

Quick Start Intensive Riding Program



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This fall, Harrogate is introducing our “Quick Start Intensive Riding Program.”

This innovative program spans 8 weeks, and is designed to give the beginner rider a solid foundational experience in riding and horsemanship.

In cooperation with the instructor who will be teaching the class, each student will have an assistant during the 16 hours of the program. With this assistant at their side, the student can freely concentrate on learning how to control their body and maintain the correct position on the horse without the additional demands of trying to control the horse.

Because each rider has an assistant in this program, the safety benefits are obvious. However, the speed at which children can master basic skills is also unprecedented. Riding ability as well as horsemanship knowledge are gained at a remarkable rate and as studies continue to prove, these skills, (including self-discipline, resiliency, coordination and empathy) are valuable assets for young people to acquire and can be carried with the student into other applications in their life.¹

The “Quick Start Intensive Riding Program” begins the first week of September. Due to scheduling demands with our other riding lessons, we can only accommodate two groups of six beginners. One group will begin on Wednesday September 5 and the other group will begin on Saturday, September 8.

All applications will be time stamped and places in the program will be awarded on a first come basis.

The cost of the program is \$497. and besides the 16 hours of intensive instruction, this includes taxes, helmet rental (and if necessary, boots too) as well as all notebooks and course notes. Attendance for all 8 consecutive weeks is encouraged so that the beginner rider does not fall behind or miss important building blocks in the program. For the sake of the integrity of the class, make ups unfortunately cannot be offered.

Applications can be sent to lessons@harrogatehills.com

P.S.

IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT HAPPY IN THE PROGRAM AFTER THE SECOND LESSON, WE OFFER A FULL 100% MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

¹ <https://www.countryliving.com/life/kids-pets/a42087/horse-riding-may-improve-child-intelligence/>

<https://www.paulickreport.com/horse-care-category/horseback-riding-social-development/>

Lesson One

- Before even entering the barn, we'll go over safety rules first.
The horses Harrogate uses for this program have been with the farm for a long time, some as long as 20 years. They are professionals and quite forgiving of the errors beginners can sometimes inadvertently make. However, it is our belief that it is just as easy to learn to do things correctly from the start and so, as our first priority, we cover the major concepts that keep children safe around horses.
- The students are encouraged to understand the naturally timid and gentle nature of the horse and we remind them to be respectful and quiet while they are a guest in the horse's home.
- Once the students have entered the barn, we will go over how to groom the horse. This is a great time for the kids to handle the horses for the first time, in a safe, supervised, controlled environment. They will learn why we groom, how we groom, and how the whole process helps us gain the horse's trust.
- In the first lesson, our staff will put the equipment on the horse, explaining to the student how the routine is designed to be predictable and comfortable for the horse and safe for the rider.
- Our staff will bring the horses into the indoor arena and once everyone is inside, the students will be shown the correct way to lead a horse.
- Having practiced leading their horses, the students line up in the centre of the school. They will now be shown the three things they need to do before getting on the horse.
- A staff member will give a brief demonstration, showing how to get on the horse and the correct position once on the horse.
- With assistance the students will now get on their horse. ***(In these first lessons, the students have one assistant with them at all times.)*** This allows the novice riders to concentrate on controlling their own bodies without having to worry about controlling the horse. Over the past 35 years it has been our experience that this assistance provides the best, safest learning environment for the young new rider.
- By the end of their first lesson, the students will have experienced walk and trot and will have learned to feel the rhythm of the rising (posting) trot. They will be learning to maintain their balance as the horse moves around the arena.

Lesson Two

- Every lesson begins with a review of safety procedures. We insist on this practice because we want the correct way of handling horses to be second nature to all of our students.
- As the students groom their horses we review the reasons why and begin teaching the names for different parts of the horse. We also go over colours and breeds using the horses in the lesson as examples. Some basic body language signals from the horse will also be discussed. (This is all provided in course notes which the students will receive throughout the 8 weeks. These notes can be added to their booklet.)
- Upon entering the arena, we once again practice leading the horse, introducing the safe way to turn a horse.
- Once the students have gotten on their horses we review proper position and show the rider how to hold the reins. Although they still have an assistant controlling the horse, we introduce the idea of keeping the rider's hands still in order not to interfere with the horse's mouth.
- The rider now tries to control the horse at walk (with assistance) and practices how to halt without pulling back on the reins.
- The work in trot is again designed to help the new rider find their balance and their confidence. Theory questions are often posed, allowing the students to answer (and to relax and breath) as they ride. Position corrections are made as the riders practice.
- Students at this stage are reminded that they are learning a new language that the horse already knows and that we have to take the time to learn it so that we can communicate with him.
- At the end of the lesson, the horse is groomed and put away. We introduce the idea of making a final check of the stall, the horse, the work area and equipment. They will learn to clean their tack and why it is important to do this.



