



FROM THE SADDLE TO THE GROUND: THE BENEFITS OF A GROUND SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN EAT PROGRAMS

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- Do you currently teach any unmounted lessons?
- Do you have a weight limit at your program?
- Do you have participants that you have had to turn away due to weight limit?
- Do you have participants that are contraindicated to do mounted lessons?
- Do you have participants that are unable to participate in mounted lessons due to behavioral/stemming outbursts?
- Do you have horses that are getting burnt out with traditional mounted TR?
- Do you have traditional TR participants who would benefit from learning horsemanship skills other than riding?
- Would you like to not have to turn participants away for these reasons?
- Do you have participants in mind at your program now that would benefit from adding this program?



What benefits are your participants going to gain from working in ground lessons?

- Connections with their equine partners that they may not experience in a traditional TR lesson
- The feeling of getting to help “train” the horse
- Increased self confidence
- Possibility to succeed at a faster rate
- Learn body language awareness (both horse and human)
- Instant feedback from equine
- Ability to learn at their own level
- Can help reduce anxiety in participants who are nervous around horses/large animals



Who benefits from a Ground School Program?

Anyone can benefit from doing ground school, the benefits just may look different for each person! Here are some of the common diagnoses that we see currently in the Ground School Program at our center:

- *Down Syndrome
- *Autism
- *Seizure Disorder
- *Anxiety
- *Cancer Survivors
- *PTSD
- *Expressive Language Delay



How can your center benefit from a Ground School Program?

- Uses fewer volunteers
- Less wear and tear on your horses
- Ability to serve more participants
- Creates more versatility for your center
- Makes your center more well-rounded and able to serve more diverse populations by offering a wider range of EAAT
- A great resource for mounted TR students on a rainy day if you have no indoor arena

How can your horses benefit from a Ground School Program?



- Gives variety to their workload
- Puts less wear and tear on them- great for older horses or horses that may not hold up to strenuous work
- Gives them a chance to build a relationship with their participant
- Helps widen your horses' skill set
- Gives your outgoing horse a chance to let their personality shine



What does Ground School look like at Rocking Horse Ranch?

*20-25% or more of the participants that come through Rocking Horse Ranch each semester are in the Ground School Program.

*Participants that are in this program range from being over the weight limit, have diagnoses that are contraindicated to do mounted work, and some choose this program over traditional mounted TR!

*All levels of physical, mental, and emotional diagnoses are able to not only participate in this program, but are able to excel in it!

Safety Standards for Ground School at RHR



- *All participants under 18 are required to wear a helmet for any unmounted activity
- *If a participant is 18 or over and cognitively able, they are given the option to sign a waiver that they understand the risks of participating in equine activities without a helmet and choose not to wear one
- *All participants who choose to work on Long Lining are required to wear a helmet



What Does our
Curriculum Look
Like?



- *18 Ground-based Horsemanship Skills

- *Written curriculum for participants

- *Thorough teaching guide for instructors

- *3 different level tests at the completion of each topic

- *Badges/Certificates to earn when a skill is completed

- *YouTube Channel videos to help with the teaching process

- *The ability to customize the curriculum to fit any participant's level



Badges/Certificates

- *Horse Sense
- *Grooming
- *Leading
- *Horse Body Parts
- *Horse First Aid
- *Barn Management
- *Tack and Equipment
- *Horse Gait and Lameness
- *Round Penning
- *Horse Conformation
- *Bathing and Horse Show Preparation
- *Hoof Care
- *Horse Facility Management
- *Lungeing
- *Equine Massage
- *Horse Desensitization Training
- *Long Lining
- *Natural Horsemanship



Resources for Teaching Ground School

- *Resource boxes can be made for each topic to give a more hands-on approach
- *Flash cards for different topics
- *Ground School YouTube Channel
- *Facebook Group with resources

How to Pitch Ground School to Participants and Parents

- It's important to point out all the benefits of the Ground School Program
- Can be done in conjunction with mounted lessons if program is set up to do so
- Gained knowledge of horsemanship skills that the participant may not accomplish from mounted lessons
- Building a relationship with the equine
- Learn to think of the horse as a partner and not just a "tool"



Case Studies



Participant #1

*32 year old Male

*Developmental Delay, MR,
and Seizure Disorder (active
tonic/clonic & absent)

*6 foot and 145 pounds

*Is verbal when prompted and
responds to directives most of
the time



Participant #2



- *20 Year Old Male
- *5'9" Tall and 176 Pounds
- *Autism, Anxiety, and MID
- *Behavioral outbursts
- *Trouble with transitions
- *Lives in a group home



Participant #3

- *59 year old Female
- *Breast Cancer
- *Tightness in hips
- *Has past horse experience
- *Completed Healing with Horses Cancer Survivor program



Participant #4

- 17 Year Old Male
- Autism and Auditory Processing Disorder
- 6'1" 180 pounds
- Parents goal is to work on social skills while learning horsemanship skills



Participant #5

- 17 Year Old Male
- MT22, Cervical Stenosis, CMT
- 5'5" 99 pounds
- Contraindicated to do mounted work

Participant #5



- *13 year old Female
- *Anxiety
- *Has ridden in the past but is fearful
- *Easily triggered
- *Enthusiastic about working with horses
- *Loves school and learning

Questions?

For more information about our curriculum or questions contact us at:

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