



THE LEVELS:
RIDING SKILLS
MANAGEMENT SKILLS



*BLUE
MOON*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
riding stables

WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM!

Blue Moon provides a safe and encouraging environment for beginner through advanced riders of all ages. Our riding programs have been designed to develop rider goals through a variety of exercises, teaching the same skills and rider development in different ways. These programs promote building confidence, motivation, discipline, coordination, focus and camaraderie, while still having fun and developing a compassionate bond with horses.

Factors such as age, coordination, strength, frequency of lessons and attention span will impact students' skill advancement. Progress is best achieved through consistent instruction and practice rides; skills typically improve exponentially with each additional weekly ride. However; for many riders, progress is seen in other forms in everyday life almost immediately, like confidence, coordination and problem solving.

Our program allows students to follow the Riding Skills and/or the Horse Management Skills program. However, to graduate from both Beginner and Novice Rider Levels, students MUST complete the corresponding Management Level. Most new students will start at Beginner and may advance very quickly depending on experience level.

Students are encouraged to study materials on their own in magazines, books and web resources. Periodically we may provide links to sources on our website, so please check it often.

**For each level mastered, students will
receive a ribbon!**

SKILL LEVELS - RIDING

Beginner (Must also pass Beginner Management Level)

- ☆ Brush, pick hooves, saddle and bridle, with assistance only if necessary, demonstrating awareness of basic horse safety techniques.
- ☆ Mount and dismount independently with mounting block.
- ☆ Perform warm-up stretches independently.
- ☆ Perform an emergency dismount at the halt and walk.
- ☆ Demonstrate proper end of ride technique including cooling down your horse, running up the stirrups, and loosening the girth.
- ☆ Demonstrate proper technique leading horse or pony by the bridle reins.
- ☆ Halt by disengaging horse's hindquarters ("one-rein stop"), once on each rein at the walk.
- ☆ Shorten and lengthen reins correctly.
- ☆ Perform walk-halt transitions, maintaining balanced position.
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers at walk:
 - change of direction across diagonal
 - half-circle reverse
 - center line turn
 - 20 meter circle
- ☆ Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the halt.
- ☆ Ride in half seat at the walk and over poles.
- ☆ Ride simple schooling figures at walk over ground poles demonstrating good approaches and accurately crossing ground poles at their center.
- ☆ Ride on the rail at a posting trot, once around in each direction

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

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Novice (Must also pass Novice Management Level)

- ☆ Tack and untack independently, in less than twenty minutes.
- ☆ Adjust stirrups and girth while mounted.
- ☆ Perform an emergency dismount at the trot.
- ☆ Maintain light contact on the flat, demonstrating long and loose rein when asked.
- ☆ Ride smooth walk-trot transitions, maintaining balanced position.
- ☆ Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of posting diagonals.
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers at walk and trot:
 - turn on the forehand
 - sitting trot
 - ☆ 20 meter circle
 - figure-8
 - serpentine
 - half circle, center line turn and diagonal with change of posting diagonal
- ☆ Ride USDF Intro Test A or B, showing knowledge of elementary dressage terms and figures.
- ☆ Ride on the longe at walk and trot without stirrups and reins.
- ☆ Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the walk.
- ☆ Ride in half seat at the trot on the flat and over ground poles, developing ability to balance independently of hands.
- ☆ Ride grid of trot poles, demonstrating secure half seat position.
- ☆ Ride a series of serpentines, with poles, at the trot, accurately crossing the center of ground poles.
- ☆ Learn to properly tack a horse with a western saddle and take one riding lesson in a western saddle.

