

Healing Hoof Steps

Therapeutic Riding Program

Volunteer Handbook

as of Summer 2024



Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

3942 Jace Dr, Crestview, FL 32539

Office Phone: (850) 764-1005

Office Fax: (855) 588-7389 Web: www.HealingHoofSteps.org

Volunteer Coordinator Contact: 850-736-4110

Email: Susan@healinghoofsteps.org



Healing Hoof Steps Therapeutic Riding Program Volunteer Handbook

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WELCOME

Volunteers are the heart and muscle of Healing Hoof Steps (HHS). We hope you are as glad to be here as we are to have you. This guide is meant to help answer some questions about our program, our mission and purpose, some general policies and basic procedures for members of our Volunteer Team. Though nothing takes the place of hands-on experience, this publication can serve as a helpful guide.

HEALING HOOF STEPS MISSION

To create lasting, positive change in the lives of individuals along the Emerald Coast through therapeutic engagement with horses.

HEALING HOOF STEPS HISTORY

Healing Hoof Steps was founded by Narissa Jenkins in 2014. As the daughter of a combat veteran, Narissa had a lifelong passion for horses and helping people but longed for larger purpose. After a 20-year professional career, she found herself feeling particularly stressed and no longer feeling fulfilled. The demands of a high-pressure career, raising young children in a large city with no immediate family nearby, and a husband who traveled for work, made life seem overwhelming. She found a barn nearby where she noticed a faded, brown, skinny horse who later would become the catalyst for what is known today as Healing Hoof Steps, Inc.

This horse was also in need of a larger purpose and though time riding together was fun, many afternoons were spent just “being” in the pasture together where they both found solace with each other. Narissa began her research and discovered equine-assisted therapies, where licensed therapists and horses work together to provide therapy for populations who have experienced trauma. She also noticed no such service existed in the Florida panhandle, which led to the start of Healing Hoof Steps in 2015, finding its home in Crestview, Florida.

HEALING HOOF STEPS VISION

Passionately impacting our community by engaging horses and innovative techniques at a premier facility to improve the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of the Emerald Coast.

SERVICES OFFERED

Healing Hoof Steps offers two distinct programs that are designed to create positive change for the community. One program offers unmounted activities, the other offers mounted activities.

The first program where volunteers often do NOT participate is our clinical Mental Health Program. This program provides an alternate approach to traditional office mental health counseling, utilizing licensed professionals and the horses in an experiential, outdoor setting in unmounted activities, helping many individuals, couples, families, at risk teens, Veterans, and groups, ages five and older. We assist with overcoming anxiety, depression, PTSD, relationship issues, and trauma-related concerns utilizing the EAGALA model of equine assisted psychotherapy (www.eagala.org).

The second program is where volunteers spend most of their time when volunteering. See info below.

Therapeutic Riding Program

Our Therapeutic Riding Program (TRP) is governed by the standards developed by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (www.PATHIntl.org) and opened its doors Summer of 2020. The program serves five years of age and older.

Opening this program allowed HHS to expand services for those with a variety of limitations, challenges and/or disabilities, who receive a greater benefit from the additional physical elements of riding. Some of the physical benefits of therapeutic riding include improved muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, and motor development. It can also offer sport, recreational, and educational benefits.

How Does Therapeutic Riding Benefit Participants?

Participants benefit emotionally in areas such as self-confidence, sense of accomplishment, and motivation. Trust, communication, teamwork, responsibility, respect, and care are learned directly through horsemanship. Program lessons are led by PATH Intl Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors (CTRIs) who specialize in leading mounted and unmounted equine-assisted activities for participants who face a variety of challenges, limitations and/or disabilities. Participants can receive physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits with the goal of maximum independence, self-confidence building, improved communication, as well as the relationship and coordination skills that can assist in meeting other life goals outside of the arena.

TR can benefit individuals with disabilities to achieve the control and mobility they may not otherwise experience. A horse's gait, like the human walk, can help strengthen muscles, improve posture and coordination, and increase joint mobility and psychological well-being. The three-dimensional movement of the horse can stimulate parts of the brain that control vocal and motor skills, resulting in improved speech and mobility. These stimuli, as well as the other sights and sounds experienced can, at times, be difficult to duplicate in the traditional clinical setting.

