



## Introduction to Horses I

An 8 week lesson program for new students. This is an introduction to the world of horses, not just riding them. Once Intro to Horses I is completed students may move up to other Academy classes or group lessons.

### Rising Stars Riding Academy goals:

- *To allow children to explore the world of horses without major commitment.*
- *To build teamwork, leadership, sense of community and, above all, self-confidence.*
- *To educate youth on the basic safety and skill sets necessary to work around horses.*
- *To teach life lessons that reach far beyond a horse!*

**Week 1:** Orientation and initial saddle time. We will tour the farm (parents welcomed) and learn about the instructor and her expectations. All students will learn to lead the horse, to mount and dismount and briefly ride in the arena at the walk only. We will address holding the reins and body position. All lesson horses will be groomed, tacked and untacked for students this week.

**Week 2:** Grooming and Tacking. Students will learn proper ways to groom (clean) a horse's coat, hooves, and mane and tail. Students will get demonstrations on proper tack placement and then work as a team to tack up the rest of the horses. We will review mounting and unmounting, holding the reins and body position. Introduced this week will be commands for walk, stop and turning by being clear and consistent. The horses will be untacked for students.

**Week 3:** Controlling the horse at the walk. Students will groom and tack with assistance and spend most of the time in the saddle. We will use repeated drills to promote a goal-oriented approach to learning how to walk, stop and steer the horse. With 15 minutes left, each student may choose to untack and groom their lesson horse or continue with drills.

**Week 4:** Rider seat positions and basic horse anatomy. We will use stickers to tag basic body parts of a horse and talk about the overall function of a horse's structure. Students will work together to label another horse's body parts as a "quiz" before and after riding. Students will tack up with assistance and review anatomy from the saddle. Students will learn the 3 basic seat positions for riding: dressage seat, half seat and 2 point position. We will use these while standing still and walking. After untacking, students will each be given a set of body part labels to tag their lesson horse's body parts correctly.

**Week 5:** Learn how horses move. Students will start with a demonstration from a student-assistant on the three main gaits of a horse: the walk, trot and canter. Students will groom and tack up and begin reviewing the previous 4 weeks lessons as a group. Students will learn how to properly use a "grab strap" and be introduced to the trot individually. We will also introduce the one-rein stop and emergency dismount. Students will not be required to untack and groom.

**Week 6:** Prepare for final performance. Students will work on foot through a prepared "routine" of basic skills they have learned. They will then start working through it on horseback. Horses will be groomed and tacked for them but students must untack and groom at the end.

**Week 7:** Practice for final performance. Students may arrive early to groom and tack, but horses will be ready at start time. We will discuss horse and rider "costumes" for the final performance. Depending on amount of practice needed, students may untack and groom at end.

**Week 8:** Final performance!! We may discuss a special day/time to accommodate schedule of parents. We will have a small reception following the performance.

Proper attire: Students may wear jeans, stretchpants or breeches. Students MUST wear hard soled boots with at least a ½ inch heel- cowboy boots and many other popular styles fit this description. Helmets are available to borrow, but you are encouraged to purchase one, and are available for purchase at Tractor Supply and Tri State Vet and Pet in Evansville. No spaghetti straps and no hoodies. Gloves are recommended, Rural King has a nice variety of children's riding and work gloves.

All lesson times for this class are 1 hour and 15 minutes. Please be on time, and we will do our best to have your child ready to walk out of the barn in 1 hour and 15 minutes so you may keep a schedule. You may drop your child off (except Week 1) and return to pick them up. You are also welcome to watch the lessons but please do not interfere with the lessons by talking to your child. All lessons will be taught by Stacy Denton with student-assistants present to help beginners.

This lesson outline will be followed to the best of our abilities and will be adjusted if necessary. Any horse-related activity must be approached with flexibility, which is part of why horses are so valuable for teaching our children life lessons! Our professional staff works hard to provide an excellent environment for educating students about EVERYTHING about horses, so sometimes we may stray from the outline to give students unique opportunities. As an example, if the blacksmith is here we may take part of a lesson and learn about shoeing instead.

The Rising Stars Riding Academy is an inlet to the world of horses that is economical and short-term, making it ideal for busy families. It is not a class for competition prep or going up the riding levels quickly, but we do offer group and semiprivate lessons for that. Competition riding, even at the lower levels, requires a much larger commitment of leasing or owning a horse and three or more days riding per week. Please feel free to speak to Stacy regarding the goals your family has with horses, as she will be happy to candidly discuss options.

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