Date Started: _____

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Advanced Novice

- ☆ Demonstrate ability to safely catch horse in both stall and field.
- ☆ Prepare for a lesson independently in fifteen minutes or less.
- ☆ Discuss procedure for warm-up and cool-down with consideration of weather, footing, and fitness level of horse.
- ☆ Ride bareback confidently at the walk and trot, balancing independently of hands.
- ☆ Demonstrate knowledge of aids used for asking horse to correctly bend. Define "Suppling".
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers:
 - rein back
 - 20 meter circle at canter
 - change of direction with simple change at canter
- ☆ Demonstrate knowledge footfall patterns at the walk, trot, and canter.
- ☆ Ride at the canter on the rail in both directions, demonstrating both light and full seat.
- ☆ Demonstrate awareness of leads.
- ☆ Ride at the trot for a minimum of five minutes without stirrups, alternating posting and sitting.
- ☆ Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the trot.
- ☆ Ride in half seat at the canter on the flat and over a single ground pole.
- ☆ Trot over a grid of trot poles with reins knotted and arms outstretched.
- ☆ Ride serpentine at the trot with smooth turns, good approaches, and correct diagonals over ground poles.
- ☆ Jump a single crossrail, not to exceed 18".
- ☆ Ride with a different instructor on-site or offsite.

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Intermediate

- ☆ Know and demonstrate a minimum of four exercises that can be used to improve the seat.
- ☆ Ride schooling figures at the walk and trot, with correct diagonals.
- ☆ Ride accurate trot/canter and walk/canter transitions
- ☆ Demonstrate the counter canter and straight line patterns.
- ☆ Ride a 20m circle at the walk, trot, and canter, with correct diagonals and leads.
- ☆ Ride USDF Intro Test C with accurate transitions and schooling figures.
- ☆ Ride at the walk, trot and canter without stirrups.
- ☆ Ride a ground pole course at the canter, with simple changes of lead as necessary.
- ☆ Ride in the open, up and down hills and over natural obstacles at the walk and trot.
- ☆ Volunteer as an assistant for Little Britches, Academy, or Camp.
- ☆ Demonstrate your completed riding achievement, talk with your instructor and set a new goal for the next level.

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

My new goals to pass the next level: Inst. Init. _____

Advanced Intermediate

- ☆ Demonstrate self-directed, progressive warm-up for horse and rider.
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers:
 - figure-8 at canter
 - serpentine at canter
- ☆ Demonstrate schooling figures at all three gaits, with awareness of bend and balance.
- ☆ Ride schooling figures at walk, trot, and canter without stirrups.
- ☆ Be able to drop and pick up stirrups at all gaits without looking down.
- ☆ Ride in the open in a group, at walk, trot and canter, maintaining control.
- ☆ Demonstrate a galloping position at the walk, trot, and canter.
- ☆ Ride the hand gallop.
- ☆ Demonstrate ability to longe horse as a training technique.
- ☆ Demonstrate your completed riding achievement, talk with your instructor and set a new goal for the next level.

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

My new goal to pass the next level: Inst. Init. _____

Pre-Graduate

- ☆ Ride on the longe at walk, trot and canter, without stirrups and reins, performing balancing and suppling exercises.
- ☆ Identify diagonals and leads through feel.
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers:
 - 20m, 15m, and 10m circles at walk and trot
 - 20m, 15m, and 10m half-circles at walk and trot
 - simple change of lead on a straight line
 - leg yield, from quarter line to rail, at walk and trot
- ☆ Ride accurate trot/halt/trot transitions.
- ☆ Demonstrate a walk to canter transition, returning to walk with three or fewer steps of trot.
- ☆ Ride canter to halt in three or fewer steps.
- ☆ Ride USEF Training Test 3 or equivalent pattern; demonstrating accuracy, steady contact, and correct bend on circles and through corners.
- ☆ Know distances for trot poles and basic gymnastic exercises.
- ☆ Demonstrate your completed riding achievement, talk with your instructor and set a new goal for the next level.
- ☆ Create a lesson plan for a beginner lesson group.

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

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My new goal to pass the next level: Inst. Init. _____

Graduate

- ☆ Discuss basic dressage theory, showing knowledge of the training pyramid and use of natural aids.
- ☆ Discuss appropriate use of artificial aids and training devices.
- ☆ Demonstrate a self-directed, progressive warm-up for flatwork and jumping, with consideration of mount's strengths and weaknesses.
- ☆ Ride various schooling figures on the aids, at walk, trot and canter, demonstrating rhythm, relaxation, connection and bend.
- ☆ Ride accurate, balanced transitions, including halts and transitions between the walk and canter.
- ☆ Demonstrate the following maneuvers:
 - turn on the haunches
 - leg yield at the walk
 - haunches-in
 - countercanter
- ☆ Ride a simple change of lead through the walk or a flying change of lead, appropriate to the horse.
- ☆ Ride and evaluate an unfamiliar horse, to include work at all three gaits and through basic figures.
- ☆ Discuss at least five equestrian disciplines other than ones you participate in.
- ☆ Create a lesson plan for intermediate level rider and assist with the planned lesson.

