

Things that should be in your Horses First Aid Kit

Thermometer	Bandages
Scissors	Rubbing Alcohol
Adhesive Tape	Petroleum Jelly
Sharp Knife	Epson Salts
Gauze	Muscle Liniments
Twitch	Wound Ointment
Anti Bacterial Soap	Colic Remedy
Cotton	Veterinarians Phone Number

4 types of wounds and treatments

Incision	Straight Edge Cut	Wash with antibacterial soap Apply dressing
Laceration	Tear with ragged edges	Best treated by your vet.
Puncture	Sharp Pointed Object	Remove object Apply dressing Call your Vet.
Contusions	Bruises- may or may not break skin	Ice packs or cold water. After swelling goes down apply moist towel with heat or hot water

fact remains that inexperienced riders are better off with experienced horses. Selecting a green horse with no training for a completely inexperienced rider with the thought that they will learn together is a blueprint for failure. These situations are frustrating to the riders who will get discouraged and generally lose interest before their newly acquired skills enable them to adequately train a green horse.

Horse and Rider Combination

The horse and rider combination requires serious thought and consideration. Emphasis should be placed on the event or activity in which the rider wishes to participate. If a person wants to ride hunt courses and jump fences, then a horse with "hunter" type should be selected. The horse should not only be well-matched with the rider's ability, but also should be suitable for the purpose. Any horse may make a suitably trained horse, but that same horse may be inappropriate for certain horse show or event combinations.

The size of the horse in relationship to the rider can also be addressed. Matching appropriate body type of the horse with the rider can be fun and challenging. A large man may not look good on a small-framed stock horse in jumping events, but put him on a large Thoroughbred-type hunter and he'll look great. Additionally, a small pony may be an acceptable mount for a small child but would not be acceptable for a larger teenager. The horse and rider team needs to be compatible to make a good union of the pair. Size, suitability for purpose, and level of training, must be considered when matching horse-rider combinations.

How Much to Spend for a Horse

The key to buying a horse, particularly your first horse, is to practice moderation. Even though a family or person may be able to afford to spend virtually any amount of money for a horse, it is still wise to purchase one in a moderate price range. Many good horses can be purchased for \$1,500 to \$3,000. The horse's level of training will play a major role in determining its price. A better, more expensive horse can be purchased later if the situation warrants a change. But just because a horse has a \$25,000 price tag does not mean it is a great horse. Conversely, many "cheap"

horses make excellent mounts and provide a learning opportunity and fun for a rider.

It is advisable to grow, step-by-step, into a horse project. However, it will cost as much to maintain a cheap horse as an expensive one. Determine how much money can be spent for a horse and search for suitable horses in that price range. Do not become swayed by high pressure sales pitches to spend additional money above the pre-set limit. Most people can find a suitable horse in their price range if they are willing to work at finding the horse.

Breed or Breed-Type Selection

The breed or breed-type of horse has to be selected based on the prospective buyer's interests. Many people will select horses based on the type of event in which they want to participate. Many breeds of horses are well-suited to train or use for pleasure riding. However, if an owner wants to participate in western events at horse shows, they should select a breed with traits and attributes suited to these classes. These breeds or breed-types should be of stock horse origin such as Quarter Horse, American Paint Horse, Palomino, Appaloosa or even a Pony of America (POA).

Those interested in hunter events could select one of the aforementioned breeds; however, Thoroughbred-types are typically used on the hunter-jumper circuit. Warmbloods such as Friesians and Trakehners are also used successfully in jumping events. Arabians, American Saddlebreds or Morgans may also be used for many events but are typically show horses. However, Arabians are very competitive in trail and endurance trail rides. Many of these breeds, with proper training, can perform in dressage competition.

Walking or racking-type horses may also be used as show or pleasure mounts. These gaited-type horses are more predominant in certain regions of the country. However, in recent years, Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses and Spotted Saddle Horses have increased in popularity.

Those who want to race horses may select a horse from many of the breeds. Horse racing today is present in many forms and is not just limited to

LOCATING AND BUYING THE RIGHT HORSE

Doyle G. Meadows, PhD
University of Tennessee

David W. Whitaker, PhD
Middle Tennessee State University

Robert A. Mowrey, PhD
North Carolina State University

Will Rogers once said, "The outside of the horse is good for the inside of man." This feeling is shared today by many horse owners. Exploring a new trail, completing a difficult hunt course, or teaching a foal to lead are experiences that happen daily in the lives of horse owners. The relationship between a horse and rider can be unparalleled if the right horse is chosen. But how do you find the "RIGHT" horse? This chapter will assist prospective horse owners not only in locating but selecting the most appropriate horse for their needs and desires. What may be surprising is how many considerations and questions need to be evaluated when selecting a horse.

