



**BEAMING, Inc.**  
**Training Manual**

## Index

Welcome .....	3
Benefits of Volunteering and General Information .....	4
Expectations and Volunteer Activities .....	5
Facts at a Glance.....	7
Emergency and Safety Issues .....	8
When Meeting a Person with a Disability .....	9
Procedures for Handling Body Fluids, etc. ....	10
Effective Side Walking .....	11
Levels of Horse Handling.....	13
Therapeutic Riding Equipment .....	14
Posture and Movement .....	15
Mounted Rider Postural Alignment.....	17
The Role of the Horse Handler .....	18
Safe Leading Tips .....	19
Parts of a Horse .....	20
Horse "Sense".....	21
Grooming Equipment.....	22
Reading a Horse's Ears .....	23
Understanding Horse Behavior .....	24
Glossary of Horse Terms .....	26
100 Ways to be a More Effective Volunteer .....	27



**“Changing lives one ride at a time”**

## **WELCOME**

**Mission:** *BEAMING, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for families with special needs through developing connecting relationships with people and horses.*

Welcome to the BEAMING Volunteer Program! Working together with other volunteers, YOU make it possible to provide therapeutic horseback riding for disabled children and adults in the Fox Valley and surrounding areas. A TEAM approach is emphasized to provide active therapy and an enjoyable, challenging experience.

A positive image of BEAMING is imperative in remaining the type of organization that attracts quality volunteers like you and provides satisfaction of services. Appearing professional goes a long way in projecting the superior image a BEAMING, PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) accredited center, should project.

All volunteers are expected to work safely at all times. The experienced volunteers are asked to mentor new volunteers by helping them understand what is required and emphasize safety.

BEAMING, Inc. is fully insured and accredited by PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) International. It is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization funded through grants and contributions from individuals and the community.

## **VOLUNTEERING FOR BEAMING, INC.**

The volunteer experience offered through BEAMING, Inc. is as rewarding as it is unique. It is an opportunity to channel individual talents and skills into many volunteer activities. In doing so, you contribute to the process of giving children and adults with special needs one of life's most precious gifts - a feeling of self-worth, accomplishment and SELF-ESTEEM! The only requirement of a potential BEAMING, Inc. volunteer is an interest in supporting the program. By volunteering, you can learn about people with disabilities, horses, and make new friends. You'll gain tremendous satisfaction from watching the participants enjoy contact with horses physically, mentally, and emotionally. You will help us "change lives one ride at a time" while having fun.

Volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, from laborers, homemakers, students, retired individuals, business people, educators, medical personnel, and office staff who have energy, skills, and compassion to share. BEAMING insurance requires volunteers to be a minimum of fourteen (14) years old to work with horses. Volunteers working directly with students and horses must be able to walk a minimum of sixty (60) minutes and jog for brief intervals. It is not necessary to have previous experience with horses or individuals with special needs.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

Time commitments vary depending on the activity. However, volunteers working during class are asked to commit to an entire session of lessons (6-8 weeks) to provide continuity for the participants.

## **GROUP VOLUNTEERING**

Service clubs, youth groups, school groups, church groups, and other organizations are encouraged to participate in community service projects with BEAMING.

## **BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING**

- A sense of accomplishment and enjoyment
- Pleasure in giving of yourself
- Affection and gratitude from students
- New friends
- New skills
- Physical exercise
- An opportunity to make a difference and witness the results!

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

When signing up for a class, you are expected to attend every class for that session. If a class must be missed, refer to the sub list and make arrangements for a replacement. **Missing a class without getting a sub means that the participant cannot ride.** Please take a sub list home and watch for updated lists.

Whenever possible, it is beneficial to work with the same participant each time. This saves time explaining

what help is needed for that participant for each class and builds relationships. This is more effective and allows the rider to progress more rapidly. Please fill in any new team members working with you on what types of help the rider needs. This is best done in the ring while waiting to mount. Parents and caregivers are often willing to share insights. Time before and after class can be spent getting to know the families.

Please be prompt. Arrive 20 minutes early to check in, meet with the instructor for any special updates, help with any pre-class set up, and help the riders with their helmets while they are waiting. Clean up after the horses and yourself! Help keep the stables, family room, and bathrooms neat and clean.

Occasionally, classes may need to be cancelled due to bad weather. You will be notified via the volunteer scheduling program when lessons are cancelled due to weather. You can also call the BEAMING Volunteer phone at **920.470.6683** or check the BEAMING website at [www.beaminginc.org](http://www.beaminginc.org) for lesson cancellations. No classes are held if a tornado warning is in effect in Winnebago County. The instructors will be alerted to changing weather conditions during a tornado watch and will give instructions accordingly.

## **DRESS CODE**

Clothing should be neat and appropriate. Sturdy, fully enclosed shoes must be worn, no dangling jewelry, and no clothing that makes a distracting noise when you walk. Keep in mind that horses shed hair, may slobber on you, and that the barn is dusty. For safety reasons, no pants that are excessively long will be allowed. As a BEAMING volunteer, you are respected in the community for your dedication and the value of your service. Be proud of your work and show it in your appearance.

## **PARKING**

Park in designated areas only. Take up as little space as possible, so more cars will fit and try to keep the entrance clear for riders. Leave enough room at the entrance for the wheelchair accessible vans to drive through and park under the overhang to allow participants in wheelchairs to disembark and enter the building. **Obey 10 MPH speed limit in driveway.**

## **EXPECTATIONS OF BEAMING VOLUNTEERS**

To ensure a safe environment while engaging in therapeutic interaction with horses, the following expectations are required of all volunteers. Disregarding any one of these expectations will result in first a warning, second a reprimand, and if a third time occurs, dismissal from the BEAMING Volunteer Program.

- Safety is to be the top priority, whether grooming, tacking the horses, side walking or handling the horses in or outside of class time.
- Listen to and obey the instructor.
- Follow the posted barn rules which include but are not limited to:
  - No Smoking on BEAMING property.
  - No running or yelling.
  - No "horse play".
  - No hand feeding horses.
- Follow dress code for personal safety and professionalism.
- Be courteous and work as a team member. This includes:
  - Speak positively about BEAMING personnel, volunteers, and participants.
  - Understand the role of Side Walker vs. Horse Handler.
  - Ask questions when not fully understanding what is needed.
  - Arrive in a punctual manner 20 MINUTES BEFORE LESSONS.

