

READY SET RIDE SIDEWALKING TRAINING - 2017

The Role of the sidewalker is to be an extension of the instructor. Encourage the rider to grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Sidewalking is the most hands-on position in a therapeutic riding lesson. You are directly responsible for the rider and provide supervision from the time the rider arrives until they leave. You must work harmoniously with the team for the benefit of the rider. The role of the sidewalker varies between riders, so understand the rider's needs and goals. When there are opportunities to talk socially with your rider, we encourage you to do so. Part of the benefits to riding is the social connections the rider will share with their team! What is your favorite ice cream? What color do we hold onto the reins? BUT, when the lesson begins, keep your words limited and directed towards the activity. Remember that most riders have difficulty with concentrating and focus, so give the rider time to react.

Riding Skills

It is not necessary for sidewalkers to have riding experience, however, working knowledge of basic riding skills will ensure the effectiveness and safety of the rider.

Position of foot in stirrup – stretching ring is facing outside, ball of foot rests on stirrup bar, heel down and toes up.

Holding reins – fingers closed around reins and held up like ice cream cones

Posture and alignment of rider – ear, shoulder, hip heel make a straight line

Walking – “Walk On”

Trotting – “Trot On”

Halting – “Whoa” and pull the reins back to belly button

Backing – “Back, Back, Back” pull reins towards hips and squeeze legs

Turning – Pull the right rein to hop to go right. Or pull the horse's nose to the direction you want to go. Same for left.

Posting – This is a 1, 2, count rhythmic move of slightly standing and sitting down. Eventually letting the cantle of the saddle push you to the up position.

Two Point – This “jumping position” rider leans forward hands on neck and bottom slightly out of saddle.

Spooks and Falls

Though this is rare, it does happen. First remain calm and stay with your rider. Immediately assume a thigh hold to keep the rider in the saddle. If able to do so we will “start again”, or if we need to have an emergency dismount. Stop where ever we are, dismount the riders and exit the arena, horses follow and go to stalls. You may be instructed to dial 911. The location and information you need is located next to the laundry tub sink. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and every involved individual.



Before the Lesson

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of class
- Check who your rider is, horse, and team mates are
- Help get horse ready or arena ready
- Do you know what your goals are for your rider?
- Greet your rider and assist with helmet
- Wait with your rider in the paddock, do not enter arena until you are instructed to do so

Mounting

- When you are called in, one side walker escorts rider to mounting block. The other will be on the offside and assist with stirrup, put your hand in stirrup to prevent saddle from slipping. You may be asked to help pull the right leg over the rump area of the horse to avoid kicking the horse.

Physical Support

- Providing support can be tiring, inform the instructor if you are fatigued and need to switch sides.
- Never apply a physical hold over a joint
- Thigh hold – Place forearm gently over the thigh and hold the front of the saddle
- Ankle hold – Hold back of ankle/cup of heel
- Calf hold – Rest hand on top of rider's calf
- Spotter position – Sidewalker walks beside the rider, prepared to give hands on support if needed

During the Lesson

- Use good body mechanics and your peripheral vision. Do not walk looking at the ground. Your focus needs to be the rider, stand up straight, do not lean on your horse.
- Keep communication going, either instructing task instructor has asked, or if there is down time, engage your rider to communicate. Remember to allow TIME to process. SAY TOUCH DO
- Verbal Prompt – Ask the rider to make a turn with simple words only (Turn right)
- Physical Prompt – If the instructor says “turn right” gently tap the right hand
- Hand over Hand – If the instructors says “turn right” place your hand over the rider's right hand and pull the rein to turn the horse right together.
- Do not interfere with the horse by petting, poking leaning, or bumping
- Do not leave your rider for ANYTHING. If a toy drops, let it go and keep moving. Never place your hands into saddle holes or let the horse drag you. If you get behind, do not run to catch up.

Dismounting & Conclusion of the Lesson

- Follow the instructor's directions
- We have three rules 1. Remove feet from stirrups 2. Reins forward to make a necklace for your horse 3. Hug your horse and slide down the left side. As sidewalkers you will make sure this goes smoothly.
- We encourage the rider to thank their horse with a pat on the nose and high fives to the leader and with you as the side walker (s).
- Stay with your rider until they are returned to a parent or guardian.
- Return the helmet to the correct helmet box and spray with cleaner.