Veterans and First Responders participate in our HOOFSTEPS 4 HEROES Riding Program where they build confidence, resiliency and camaraderie with other veterans and first responders. This program is 100% funded by local organizations and businesses.

Equine-Assisted Learning

Our program also provides unmounted horsemanship lessons where participants learn skills related to horse health and care, horse handling, barn maintenance, and equine body language. This program allows participants to form a unique bond with the horse by learning how to communicate and work with the horse on the ground.

Hippotherapy*NOT currently offered at HHS*****

Hippotherapy refers to the use of a horse as a treatment tool by a licensed Occupational, Physical, or Speech and Language Therapist to address impairments and functional limitations in patients with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction. Research has shown improvements in dynamic postural control, balance, mobility, and function and can also be used to improve sensory processing and achieve psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and communication outcomes.

Unlike therapeutic riding, specific riding skills are not taught during a hippotherapy session. Rather, a foundation is established to improve neurological and physical function and sensory processing. This foundation can be generalized to benefit a wide range of daily activities. Hippotherapy sessions are provided as a one-on-one therapist to rider session. The horse's movement is used to influence the rider.

ABOUT VOLUNTEERING & WHO WE SERVE

It doesn't matter if you're an expert horse person, trained therapist, or novice volunteer. If you are open and willing to learn new things, and conduct yourself with respect for people and horses, then you will make a significant contribution, not to mention, take away a variety of important skills.

HHS volunteers must be at least 14 years old and are expected to attend an in-person Volunteer Training/orientation session. All volunteers should possess a positive attitude toward working with and around persons with disabilities and be open to serving in a variety of roles.

Volunteers should be able to walk and sometimes jog over uneven ground for up to 30 minutes and/or keep one arm at or above shoulder height for a reasonable amount of time. Each volunteer must have adequate body size, strength and experience for the assigned task.

We promote a culture of ongoing learning so volunteers will undergo regular assessments for all roles and responsibilities and should not hesitate to ask questions. They should not perform a role you have not been trained to perform. If you are not comfortable with an assignment, feel free to discuss those concerns with the instructor or Volunteer Coordinator.

Responsibilities/Duties When volunteering in the mounted activities (a.k.a. riding lessons), you could fulfill one of two roles: a **Sidewalker** or a **Horse Handler** (discussed in greater detail later in this guide).

Volunteers assist participants with grooming, tacking and preparing horses for class. Volunteers will be asked to help in getting horses ready for lessons, a variety of barn work and/or assisting with special events or even other things like help in the office, fundraising projects or organizing of special events, or special projects.

Volunteers should abide by the safety guidelines, should be in good health, be physically active, mentally alert and focused, able to tolerate heat, cold, dust and wind, and work with instructors to carry out tasks. The lesson/activity time is very special for our participants so any unrelated conversations can distract from this experience and should be kept to a minimum; all attention should be on the task at hand.

Though we work in a barn, we like to promote a professional atmosphere, one that may be found in a professional office or a classroom. Please keep this in mind when choosing what to wear to the barn or how you speak and behave. Below are some general guidelines for all volunteers to assist with these responsibilities and duties often carried out by everyone at the barn.

Working with a Special Needs Population Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some Volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Often, a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing or Language Impairments

In general, direct questions to your instructor. Getting to know the participant will allow you to become familiar with hand gestures or body positions the participant may use to communicate.

Things to remember include: maintaining good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking, speak clearly without talking slowly or over-emphasizing words, and avoid long verbal instructions or conversations. During activities, help with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc.). Alert the instructor if the participant is having difficulty hearing instructions.

Non-Speaking or Limited Verbal Expression Many of our participants are non-speaking or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication, you may reinforce requests and direction.

Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first. Remember, they may only need verbal direction/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold your arm above the elbow and you walk one-half step ahead or if specifically described by the individual. If uncertain, ask the instructor how you can be of further assistance.

