

The Kid's Guide to

HORSEMANSHIP AND GROOMING



from
**CAT HILL &
EMMA FORD**
of World-Class
Grooming

— EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW —
to Care for Horses While Staying Safe and Having Fun

Featuring Over 700 Instructional Photographs by Mary Patricia Stone

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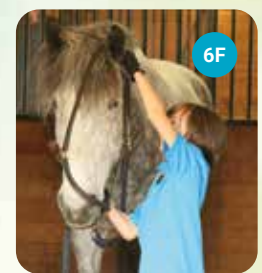
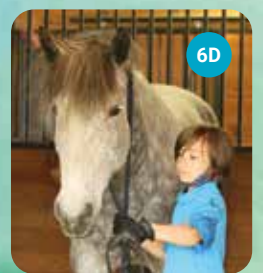
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4 (A-D)



6 (A-F)



☆5 A & B When you have a halter with a buckle, slide the noseband high up the face, then push the strap of the crownpiece over the horse's neck well behind the ears (A). Reposition the halter into the correct spot and buckle (B).

How to Halter a Tall Horse

Sometimes a tall horse can be a bit of a trick to halter. Using a stool seems like a good idea until you are chasing a horse around a stall waiting for him to stand still long enough for you to set up the stool, get on, and get his head in the halter! Instead, you can teach a horse to come down to your level.

☆6 A-F First, approach the horse and give him a scratch or pat to say hello (A). Slide the lead rope over the neck at the lowest point, near the withers (B). Quietly give the

“Whoa” command as you reach around to the other side and grasp the tail end of the lead rope (C). Standing next to the horse's neck on the near side, gently pull down on the rope and clearly say, “Head down” (D). If the horse does not respond, shimmy the lead rope up the neck a bit and try again. Repeat this until the horse responds to the pressure by lowering his head (E). If you have a horse who is very confused, have a helper hold treats very low to link the verbal command to the correct response. Once you have the horse's head lowered, quietly slide the halter on as described above (F).

How to Approach a Horse in the Stall

☆7 A-E A horse can feel trapped or scared if you go into his stall and surprise him. The goal is to have a horse come to

you safely. First, open the stall door and greet the horse: “Hi, Stormy!” (A). Next, close the door behind you so you can push it to exit but there isn't an escape visible to the horse. If the horse is facing you, go on to the next step. If the horse is facing away from you, cluck to him and ask him to move until he is facing you or is parallel to you. If clucking doesn't work, swing the lead rope in a circle and cluck a bit louder until he moves (B). With your eyes looking at his shoulder, walk toward it, keeping your hands at your sides or slightly in front of you, palms up, but *not*

5 (A & B)



2

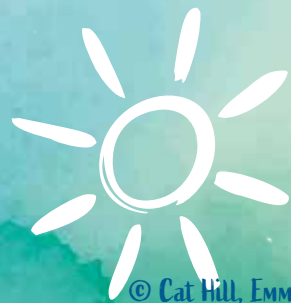
Barn Chores and Feeding

Barn chores are an important but often tedious part of owning and riding horses! It is important that we remember that without our care, the ponies cannot stay healthy and happy. All barns should be kept as tidy as possible, for both the horses' safety and your own.

I like to make the chores fun by setting challenges: How fast can I clean a stall, what patterns can I make in the aisle with my rake? The amount of care a horse or pony needs depends on a lot of factors. A pony that lives inside a stall most of the day needs it cleaned more often than one that is outside for a longer period of the day.

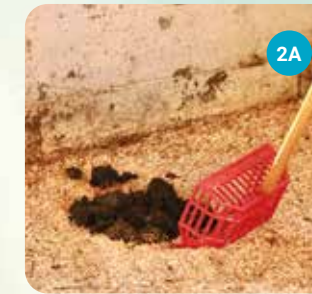
How to Clean a Stall

Remember, a stall must be kept very clean. A dirty stall can make your pony sick because it invites flies, smells bad (which can cause damage to his breathing), and can make his feet rot. A stall should be cleaned at minimum once every twelve hours a pony is in it.



