

Green Certificate

Helping with grooming the horse, putting the saddle on and taking it off

Why do we always have to groom a horse?

Grooming is a very important part in the stables. The aim is to remove dust, dirt and sweat from the hair and the skin. It also stimulates the circulation in the skin and helps the skin to breathe.

Most horses love to be groomed. Some horses send clear signals to you which spot needs some extra attention. When the horse is yawning it's also a good sign. Sometimes you may have a little problem as the horse also wants to take care of your skin. The horse just shows that it accepts you as one of the horses. When a horse acts like this, just push away the head gently.

Picking the hoofs. Before and after the riding you always have to pick the hoofs with a hoof pick. Stand next to the horse and look at its tail and ask literally for a **foot**. You can also glide with your hand on his leg from the upper part to below calling **foot**. Mostly they understand what you mean. Then you can pick the sole of the hoof, especially the frog and the line between the sole and the iron. Never do this towards you but away from yourself.

When you clean the hoofs thoroughly, you also clean the outside of the hoof. Just with a brush (we have some special hoof brushes at the stables!) Make sure that you don't touch the sensible part, the coronary band!

Curry comb The curry comb is an iron, rubber or plastic brush which removes hard crusts of dirt and loose hair. Never use the curry comb at the parts of the horse where there is no layer of flesh, like the head and legs.

Hard body brush This is also a brush for removing dirt from the coat. You also have to be careful with this brush at the head and legs. You can use the hard body brush also for the mane.

Soft brush With the soft brush, you can brush the sensible parts (like head and legs). You can also use the soft brush for the last brushing of the coat: it makes it shine beautifully.

Pieces of straw and so on, in the tail and manes, can be taken away by hand.

Saddling the horse

Start by checking the back of the horse that there are no wounds, bumps etc. Remove dirt, shaving etc that can irritate underneath the saddle. You always start saddling standing at the left side of the horse. First put the saddle blanket and then the fur pad on the back of the horse, then the saddle (with the girth over the saddle), first far forwards so you can slide it a little backwards to a correct position. It is important that there are no wrinkles underneath the saddle and that the blanket is well pulled up into the front arch of the saddle, so the withers has enough space. Then go to the right to check that it is lying flat. Lift down the girth (don't let it fall down from the left side as you can scare the horse when it's coming down his legs). Go back to the left side and fasten the girth. First loosely and after a few minutes the girth can be tightened further. While you are tightening the girth always watch the horse: some of them don't like this and will try to bite you. Therefore never pull too hard! Also not too loose, as the saddle needs to stay in place when you walk to the ring. Just before you mount the horse you can tighten the girth further.

Taking the saddle off

Loosen the girth at the left side and slide the saddle a little bit backwards and aside (that's because it sticks a little to the withers) Always put the saddle over the stable doors or on the saddle hangers, so it won't be damaged.

Putting on the bridle

First arrange all the straps and bands correctly. Stand on the left side of the horse and put the reins over his head first. Hold the bridle in your right hand (on the headpiece). The bit is in your left hand. Put your right arm underneath the neck and bring your right hand (with the bridle) to the centre of his head (look at the picture). In this way you can prevent the horse to lift its head .



Then lift the bit, towards his mouth and open the mouth with your thumb by pushing a little at the edge of the mouth. When the horse opens its mouth place the bit in his mouth and put the headpiece over his ears. Watch out!!! Never bang the bit towards the teeth: it hurts and doesn't work!

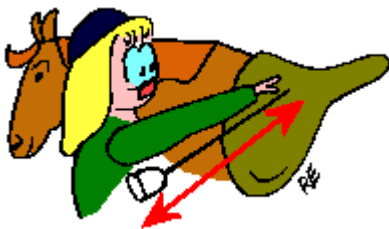
Then fasten the throatlatch and noseband. There must be room for an upright fist between the throatlatch and one finger between the nose and the noseband.

Taking the bridle off

Not very complicated: loosen throatlatch and noseband. Take the headpiece and move it gently over the ears and then let the bit glide gently out of the mouth.