Date Started: _____

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Horse Management Levels

Beginner (Required to pass Beginner Riding Level)

- Know and discuss safety rules in barn, arena, and pasture.
- Know safe riding attire; demonstrate how to correctly fit a helmet.
- Catch horse in stall and paddock using safe technique.
- Demonstrate safe leading from near side, both in barn and through doorways/gates.
- Tie horse safely, using an effective quick-release knot.
- Demonstrate basic grooming to prepare a horse for a ride.
- Know names and functions of at least three grooming tools.
- Demonstrate picking out hooves safely, with knowledge of reasons for basic hoof care.
- Name at least ten parts of the horse.
- Know basic parts and functions of saddle and bridle.
- Know how to store tack correctly, and give at least two reasons for cleaning tack and equipment.
- Demonstrate mucking and re-bedding a stall, cleaning stall thoroughly and efficiently.

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

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Novice (Required to pass Novice Riding Level)

- Jog horse in hand, with safe technique, as though jogging for soundness.
- Blanket and remove blanket from horse safely.
- Correctly apply splint boots, bell boots, and shipping boots. Know what each is used for and which vital areas are protected.
- Clean and condition a saddle, bridle, and girth, knowing reasons for each step.
- Reassemble saddle and bridle without assistance.
- Care for a horse after a workout, to include: cooling out, thorough grooming and inspection, feeding and watering.
- Know normal vital signs for a horse, and discuss how to measure these.
- Know basic horse colors and markings.
- Know basic categories of horse types and name the four most popular breeds of horse in Kentucky.
- Know how to measure a horse for height.
- Know reasons for basic feeding principles, to include discussion of concentrates and roughage.
- Know the 3 most common signs of colic and action to take.
- Spend at least thirty minutes observing or assisting a vet with a routine procedure. Date _____ Vet Init. _____
- Volunteer for morning chore help at least one day. Date _____ Instr. Init. _____

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Advanced Novice

- Fit a saddle, bridle (including bit), girth and halter to a horse.
- Identify items in equine first aid kit, giving reasons for each item's use.
- Take and record vital signs.
- Measure a horse for weight and height.
- Administer a paste or gel dewormer safely.
- Demonstrate and offer assistance a Beginner or Novice student to clean and condition a saddle, bridle, and girth, explaining reasons for each step.
- Demonstrate and offer assistance to a Beginner or Novice student to reassemble saddle and bridle without assistance.
- Demonstrate and offer assistance to a Beginner or Novice student how to care for a horse after a workout, to include: cooling out, thorough grooming and inspection, feeding and watering.
- Know normal vital signs for a horse, and discuss how to measure these.
- Know the uses of and the difference between a polo wrap and a standing wrap.
- Complete the written practice packet and written exam to move on to Intermediate level.
- Take a turn holding a school horse for the farrier. Learn tips to safely control an uncooperative horse.
Date _____ Farrier Init. _____
- Volunteer for work on the farm for an entire day, including morning and afternoon chores. Date _____ Instr. Init. _____

Date Started: _____

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Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Intermediate

- Groom a horse to turnout inspection quality (no braiding necessary).
- Perform a safety check on a younger rider under supervision.
- Know how to adjust different types of tack, including martingale, breastplate, curb chain, etc. Know how to cinch a Western saddle.
- Identify 15 different bits, to include both snaffle and leverage bits.
- Apply a polo wrap and discuss its purpose.
- Know how to treat the following injuries: stone bruise, laceration, puncture wound, abscess, swollen tendon, injured eye.
- Discuss life cycle and prevention of internal and external parasites.
- Know names and functions of farrier tools used in trimming and shoeing.
- Know basic horse movement, to include number of beats in each gait, footfall pattern, faulty movement, and methods of detecting unsoundness.
- Discuss what conformation is and why it is important, to include basic faults of the leg, back, shoulder, neck and head.
- Name five unsoundnesses.
- Perform a pre-trip safety check on a truck or trailer.
- Safely load and unload a quiet horse, with assistance.
- Discuss reasons for longeing, safe longeing practices and equipment. Demonstrate how to hold and give aids with a line and whip.