Wheelchair Etiquette. The wheelchair is an extension of the body and space for the individual; always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before helping. Don't hang or lean on the chair unless you have permission. Speak directly to individuals, don't exclude them from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

General Etiquette/Rules Around the Therapeutic Riding Program:

- Volunteers should always follow directions of the supervising staff member(s)
- Excessive noise or commotion in/around work areas/riding arena is not permitted
- Cell phones should be on silent, should not be used during mounted activities or handling horse
- Barn area and grounds should always be kept neat and orderly
- Equipment must be kept in its proper places; walkways/aisles should be kept clear
- Manure should be removed as soon as possible
- Car alarms should also be disarmed to minimize excessive commotion for horses
- All children must be kept under the supervision of an adults
- Plan to bring a snack, lunch or drinks, depending on how long you will be at the barn
- Reusable water bottle is highly recommended (water is available at the barn)
- Consider bringing/utilizing sunscreen, bug repellent, and a hat
- Wear comfortable clothing that can get dirty
- Long pants or shorts permitted, no revealing, tattered, inappropriate lengths please
- Spaghetti straps not permitted
- Sturdy athletic shoes or boots will be needed; you will be on your feet a lot
- Flip flops, sandals, crocks or other non-sturdy footwear NOT permitted
- Rain boots are a good idea during the rainy season
- Hanging jewelry not permitted-may dangle, get caught, or tempt little hands
- Hair should be tied back, out of the way
- Heavy perfumes/colognes/lotions are discouraged-attracts bug/insects & can irritate horses
- Consumption of alcohol prior to or while at HHS is prohibited, except for events approved by HHS
- The use of illegal substances prior to or while at HHS is prohibited
- Smoking, foul language, and crude behaviors on premises not permitted
- With prior approval of Volunteer coordinator, visitors are welcome outside of your shift
- All visitors must sign release of liability
- Please refrain from offering food or other gifts to participants without permission
 - they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- No dogs anywhere on the property, especially not left unattended in cars
- Notify staff immediately about broken fences, gates or anything out of the ordinary on the grounds
- Volunteers are not permitted to drive the tractor
- Tack room and offices must be locked when closing for night

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality

Names, specific conditions, or other personal details are to be held in strict confidence. By all means, share the stories, successes and the warmth but please leave out personal details. This includes detailed information on participants, other Volunteers, donors, staff, and instructors.

There may be situations where you feel it is necessary to reveal confidential information in order to keep someone safe. For example, a participant tells you they are having a severe medical issue that day but still wants to ride, it is your responsibility to share that information with the staff. You are not bound by confidentiality when it comes to safety. Your primary role is to keep the participants safe, and if anyone at the Center tells you something that is a threat to their own person or someone else, it is your responsibility to tell a staff member in a confidential manner.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS / INFORMATION

When You Arrive for your Shift

- **Sign in** to the electronic kiosk in the Tack Building
- Put on **Name Tag** – It is important to wear your name tag so others can identify you
- **Check Lesson Board**; may also check for flyers or updates on bulletin board and/or by reading HHS e-mails, texts, and checking the HHS Facebook page
- You may leave your **personal belongings** in tack room area but please remember that HHS is not responsible for loss of those items. When possible, please lock your belongings in your car
- **Check in** with instructor of the day and/or barn staff
- **Horse Handlers**: get horse, groom horse, help tack horse, warm up horse
- **Side walkers**– before lesson start time, set up and check tack against instructor notes. May be asked to help set up arena. Greet participant upon arrival, assist them with the helmet if needed. Stay with and assist participant with assigned activities until time to mount.

Before Departing

- **Horse Handler**: Make sure all grooming kits and tack are put away. If the horse is not used again, you may turn out to pasture at the request of the staff
- **Side walkers**: Once participant leaves, help put away equipment and remove any manure from arena
- **All Volunteers**: Put name tag in box, and inform barn staff before you leave and collect personal belongings

Commitment / Consistency

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of your consistent attendance as a Volunteer at HHS. We cannot conduct a class without Volunteers and our horses rely on consistency.

As an HHS Volunteer, you will reap the rewards of truly making a difference in people's lives.