- Contact an appropriate substitute when a conflict arises that would cause unavailability.

## **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

**SIDE WALKER:** This person works with students and horses during lessons. The side walker helps the student maintain balance and control by walking beside the rider. The side walker helps to interpret the directions given by the riding instructor. They assist with mounting and dismounting the horses. Training is provided.

**HORSE HANDLER:** This person works with students and horses in lessons. The horse handler has developed an adequate degree of horse experience to be responsible for the horse's behavior while a student rides. Sometimes the Horse Handler leads the horse and at other times, remains within reach of a mounted student. This person also helps with grooming, tacking, mounting and dismounting, depending on the level of certification. There are 5 different levels of Horse Handling. Training is provided and testing is required for certification at each level.

**FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND SITE WORK:** This includes assisting with painting, minor repairs, simple building projects, lawn and garden care, etc. These are great family opportunities. Workdays occur when needed and are announced frequently. If interested in helping in this area, specify on the volunteer application form and you will be contacted.

**SPECIAL EVENTS AND FUND RAISING:** BEAMING "Night at the Races" is an annual event and is the largest fund raiser. The event offers many volunteer opportunities. Help is needed year round in preparing for this event by soliciting for raffle and silent auction items and helping in many other areas on the day of the event.

**SUPPORT SERVICES:** Word processing, public relations, newsletter preparation and assembly, networking, distributing information, computer work, and more.

## **ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY STANDARDS**

BEAMING is insured and accredited and through PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) and which establishes safety standards and teaching techniques for member operating centers.

The accreditation process involves a review of the BEAMING facility, horses, instructors, volunteers, special equipment, and administrative procedures. Each category is reviewed and suggestions are made to help BEAMING work toward the highest possible level of Accreditation.

Instructor recognition involves testing the potential instructor on equine science and knowledge of different disabilities as the disabilities apply to equine-facilitated activities. Instructors can obtain one of three levels of recognition: Registered Advanced, or Master Instructor.

As a PATH center, BEAMING must complete and maintain their Accreditation status within a specified time period. Beginning in 1995, all PATH centers were required to show that their instructors have achieved the minimum level of PATH instructor recognition when applying for Accreditation.

**Our goal is that every participant will ride as independently  
as they are capable of!**

## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Founded:** 2004

**Mission:** *BEAMING, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for families with special needs through developing connecting relationships with people and horses.*

**Purpose:**

- 1) To provide active therapy.
- 2) To provide a valuable experience that is enjoyable though challenging.
- 3) To promote the rehabilitation of individuals with physical, psychological and learning challenges through equine-facilitated activities.

**Type of Organization:** 501 (cX3) Non-profit Corporation.

**Eligible Individuals:** Anyone over 4 years of age with a diagnosed Developmental, Physical, Visual, Cognitive, Emotional, or Social Disability.

**Rider Fee:** \$35.00 per 45-50 minute hour riding class or \$15.00 per half hour grooming class. Riders are encouraged to have our services written into the Family Support Program, CMO, COP, or CDP treatment plans. Riderships and partial Riderships may be available based on family needs and income.

**Major Benefits of Horse Related Activities:** Improves muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, motor development, emotional, and psychological health.

**Primary Funding Sources:** Grants, Organized Fund Raising, Fee for services, and Individual contributions.

**Volunteers:** Help in a variety of ways: fund raising, newsletter production, gardening and landscaping, office work and more. All volunteers must be 14 years old or older to work with horses.

**Program Site:** KK Quarter Horses, 2692 County Road GG, Neenah, WI 54956

**Mailing Address:** P. O. Box 524, Neenah, WI 54956

**Contact:** 920.636.5001

**Web Site:** [www.beaminginc.org](http://www.beaminginc.org)

**E-mail Address:** [info@beaminginc.org](mailto:info@beaminginc.org)

## HISTORY OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

References to the physical and emotional benefits of horseback riding date back to writings in the 1600's. However, when Liz Hartel of Denmark won the silver medal for dressage at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games - despite having paralysis from polio - medical and equine professionals took active notice. It wasn't long before therapeutic riding was being used for rehabilitation in England and then in North America. The first Centers for therapeutic riding in North America began operation in the 1960's. BEAMING, Inc. began equine facilitated interaction with horses to the Fox Valley and surrounding areas in 2004.

## EMERGENCY AND SAFETY ISSUES

**Accidents:** An untidy work environment promotes accidents. Good housekeeping prevents them and is emphasized as a vital safety measure. If you are asked to do housekeeping detail, please know that it is important to the organization and the people we serve.

**911:** Know where the phone is located. Dial 911. Stay calm. Do not hang-up the phone!!! Let the 911 operator hang up first, after they have all the information needed. The address is at the phone. **Request emergency personnel not to use the sirens when they arrive at the stable as this may frighten the horses.** Have a volunteer meet the emergency vehicles at the end of the driveway and give instructions as to the location of the emergency.

**Fire:** Know where the fire extinguishers are located. Call 911. Remove the safety pin, aim the fire extinguisher at the base of the flame and use a sweeping motion.

**Severe Weather:** Whenever weather conditions are announced with a warning, classes are immediately cancelled for the rest of the evening. The instructor will dismount the riders and instruct the volunteers, riders, and other people to a safe location until weather conditions improve and people can safely return home.

**Fall from a horse:** Stay calm.

**Leader:** Lead the horse away from the rider. Stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move the horse as far from the fallen rider as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

**Side Walker:** If the rider starts to fall, it is usually most effective to push them back in the saddle. If a fall cannot be prevented, try to soften the fall, but do not compound the problem by getting in the way. Call for the instructor's attention. Keep the student still. If there is an injury, the instructor will tell you to call for help.

**During Class:** The instructor will stop class and assist the rider. Remain alert. A loose horse may run into a group. Leaders, head the horse. The instructor may ask everyone to resume class at one end and will put someone in charge.

