



The Safety Induction

- Horse instincts and their response to fear.
- How to behave around horses.
- How to recognise a horse's individual characteristics.
- Harnessing.

This induction is a basic overview to assist you with being safe around horses, in conjunction with this overview one of the Leaders will show you the practical side of caring for and walking with horses.

- Moreton Trips- Please ensure no electronics or valuables in panniers, including any required medication – the ford is often quite high

Instinct & Work

Horses are herd animals – as such they like being around others and like to have a leader. We train with them daily to become this figure in their herd – we show them that we provide for them, we meet their needs, we ask them to behave in a certain way during 'work' time.

Horses are also prey. They are built to run from danger and this is their first instinct. With an insightful pack leader – you – they won't need to. Be careful to act calmly, kindly, predictably and confidently with them and they'll feel safer with you and want to please you.

During 'work' time, they are not allowed to eat. This does them no harm and keeps the group safe and on track. They are allowed to eat only when they're tied up. Please don't be tempted to give them food while they work – this might not be appropriate food for them and might become a hazardous situation as they'll keep pushing you for more. You can give them a treat at the end of their job – we have some treats that won't cause them digestion issues.

They recognise the following voice commands which might be helpful for you to know:

Woah, stand

Walk on

Head up

No!

Waalk, walk/ steady (said in a deeper, steady voice to slow their pace)

Back, Back.





Walk further, camp wilder, breathe...

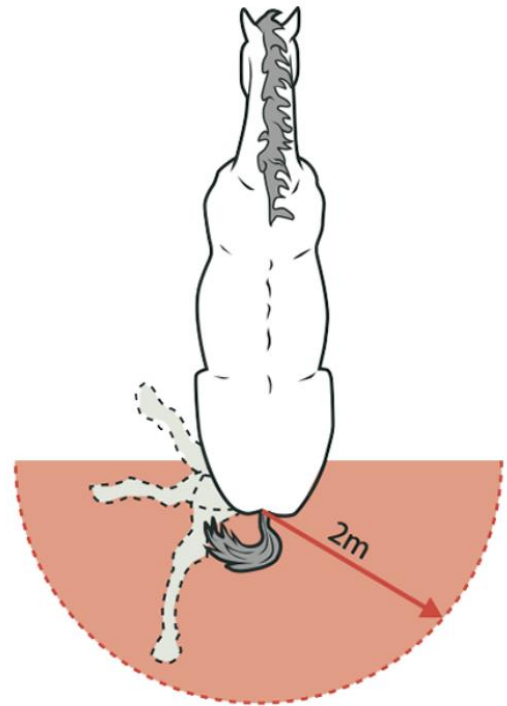
1. Approaching

No walking up to a horse in its kicking zone.

If walking behind a horse, walk close with a hand on its rump. A horse's hind legs are very strong and can deliver a powerful kick. A horse can also lash out with its front legs. A stressed or frightened horse might kick you. Even if the horse knows where you are, quick movements can startle it. One well-placed kick can kill or cause serious injuries, like broken bones. Always approach your horse from the front or side. If he's turned away from you, call to him or entice him with a treat to get him to come to you. Never approach your horse directly from the rear.

Always approach a horse in a calm way, making sure they can see you.

Do not approach from their blind spot (directly in front or behind) – this could startle them. Read the horse's intent by watching its body language. Ears flat back is a warning sign.



2. Leading

Always use a lead rope attached to a halter/ head collar so you have a 'safety zone'; don't hold the halter/ head collar directly with your hand. Hold the lead rope with one hand, 8 to 10 inches away from the horse's head, holding the end of the rope with your other hand. This puts your elbow near the horse's shoulder so you can anticipate its actions.

Never wrap the lead rope around your hand, wrist or body, even with small loops. It could wrap around your hand and seriously injure you if the horse startles.

Don't climb over or under a tied horse's lead rope

The horse can stand on the handler's foot, causing bruising or broken bones – be aware of where your feet are!

3. Characteristics

Both of our ponies are very friendly to handle – we've yet to have any biting or kicking because they've always been handled kindly and with consideration. If they spook, it's because they've seen, smelt or heard something they're genuinely frightened of. When they spook, they do what we call '*hold onto the floor*' – this might be a sudden lunge in an





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unexpected direction. This is when you need to 'be the leader' - firm and reassuring. Both like *being rubbed behind the ear and on the withers*, both respond to their name and to a gentle voice. If they are 'on their toes' – ie walking quicker than you're comfortable with in an agitated way – a deep, strong, 'Walk, walk' instruction is effective.

Evie – is only around 9 years old, but her sight is weaker in one eye than the other, so things waving around behind her head might startle her, for example if someone walking by her side starts taking off a flappy jacket. Things she 'half sees' ie if someone is walking behind a hedge and she keeps getting glimpses of them are also scary for her.

Bob – Bob is younger than Evie at about 7 years old and has grown up a lot in the last few years – he used to rush into things without thinking, be reluctant and panic when he can't see his 'big mama' – Evie! He has mostly grown out of this now and is often calmer than Evie.

As their handler, if you see anything that might be out of place, pay them extra attention – talk calmly, stroke their withers, use the 'Walk, walk' command if you sense they're picking their pace up in fear.

4. Driving

When we hitch a cart to a horse, pony or donkey, we say they are driving. During your experience, you'll learn how to drive the ponies from the ground – initially without the cart, and then with, but still from the ground for safety reasons.

5. Spacing

Avoid being on the inside of the pony or cart on a turn.

Even when you are not leading or driving the pony, you should be aware of keeping yourself safe by acting in a predictable way.

6. Harnessing

There are many risks around handling the harnesses, particularly the working harness as it's very heavy and has strong metal chains which could cause injury. Please ensure you are respectful of the risks and follow the advice of the leaders – if in doubt, please ask. Our aim is for you to enjoy the day, so we'll do our best to say yes!

7. Weather

Unfortunately, weather is unpredictable. If it's too wet, windy, or hot this will not be fun and may even be dangerous. If we have to cancel the session it will be with reluctance, your enjoyment and the ponies' wellbeing in mind. We will rebook or refund you in full.





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What to Wear & Bring

Please avoid clothing with excess fabrics, such as long skirts, hoodies, hoods, hanging sleeves or scarves – if they get caught in the equipment you could get hurt. Trousers or jeans work well as do practical layers that you can easily add or remove as needed.

Wind & waterproof jacket/ sun hat & sun protection – this is British weather we're talking about!

**** Strong, hard topped boots. These will make your experience more comfy, less hazardous and keep your feet in one piece if a pony steps on you! Soft top footwear is a hazard and may prevent you from being near the hooves! If this is difficult for you, wellies are a good alternative. Avoid shoes if possible as a hoof can easily catch the back of your heel! ****

With the best will in the world, it is actually impossible to spend any time 'hands-on' with horses and walk away clean – we find knitted, woolly jumpers or fleeces attract hair and hay and may never be quite the same again! Grass stains are common-place, so maybe save your fave new outfit for a different occasion!

Most importantly of all, bring a smile & your sense of adventure!



Finally, all of this might seem like a big responsibility – you are welcome to do as much or as little as you're comfortable with – we're happy to slow things down if you want to recap or take over from you if you are uncomfortable or want a break and equally we're happy to keep an eye on both you and the ponies to give you as much independence as possible – please don't worry and just enjoy your day!