If you are unable to participate or will be late for your scheduled volunteer shift, please immediately call or text Volunteer Coordinator at 850-736-4110

#1 VOLUNTEER POSITION / DESCRIPTION

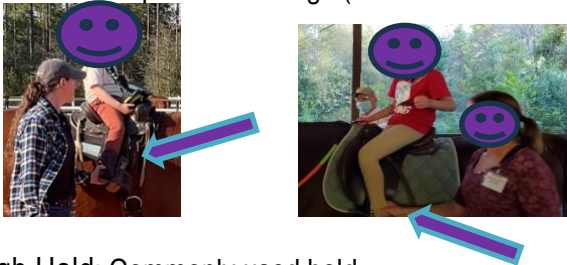
Side Walker

Side Walkers (SW)- Primary responsibility is the participant/rider's safety during the lesson session. SWs are especially important, as they need to be constantly aware of the participant and what they are doing; his/her safety depends on you!
SWs are positioned at each side of the rider to assist with balance and safety, at the rider's knee. Being too far forward/back will make it difficult to assist with instructions/provide security for the rider.

- Maintain balance of rider when they cannot sustain themselves
- Some have balance struggles on the ground and mounted
- Could need 1 or 2 SW, depending on ability of participant
- The schedule will reflect requirement of each participant
- If 2 SWs are needed, one will be designated to clarify instructor's directions
 - Too many people talking can be very overwhelming, may cause confusion
 - Refrain from talking to others unless concerned about rider's position, balance/horse
 - Any unnecessary talking can distract all involved; shows disrespect for lesson time

Below you will see description of several supporting holds used for different riders:

Ankle Hold: used for riders who do not need help balancing but still need support. Help keep busy lower legs away from the horse's side and keep SW in proper position. Cup hand just below ankle bones with fingers close to horse and thumb on the outside of ankle. Placement is important--too high (above ankle bones) no support, too low risk pulling off rider's shoes.



Thigh Hold: Commonly used hold Helps secure unbalanced riders, beginner riders, and/or anxious riders. Uses arm closest to the horse, gripping at the front of the saddle, then placing forearm across thigh. The hand on the saddle ensures a consistent contact and placement of the forearm. Be careful not to place too much pressure on rider's thigh or interfere with horse's movement.



Double Hold: Combination of thigh hold and ankle hold



Spotter: Walks along side of horse at rider's leg (not pictured) There for support for the rider; often because rider may not be ready for zero support

Tips to keep in mind as a Side Walker

- Be responsible for safety of participant during all activities especially while mounted
- Some holds can be tiring on SWs so instructors will attempt to instruct to change sides often
 - if swapping sides is needed, inform horse handler, raise free hand to notify instructor
 - will be conducted ONE SW at a time
- Have ability to relate to children and adults in an encouraging and humorous manner
- Have ability to reassure frightened / nervous participants
- Always observe participant; never become so relaxed you lose awareness
- When instructor gives a direction, allow participant plenty of time to process instructions
- One of greatest distractions during lessons can be the excessive talking amongst SWs
- Please limit conversations with participants during lesson time to what is necessary
- If participant is not paying attention/does not hear instructor, help reinforce instructions
- Though conversations are encouraged, limit to during warmup and cool down time
- You'll get to know participants & learn when they need help & when they may not be paying attention
- Sometimes we forget participants are capable, don't get so competitive that you start to take over
- If instructor says, *turn to right toward me*, and participant seems confused, gently tap right hand and say, *right* to reinforce command
- Be careful if participants start to slip, gently guide back into correct position instead of grabbing; key tips include using palm of hands on hips/thighs to guide, hands in armpit area to guide, etc.
- Always be alert to your surroundings; be as prepared as possible for unexpected
- Be aware of position near horse
 - Do not lean on horse-can agitate horse, throw off horse's balance
 - Can interfere with communication between horse and rider
 - Learn from experiences-anticipate difficulties from horse/participant that may create accidents
 - SW at the trot requires some jogging but is limited to short distances and all above still applies
 - can request a stand-in if needed ☺

The ultimate goal... encouraging participant to achieve his/her maximal level of independence!