1A

2 (A-F)



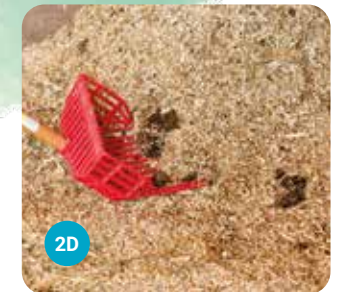
2A



2B



2C



2D



2E



2F

☆1 To clean a stall, first make sure you have a pitchfork that fits you. There are several great options for youth-sized pitchforks, some have a full basket and others are flatter. The full basket is great for learning so you don't lose the poop you have worked so hard to pick up.

☆2 **A-I** Clean all the big piles off the top of the shavings or bedding (A). Next, start at the left front corner of the stall and pick up a scoop of bedding (B). Throw the shavings up along the edge of the stall, making a little pile of bedding along the wall (C). Manure will roll to the bottom of your pile. Lift it out (D), and shake your pitch fork to separate the manure from the clean bedding (E). When you hit areas that

13 (A & B)



your feet under you so you can move quickly out of the way (B).

☆13 A & B Never put your head under your horse's body when grooming him; it is too easy to be kicked (A). Instead, reach your arm under with your head up (B).

☆14 A & B If your pony gets too close to the wall, use pressure on his side and say, "Over," to ask him to give you some space (A). If he swings his hips toward you, put one hand on his rear and one on his flank and ask him to move just his rear end over (B).

☆15 When you are in a busy barn, take care when walking horses past each other. A horse on the cross-ties should have one side dropped and his handler standing next to his head. In the picture, you can see that Beau has his hips toward the wall, and his head and shoulders a little bit

14 (A & B)



away. This helps prevent him from cow kicking or swinging his hind end toward the other pony. Milka, who is walking out of the barn, is positioned far enough from the wall to not get any tack caught, but far enough from Beau to give him space. Both leaders have their eyes up and are paying attention.

Grooming the Head

☆16 A & B If your pony likes to lift his head when you go to brush or towel it off, try standing on a mounting block on either side of his head (A & B). Remember, ponies have a blind spot in the middle of their foreheads, so

16 (A & B)

4 (A-E)



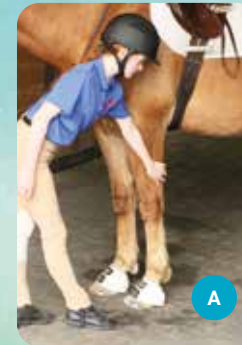
the correct spot. If it is too far *forward*, just slide the pad and saddle back into position. If too far *back*, you need to lift the saddle pad and saddle simultaneously off the horse's back and place farther forward, again making sure you then slide the saddle into place going *with* the direction of hair growth, not against it.

Girth

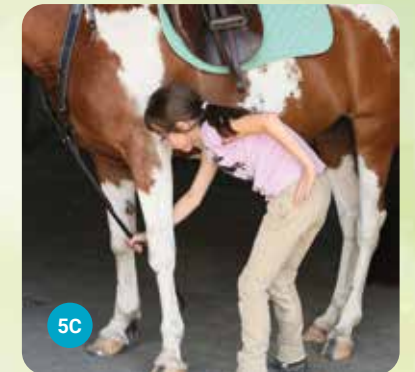
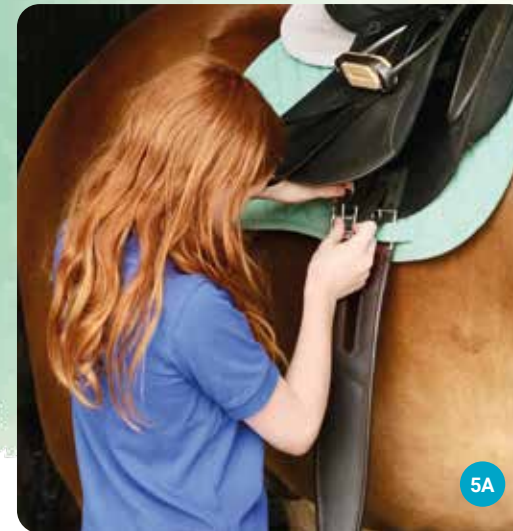
☆5 A-E The girth should be attached first, from the off (right) side; the buckles should be at least two holes from the bottom, *not* on the very top holes (A). When you have three billets, you should do up to the first and third billet. This applies a more even pressure across the tree of the saddle. The third billet is a safety measure in case one of the other two breaks. Moving to the near (left) side, take the girth under the belly (B). When you have a breastplate/martingale (see p. 56), put the girth through the loop before you buckle it (C). Do the girth up just snug enough to hold the saddle