**Stable Problems:** If you see a problem at any time, please fix it if you know how, or speak up. Here are a few examples:

1. A student, parent, or visitor is wandering around the barn petting the horses.  
Direct them to the Family Room. Only horse handlers are allowed in the horse aisles.
2. You see a helmet on a rider with a loose or hanging chinstrap.  
Shorten it up. Chinstraps must be snug for the helmet to work. Helmets must be on before the student touches the horse.
3. You see a bridle with a twisted strap. Fix it or ask for help.

## WHEN MEETING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

1. Remember that this person is a person first, just like everyone else, except for the limitations of his or her disability.
2. A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends, but until your relationship is one of friendship, show friendly interest in him or her as a person only.
3. Be yourself when meeting someone with a disability.
4. Talk about the same things you would with anyone else.
5. Help him or her only when they request it. When a person with a disability falls down, they may wish to get up by themselves, just as many blind persons may prefer to get along without assistance.
6. Be patient. Let the individual with a disability set their own pace in walking or talking.
7. Don't be afraid to laugh *WITH* a person with a disability.
8. People with disabilities deserve the same courtesy as you would give to anyone. Refrain from staring when you see someone you do not know with a disability.
9. There is no need to offer pity or charity. The child or adult with a disability wants to be treated as an equal in all things. They want the chance to prove themselves the same as you or I would.
10. Don't make up your mind about a person with a disability ahead of time. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging their interests or abilities!
11. Enjoy yourself and your friendship with the students with disabilities. Their philosophy and good humor will be an inspiration to you.

### IMPROPER TERMINOLOGY

Just as some well-known, four letter words are offensive, so are some words used in referring to people with disabilities. Here are some to avoid when speaking to or about people with disabilities:

Afflicted  
Cerebral Palsied  
Confined to a Wheelchair  
Courageous  
Crippled  
Deaf and Dumb  
Deaf Mute

Disease  
Epileptic  
Gimp  
Handicapped  
Mental Illness  
Normal

Poor  
Retarded  
Spastic  
Suffering  
Unfortunate  
Victim

### PROPER TERMINOLOGY

#### ***Persons who are:***

Blind  
Visually Impaired  
Deaf  
Hearing Impaired  
Non-disabled  
Physically Disabled  
Challenged

#### ***Persons with, or who have:***

Cerebral Palsy  
Down Syndrome  
Head Injury  
Mental Health Problems  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Muscular Dystrophy  
Paraplegia

Quadriplegia  
Partial Hearing Loss  
Seizure Disorder  
Specific Learning Disability  
Speech Impairment  
Hearing Impaired

## GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING BODY FLUIDS/INJURIES/FIRST AID

The following guidelines are meant to provide simple and effective precautions against the transmission of disease for all persons potentially exposed to the blood or body fluids of any other person(s).

Good hygiene practices should be used when handling body fluids or blood to prevent the spread of disease and infectious agents. All situations, no matter what bacteria or virus is present, should be treated the same.

Contact with body fluids presents a low risk of infection with a variety of germs. In general, however, the risk is very low and dependent on a variety of factors, including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it. Use disposable equipment whenever possible.

- Ensure that the First Aid kit is accessible during program activity hours.
- Direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided. **Disposable gloves are recommended when direct contact with body fluid is anticipated.**
- Hands should be washed as soon as possible after any body fluid contact is made, with or without gloves. Hands should be washed for a minimum of 15-20 seconds with soap and warm water. Antiseptic towelettes should be used in the absence of running water.
- Encourage the person to self-manage their own injury whenever possible through the use of paper towels and/or pressure to bleeding wounds or bloody noses.
- Place soiled towels or towelettes in a lined waste container. Urge the rider to do as much of this as possible. (This may not always be a practical solution.)
- If practical, remove soiled clothing and place in a closed plastic bag for laundering.
- If you have an open wound on your hand, use gloves to handle or clean blood or body fluids. Wash your hands when you are finished.
- All persons with oozing lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from direct contact with others until the condition resolves.
- A disinfectant should be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids. The U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) should register the disinfectant for use as a disinfectant. Bleach water in a ratio of 10 parts water to 1 part chlorine bleach may be used in an emergency in the absence of a registered disinfectant.

The term body fluid may include blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomit, respiratory secretions (i.e. runny nose), and saliva.

\*Adapted in part from the American Federation of Teachers and MacNeil Environmental, Inc. Procedures for Handling Body Fluids, etc. 2010

## Effective Side Walking

(Reprinted from the May/June 1989 NARHA News) By  
Susan F. Tucker and Molly Lingua, R.P.T.

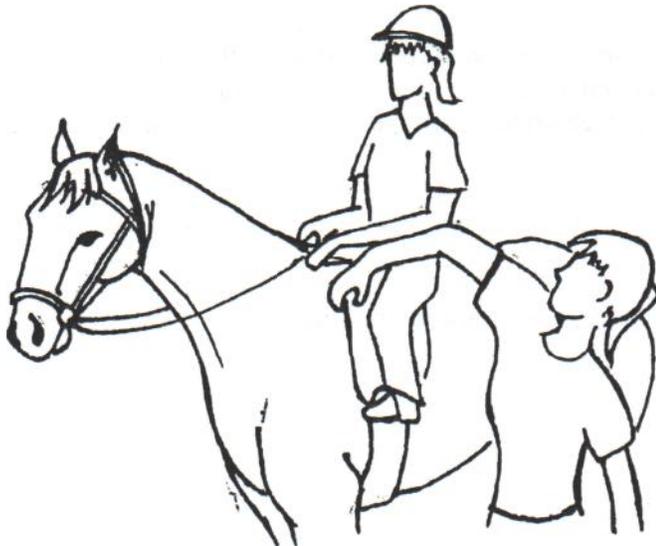
Side walkers are the ones who normally get the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson.

In the arena, the side walker should help the student focus his/her attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and to riders who already have perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two side walkers are working with one student, one should be the "designated talker" to avoid this situation.

When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says, "Turn to the right toward me,"\* and the student seems confused, gently tap the right hand and say, "Right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they're just not paying attention.

It is important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it very difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

There are two ways to hold onto the rider without interfering. The most commonly used is the "arm-over-the-thigh" hold. The side walker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse's size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider's thigh. Be careful that the elbow doesn't accidentally dig into the rider's leg.