#2 VOLUNTEER POSITION / DESCRIPTION

Horse Handling/Leading

General Notes

- Responsible for control of horse from start to finish
- Retrieve from Pasture (with permission from staff)
- Watch horse at crosstie area for limited movement of feet, proper ground manners
- Calm and gentle nature with and around horses
- Ability to walk for a minimum of 50 minutes and jog for short distances
- Do not let horse's head get too low to ground as this may pull rider forward
- Keep your hands away from the horse's mouth
- Returning horses to pasture area
- Proper position is to walk just behind the horse's or pony's head but out of way of the stride
- Do not get in front of or too far behind as it will impact horse's understanding of communication
- Hold lead in right hand approximately six to eight inches away from ring/buckle (keep a smile in line)
- Hold extra length of lead in left hand (NEVER wrap it around your hand)
- Our horses can be led from either side; to better hear instructor, you can change sides when needed
- Sizes of horses vary as well as their steps; adjust your steps as needed so not to pull/push horse

For the participant to have freedom to use reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure the lead line does not run over the rider's reins. The lead line must be hanging between the rider's reins and not over the top of them.

Leading Into Mounting Ramp

- Pay close attention to instructor because they will tell you where to position horse
- Move into ramp slowly, moving horse's head toward ramp so the body follows
- Want to place horse as close as possible to side of ramp on which participant will mount
 - Most mounting done on left side of horse
 - Better to lead horse out and around again if not lined up close enough
- Try to get horse to stand squarely & inform team when horse is ready
- Do not try to push horse to get closer; instructor/you may remind SWs not to either
- Your responsibility to keep horse as quiet & immobile as possible while participant mounts
 - Patting horse's neck, quiet reassuring conversation can be calming to horse
 - Stand in front of/slightly to side of horse while mounting to block forward movement
 - Once participant is settled, face forward & assume your position at head of horse
- Slowly walk horse straight out of ramp so instructor & SWs can remain close
- Be sure to listen to instructor, follow his/her instructions

Leading To a Mounting Block

- All information above applies but lead horse to a straight shot to mounting block

Leading/Handling in Arena at Various Gaits

- Once participant is mounted, instructor will tell you where to stand with horse
- Walk beside the horse (about an arm's length away) in between head and shoulder
- Be sure you maintain safe distances from other horses, behind or in front of you
 - an "elephant's length" or horse length between is a good gauge

- Every effort will be made to provide all instruction to participant by name
 - Though meant for you and entire team to listen to as well
 - Entire team should be familiar with participant and give opportunity to learn
 - Entire team should allow for participant to know/say your name too (name tags)

- At The Halt
 - While seemingly unnatural, pivot yourself from side of horse to slightly in front
 - keeps horse from moving forward
 - especially important while participants do exercises
 - Used as a “breather” for horses
 - Do not hold horse head too tight; allow horse freedom to move head around
 - If horse gets too restless, rub neck, quietly reassure
 - can be an effective way to calm horse
 - Instructor will have you “walk it out” if needed
 - Can be tempting to turn around to talk with or assist participant but please do not
 - your responsibility as horse handler is to pay attention to horse & direction headed
 - listen to participant and/or SW for instructions, whether assistance is needed

- At The Walk
 - Don't forget there are SWs; don't get too close to side of things (rail, cones, other)
 - Be sure to maintain safe distances from other horses, behind or in front of you
 - an “elephant's length” or horse length between is a good gauge
 - If participant cannot maintain a safe distance, it is your job to assist
 - If a turn is needed for safety reasons, verbalize your intentions to whole team especially since a sudden turn can throw off a rider's balance and SWs need to be aware
 - Use common sense; if you see participant is struggling/unable to follow directions given by instructor it is your job to help
 - You are not always doing steering during lessons; you are at horse's head for safety

- At The Trot
 - Since it's faster than walking, leaders must be more alert to horse, rider, surroundings
 - Instructor will come over, if necessary, to give specific instructions to participant & you
 - Before starting trot, be sure participant and side walkers are ready
 - If horse is reluctant, start to walk a little faster and say “trot”
 - Most of our horses are good at voice commands, but some will need a little prodding
 - Do not pull on the lead
 - Do not run in front of horse, or immediately “walk” or stop / “whoa”
 - Stop should be done on a straight line so as not to unseat participant
 - Make transitions smooth, no sudden stops or starts; make sure the team is ready

