

## **Beginning Equestrian:**

### **Riding:**

-The type of riding you are learning is called 'Hunt-seat Equitation'. It is the forward jumping seat style of English riding.

-There are five basic grooming tools used on a horse. They are curry comb, hard brush, soft brush, main and tail comb, and hoof pick.

-A horse should be brushed before being saddled. This will prevent saddle sores.

-Stirrup length can be estimated on the ground. Holding your hand at the buckle, stretch the stirrup to see if it hits under your arm pit. If it does, it's generally a good length. Once on the horse, the stirrup should hit just below your ankle.

-Always tighten your girth before you mount. When mounting, hold the reins and mane with your left hand, your right hand on the back of the saddle, and your left foot in the stirrup. Putting the majority of your weight in your left hand on the neck, lift your self up and gently place yourself into the saddle.

-There are five natural aids a rider has in order to control a horse. They are the eyes, voice, hands, seat/weight, and legs.

-Hands should be held low and in front of the pommel. Ideally you should be able to reach your thumbs across and touch, and reach your pinkie fingers down and touch the neck. The reins are held firmly but the hands and arms are gentle and supple and give and take with the motion of the horse.

-Heels should always be lower than the toes, with the stirrup placed on the ball of the foot and toes angled more forward than to the side.

-The rider should hold onto the horse with the calf muscle more than any other muscle in the body. The legs are held right behind the girth.

-The rider should sit up straight, with shoulders relaxed and eyes up. The head plays a very important part in the rider's ability to steer a horse, due to the fact that it is connected to the spine which, in turn, is sending signals to the horse's spine.

- English riding uses direct reining, meaning that direct pressure from the reins to the bit controls the horse's direction. To turn left, pressure is applied to the left rein only. To turn right, pressure is applied to the right rein only. To stop, pressure is applied equally to both reins.

-A horse moves away from pressure. When asking a horse to move forward, both the legs apply pressure equally to the sides of the horse while the seat pushes forward slightly. While turning, more pressure should be created by the inside leg, so that the horse turns around it, while the outside leg is steady so the horse does not swing his hind quarters out.

-Horses have four distinct gaits(speeds) of moving: walk, trot, canter and gallop. A walk has one leg off the ground at a time and is the slowest gait. A trot has two legs off the ground at a time. It tends to be very bumpy. A canter has three legs off the ground at a time and resembles a rocking motion. A gallop has four legs off the ground at one time and is the fastest gait.

- A horse should always be walked as a warm-up before asked to do more strenuous movement.

- The sitting position is also called the 3-point position because you have three points touching the horse-your two legs and your seat. This position can be done at the walk, trot, and canter.
- The two-point position is the forward jumping position. It is called two-point because the only two points touching the saddle are your two legs. Rise up out of the saddle and bend at the hips to keep your center of gravity still over the saddle. You only need to rise up about an inch. Hold this position. This position is used when jumping. It also has other benefits, including building strength in your leg, stretching the backs of your heels, and creating a better sense of balance.
- A posting trot is rising up and down with the one-two beat of the trot.
- When posting, a rider should make sure they are on the 'correct diagonal'. This means rising when the outside shoulder of the horse moves forward.
- To cue a horse to canter, the outside leg taps the horse 3-4 inches behind the girth.
- 'Being on the correct lead' means that the horse is reaching forward more with the inside leg than the outside leg at a canter. This creates a smoother ride and is more natural for the horse. For example, a left lead means the horse is stretching forward more with the left leg. Generally the horse is also traveling in a left circle as well.
- An independent seat means that your hands, seat, and legs all have the ability to move independent of each other. For example, your hands stay still as your body moves up and down with the rhythm of the trot. This is a very important skill to achieve.
- When changing directions, a half-turn is performed turning to the inside of the arena.
- When passing someone, it's generally good to pass on the outside and announce to the rider that you are 'outside' of them.
- When untacking, the girth is un-done on the left side only, and the throat latch of the bridle is the only part of the bridle that is unbuckled. Care should be taken to remove both reins and the headstall off the ears and allow the horse to let go of the bit.
- Cavellettes are poles on the ground that are trotted over. This is an exercise to learn the rhythm needed for jumping.
- Serpentine- It is a bending and steering exercise where the rider forms an 'S' pattern on the ground.

### **Horse care:**

- A horse prefers routine, so he should be fed the same time of day, every day.
- Horses were made to move constantly, so the more turn-out (free roam) time, the better.
- A balanced diet consists of a mixture of sweet feed and oats-usually in grain form, grass, and hay. Supplements can also be added. These can range from vitamins, to joint medication.
- Every horse has a certain amount of worms in their system. In order to keep that worm burden under control, worming is vital. A paste wormer is given every two months. The type of paste wormer should be cycled, so that the worms do not develop resistance to any specific ingredient. Strongid is a daily dewormer that can

be fed with grain. If on Strongid, a horse will still need to be wormed every 6 months with a paste wormer with a different ingredient than Strongid.

