

# LESSONS

YOUR  
FIRST  
TIME



We are so excited that you've decided to come and ride with us! Please make sure to read through the information below to prepare yourself for your first ride with us.

## WHAT TO WEAR

Having the appropriate gear is both a matter of safety and can make a big difference in your ride. This does not mean you have to invest in anything special before your first ride,

**Shoes:** Closed toe, ankle height, with a heel (to protect your toes and help to keep your foot in the stirrup). Absolutely NO sandals, crocs, or flat soled shoes.

**Pants:** Stretchy pant such as leggings or yoga pants, try to avoid jeans

**Shirts/Outerwear:** Wear something that considers the time of year (cold/hot), but not bulky or constricting your arms. While our arena is heated during the winter, it is not hot in there, so we recommend layering up!

**Helmet:** We have an assortment of helmets available for students to use

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Our program teaches riders to not only ride, but to care for and tack up their horses. This means that your first few lessons will be ensuring that you are able to lead, brush, blanket and tack up your horse before you get on. These lessons will also familiarize the student with basic horse behavior, body language, and interaction.

Once you get on your horse, you will be taught about balance, steering, and form: with the riders' safety being the foundation of all these things. As riders progress in strength in ability, they will begin to explore how to navigate over ground poles at different speeds, and depending on their interests and goals, will eventually be able to explore activities such as barrel racing, pole bending, jumping, dressage, and other fun activities.

## WHEN TO COME

All riders need to show up 15 minutes before their scheduled riding time. This will allow first time students to fill out necessary paperwork and get a tour of the barn and a run down of barn rules. For returning students, they use this time to get their horses ready for their lesson. As students' skill and knowledge grow, they will need less time for tacking up and have more time to ride.

**Care/Tack up** – 15 – 20 minutes

**Riding** - 45 minutes

**Care/Untack** – 15 minutes

## THE LESSON

All riders are placed into group lessons by default, if you would like lessons to be private, please talk with your coach. We max out our group lessons at 5 horses, so the coach is able to clearly watch and instruct students. If it is your first time riding, we may have other helpers/coaches in the arena to walk with you the first few times to give you more one on one attention.

## DISCONTINUING OR SUSPENDING YOUR LESSONS

If you need to stop taking lessons or want to suspend your lessons for whatever reason, we require at least 30 days notice in writing to your coach.



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## WHAT IF I'M LATE?

If you are late, you will still have to ready your horse for your lesson, joining your lesson when you are ready. This may result in your having **less** riding time, as all of our lessons must end at their scheduled time. Each lesson set up and planned intentionally to allow maximum learning for our students in the time allotted.

## WHAT IF I MISS MY LESSON?

If you have to miss a lesson for any reason, you must let the coach know at least 2 hours **prior** to your lesson. If you do so, you will be able to make up your lesson at another time.

If you miss a lesson *without* informing your coach, you will not be eligible for a make up lesson.

## WHAT IF MY COACH CANCELS MY LESSON?

As we are working with animals, their well being, and safety are very important. There will be times where the weather will impact if we are able to ride or not. Conditions such as very hot or very cold temperatures, high winds, unsafe road conditions, tornado warnings, etc.

If the coach cancel's your lesson, a make up lesson will be scheduled.

## AS A PARENT, HOW INVOLVED SHOULD I BE?

Learning about horses can be as rewarding for you as it is for your child. While we welcome and invite all parents and caretakers to dive into the experience of horses, as we are teaching your child it is important that you provide space for them to be the primary learners.

During care and tack up both before and after riding, parents/caretakers may watch from a safe distance in the barn (staff/helpers will let you know where that is). During the lesson we have a wonderful viewing area that allows parents/caregivers to watch their child.

If your child is leasing a horse in our lesson program, your involvement will be more hands on as you would need to be educated as well as your child for safety.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO LEARN TO RIDE?

Like any other sport, the process of learning never actually stops. How fast you progress in ability and skill depends on you!

As with most things, the more frequently you practice, the faster you will learn. How quickly someone can learn to ride will also depend on personal aptitude, but to fully master all gaits will likely take somewhere between 1-2 years when riding once a week.

If you want to progress faster while only riding once a week, ask your coach about physical exercises you can do in between lessons and books/videos to look into.

## HOW DO I CONTACT MY COACH?

We ask that all of our riders communicate with their coaches via facebook messenger. Coaches very frequently check their messages and will often respond in a few hours.

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## HOW AND WHEN DO I PAY?

All riders in our lesson program pay for the next month in advance, to secure their spot in the program. Invoices will be sent out in the last week of the month for the upcoming month.

You can pay for your lessons by e-transfer or credit card. Please see the instructions on the invoice for the appropriate e-transfer email and a link to pay by credit card.

## CAN I PARTICIPATE IN SHOWS?

Southern Run has a great competitive team that goes to shows all year round, and we have a blast!

As your skill and ability progresses, let your coach know that you are interested in competing in shows and they will let you know if you are ready or if there are things you can do to get ready. Please note, that depending on the type of show, additional equipment may be required (i.e., for show jumping, riders will be required to wear certain outfits to compete). Talk with your coach about how to source this equipment in an efficient and cost-effective way.

## HOW CAN I RIDE MORE?

We get it, riding is SUPER fun! And you might want to ride in additional lessons or even ride for fun on another day of the week. There are three options for you:

**PRIVATE LESSONS:** Let your coach know that you would like to take a private lesson and the two of you can work out a time. These lessons can be a one off, or on a regular, weekly schedule. Payment for these lessons will be required prior to the lesson.

**GROUP LESSONS:** Talk to your coach to see if there are other lessons at your skill level, and if there are spaces in those lessons for you to join in. These lessons will have to be scheduled and paid for exactly like your current lessons, a month at a time and paid for in advance.

**LEASE OPTIONS:** If you want to have an additional fun ride a week, you will need to explore our lease options. Talk to your coach about the different kinds of leases you can participate in.

## IS RIDING SAFE?

Riding is an extremely fun sport, but there are definitely risks involved. This is why Southern Run concentrates on equipping all students (young and old), with skills and knowledge of working with and riding horses. These skills do not eliminate the risks, but they do mitigate risks.

The other, very large, aspect of riding that sets it apart from other sports... is our horse! Horses are very intelligent creatures with a mind of their own. While we are very confident in the horses in our program, they are not immune to bad days. Coaches monitor the personalities and actions of our horses closely, and students are taught to learn horse behaviour and signals. For more information, talk to your coach.

## GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

PLEASE ASK!!!! We love questions and will answer any and all questions you have.