Sometimes, pressure on the thigh can increase and/or cause muscle spasticity, especially with the Cerebral Palsy population. In this case, the "therapeutic hold" may be used. Here, the leg is held at the joints, usually the knee and/or ankle. Check with the instructor or therapist for the best way to assist. In the unlikely event of an emergency, the arm-over-the-thigh hold is the most secure.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider's waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer too much and uneven support. At times, it can even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Encourage the students to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities.

If the instructor chooses to use a safety belt on your rider, be very careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires, it's hard to avoid these movements, so rather than gripping the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and finger together around it. This way you are in position to assist the rider if needed, but you will neither give unneeded support nor pull him off balance. When you are ready for relief for your arm, ask the leader to move into the center to stop and trade sides, one at a time, with the other side walker.

During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget the riders are to do the exercises and the side walkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to the games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an all effort to win.

The ultimate foal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as normal as he can possibly be. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

Without you, these programs couldn't exist. We thank you for all you give and challenge you to be the best you can be.

## Levels of Horse Handling

BEAMING, Inc. has a progressive volunteer program that provides increased responsibilities through the 6 designation levels. The first level is as a side walker; then there are 5 levels of horse handling. To become involved with the horses, you will begin by working with a blue or purple level horse handler while learning various horse handler skills. The various levels in no way imply that a volunteer is more or less important than the others, it is merely an aid to assign various duties while insuring the safety and comfort of the riders, volunteers, and horses involved.

Although training events are held periodically, in order to gain more knowledge of horses and horse behaviors, you may want to seek additional training on your own, outside the program. Taking independent riding and horsemanship lessons as well as reading and studying books on therapeutic riding can do this. The United States Pony Club has some good books that can teach correct, safe techniques.

**Side Walker: (WHITE)** A Side Walker has the most direct contact with the rider and has the biggest impact on the quality of the riding program. Attention to the riders is vitally important!

**Horse Handler: (YELLOW)** A Yellow Level Horse Handler grooms the horse before and after classes using various brushes. In order to receive this designation, you will demonstrate the ability to safely catch and halter the horse in the stall and safely and effectively curry and brush the horse.

**Horse Handler: (ORANGE)** An Orange Level Horse Handler must demonstrate knowledge of various types of riding equipment and how to correctly put on bareback pads, saddles, and vaulting surcingles.

**Horse Handler: (GREEN)** A Green Level Horse Handler leads the horses during classes. Their job includes handling the horse during mounting and dismounting as well as during class activities and games. It is vital that they are aware of, and sensitive to, the rider's abilities and what directions the rider may be giving the horse. In cases where there is no side walker, they take on the responsibilities of the side walker in addition to handling the horses.

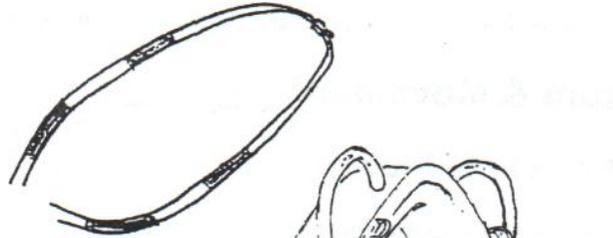
**Horse Handler: (Blue)** A Blue Level Horse Handler can safely pick out any of the horses' feet using a hoof pick, as well as safely move horses to and from the pastures, demonstrate a quick release knot and how it is used to tie the horse.

**Horse Handler: (Purple)** A Purple Level Horse Handler can properly and safely bridle the horse and can recognize problems with bridle fit.

## Therapeutic Riding Adaptive Equipment

### Rainbow Reins

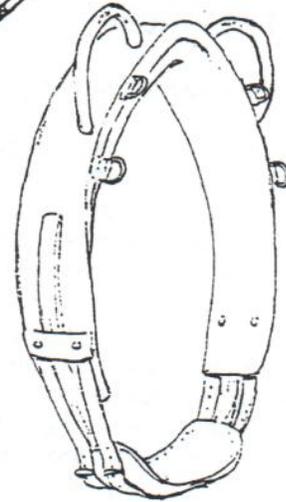
To teach proper use of the reins, the instructor can direct a rider to "hold in the green\*" or "hold in the red". The rider can then feel an appropriate response to their aids and have a guide for proper positioning.



### Vaulting Surcingle or Double

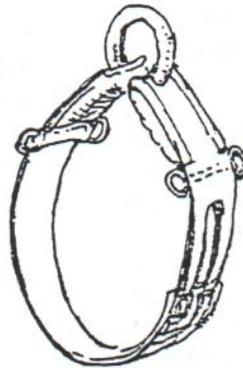
#### Handled Surcingle

Used over a bareback pad or over the pommel of an English saddle. This surcingle has two handles.



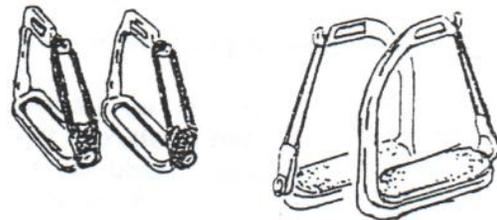
### Brady Surcingle and Single Handled Surcingle

Also used over a bareback pad or the pommel of a saddle. It has a single center positioned handle.



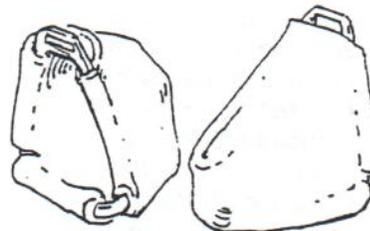
### Peacock Stirrups

Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall. The safety feature should always face away from the horse when positioned on the rider's foot.



### Devonshire Boots

A hooded stirrup with a dosed platform that prevents the rider's foot from moving too far forward.