-Hooves grow like fingernails and need to be trimmed every 5-6 weeks in order to ensure proper hoof health.

-A healthy horse should have a clear eye, clean nose-or with clear mucus, smooth coat, and ribs that can be felt, but not seen.

### **Horse classifications:**

-The gender and age of a horse has it's own classification:

-A baby horse is called a foal.

-A female horse under the age of three is called a filly.

-A male horse under the age of three is called a colt.

-A female horse over the age of three is called a mare.

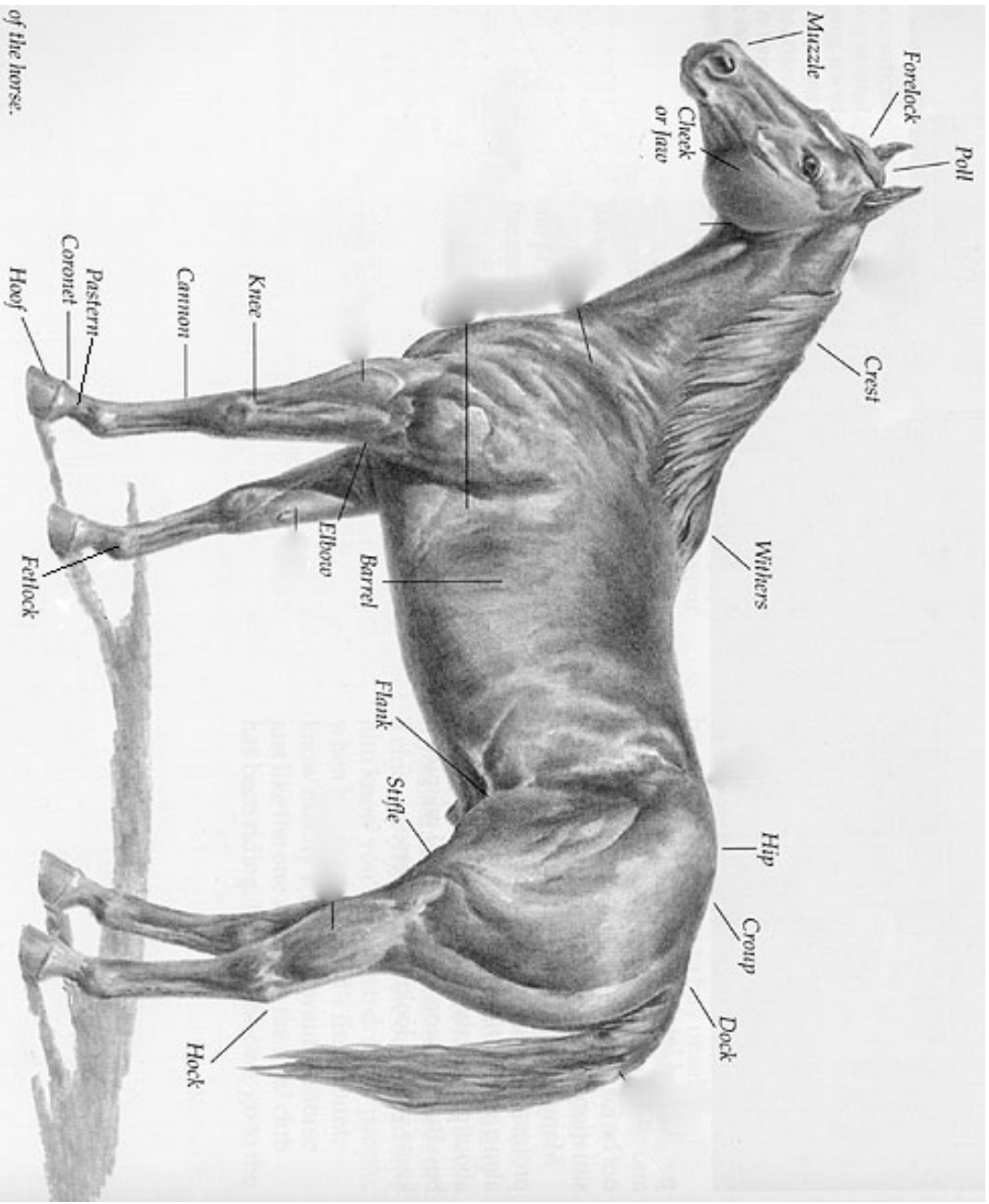
-A male horse that has been castrated is called a gelding.

-A male horse that is intact is called a stallion.

-A horse is measured in hands. A hand equals 4 inches. A horse is measured from the ground to the top of the withers.

-A pony is 14.2 hands or less.

-A horse is classified as 14.2 hands or more.



of the horse.

# Riding Equipment

