



## LESSON AND ARENA ETIQUETTE

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The safety of horses, riders and spectators is our priority. With this in mind:

### GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LESSONS

- Remember you are riding for your own enjoyment and your horse's wellbeing, not for your coach or your friends or those on the sidelines.
- You owe it to your horse to concentrate 100% on what you are doing. If you are not well, or are emotionally or physically fragile, it's best not to ride.
- Lessons are to help you with your own schooling at home, so it's wise to have a plan, and share it with your instructor. What are you working on at home? How can the instructor help you? What are your priorities? Say at the start if there is something in particular you would like help with.
- Ask the instructor to clarify points if you are concerned about what is being asked of you, or if you don't understand something.
- Make sure you can hear and understand instructions. For safety it's important that you tell your instructor if you cannot hear them, or you don't understand what to do.
- If there is time you may ask your instructor about the lesson, or what would be useful to continue with in your own training. Most instructors like curious students who want to improve.
- If the instructor corrects you for something, don't take it personally - they are trying to help you - that's what you are paying them for. Be positive. Be willing to try something new - it might feel strange, but it might work. But speak up if you don't feel safe or capable of the task.
- On the other hand, if you feel the instructor is unprofessional or asks you to do something you are not agreeing with, discuss it. Tell them your concerns. But for the sake of others, try not to continually interfere with the progress of the lesson.

### PRIOR TO YOUR LESSON

- All in-hand work, lunging or ridden work done prior to or after lessons should be carried out in a calm and respectful way, considerate of those around you and the horse's mental and physical condition.
- If you feel at risk or unsafe with your own horse, or any other horse you are near, it is imperative that you seek help immediately. We are all here to help each other, and to stay safe.
- If there is equipment to be set up for your lesson, offer assistance before mounting. Equally, if there is equipment to be packed away, make yourself available to help.
- If you are arriving late to a lesson, look around first to see what is happening so you can plan to enter the arena without interrupting other riders already moving in a pattern. Apologise to the instructor and ask their permission to join the group.

## **ARRIVING AND ENTERING THE ARENA**

- Always approach, enter and leave the arena at a walk.
- Arrive on time or early to give your horse a chance to settle into the working environment and the other horses.
- If the arena is free, you are welcome to enter early to calmly work your horse.
- If there is a lesson in progress, please wait for the other lesson to finish before entering the working area unless the instructor has called you in.
- When opening the entrance gate or an indoor arena door always check that the riders are not near the entrance. It's customary to call "door free" before entering or leaving.

## **GEAR CHECK AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- Introduce yourself to the other riders.
- Introduce yourself to a new instructor and advise them of you and your horse's experience, confidence, level and any concerns you have.
- If the instructor has not performed a gear check for you, you can ask them to check your gear for safety and correct fit.
- Ensure you are aware of what gear and tack is, or is not, allowed at club.
- Tell the instructor at the start if there is something you would like help with.

## **RIDING IN SHARED LESSONS**

- Where possible riders and horses are grouped in similar levels for all lessons. But this is not always possible. In mixed group the instructor will do their best to find suitable challenges for each level.
- Be aware of where others are riding so you can safely respect their space.
- Acquaint yourself with horses that need you to keep distance (e.g. mares / stallions / young horses) and do your best to do so.
- If your horse is tense about others coming close, please advise the instructor and other riders, so they equally can keep their distance from you.
- If your horse kicks at other horses coming up behind them, please warn other riders and tie a red ribbon on your horse's tail.
- As a guide, you should leave a distance of two horse lengths between yourself and the horse in front.
- When passing another horse front-on, it is customary, where possible, to pass left shoulder to left shoulder, unless you are instructed otherwise. This is opposite to how we drive on the road in Australia!
- Never allow your horse to run up the rear of the horse in front. Turn to the inside of the arena, to add a small circle, or come in off the track to cut across the arena where there is more space.
- If you need to stop for any reason, make your way to the middle of the group, clear of others riding around you, and tell the instructor what you are doing.
- Take a break. Horses and riders are at different fitness levels. It's perfectly fine to stop now and then. But just don't do it suddenly in front of the one behind you.
- If you carry a full length dressage whip, ensure when passing other horses, you don't inadvertently touch or flick them with your whip.

- If you are sharing a lesson or ride with riders doing two-track work, or riding at a faster pace, they have right-of-way at all times. ie. If you are walking, stay on an inside track of those trotting, cantering or doing lateral work.
- Respect the teacher, listen and concentrate on the task. If the instructor is teaching another person and has asked you to wait – pay respect to the one being taught, and try to learn from their training. The teacher may also suggest you practice something while they work with another student.
- If you feel you are not getting your share of equal time in the lesson, pick a suitable time to ask the instructor for advice or help with something you want to learn or want to improve.

### **HELP EACH OTHER**

- If you see a rider having difficulty with an out of control horse, try to help them immediately if it is safe to do so. If required, bring the situation immediately to the attention of the instructor.
- If there is an accident or an incident, and if it is safe to do so, help the instructor to assist the rider, catch the horse, and get help if needed.
- Support each other. Never ridicule, humiliate or yell at another rider.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all – including your horse.
- Be positive and encouraging to those with less confidence or skills, but if you see “an accident waiting to happen” be quick to alert the instructor.
- If you feel at risk or unsafe with your own horse, or any other horse you are near, it is imperative that you speak up and seek help immediately. We are here to help each other, to provide a safe environment, and to stay safe.
- If you are schooling your horse near a booked lesson (private or shared), please respect that space by avoiding activities that may disrupt the horse in the lesson.

### **LEAVING THE LESSON / ARENA**

- If you need to leave your lesson early, please advise the instructor as soon as you know, and excuse yourself quietly from a lesson.
- Please leave the arena at a walk and when returning to the float/yards area or generally moving around the grounds, do so at a walk so as not to disrupt other horses.
- Ensure all manure is removed from the arena.
- Please report any equipment or fencing that is damaged or dangerous
- A small gesture of goodwill goes a long way to create an atmosphere of care for your club facilities and your fellow riders.