PRO TIP

Make Sure the Girth Is Comfortable



Before mounting, pull your horse's legs forward to help stretch out any skin folds under the girth that might cause chafing. Stand to the side of the horse, a little in front of his leg, and run your hand down one leg toward the knee (A). Lift the knee up and forward, being careful not to fight the horse; just a gentle stretch will do the trick (B). Gently set the leg down and do the other side.



5 (A-E)





5A



5B

☆5 **A & B** Spray the leg all over (A). Use your hands to rub the liniment into your horse's skin (B).

Leg Wraps

We use leg wraps for horses who are riding in a trailer or who need some extra care for their lower limbs. Wrapping a horse's legs is a good option if your horse is staying inside but can be very dangerous when done incorrectly. Due to the difficulty in doing a standing wrap correctly, we prefer to start with an all-in-one wrap. Rambo® Ionic leg wraps are our favorites, but there are several good ones on the market. Look for a breathable neoprene shell and

5 (A & B)

6 (A-D)



6C



6D

a pillow wrap that attaches to the inside of the boot.

☆6 **A-I** To put on an all-in-one wrap, first place the wrap around the leg so the straps can be pulled across the front and to the outside (A). Slide the boot into place so the boot "cups" the fetlock (B). Take the middle strap across the



6A



6B



6E



6F



6G

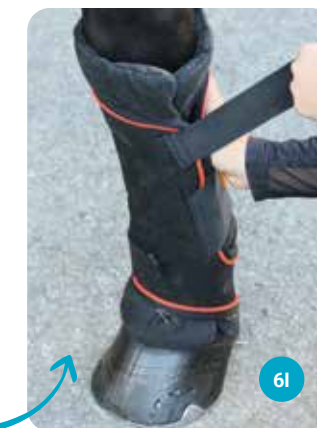


6H

front of the leg and then around the back of the boot so it is securely fastened (C & D). Take the bottom strap and cup the fetlock by first lowering the strap down and around the pastern, then come back up to fasten across the front of the fetlock (E-G). Now take the top strap and secure across the front and to the outside of the leg as you did with the middle strap (H & I).

end of chapter 5

6 (E-I)