## Posture & Movement

It is the responsibility of the NARHA Certified Instructor, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, etc. to evaluate a rider's posture. This information is provided to the volunteer to enhance your understanding of the basic principles of "ideal" riding position

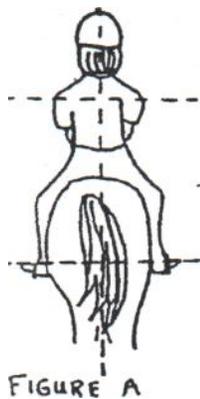
### Position of the Rider

By Lome Renker and Martha Biery

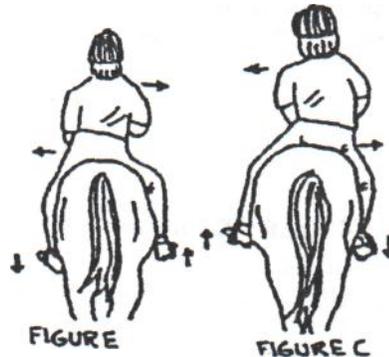
All riders strive toward the "deal" riding position. It should be no different for riders with disabilities. Yet, instructors often appear afraid to make position corrections. So, while not all riders will be able to achieve the ideal position, it doesn't mean you shouldn't try. The rider's position has little to do with looking good and everything to do with being in balance and moving in harmony with the horse. **The better the body alignment, the better the therapeutic benefits.**

The best way to evaluate the rider's position on the horse is to step back and view the rider from all angles. The rider may look great from the side, but could be off center when viewed from behind. Don't be afraid to make corrections. Videotapes often show a rider in a poor position for the entire lesson with no attempt made to improve the position.

Here are some common problems to look for



1) When viewed from behind, the rider should sit as straight as possible (**Figure A**). Many riders sit to one side, then have to make corrections in the rest of the body to maintain balance. When imbalance occurs, one foot will appear lower than the other.



**Figure B** shows a rider with a left foot lower, the pelvis leaning to the left and the upper body correcting to the right **Figure C** shows just the opposite - The right foot lower, the pelvis leaning to the right and the upper body correcting to the left. Neither of these positions help the rider strengthen muscles evenly. Correcting this position usually requires aligning the rider's base (get the butt square in the saddle).



this **FIGURE. D**

2) When viewed from the side, the rider should sit as straight as possible (**Figure D**).

Videotapes often show riders in the "sofa seat" or C curve (**Figure E**). Often the rider will sit up if asked. Sometimes the position will reflect the rider's posture off the horse.



**FIGURE E**

Encouraging elongation of the leg usually improves the posture. To achieve a better position, it may be necessary to evaluate the type of saddle being used. Is the saddle level on the horse so that it will encourage a good position? Just placing a bounce pad or lollipop under the saddle does not insure a level saddle. Often the weight of the rider compresses the pad completely, resulting in a backward-sloping saddle. It is literally impossible to keep the leg positioned under the rider's' pelvis in these circumstances. Use of a foam pad with more density will help. Ideally, the saddle should be fitted correctly to the horse and the rider.

3) **Figure F** shows a rider with a toe down and the leg pinched up. This position could indicate a rider with tight adductor muscles, an extreme forward-seat saddle or stirrups that are too short. The rider should be encouraged to lengthen their leg. This lengthening could be achieved by riding without stirrups or by trying a different style of saddle.

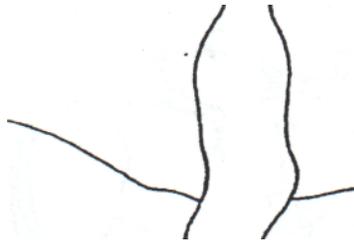


**FIGURE F**

The Important thing to remember is to constantly evaluate the rider's position. Consider all factors, such as disability limitations, posture off the horse and equipment used. Then work toward improving the rider's position.

## Mounted Rider Postural Alignment

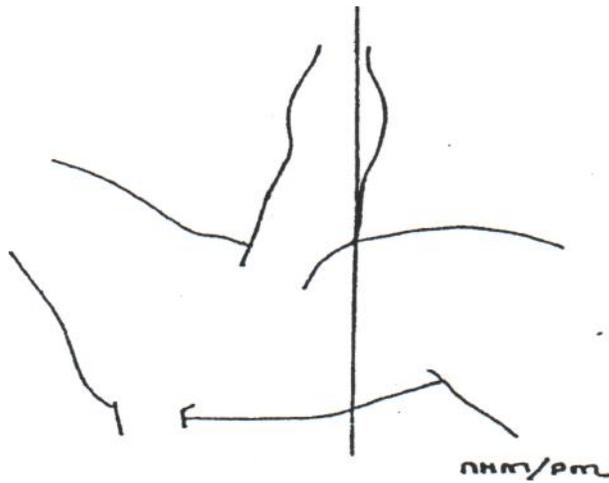
Neutral Pelvis  
Correct Alignment



Anterior Pelvic Tilt



Posterior Pelvic Tilt  
(Sacral Sitting)



## The Role of the Horse Handler

By Susan F. tucker, NARAH Accreditation Committee

As a volunteer, one of the most challenging duties you could be assigned is the position of leader. A leader's first responsibility is the horse but you must also constantly be aware of the rider, instructor, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. In addition, you must also consider the side walkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.

An effective leader pays dose attention to the rider's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This attention reinforces the rider's attempts to control the horse. However, you should not execute an instruction for the rider before he has time to process the information and make an effort to comply. Sometimes it may be appropriate to walk into the comer and stand until the student figures out what to do.

Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider and/or side walkers. A rider may get confused by too much input and not know who's in charge. (Instructors often make terrible leaders because they can't keep their mouths shut!)

**Figure A** depicts a few faults common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along-head down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope-dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk alongside the horse, about even with his eye. This position helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

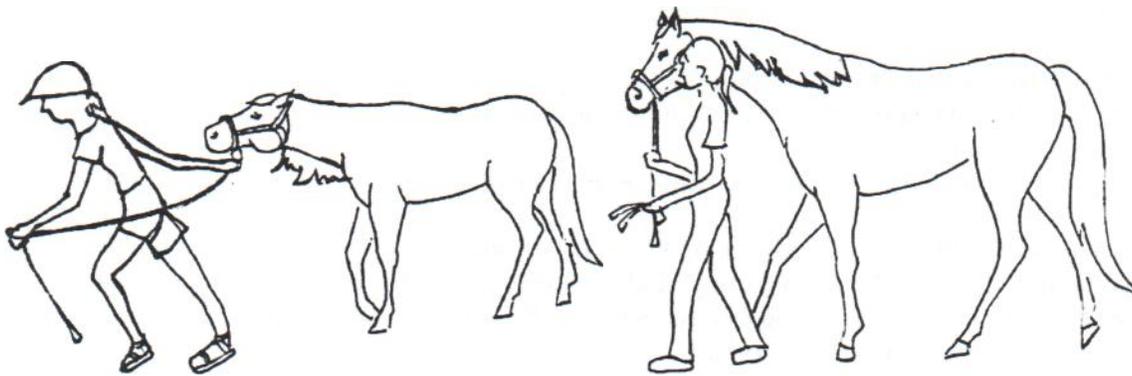


Figure A

Figure B

**Figure B** shows the correct position for leaders. The lead shank is held with the right hand, 6-12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This position is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. Never coil the rope around your hand. A sudden pull could crush or amputate your fingers.