Age of Rider

The age of the rider must be considered when purchasing a horse. The rider's age and size can have a profound influence on his or her ability to make a horse perform. For instance, a child's physical limitations in many cases will influence the size and level of training sought in a prospective purchase. Normally a 15-year-old would be better able to handle a larger, less-trained horse than a 7-year-old. The primary consideration of age is the physical attributes necessary for the successful enjoyment of a horse.

Experience of the Rider

Equally important as age is a rider's experience. Many accomplished youth can capably manage and ride horses that would be inappropriate for adults who lack experience. Generally, children are often considered to be inexperienced riders, but today many adults with absolutely no prior experience are buying horses. It is incorrect to assume that an adult can handle a horse better than a youth

just because they are older. A highly trained, well-broken horse may be perfect for an inexperienced rider but may be "boring" for an experienced rider who wants to provide at least some level of training to the horse. Experience will play a major role in determining the right horse for any given rider.

It may also be beneficial for the prospective buyer to take riding lessons for about 30 days before purchasing a horse. Many people buy a horse before learning to ride, but lessons can help a prospective buyer decide if they really want a horse.

Age of the Horse

Another important consideration in selecting the right horse is the age of the horse. First, the horse's age must be consistent with the desires and experience of the rider. An experienced rider may want to show or train a young horse, while a young horse would be totally inappropriate for an inexperienced handler. In this instance, a mature, older horse would normally be more suitable for the inexperienced rider. However, selecting a horse solely based on age could be a problem. Just because a horse is mature does not mean it is a suitable mount. Although an exact age cannot be given, horses from five to ten years of age are generally preferred for novice or first-time horse owners.

The Horse's Level of Training

When selecting a mount, the level of training or, in fact, the experience of the horse is a consideration that should be given high priority. Generally speaking, the inexperienced rider should select a highly trained horse. However, this important concept can be taken too far. For example, many parents have paid large amounts of money for professionally trained horses. This in itself is not bad.

However, the extra money paid for a horse that can perform sophisticated maneuvers may be negated if the rider is unable to capitalize on that level of training. Typically, the horse's level of training will decrease to the rider's experience unless the rider advances his or her level of training. Nonetheless, the



Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, Arabians, Paints and Appaloosas also race on the flat, while harness racing continues to be popular with Standardbreds, both pacing and trotting. Potential horse owners who simply want to breed and race should consult a professional blood stock agent and select breeding stock based on their interest and the future use of the offspring.

Daily and Monthly Expenses

The initial purchase price of a horse may be insignificant compared to the routine management costs. The horse owner must be prepared for the daily and monthly expenses. The primary expense to horse owners are feed and board. However, these expenses may vary tremendously depending on where the horse is boarded. If the horse is maintained on the owner's property then obviously board costs would be minimal. If pasture is available, feed costs also would be reduced. Total feed and board costs required by boarding stables could range from \$150 to \$600 per month depending on amenities and locations. Additional, monthly costs would include health and farrier services, grooming aids, tack and equipment, and possibly insurance. It is critical that the prospective buyer fully understand the costs involved in maintaining a horse prior to the initial purchase.

Another significant consideration that must be addressed is showing the horse. Showing horses can be very expensive and requires financial and time management. Although fancy, expensive horse trailers and towing vehicles may not be required, the fact remains that the horse has to get to the show. Therefore, the horse will have to be hauled creating an expense. Moreover, to "fit in" with the show crowd, certain show tack, equipment and attire must be purchased requiring additional expense. Furthermore, entry fees can be costly depending on the show. Consult a friend or a professional in the area who is currently showing to determine a typical horse show budget.

Registered or Unregistered (Grade) Horse

Horse owners that wish to show in breed or registered shows must purchase a registered horse. For example, if a prospective owner wants to show in approved American Quarter Horse shows, the owner must purchase a horse registered in the

American Quarter Horse Association. Similar situations exist for most other breeds and horse show associations, such as the American Horse Show Association. Many of the associations require owners to be members in order to show or transfer horses. Requirements can be obtained from each different association or registry.

