for the horse.
 - There are a variety of blankets, pads, wedges, and accessories. It is important that the correct ones are used and placed properly on the horse. There is a "How to" notebook with pictures to aid you. Always feel free to ask questions-**Saddle fit is very important.**
 - Please make sure that the pad is even on both sides of the horse, the saddle is straight on the horse and nothing is under the saddle that shouldn't be like straps and sticks.
 - Please be sure that the short latigo is the correct length. Then pull up the girth on the left and get it ready to be tightened, but **DO NOT TIGHTEN GIRTHS** the instructors will do it at the mounting blocks.
 - Please put stirrups at the right length or assist the student before they mount, the numbers are in the book with the student's other riding information.



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▪ English-

- The English pad has round edges on the front and is quilted. The round edges of the blanket go towards the head of the horse and dirty side touching the horse.
- The pad should sit in the middle of the horse's shoulder. The front of the flap on the saddle should be just behind the shoulder with the girth right behind the front legs. (The saddle's correct location on the horse's back may vary a bit from horse to horse so if you have questions please ask.)
- Make sure to use dressage girths with dressage saddles and all-purpose girths with all-purpose saddles. If you don't know which is which please ask.
 - Elastic end is used on the left side
 - Buckle the back strap first, this puts less pressure on the horse's abdomen
- Always have the stirrups run up unless the student is mounting or riding the horse. The horse should NOT take ANY steps with the stirrups down
- When putting the saddles away take the stirrups and girth off the saddle and put them back in their proper location.

▪ Western-

- When getting the saddles off the racks put the cinch up on the seat and hook the right stirrup on the horn. This is to prevent hitting the horse when lifting the saddle on their back and you don't have to lift the saddle so high to get it on.
- Western saddles and blankets should sit just behind the horse's shoulder. There should be about two fingers or a thumb length between the front of the blanket and the front edge of the saddle. (The saddle's correct location on the horse's back may vary a bit from horse to horse so if you have questions please ask.)
- When putting away the saddles put the latigo back through the D-ring two times and the cinch back in its keeper. There are a couple of saddles without keepers-hook on horn. Make sure that all of the stirrups are hanging down and the cinch and latigo aren't twisted when hanging on the rack.
 - Most of the students that saddle their horses know these steps, but may just need gentle reminders every once in a while to remember the details.

❖ 6) Putting on Sidepulls- Most students are able to do this or are working to do it independently.



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- First hold the Sidepull with your right hand on the center of crown and left hand on the chinstrap. While standing on the left side of the horse's head; guide the nosepiece over the nose and fold the right ear (far ear) forward, slipping the headband over it then slide the left ear (near ear) in.
- Attach the throatlatch, loosely so that you can fit a small fist or four fingers between the leather and the neck. (Remember it's more like a necklace, than a choker)
 - **ALWAYS STAND ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE HORSE** when putting on Sidepulls. Horses cannot see directly in front of them and can startle if you are standing there. **B.J in particular takes offense at this.** Please really be aware of your position and the student's position when helping them put on sidepulls. Both of you should be on a side of the horse and no other helpers should be in front of the horse.
 - Again many students can do this while some may need help, especially with getting the horses to lower their heads. Most students should at least assist. This gives the horse time to prepare for that particular student.
 - Some students do ride with bit/bridle, please ask for assistance.
- **NEARLY ALL STUDENTS PUT ON REINS or ARE LEARNING: this is done after the side pull is on.** Some students have difficulty with the snaps, help them learn to work the snap and guide it onto the ring. Reins can be attached standing on the left side of the horse or the student may need to walk around to do the right side. When both sides are attached the reins should hang down under the horse's neck, this way the horse can be lead by the reins to the arena. Right hand on yellow, left hand on green.
- ❖ 7) Cleaning Stalls-See details on Volunteer board or near Critter Cage.

The instructor will tell you if the stalls need to be stripped or fresh bedding added.

 - Put the wheelbarrow in the door of the stall to keep the horse in.
 - If you are not comfortable cleaning a stall with horse in it, the horse can be moved to an empty stall- just be aware of when that stall is going to be needed again so that you are sure you have enough time to finish cleaning and you don't end up with two horses in one stall. Two horses are **NEVER** put into one stall. Please also let the instructor know that you are moving the horse.
 - Cleaning stalls is very personal and everyone has a different way of doing it. All we ask is that our stalls look a particular way when you are done.
 - All large manure piles should be taken out
 - 95% of all small pieces of manure have been removed
 - All pee spots bedding is scooped out and the mat scraped clean with shovel
 - The stalls have a fairly even coating of bedding around
 - There should be no bedding under the water buckets or in front of manger unless there have been pee spots in those areas on a regular basis.
- ❖ If you have never picked a stall before here is a possible way to do it:
 - Pick out all of the large manure piles. Scoop the pee spots. Then scrape the spot with the shovel. After, pick the small pieces of manure. It is good to pick the top layer than as you bring the bedding away from the wall pick the pieces that surface.



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- If there are bare spots that are getting constantly used as pee spots spread some bedding on them.
- Scrape the mats near the door and under the water buckets clean with the shovel and broom to keep the aisle from getting messy and extra bedding from getting wet.
- ❖ 8) Water Buckets & Mangers-
 - **Buckets are cleaned on Tuesday and Friday. If you notice a bucket is fairly dirty, please dump the water in the grass outside of manure/compost area, rinse clean and refill in the stall.**
 - There is a facet between every two stalls.
 - Fill the buckets to about two inches from the top, the ridge on the bucket is a good guideline. This way the horses can't splash the water out on the bedding and staff knows how much the horse is drinking.
 - It is important not to spill water on the floor, because it takes a long time to dry.
 - Clean dirt & debris out of feeders/mangers with hand broom and dust pan
- ❖ 9) Emergency Situations-
 - The fire extinguisher is on the shelf by the arena gate.
 - The human first aid kit is in the tack room. The horse first aid kit is under the table in the feed room.
- ❖ For the rest of this information refer to the emergency procedures document.