



Rider Fitness

Whilst you may be a regular rider at home, being in the saddle for multiple hours a day in the Indian sunshine may be a bit of shock to the system if you have not prepared yourself. Being fit for the task in hand not only will stop you getting achey butt and thighs but also helps to prevent injuries, with back pain being a common problem that can often be helped with regular exercises off your horse.

Exercising regularly will help you build muscle, strengthen your heart, lose weight, increase your endurance, stamina and/or flexibility. A balanced rider needs to be flexible on both sides, to be supple and strong, to be soft in the hands & firm in the shoulders, to roll through the hips and be steady in the legs.

Please see our tips below on how to make sure you are in the best shape you can be in order to enjoy your holiday to the max!

CARDIO

Go For a run - Running can be a great activity for horse riders. It strengthens your leg muscles and by concentrating on your posture while you run, you can also use the time to train yourself to sit up straight and keep your shoulders back. As running is a cardio activity it can also improve your breath control.

Go for a swim - Swimming is a relatively low-impact activity which provides an excellent workout. It is especially ideal for those of you who may have an injury that won't hold up to higher-impact activities, such as jogging. Swimming even just for a short time each day can build up your strength and endurance without taking a toll on your body or joints.

Go for a bike ride - you may have to dig up the old bike pump and dust off the saddle but do consider heading out on a bike ride as another way to get physically fit. Cycling can really help to develop your leg strength, especially if you find some hills to ride up. As with horse riding, don't forget to wear your helmet.

Go for a good old fashioned walk - If you have hills or beautiful countryside nearby, grab a friend and head out for a walk. Walking develops your muscle strength and can help to improve your balance as you work your way over different terrain. Make sure to bring along water and some snack bars.

STRETCHING & BALANCING

Don't forget to include a good amount of stretching with your exercise regimen. Always remember to warm up and warm down stretch before and after exercising to reduce your chance of injury and to keep your muscles limber.

Remember to stretch before and after you horse ride, too – stretching before a ride can make a big difference in your comfort and effectiveness during riding.

Be sure not to forget the equestrian's favorite stretch – stand on stairs, drop your heels down, and let your weight drop down into the heels. Do this stretch religiously and you'll be better able to drop your heels down in the saddle.

Don't forget to include some specific exercises meant to target the muscles that you use most as an equestrian. You're sure to benefit from exercises that target your core, such as planking. You can also use balancing exercises to improve your balance. Even the simple act of lifting hay bales or water buckets can help to build your strength.

HORSE RIDING

You'll love this last tip... ride! As you're trying to improve your fitness, focus on also riding more often to become a stronger rider. Make a riding schedule and stick to it. Too much for one horse? See if there's another horse at your yard that would benefit from some exercise, and offer to ride him too.

The more that you can do to get yourself physically fit, the better a rider you're likely to become and the more you can enjoy your horse riding holiday! Plus, you'll feel good about yourself and parts of riding, such as keeping your leg secure or getting into two-point, will become easier.