Talk to the horse; most of them know "whoa," "walk," and "trot," or can learn the words. Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. Do not walk backward to look at the rider. It is dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where he is going.

Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. Move out, about 1,000 steps per 15 minutes to provide the most therapeutic benefit.

When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse with your hands on the halter's cheek pieces (if the horse permits) or loosely hold the lead or reins. Standing in front is a psychological barrier to the horse and he will stand more quietly than if he has an easy chance to move out. Don't put your thumbs through the snaffle or halter rings; they could be broken with a toss of the horse's head.

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse as far from the fallen student as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

These suggestions can help you control the horse, be a good aide to a rider and be a valuable assistant to an instructor. You will provide real therapeutic input to your rider, as well as make it safe for them to have fun riding. In short, if you lead, they'll be happy to follow.

## Safe Leading Tips

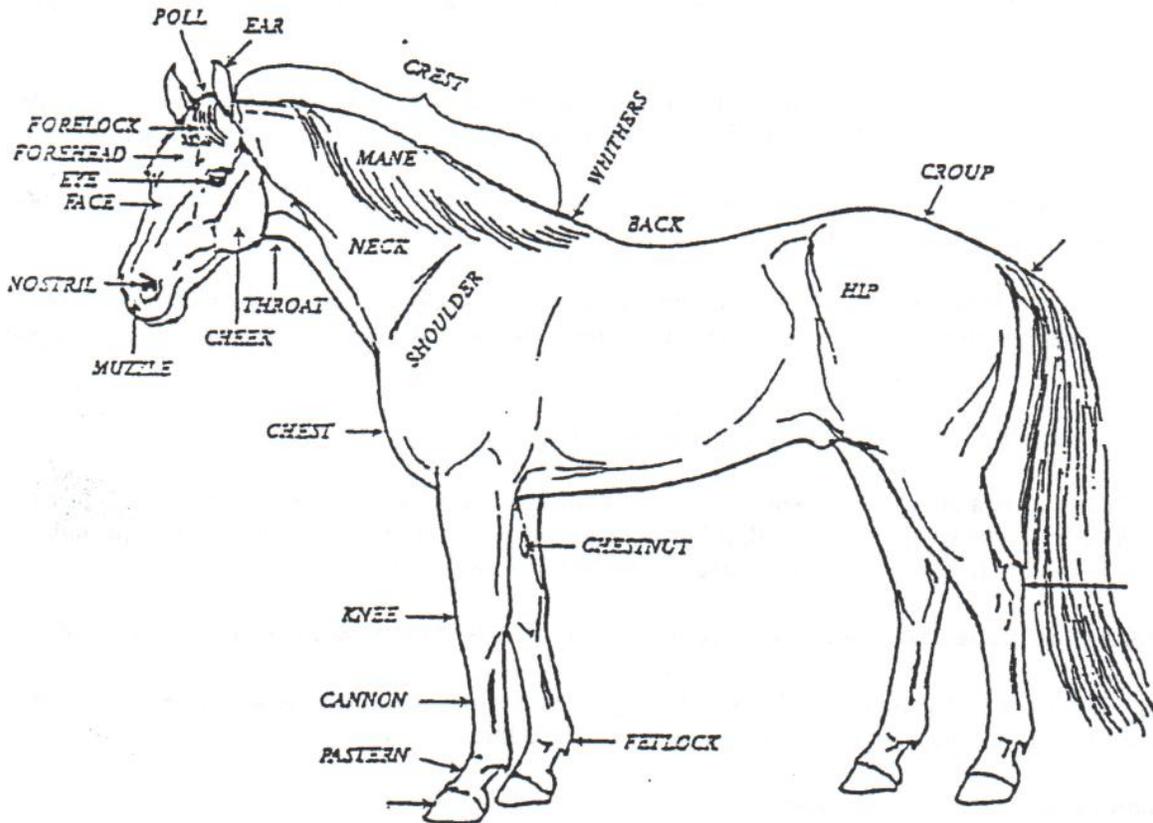
- Never coil the lead rope so that it can tighten around your hand.
- Do not let the rope drag.
- Walk between the horse's head and shoulder.
- There should be between 8 and 16 inches of lead rope between your hand and the halter.
- It is safer to turn into the horse rather than turning them toward you. You are less likely to get stepped on.
- Do not hand feed the horses. It encourages them to nip people.
- When turning the horse loose, turn the horse to face the door or gate with your back to the gate, to prevent an escape.
- Take care to walk the horse straight through the center of any doors or gates so they don't injure their hips.
- If a horse should escape, remain calm. Prevent any others from getting loose! The loose horse will not go far from his buddies. **Do not chase him!** Unless he seems inclined to come up to you, go get a bucket and a little feed from the feed room to entice him. Put a rope around the horse's neck and lead him back. If you can't catch him, call for help.

### Miscellaneous Leader Tips

- Practice leading on both sides.
- If the horse is too slow, do not try to pull him, have the rider squeeze his legs or the side walker prod in the barrel.
- At the trot, you set the pace. If you keep going faster, so will the horse.
- The leader must be alert and pay close attention to the instructor. Commands (i.e., halt, circle or cross the arena) may cause a pile up. Use common sense to avoid this. Instruction will be given in the student's name, so listen closely.

## Parts of a Horse

When working around horses there are some special words and terms that you will need to know. Some parts of the horse are shown below



Rev 10/2000

## Horse "Sense"

**Rewards:** Horses are friendly and sensitive animals. Reward them by voice and firm pats on the neck and shoulder. (They usually dislike being patted on the nose.)