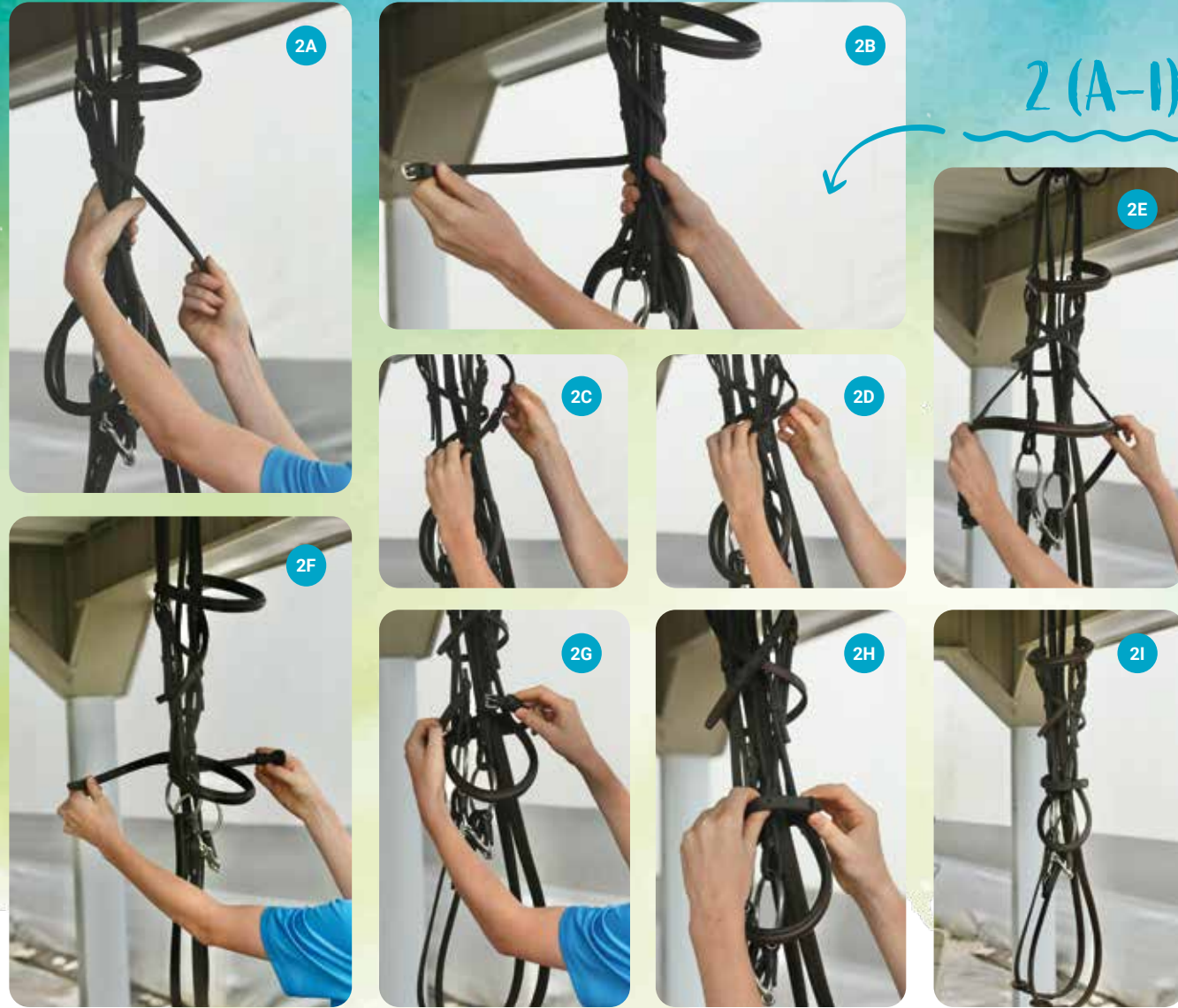


6I

PRO TIP

Keep a Horse Care Diary

Use a notebook as a "Horse Care Diary," and keep track of your pony's health and training. As you get to know your pony's legs, write down any time the legs have little cuts, swellings, or other issues. Some horses get "thick" lower legs when they have been standing in a stall for a long time (called stocking-up). It's good to keep track of when this happens so you don't get worried about it when you go to a horse show and see it happen after your pony has stood in a stall all day.

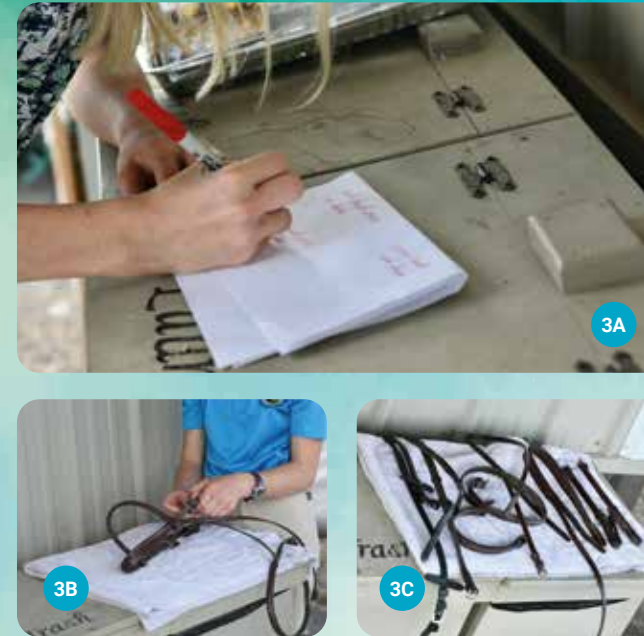


2 (A-I)

are outside the cheekpieces and reins (E). Cross the noseband straps behind the cheekpieces and reins (F). Back at the front of the bridle, insert the strap end into the keepers on the noseband (G & H). Now the bridle is neatly ready to store (I).