Date Started: _____

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Advanced Intermediate

- Know elementary concepts of equine behavior theory and relate them to 1) riding and training practices, and 2) stable management practices.
- Longe a quiet horse for exercise, showing safe technique and consideration of the horse.
- Set walk, trot, and canter poles for a selection of three different-sized horses.
Build a basic gymnastic grid for an average 15.2 hh horse.
- Apply a shipping bandage.
- Wrap a hoof.
- Discuss different types and reasons for clipping.
- Evaluate a horse's conformation, listing both good and bad points.
- Know basic conformation traits specific to the following breeds: Arabian, Thoroughbred, Quarter Horse, Andalusian. Relate to suitability for specific disciplines.
- Know stable vices, causes and possible remedies.
- Know specific immunizations needed for our local area and at what frequency.
- Identify different types of grains, hays, and supplements.
- Discuss correct measurement of feed and suitable feed rations for horses in light, moderate, and hard work; including considerations such as conditioning, injury or illness.
- Create an eight-week conditioning schedule to prepare a horse and rider for a strenuous activity (e.g., horse trial, show jumping competition, fox hunt, etc.)

Date Started: _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Pre-Graduate

- Groom a horse to turnout inspection quality, to include appropriate hunt or button braids in the mane.
- Longe a quiet horse and evaluate performance and movement.
- Fit side reins.
- Pull a mane.
- Wrap a tail for travel.
- Know how to select and maintain a trailer and tow vehicle.
- Identify parts of the horse's digestive system.
- Identify different types of shoes and their uses, to include traction devices such as borium and studs.
- Identify a minimum of five toxic plants native to this area.
- Know location, appearance and treatment of unsoundnesses: navicular, splints, strained or bowed tendon, ringbone, sidebone, curb, bone spavin, capped hock. Discuss blemishes such as windpuffs and bog spavin.
- Describe causes, signs, and treatment of laminitis/founder, tying up, choking, thrush, skin conditions.
- Name five diseases of the horse and describe symptoms and preventative measures.
- Estimate the age of a horse using teeth as a guide; discuss number of teeth, growth, and dental care.
- Discuss stable and pasture management, to include:
 - turnout schedules
 - parasite management
 - grass management
 - different options for fencing and bedding
 - routine facility maintenance
 - daily care of horses.
- Create a budget for keeping a horse for a year, to include: feed and board, routine health care, emergency care, tack and equipment, and showing and training expenses.

Date Started: _____

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Test Date _____ Pass? _____ Inst. Init. _____

Graduate

- Teach a new student Beginner Level horsekeeping skills.
- Judge an Intro to Training Level dressage test, demonstrating knowledge of basic dressage principles.
- Design a stadium jumping course, demonstrating knowledge of distances and types of fences.
- Wrap a knee and a hock.
- Give an intramuscular injection.
- Thoroughly clean an udder and a sheath.
- Know uses and dangers of common equine medications and sedatives.
- Evaluate conformation of a selection of horses, discussing relationship to soundness, movement, and athletic ability.
- Know basic equine anatomy, to include: musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory, and reproductive systems; know what diseases or health conditions affect each system.
- Discuss basic disease prevention practices, including management of infectious diseases.
- Draw a diagram showing the major bones, ligaments, and tendons in the lower leg.
- Discuss methods of conditioning for different activities, such as dressage, eventing, games, endurance riding, etc.
- Discuss methods of starting a young horse from the ground up, including ground exercises, longeing, backing, and progressive training.
- Using a tag from a commercially prepared feed mixture, analyze nutritional value of feed (to include hay and/or pasture) and balance a ration for a horse.
- Discuss equine disaster planning, to include: fire and storm emergency plans, supplies, and evacuation procedures.
- Draw a diagram of a stable and pasture setup for 1) private 2-horse farm on 5 acres; and 2) commercial boarding and training facility on 20 acres.

