

Facts and activities
for horse-crazy kids

HORSE FUN

For
Real Horse
Lovers
ONLY

OPEN
if You're
WILD
About
Horses!



RIDING TIPS

HORSE WISDOM

GAMES & CRAFTS

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Hi There, I'm Maxi!

My biggest dream ever came true. Wait, no – not my biggest dream, because that's to own my own horse. But right after that comes my second biggest dream: learning how to ride. Hobbit is the pony I get to ride at the barn where I take lessons. I am so happy when I'm with him. Whether I'm grooming him, walking him, grazing him, or riding him, he's just my favorite and I love him. If I could, I'd buy him! But first I have to prove to my parents and Susan, my riding teacher, that I'm a good rider and want to learn to be a good horse person.

Do you want to know what I'm learning about and experiencing at the barn where I take riding lessons? In my journal, you can read all about everything I've found out about horses since I started riding. When I'm not riding, I like to do arts and crafts. I've made some pretty cool horsey things all by myself out of paper and fabric. Join me! And if you want to know what type of horse and riding style suit you, there are some quizzes that will help you find out. Off we go!



This is Hobbit, the pony I get to ride in lessons! He is super good and patient – just the perfect horse for beginners.

My whole name is Maximiliane – my parents thought I would be a boy!



My Beautiful Horse

I love grooming Hobbit. It's so nice to brush his soft coat and listen to his contented snorts. I feel very proud when his coat shines. It's just picking his hooves that's a bit scary. You know?

Grooming

You should groom your horse either in the stable aisle or in another designated grooming site. It's not a great idea to groom your horse in his stall. Secure your horse in a safe, quiet, calm way with cross-ties or another quick-release tie and his halter. Make sure to leave plenty of space between your horse and others. Consider whether your horse gets along well with nearby horses.



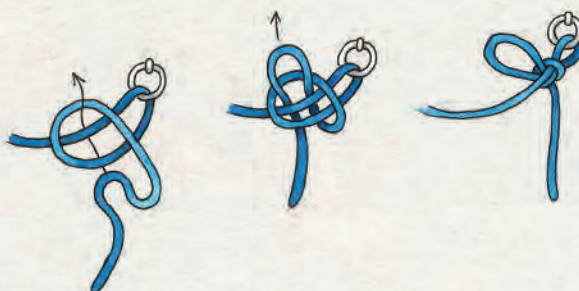
Safe Tie Option



Panic Snap

Safety Knot

Since horses are flight animals, being tied up goes against their natural instinct. Horses thus have to gain trust in humans and learn over time that being tied up doesn't present any danger to them. Fasten your horse using a rope with a panic snap and safety knot so it can come undone quickly. When a horse pulls back on a rope without a release, there's a high risk of a head or spine injury.



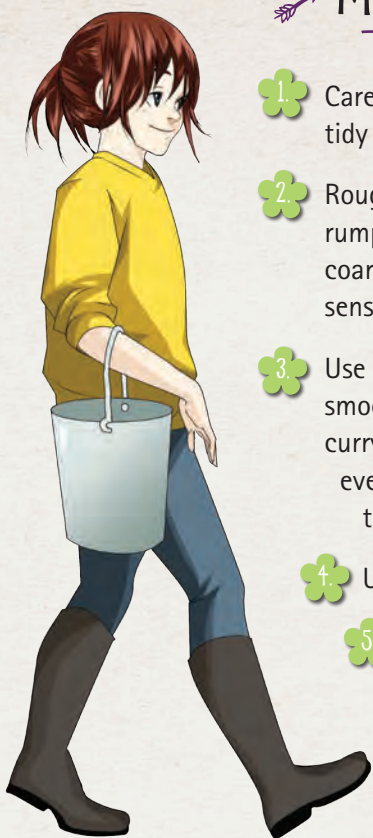
Picking the Hooves

Caring for a horse's hooves is only possible if the horse cooperates. Hobbit learned to lift his leg when he hears a certain command. I stand right next to his leg, bend over, and say, "Give." While I'm holding the hoof with one hand, I scratch and brush the grooves on either side of the "frog" carefully until they are clean. Susan says, "Remain focused and patient in case your horse won't pick up his foot, pulls away, or wriggles around. Ask someone to help if you need it."



You can paint the hooves with conditioner.