The right to exhibit in breed shows is only one advantage of owning a registered horse. Most breed associations publish a breed journal that lists show dates and locations, informative articles about horses and many other items related to horses. Owners indicate they feel more a part of the horse industry simply by owning a registered horse.

Many people purchase a grade or unregistered horse to begin with and eventually graduate to a registered horse. Some purchase a grade horse initially because of the perceived lower cost of the grade animal. Registered horses do not automatically cost more than their grade counterparts, however. Often times registered horses may be found in the same price range as grade horses.

When purchasing a registered horse, the buyer must be aware of the current recorded owner which is shown on the registration papers. The registration papers simply identify a specific horse. If the person selling the horse and the recorded owner shown on the registration papers are different, appropriate transfer information and documentation must be obtained prior to completing the transaction.

Additional information shown on the registration papers will help the owner identify the horse. This information will include such things as foaling date, three to five generations of ancestry, identifying white markings, scars, brands, initial owner and breeder, and, in many cases, previous owners. Also, neck or lip tattoos, registration number and sex will be shown on the papers.

Color

For many people selecting a horse, color is a determining factor. Most people are able to purchase their color preference within most breed or breed-types. However, the buyer that makes a purchase

decision based strictly on color severely restricts the pool of horses that are available for sale. Conversely, the less restrictive a prospective buyer is about coat color, the greater his or her chances are of finding the right horse. However, if a buyer wants to show Palomino horses, for example, then it will typically take more time and miles to find the appropriate mount. In some breeds or breed-types, certain colors may be discriminated against; therefore, it would be advisable to research those possibilities prior to purchase. A breeding program based solely on color can produce discouraging results. If a person breeds for color and develops a market plan for a specific color or color pattern, the marketability of the offspring can be greatly reduced if the color is not obtained. Therefore, an alternate market plan should be developed to accommodate for non-colored horses.

Color breeds, such as Palomino and Buckskin, will provide an excellent opportunity for the owner to exhibit the horse. For example, a 4-H youth with a Palomino horse could exhibit in approved Palomino and American Quarter Horse Shows, as well as 4-H and open shows. Of course, this would only be true if the Palomino was double-registered in both the Palomino Horse Breeders of American and American Quarter Horse Associations. Color breeds simply provide another alternative for the owner to be involved with other people and horses.

Sex of the Horse

Sex of the horse is an important consideration in horse selection. Obviously, if a buyer's goal is to eventually establish a breeding program, then mares and stallions must be purchased. Normally stallions do not make good mounts for amateurs and youth. Many of the youth associations, as well as 4-H, do not allow youth to ride or exhibit stallions. Additionally, they are not recommended for trail or pleasure riding because of the potential danger they present to the rider, as well as other participants. Mares and geldings are certainly the preferred choices for pleasurable, obedient horses. Many people prefer geldings over mares particularly for novice or youth mounts due to possible erratic behavior related to mares' estrus cycles. Geldings are generally more consistent with behavior and performance. However, many

mares can be successfully ridden on the trail and shown without any problems.

Where to Get a Horse

One of the many questions asked by a potential horse owner is "Where do I find a horse?" Although good horses can be found and purchased in many different locations and settings, local breeders are a good place to start the search. An established breeder can provide information and is often a good source of quality horses. Likewise, area trainers often have connections to good horses that are for sale. Horse agents, traders who buy and sell horses, may also assist in horse selection. Traders are often times overlooked as resource people because of the perception that they only have horses with problems. This is not true. Reputable traders or agents have assisted many people who are extremely happy with their purchases.

Auction sales provide another readily available source of horses to prospective buyers. However, simply going to an auction sale and buying a horse can be "risky." Although many quality horses are sold everyday at auctions, the law governing these sales is "Buyer Beware." Boarding stables provide an alternative for purchasing a horse. Although the boarding stable may not directly be involved in selling horse, many of the boarders may want to sell their animals or they may know of someone else who does.

Someone who specifically wants a show horse should consider going to horse shows to look for the right horse. The buyer can identify horses that may be for sale and observe their performance and behavior during an actual show. This provides the buyer with first-hand knowledge of a horse's ability to perform under show conditions.

Many horses are also sold through classified and other advertisements in newspapers, breed journals and other horse-related publications.

Don't forget your human resources. Veterinarians often provide invaluable information to prospective buyers about client horses that may be for sale and other horses in the immediate area. Additionally, many veterinary clinics provide clients with a bulletin board to list horses to buy or

sell. County extension agents, state horse specialists and Department of Agriculture marketing specialists are also good resource people. Extension 4-H leaders and even 4-H members are often very willing to provide assistance in finding horse solutions. These people make excellent resource people because, in most cases, there is no financial consideration tied to their selections or advice.