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Little Britches

Little Britches is an introductory level for young riders aged 4 through 7, who are not yet able to ride and care for a pony independently. Little Britches riders should always practice their skills with the supervision and assistance of an instructor!

- ☆ I always wear boots and an ASTM-SEI approved helmet when I am riding. I can put on my helmet myself at the proper time in the tack up routine and show you how it fits correctly.
- ☆ I can tell you how to dress safely for riding.
- ☆ I can show you how to correctly approach a pony, and how to move around a pony safely - including walking around behind.
- ☆ I can tell you why you have to groom a pony and pick out his feet before every ride.
- ☆ I can help my instructor or an older, more experienced rider prepare for a ride. I help with the grooming, cleaning hooves, and putting on the saddle and bridle. When I am a little bit bigger, I will be able to tack up a pony without any help.
- ☆ I can show you the basic parts of a saddle and bridle, such as the bit, reins, stirrups and girth.
- ☆ I can lead a pony safely, both with a halter and lead rope and with the bridle reins.
- ☆ I can help to do a safety check on my tack and pony before I ride. I can pull down the stirrups, put the reins over my pony's head, and help check the girth.
- ☆ I can mount and dismount correctly and safely. Even if I have to use the mounting block, or have my instructor give me a leg up, I know it is important to get on and off a pony carefully.
- ☆
- ☆

- ☆ I can demonstrate a basic balanced position while my pony is walking and standing still. I know that a bad position is dangerous for me and uncomfortable for my pony, so I always work hard to keep my eyes up, heels down, and “building blocks” in place!
- ☆ I can pick up the reins and hold them correctly, at a suitable length.
- ☆ I can perform the star stretches and warm-up exercises at the walk, on the leadline. (This means someone is holding onto my pony to help me steer him.)
- ☆ I can go Around the World.
- ☆ I can demonstrate how I use my aids (my seat, legs, hands and voice) to ask my pony to walk, halt, and turn.
- ☆ I can walk once all the way around the arena without a leadline.
- ☆ I can ride in a balanced two-point position at the halt and the walk.
- ☆ I can walk my pony over ground poles, showing a good jumping position, keeping my eyes up and riding straight over the middle of each pole.
- ☆ I can ride the trot on the leadline. I can ride both a sitting trot and a posting trot, holding on to the saddle if necessary. I can keep up a steady rhythm at the posting trot, so it is comfortable for both me and my pony.
- ☆ I can tell you why it is important to cool out my pony after hard work, and help take care of him after a ride.
- ☆ I can feed a treat to a quiet pony safely. I know why it can be dangerous to feed a pony too many treats, and always ask permission.
- ☆ I have helped an experienced horseperson clean out a stall. I know why it is important to clean out a pony’s stall and water buckets every day.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ☆ Instructors at Blue Moon WILL NEVER push families to purchase a horse or pony. This is a promise. Ownership is a serious commitment that is not necessary to participate in equine activities at Blue Moon.
- ☆ All Riding Skill Levels will have ON-FARM competition opportunities.
- ☆ OFF-FARM competition opportunities will be limited to instructor-defined Riding Skill Levels. This is for the safety of the riders.
- ☆ Limited Horse or Pony Lease options are available for Beginner Level Rider and above. Please ask your instructor for more information.
- ☆ Group Lessons may be supplemented by Private or SemiPrivate lessons at any time. Students may also ride in more than one group lesson per week.
- ☆ Students are strongly advised to sign up for One Day Camps and Summer or Year-Round Day Camps. There are offerings for all ages.
- ☆ Students and their families will be educated and urged to participate in organized equine clubs, such as 4-H, Pony Club or the Interscholastic Equestrian Association. Participation in Clubs can offer more opportunity for leadership and growth.



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FARM LIVING ☆ CAMPS & CLINICS ☆ HAY RIDES & PONY RIDES

THERAPY RIDING ☆ EQUINE CLUBS