



PONY PAL SKILLS

Our Pony Pal program helps young riders become comfortable on and around horses while they learn safety and develop a balanced, “no hands” seat in the saddle and learn the basics of steering. The focus is on fun and learning how the horse communicates with his rider.

Goal: Be able to ride a simple walk/halt pattern independently, demonstrating a basic balanced seat, correct rein hold and hand position, and correct leg position while sitting in the saddle.

- ___ Know how to safely walk and act around a horse
- ___ Know what a horse is saying with his ears, face, and tail
- ___ Know how to dress safely for horseback riding
- ___ Learn to balance properly in the saddle without using the hands
- ___ Develop good seated body position (Long Line position)
- ___ Learn how to ask a horse to go forward
- ___ Learn to feel and count the 4 beat rhythm of the walk
- ___ Learn how to use a “breathing halt” to stop the horse
- ___ Learn how to hold the reins correctly
- ___ Learn how to use the whole body to turn a horse (eyes, seat, hands)

- ___ ___ Perform a simple walk/halt pattern (2 instructor initials required)



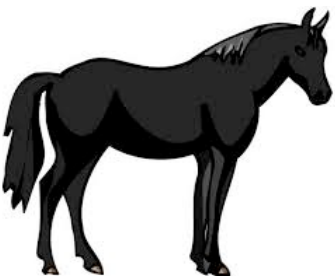


LEVEL 1 SKILLS

This foundational level stresses safety around horses and introduces students to horsemanship ground skills and basic riding skills at a walk.

Goal: Prepare horse to ride and perform a simple walk/halt pattern with quiet, correctly positioned hands and legs and demonstrate a solid two point/standing position along arena long sides.

- _____ Know general safety rules in the barn and around horses (tied and untied)
- _____ Learn how to safely tie and crosstie a horse
- _____ Learn how horses communicate through body language
- _____ Learn how to safely and correctly lead a horse at a walk
- _____ Learn how to correctly groom, tack, and untack a horse
- _____ Learn how to check tack for correct stirrup length and girth tightness
- _____ Learn how to correctly mount/dismount
- _____ Learn how to shorten/lengthen reins and find stirrups
- _____ Develop balanced body position at a walk
- _____ Develop natural aids and balanced riding through walk/halt transitions and basic patterns
- _____ Learn to feel footfalls at a walk
- _____ Develop a solid two-point/standing position at a walk (straight line)
- _____ Learn how to ride safely on the trail at a walk
- _____ Develop a rhythmic and balanced posting trot on the lunge line
- _____ Learn arena riding etiquette and terms



_____ _____ Pass the Level 1 Test (2 instructor initials required)



LEVEL 2 SKILLS

Building on Level 1 skills, riders become comfortable with using their aids to communicate with their horse at the trot, developing a rhythmic and balanced posting trot/jog and a solid two point position.

Goal: Demonstrate correct use of aids and riding form to perform a simple walk/halt/trot pattern, including a posting trot on the correct diagonal and a balanced two point position along a straight line.

___ Continue to develop ground skills, including leading the horse through walk/trot and halt transitions

___ Learn to identify trot footfalls

___ Develop a rhythmic and balanced posting trot through trot/walk/halt transitions and basic patterns

___ Learn to post on the correct diagonal

___ Develop a balanced two point position at a trot along long sides of arena and be able to switch from two point to posting trot

___ Learn how to ride in an arena with other riders

___ Learn how to apply good riding technique on the trail at a walk

___ Begin to learn how to use leg aids to keep horse straight



___ ___ Pass the Level 2 Test (2 instructor initials required)



LEVEL 3 SKILLS

Riders continue to develop all forms of trot: posting, sitting, and two point. Riders also begin work over ground poles, learn beginning canter, and begin learning basics of jumping. Students start riding more difficult horses and learn more trail/field riding skills.

Goal: Demonstrate use of quiet, effective aids and a balanced, independent seat to perform the USDF Intro A or B Dressage Test or WE Intro Dressage Test, and basic jumping skills over 2 crossrails.

- ___ Develop solid, balanced riding in both the posting trot and two-point position with transitions and patterns
- ___ Learn to sit the trot in preparation for canter
- ___ Begin developing a balanced seat in canter (sit and two-point)
- ___ Learn to identify and pick up correct canter leads in both directions
- ___ Become familiar with pole work to develop horse and rider and prepare for jumping
- ___ Learn to start balancing the horse and develop rhythm in the horse
- ___ Develop riding leg with no stirrup work at trot
- ___ Learn basic skills for single or double crossrail line (i.e. line and release)
- ___ Learn how to ride a jumping pattern over poles or low crossrails
- ___ Develop use of leg to move and bend horse
- ___ Learn basic groundwork--back and forward with energy; move haunches



- ___ ___ Perform the USDF Intro A or B Dressage Test or WE Intro Dressage Test, and be able to demonstrate basic jumping skills over 2 crossrails (2 instructor initials required)



LEVEL 4 SKILLS

At this time, Level 4 is an open ended level with no specific goal other than pursuing a deeper understanding of horses and better horsemanship skills. Indeed, there is no end to good horsemanship!

In general, riders begin to develop riding discipline-specific skills: For instance, those most interested in jumping will learn about striding and how to navigate more difficult jump patterns and higher jumps. Another rider may choose to learn how to negotiate various obstacles for becoming a skilled trail rider, while another may choose to develop dressage skills. Some riders may choose to learn a variety of riding disciplines! All riders also learn more ground training skills, such