Pre-Purchase Examination

A must consideration for the prospective horse buyer is a pre-purchase examination to determine the overall soundness and health of the horse prior to the transaction. The examination should be made by a veterinarian with experience in pre-purchase examinations and who has had no previous business with the seller. Pre-purchase examinations will be covered in detail in another segment of this Horse Industry Handbook. In addition to the pre-purchase exam, the buyer may request records of previous vaccination and deworming schedules, as well as a complete health record of the horse. These records will be easily obtained from horse owners who have maintained an appropriate horse health program.

Suggestions to Help Find the Right Horse

Take a professional with you to help select the horse. Just like a realtor can assist the home buyer, a professional in the horse business can assist the prospective horse owner. Do not underestimate the value of professional help in selecting a horse.

Make an unannounced visit after a horse has been identified as a prospect. Honest horse owners will not be offended by a surprise visit to see a horse for the second or third time. Initially, an appointment must be made and agreed to by both parties. It is a good idea to evaluate a horse that may not have been ridden close to the previous appointment time. This prevents an owner from giving a horse extra work prior to a visit so that it will perform better.

Try to spend some time alone with the horse. The more the horse is handled prior to purchase, the more likely a correct decision will be made. The horse's disposition and attitude can be more easily determined when the two are alone together. This is applicable both on and off the horse. Just watching the horse in the stall may give the buyer

an indication of its stall manners such as stall walking or cribbing. A prospective buyer can also observe eating habits.

Take some time to tie up the horse. The horse should be tied up and, if possible, cross-tied in an aisle to evaluate a horse's ability to stand tied. Even though this may seem to be insignificant, a horse that will not stand tied will have limited use and is a definite candidate for a trip to the veterinarian due to injury. Simply watching a horse's manners while tied is extremely important.

Have the owner ride the horse first. Do not attempt to ride a horse without watching someone ride the horse first, preferably the owner. A trainer riding a horse may make the horse appear to have more training than it really has. Try to see the horse ridden as fresh as possible without longeing. This can give the buyer an indication of disposition and level of training. In addition, watch the horse's actions as the horse is taken away from the barn. Many horses do not want to leave the barn area. These horses are referred to as "barn sour."

While riding the horse during the evaluation phase, make the horse sweat. Give the horse a good workout. Some horses are fine during a light riding session but become very ill-mannered and unmanageable if they have to go beyond a light workout. Do not try to overwork the horse; just a good strong riding session will do.

Load and trailer the horse. Some horses will not willingly load in a trailer. This will severely limit their usefulness since most activities require trailering. It is also a good idea not only to load but actually to trailer the horse for a short period of time to see how the individual behaves in transit.

Ask questions. Do not be afraid to ask the owner appropriate questions. Some of the questions could include:

1. Why is the owner selling the horse?
2. Is the horse easy to handle when being trimmed or shod? Also obtain the farrier's name to verify the response.
3. Is the horse easy to clip or trim and bathe?
4. How much training has the horse had?

5. What aids and cues are used to make the horse perform?
6. Could the buyer see a copy of the horse's show record?
7. Does the horse have any unusual quirks?

Try to work out a lease or lease-purchase plan for the horse. Some owners are willing to lease in lieu of selling, particularly if the owner is having a hard time selling the horse. This provides a great way to "test drive" a horse before a large expenditure is made for a horse that may not be satisfactory.

Summary

Any prospective horse owner must first decide one major question: "Are you willing to make a commitment?" Becoming a horseowner is not simply a financial commitment, but a total commitment to provide for the physical and mental well-being of a horse. If the answer is affirmative, the buyer can then start the decision-making process to decide and respond to considerations posed in this article, such as where to keep the horse, breed or breed-type, sex, age and level of training. Throughout the entire selection process, the buyer must remember that there is no perfect horse. Many horses may be acceptable, but the purchaser must select the one that is right for him or her. However, in order to select the right horse, the buyer must do the necessary "homework" to locate and buy the horse. If this process were easy, everyone would have the PERFECT HORSE.



Reviewers

Albert Kley
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Larry W. Insley, PhD
South Dakota State University
Don Burt
Portuguese Bend, California

Section Chief

Robert A. Mowrey, PhD
North Carolina State University