Lesson Three

- Each lesson begins with a review of what was covered the week before. Safety, grooming, breeds, colours, and the names of different parts of the horse, vital signs of the horse.
- Leading, turning and getting on the horse is practiced, always with an eye towards making the new rider more independent in these skills.
- The students are introduced to the meanings of expressions that are often use in riding as well as the simplest school figures, like changing the direction through the diagonal.
- Riders who have developed the skill to keep their hands still in the small zone in front of the saddle and above the horse's withers, are now asked to hold the reins as the horse is trotting. This skill is acquired at different stages by different riders. If the riders are still losing their balance or unable to maintain a correct basic position, they can still take advantage of the time with their assistant and concentrate on acquiring those skills first. Holding the reins without first developing quiet hands is not conducive to good, respectful riding.
- At the end of the lesson, the horse is again groomed and put away. We remind the students of the importance of making a final check of the stall, the horse, and the work area. Through repetition, we try to instill a sense of responsibility in the new riders. We want them to feel responsible for their horse, the horses' equipment, and for their own equipment.



Lesson Four

- Once again, the lesson begins with a review of the theory that has been taught before. Grooming the horse and tacking up will be done with less and less intervention from the assistants.
- Once on the horse, work will again begin at the walk with the rider learning to refine the signals that the horse receives. Basic turns will be introduced.
- Trot work, again stressing keeping the hands in the 'zone' and quiet.
- Introduction of trotting diagonals and how to change them.
- They will practice changing the rein through the diagonal with less (or no) assistance and changing their trotting diagonals.
- While putting the horse away, the importance of being organized and self disciplined when around horses is again stressed.



Lesson Five

- Review as above
- Introduce concept of the circle, using cones as circle points.
- Continued work on trotting diagonals, recognizing them and being able to change them.
- Continued work on trotting, independently from assistants
- Continued introduction of stable management points, (vital signs etc.), which they always learn very easily through repetition.
- Introduction of obstacle courses negotiated at the walk and trot without assistance when possible.



Lesson Six

- Most students at this point will have mastered the rising trot. Many will have learned to keep their hands relatively quiet and independent of their own movements. They will continue to work on giving the horse coherent directions with less and less help from their assistant.
It should be noted that everyone learns at a different pace. No one should feel discouraged if they are still counting on their assistants during the riding portion of the lesson. Over the years we have had many, many riders who took a little longer in the beginning only to make remarkable progress later in their riding.
- Most students will have learned to lengthen and shorten their reins without interfering with the horse's mouth.
- Sitting trot before transitions is introduced and practiced.
- Being able to recognize the correct trotting diagonal will be getting easier.
- Knowledge of breeds, colours, basic parts of the horse, vital signs etc. will be confirmed
- Understanding the horse's body language will be getting clearer.



Lesson Seven

- Review of previous work
- The rider will take horse over trot rails independently
- The Rider will do most of his work with his assistant just 'floating' next to him.
- **NOTE: As mentioned above, all riders learn at different rates and there is no pressure on any student to become more independent until they are comfortable.**



Lesson Eight

- This is a time to celebrate! The young riders 8 weeks ago were different people.
- They now know:
 - How to stay safe around horses.
 - How to understand the horses' body language
 - They understand the horses' nature
 - They know how to groom a horse
 - They know how to tack up a horse
 - They know how to lead a horse
 - They know how to turn a horse
 - They know how to get on a horse correctly
 - They know what a correct basic position feels like
 - They know how to ask a horse to halt without pulling on the reins
 - They know how to perform rising trot
 - They know how to keep their balance while keeping their hands still
 - They know how to lengthen and shorten the horses' reins
 - They know how to give coherent basic signals to the horse
 - They know how to recognize their trotting diagonals
 - They know how to change them
 - They know how to ride basic school figures
 - They know how to negotiate around obstacles
 - They know how to guide the horse over trot rails
 - They know how to practice sitting trot
 - They know how to look after their horse after a ride
 - They know how to look after their horse's equipment
 - They know how to be responsible for their equine partner after the ride
 - They know different colours, breeds of horses
 - They know many basic parts of the horse
 - They know some stable management skills (horse's vital signs etc.)
- And perhaps most importantly they've learned that the horse is a willing partner when the rider is clear and concise. They have learned that the horse is happy to follow a leader that is empathetic and kind. It is a solid foundation on which to build more advanced riding skills. But these are also transferable skills and earned confidence that the new riders can take with them even if they decide not to pursue riding any further.

Congratulations!