Taking Bridle Apart for Deep Cleaning

Periodically, you need to do a deep clean and condition your tack. You first need to learn how to take a bridle apart and put it back together.



3 (A-E)



☆3 A-E Using a notepad and pen, write down the holes that are being used for the cheekpieces and noseband (A). Then, undo all the buckles (B & C). Some buckles can be stiff; you can use a hoof pick to lift the leather and get it undone. Put the hoof pick below the peg that holds the leather in place (D). Once that is free, move the hoof pick to the other side and lift that side the same way (E). Depending on the style of bridle, you should have at least eight separate pieces: the bit, two cheekpieces, one head piece, one noseband, the browband, and the reins. (Some bridles have detachable throat latches.)

Deep Cleaning

☆4 A-D (next page) Once the bridle is taken apart, check all the folds in the leather for cracking, as well as all the stitching around the buckles (A). Over time, stitching can rot, which is very unsafe.

Mane

Next, you can trim the bridle path, which is the area of the mane right behind the poll where the bridle sits. Your bridle path should only be two or three fingers wide, just wide enough for the bridle and halter to sit cleanly. Follow the previous steps ☆1 A–F to check that your horse is happy and comfortable with the clippers.

☆2 A–D Now, slide the halter back to hold the mane away from the hairs you want to cut (A). Then place the clippers so the blade is flat on the horse's crest, and the points face the horse's withers (B). Slide the clippers back until they just barely reach the long hairs held back by the halter (C). Check your work and clean up if necessary (D).

Banging the Tail

Working on the other end, it is time to clean up the tips of his tail. A nice, clean line makes him look freshly tidied up. First, comb the tail as shown on page 41.

☆3 A–G Once it's tangle-free, stand to the side of the horse's hindquarters and carefully smooth the hair from the dock down (A). Gather the hair in one hand (B) and, trying not to lose any hairs, run your hand down to an inch or two from the very bottom of the tail (C). Grasping the hair tightly (D), cut a clean line



2 (A–D)



3 (A–G)

with scissors across the bottom (E). You will need to comb out the tail a couple more times and check for missed hairs that may need trimming to complete a tidy look (F & G).

Don't panic, you can take care of this. The easiest is to have a bottle of dry shampoo on hand. If you don't have any, you can mix a couple of drops of purple shampoo into some alcohol to make a decent alternative.

Cleaning Manure Spots

Ideally, you get to give your horse a bath the day before or the morning before you leave (see p. 74). But what happens when, on the day of your special event, you show up to find your horse has rolled in a pile of manure? With no time to bathe, what do you do?

☆4 A–C (next page) Spray the manure spot with your cleaning mixture until it is soaked (A) and rub it really hard with a towel (B). Check to see if the spot is clean (C). When good, use the towel to smooth the hair flat; otherwise, repeat the scrubbing steps.

17 (A-K)



new band around it, making sure you catch the bottom of the braid as close to the crest as possible. When you are finished, you should have a line of similar sized, elegant braids on the top of the neck (G).

Rolling Braids for Long Manes

The *second* method is great for horses and ponies with long manes.

☆17 A-K You will need a large plastic pull-through. These are sold at many grocery or pharmacy stores in the haircare section (A). First, braid down about 4 to 5 inches, and rubber band the end (B). Insert the pull-through pointy-end up from under the braid (C & D). Pull the braid down through the loop of the pull-through (E & F). Pull the pull-through up and the tail of the braid all the way through the base of the braid (G & H). Using two rubber bands at a time (I), grasp the braided bun and secure it with the bands (J & K).

Connecting the Braids

☆18 A-I Move to the mane next to the braid you finished, and separate a bunch of hair. Divide this section



18 (A-F)