**Talk Quietly:** Be calm and quiet around horses. Approach a horse at its shoulder, talking quietly.

**Walk Around the Front:** When moving from one side of the horse to the other, walk around the front whenever possible. Never duck under a lead rope.

**If you must:** If an approach from the rear is unavoidable, alert the horse by talking quietly and resting a hand on its hip. Then walk to the front of the horse, maintaining hand contact. If in doubt as to the horse's temperament, walk well back out of kicking range.

**Creatures of Habit:** Horses are suspicious of anything new, unusual, or different. Allow the horse time to get acquainted with the new situation.

**Herd Animals:** Loose horses tend to run into a group, so hold your horse carefully if a loose one is present. To catch the loose horse, wait until it is standing still, then approach slowly at its shoulder, while talking soothingly.

**Keep Them Separated:** Horses may kick and squeal when close to another animal. Do not allow horses to 'sniff' noses, keep them separated.

**Stall or Pasture:** When putting a horse into the stall or pasture, lead the horse in, then turn the horse so the leader is standing with his or her back to the gate opening. Remove the halter, step back through the gate and close it.

**Only Two:** Only two people are allowed in a horse stall at a time.

**Tying:** Always use a quick release knot. Never tie a horse by its bridle reins as the horse may injure its mouth on the bit or break the bridle. When tied, if the horse begins to pull back on the ends of the rope, talk quietly while loosening the rope, then walk the horse forward a few steps to re-tie.

**Reins and Lead Rope:** To avoid horses stepping on reins and lead ropes, keep them off the ground.

**Stirrups and Boots:** An empty saddle should always have stirrups run up on the stirrup leathers. If the saddle has Devonshire boots, then cross them over the top of the saddle.

**Flies and Pests:** If flies or other insects are present, allow the horse to keep itself comfortable with a minimum of hoof stamping or tail-swishing.

**Accidents and Injuries:** Report all accidents and injuries (i.e., rubs on students' legs, saddle sores), even if minor, to the instructor.

## Grooming Equipment

**Curry Comb:** May be rubber or plastic and is used to loosen hair and dirt. Curry the neck and body, especially the areas where tack goes. Use a circular motion with the lay of the hair.

**Dandy Brush:** A stiff bristle brush, used to remove the dirt loosened by the curry. Use a firm brisk stroke in the direction the hair grows to lift dirt away.

**Body Brush:** A soft bristle brush, used to finish the coat and brush the face and legs. Use a long stroke to remove fine dust. Skip this step if short on time.

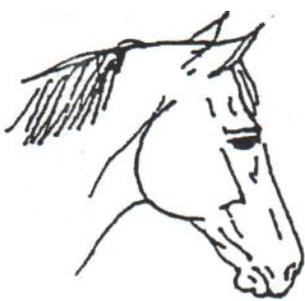
**Hoof Pick:** Used to remove dirt and stones from feet. Work from heel to toe to avoid wedging in dirt. Never squat or kneel!

**Mane and Tail:** Comb or brush the mane and tail working from the ends towards the roots to avoid pulling hair out. Use the mane comb or plastic curry.

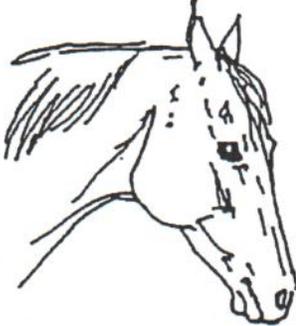
**Fly Spray:** If necessary, spray the horse, particularly on the legs and belly. Do not spray directly on the face. Do not get the spray on the rubber reins.

## Reading a Horse's Ears

The horse's ears and actions is the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way that he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



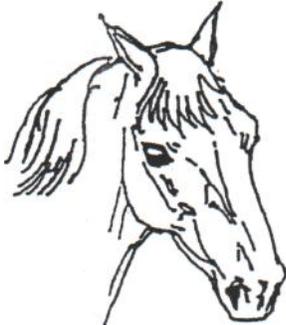
Ears forward but relaxed interested in what's in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed listening to his rider or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward alarmed or nervous about what's ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right relaxed, paying attention to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back annoyed or worried about what's behind him; might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears calm and resting, may be dozing.



- **Ears flattened against neck.** Violently angry, in a fighting mood. May fight, bite or kick.

### Other signs you should notice are:

- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**  
Danger to the rear. Horse may bolt, buck or kick. Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- **Switching the tail.**  
Annoyance and irritation:
  - At biting flies, stinging insects or
  - Tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing. Don't wake him up by startling him!
  - **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse. Watch out for biting or kicking.

Information and illustrations provided by PDA

# Understanding Horse Behavior

## Equine Senses

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts, and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks, and increasing positive relationships.

### Smell:

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

### Implications

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- It is recommended that treats not be carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.
- Volunteers should be discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

### Hearing:

The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response. Note the position of the horse's ears (pictures following this article). Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicates that they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person.

### Implications:

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

### Sight:

The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head: there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poorer frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

### Implications:

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The horse has better peripheral vision: consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots; directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration, when hand feeding.

**Touch:**

Touch is used as a communication between horses, and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

**Implications:**

- Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly.
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e., flank and belly areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a 'clothes pin' effect with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

**Taste:**

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable food and other objects.

**Implications:**

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

## Glossary of Horse Terms

**Billets:** The strap on the saddle to which the girth is buckled.

**Bit:** The part of the bridle that goes into the horse's mouth, used to control the horse.

**Bit Rings:** The part on the ends of the bit to which the reins and bridle attach.

**Bridle:** A head harness for guiding a horse, it consists on a headstall, bit and reins.

**Crest:** The part of the horse's neck that forms the arch.

**Croup:** Located on the top of the rump between the tail and the point of the hip.

**Forehand:** The front section of the horse: forelegs, shoulder, neck, and head.

**Girth:** A wide strap that goes around the horse and buckles to the saddle to hold it in position. It is usually made of leather, nylon, or cotton.

**Grazing Muzzle:** Made of nylon and rubber, this is fitted to the horse's head to prevent them from over eating or may be used to prevent the horse from biting the handler.

**Gullet:** The open channel that runs the length of the saddle on the bottom. It keeps the saddle off the horse's spine.

**Halter:** Straps that buckle around the horse or pony's head that allows the horse to be lead or tied.

**Halter Bridle:** Combination piece of equipment. It may be used as a halter or a bridle. The bit and cheek pieces are removable.

