

WELCOME

TO OUR INTRO RIDE

We hope that you and your horse have a great ride.

Following are a few tips about Endurance riding that will help you and your horse enjoy your introduction to the sport.

Ride Preparation

If you have decided to attend a ride, it is courteous to phone the ride organiser at least a week before to pre-nominate so that catering, prizes, vets and stewards can be suitably organised. If you are then unable to attend, please phone again to let the ride organiser know.

The Endurance Camp

For those new to endurance riding, good manners in camp and on track from both rider and horse can make for a pleasant ride that you can look back on with fond memories.

In setting up your camp, only take up enough space as necessary and consider others nearby. Please leave sufficient space from water points making access for others easy. If hoses are available remember to share them with other riders. At most rides dogs need to be secured at all times.

The Ride

It is important to attend the pre-ride talk as you will be given valuable information about the ride and any questions you may have can be answered. Please be polite and friendly to the volunteers at the check- points and gates as they are helping to run the ride for your pleasure.

Whilst on track, the rider should maintain control of the horse, directing its speed and direction at all times. An endurance horse needs basic training in the walk, trot and canter, and to obey its rider. You may have seen endurance riders riding experienced horses with simple rope halters. Your horse may respond quite well to a rope halter when riding quietly at home, but it is most likely to become excited and potentially out of control in new surroundings and in the company of strange horses. So, please make sure that your horse is fully controllable at all times.

Before the group of horses start the ride, decide where you would like to be in the field. If you know that your horse is fast and will want to move out, then go out in front of the main field. If you are nervous and your horse is excited, you may choose to start five minutes after the main group, when the other horses are out of sight. If horses near you are prancing and traveling sideways etc. either get in front or behind them. Try to get out of their way so that you and your horse won't then be in danger of being bumped or kicked.

Never ride up close behind another horse. It will disturb that horse and it may either kick up or out causing trouble for you and the rider of the horse in front. Riders tie a red ribbon in the tail of their horse to indicate to other riders that their horse is liable to kick out at another horse. In the case of a child rider, this is a fair warning to other riders to keep away from that horse and not to disturb the child. In the case of adults who ride a horse wearing a red ribbon, it is a warning that the rider wants some space for their horse. Keep well out of their way. Horses that are trained and under control are less likely to kick at other horses, even if they are a mare in season or a stallion. Here again riders of stallions must indicate that they are riding a stallion by tying a blue ribbon in the tail so that other riders are aware and do not ride too close to them.

If your horse attempts to kick another horse (it is usually done out of fear), a stern reprimand with a slap from the reins or a boot in the ribs, is usually sufficient to deter it from bad behaviour before it becomes a habit. Horses learn what is acceptable behaviour under saddle even if they are the paddock boss at home.

If you want to pass a rider or group of riders in front of you on a track where there is limited room, call out to the rider/group that you wish to pass on the left or the right, whichever is most suitable. Wait for them to acknowledge your request, then pass and move on out of their way. Do not dawdle in front of the group and annoy them.

Please wait for a suitable place on the track to overtake other horses. Assuming that you are alone or in a group do not try to prevent other horses and riders overtaking you. Move over at the first possible opportunity and let them pass. If on the other hand you catch up to a group of riders and they invite you to pass, but you really wish to slow up and travel at their pace, say so, and stay behind them at a distance which will not disturb their horses.

Endurance riders are advised to allow their horses to drink at every opportunity. When you come to water, try not to muddy the water and leave it unpalatable for horses following behind you. If several horses arrive for water at once, allow your horse to water in its turn, and do not rush off as soon as your horse has drunk its fill, as you may disturb someone else's horse that still needs to drink. It may not drink if it sees another horse moving off, and it may miss out on much needed water. A few minutes spent at the water can soon be made up further down the track and you will have helped another rider to care for their horse.

Water provided by ride management for horse drinking, is not for the purpose of washing down horses. The last horses that come along for a drink may find it unpalatable and miss out on a drink. Sometimes strapping water is provided in a separate container for you to use.

If one finds another rider on the track in distress, **always** stop and ask if you can help, or, if the situation warrants it, ride to the nearest communication check-point so that help can be organised to reach the rider in trouble. One day it could be you who may need assistance.

Vetting

At the vet check, be considerate of horses that are having their heart rates taken. Refrain from loud noises or quick movements or allowing your horse to disturb others in any way. Wait your turn quietly if there is a hold-up in the vet ring. The stewards and vets will be doing their best to attend to you.

Post Ride

The ride committee has worked hard to organise the ride. It is part of endurance rider's tradition for everyone to attend the ride presentations and applaud the winners and completers. We can all think of a hundred reasons why we would like to pack up and rush home as soon as we have completed our ride. But please don't. The ride is not over until after the presentations. Attend the presentations, talk to your friends and give your horse a chance for a rest and a feed before heading for home.

Most ride organisers appreciate feed-back on their ride. If you liked it, say so, if you have some constructive criticism to improve the ride for next time, please tell them.