MY GROOMING PLAN



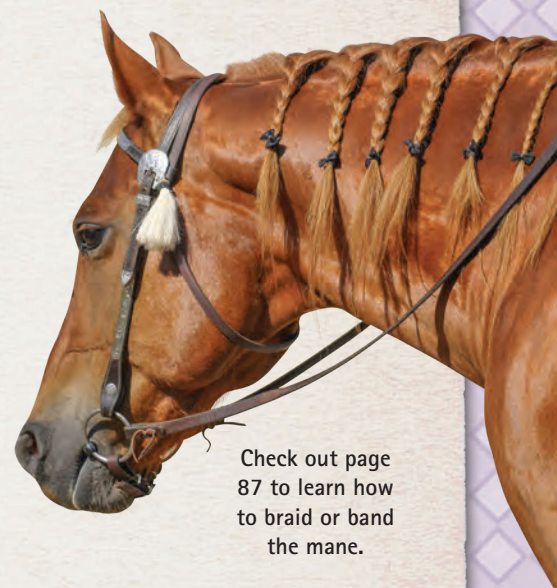
1. Carefully brush the head with a soft brush and tidy up the mane and forelock with a comb.
2. Roughly brush off any dirt on the body and rump using the curry comb. On the legs, use a coarse grooming brush. Skip over any sensitive or un-muscled body parts.
3. Use a soft grooming brush to brush off remaining dust and smooth out the coat, occasionally rubbing the brush against the curry comb to clean it. Hit the curry comb against your boot every now and then to knock the dirt out of it. Lastly, use a soft towel to polish the coat until it shines.
4. Untangle the tail.
5. Use the coarse grooming brush to clean the outside of the hooves and a hoof pick for the inside.
6. If necessary, clean the eyes, nostrils, and mouth (one sponge) and penis or udder and anus (a different sponge) carefully with lukewarm water, always making sure to rinse out the sponge thoroughly.



Curry comb and soft grooming brush.



Coarse grooming brush.



Check out page 87 to learn how to braid or band the mane.

GROOMING GEAR



Curry Comb



Sponge



Soft Brush



Sweat Scraper



Hoof Pick



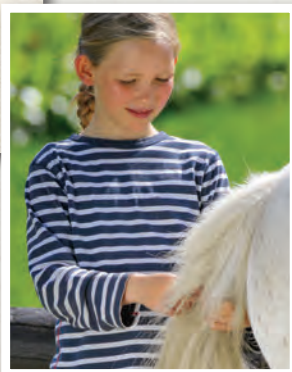
Mane Comb



Coarse Brush



Towel



Untangling the tail.

Tail Tip

"Hold on, don't brush the tail!" Susan exclaims. "Sorry, but we would lose too many tail hairs. We want Hobbit to look his best. Remove any hay or shavings. Carefully pull apart individual strands. If the tail is super dirty, we'll wash it."

Stable Air and Horse Scent

I'll do anything for Hobbit -
even sweeping and mucking!



It's another whole week until my next riding lesson. Basically, an eternity! I dreamed of Hobbit three nights in a row.

I dreamed that we rode over fields, crossed a creek, galloped beneath the trees, and made a campfire. It really was amazing! I spent three days down on my knees begging Mom and Dad to pay for more riding lessons (the outcome:

"No"). I raved on and on about Hobbit to my best friends Cleo and Rana (the outcome: they plug their ears as soon as I utter the word "pony"). Tom, Robin, Phil, and Leo never listen to me anyway. On the fourth day, something had to happen.

I rode my bike to the barn. It was really bustling there: horses were being groomed and saddled, kids were being dropped off by car, somewhere in the distance, a horse neighed.

Hobbit wasn't in his stall, but I found him in the arena. A young boy was riding him, and for some reason, I thought it was really dumb that he got to ride Hobbit. He's my favorite! "Hey, Maxi!" someone yelled in a loud voice. It was Susan. I wasn't sure if she was going to yell at me...are you even allowed to just "show up" at the barn when you don't have a lesson? But she was really nice. "Did you miss Hobbit?" she asked.

I nodded. "And I missed the smell here in the barn and the neighing and the grooming stuff and, well, everything. One week is suuuuch a long time!"

Susan grinned. I think she understood. "Listen, Maxi, I have an idea," she said. "You can come here in the afternoons whenever you want and help out with some of the barn chores, like mucking, feeding, sweeping, and grooming - stuff like that. In return you get to ride a little extra every now and then. Of course, only after a few months when you've become more secure on horseback. Would you like that?"

I grinned from ear to ear. "Yes, yes, yessss!" I cheered.

"I'm warning you, it's hard work," Susan added. "Elena!" she called out. "Maxi's going to help you out, okay?"

Elena nodded. "Hey, Maxi!" she said. "Why don't you come with me right away? I was