**Harness:** (noun) the assemblage of leather or synthetic strap and metal pieces, by which a horse is fastened to a vehicle, plow or load; (verb) to attach a horse with a harness to something.

**Haunches:** The hindquarters of a horse.

**Impairment:** A loss or abnormality of a specific body function.

**Lead Rope:** A rope used to lead the horse.

**Muzzle:** The nose and mouth area of the horse.

**Posting:** "Rising trot" the rising and descending of the rider with the rhythm of the trot.

**Saddle:** (noun) a structure that is strapped onto a horse's or pony's back to facilitate the rider's comfort and balance, and distribute weight evenly on the horse's back. The rider uses it as a seat, (verb) the act of placing a saddle on a horse's back.

**Safety Catch:** The hinged section of the stirrup bar.

## 100 Ways To Become A More Effective Volunteer

1. Consider safety first at all times.
2. Treat riders and horses kindly but firmly.
3. Give instructor feedback about the rider at appropriate times.
4. Do not mistreat or abuse horses or riders.
5. Assist your rider in maintaining the order of activity, the horse's spacing and positions of hands and body when necessary.
6. Remain calm in an emergency or stressful situation and remember your job.
7. Praise should be given equivalent to the deed accomplished.
8. ....Smiles say a thousand words ..... only louder.
9. Acknowledge the efforts of your rider.
10. Consult instructor/staff in praise techniques for each rider.
11. Allowing riders to feel upset helps them accept their feelings.
12. Do not hand or rest on the horse, rider, fencing, or rails.
13. Always inform a rider before touching them.
14. Wear sensible clothing and shoes.
15. Minimize the distractions for riders who are easily distracted.
16. Ask the rider first to do the task independently, then assist.
17. Ensure a rider's feet are out of stirrups prior to dismounting.
18. At first, offer support at the trot.
19. Always encourage the rider to thank the horse.
20. Maximize, not minimize, your rider's capabilities.
21. If you are afraid or apprehensive, the horse will know it.
22. Do not talk through your rider...talk to your rider.
23. Support your team, don't criticize or make fun of others.
24. Encourage teamwork.
25. Re-latch all doors and gates behind you.
26. If you're not sure, don't be afraid to ask questions.
27. Notify an instructor immediately if a horse is acting oddly.
28. The riding instructor is in charge of all riding emergencies.
29. Never approach an unsuspecting horse from the rear.
30. Never walk under a horse's neck.
31. Be familiar with emergency procedures.
32. Contact the instructor about all mishaps and their circumstances.
33. Stay attentive to the horse, rider, instructor and situation.
34. If you are unable to understand a rider, ask for assistance.
35. Never hand feed the horses.
36. Park in designated areas.
37. Be reliable, everyone is depending on you to do your part.
38. Be courteous and respect each person's needs.
39. Promptness and reliability are key to the success of the Free S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders program.
40. Greet your rider upon arrival and acknowledge their departure.
41. Notify the Volunteer Coordinator ASAP of scheduling conflicts.
42. Maintain a professional but friendly relationship with a rider.
43. Your genuine friendship and empathy are appreciated.
44. Do not prejudge a person's abilities.
45. Weakness in the rider's neck and trunk require precaution.
46. Give verbal cues prior to change for the visually challenged.
47. Remember that smoke may irritate the sensitive rider.
48. Make new friends while being of assistance to others.
49. Make reference to the person first, not the disability.
50. To further understand a rider, try to observe them. The eyes, mouth, face, and body movements are all key communicators.
51. Accept each individual as they are and respect each person's individual needs.
52. Listen to and help the rider focus on the instructor's directions.
53. Respect everyone's right to confidentiality.
54. Know and respect Free S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders policies.
55. Encourage the rider to be as independent as

- possible.
56. Allow a rider to fail as well as succeed.
  57. Bring your positive energy, not your problems, to the rider.
  58. Be attentive to the instructor. Keep talking to a minimum.
  59. Allow the rider's efforts to succeed in games, not yours.
  60. Allow the rider ample time to process a direction.
  61. Help maintain a safe and welcoming environment.
  62. Never wrap a lead around your hand, butterfly wrap the excess.
  63. Check clothing under the rider's legs to make sure it's not binding.
  64. Be conscientious about dress and personal hygiene.

65. Remain calm and avoid rushing.
66. Offer physical support only when needed.
67. Be willing to learn and participate in BEAMING educational programs.
68. Supervise riders when away from their caregivers or parents.
69. Don't suffer through a personality clash. Ask to be reassigned.
70. Treat others, as you would like to be treated.
71. Never become so relaxed or distracted as to forget your rider.
72. If using a safety belt, don't pull your rider off balance.
73. Allow riders to share their lives and friendship without prying.
74. Return things to the spot where you found them.
75. Use a halter and a lead line when going to and from stabling areas.
76. If something is broken or needs fixing, let someone know or if you are able take care of it yourself.
77. If a horse is lame or injured, tell an instructor immediately.
78. If a rider has fallen, never move them. Defer to the instructor.
79. Pet a horse on the neck or shoulder, not on their face.
80. Any form of injury to yourself or others must be reported.
81. Pay attention to how you move and know your physical limits.
82. When lifting, use your legs, not your back.
83. Do not run or make loud noises around horses.
84. Be aware of the phone and first aid kit location.
85. Do not bring pets, children or others without prior permission.
86. Respect your coworkers and their responsibilities.
87. Sign in and out every time you volunteer.
88. Check your schedule and get a nametag upon arrival.
89. Choose your words carefully; they can impact other's lives.
90. Call in advance if you are ill or unable to report for your assign time and can't get a sub.
91. Patience + Praise = Success and Results
92. Be attentive to sighs of rider fatigue and frustration.
93. Be sincere in the offer of services.
94. Do not force a rider's body parts into desired positions.
95. Alert the instructor immediately if a seizure takes place.
96. Be sober and drug free when you volunteer.
97. Enjoy the pleasure in helping in an assisted riding experience.
98. Share knowledge and experiences with others.
99. Maintain the dignity and integrity of the services BEAMING Riders.
100. Remember that your dedication and sincerity truly makes a world of difference!