Adjust the stirrups to the right length and mount your horse

Walk the horse to the ring and lineup on the center line with the head towards the entrance. Tighten the girth and make sure it is tight enough so the saddle cannot move when you mount your horse. Then adjust the stirrups to the right length.



This is a way to measure your stirrup

This is the way to mount the horse:



Picture 1: Hold the reins in your left hand on top of the horse's neck. Both reins should be in light contact with the horse's mouth. Grasp the mane in you left hand and take hold of the stirrup leather and turn it towards you with your right hand.

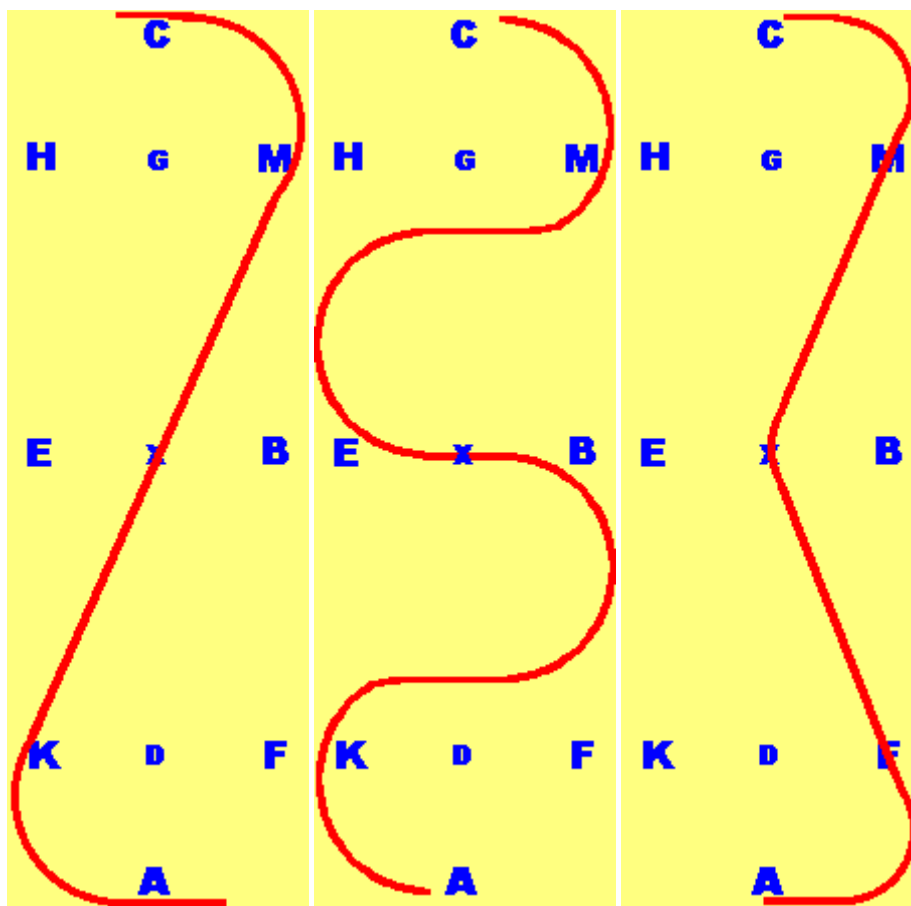
Picture 2: Place your foot in the stirrup so the stirrup is behind the ball of the foot, then lean your left knee against the saddle so that your toe does not disturb the horse. Place your right hand on the saddle for support.

Picture 3: Stand on tip toe on your tight foot, hold on to the mane and saddle, transfer your weight on to your left foot, press your left knee against the saddle and push off energetically with your right foot, so you can rise in one to bring your weight above the horse as in picture 4

Picture 5: swing your right leg over the back of the horse without touching the horse with your foot (it can frighten the horse).

Picture 6: Sit down carefully and take your right stirrup

Simple figures for riding in walk and trot



1. change the rein across the diagonal
2. serpentines through the whole school with 4 loops
3. broken line 10 meters