- During Games
 - Leader is an important part of all games
 - Games are an important part of lessons; may be simple but could be more challenging
 - Instructor will provide participant & volunteers instructions for games to be played
 - Side walker will watch rider to see if they understand directions
 - Your enthusiasm is contagious, but remember it is rider playing not you 😊
 - Allow participant to do as much as possible by them self
 - During games, it can be exciting & team members can lose focus on safety
 - Make sure horses remain at a safe distance apart from each other

- Dismounting
 - Unless otherwise specified, instructor will dismount participant
 - You will receive specific instructions where to go--either ramp or remain in arena
 - Once again, keep dismount quiet by standing slightly to front of horse, turning toward horse's head while rider dismounts

- Leading Reminders
 - Do NOT wrap lead rope around hand
 - Though falls are exceedingly rare, they can happen
 - If your rider falls, your only concern is the horse you are leading; Do not panic!
 - Instructor will take care of student
 - If another rider falls and horse gets loose, **stop immediately** in front of your horse and hold horse as you would while mounting; do NOT let go of horse if possible
 - If rider falls close to horse, carefully walk horse away to allow care of rider
 - Keep attention on horse
 - Follow instructor's directions; listen to side walkers/leaders if assistance is needed
 - Improper leading can change movement of horse,
 - Improper leading can affect horse's physical health & participant's feel
 - Horses have two blind spots – directly in front of & directly behind body
 - Horses are protective of personal space; do not lead too close behind/beside another horse
 - Horses can sense what you are feeling, so it is important to stay calm
 - Use voice commands
 - Look up and where you are going, NOT at the ground
 - Allow the horse to have free head and neck movement
 - Tune in to the horse's body language so you will know when something is going wrong

Bottom line – always remain cautious around the horses.

While your skills and confidence may increase working with our four-legged staff, you should maintain a healthy respect for their size and be watchful of any sudden changes in behavior.

If you follow the safety procedures and remain alert to your surroundings and environment, you will be able to reduce the risks of working around the horses.

Don't hesitate to ask questions. If you are not comfortable completing a task, DON'T do it. Instead, ask someone to help you until you are comfortable. Your safety, the rider's safety and the horse's safety are of the utmost importance to us.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES / GROOMING & TACKING INFO

General Horse Rules at our Barn

- No horse/any treats permitted at any time without explicit permission
- No changes to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise program without permission
- Notify staff member immediately IF you see any injury or abnormality on any horse
- Do not enter pastures/fields that contain horses unless you have been asked to do so by staff
- Keep all gates closed and always latched
- Do not go into a horse's pasture without being asked by staff member
- Always remain cautious when working around horses
- Pay close attention to what you are doing and how horse is behaving or responding to you
- Each horse has designated halter and lead lines; always put on horse to walk
- Each horse has his/her own Grooming buckets; please do not share between horses
- While grooming, if you notice anything unusual about the horse, please alert the barn staff
- Report any injuries (no matter how small) to the barn staff or instructor on site
- Horse responds more favorably to calm environments than a rushed chaotic one

Grooming

Grooming is your time to learn and practice; if instructor is teaching a participant; pay attention 😊

Remember – Safety is most important for everyone involved!

Sample Grooming Tools used at Our Barn

	<p style="text-align: center;">CURRY COMB</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Brush the horse in circles to work up the dirt and hair</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">DANDY BRUSH (Hard brush)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Make short strokes to brush off the dirt</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">BODY BRUSH (Soft brush)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Make long strokes to smooth the hair</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">MANE & TAIL COMB or BRUSH</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Start at the end of the hair and progress up as each section is tangle-free</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">HOOF PICK</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pick up each hoof, while facing the rear of the horse, and pick out the foot going from heel to toe on either side of the frog</p>

Tacking Procedure

Once your horse is properly secured and clean, tacking is next.

Look at the lesson schedule to see what is exactly needed for your assigned horse.

Everything is labeled, marked, identified in some way.

We utilize both Western and English/Dressage Saddles so though things may be called different names, there are six basic items needed.

Learning this will come with more hands-on experience but here are some

Saddle pads. English or Western

Saddle- Saddles are labeled with "E" or "D" or "W" followed by a number (couple exceptions)

W = Western saddles

E = English saddles

D = Dressage saddles

Girth/Cinch- each is labeled with numbers & a letter which means the size & its type:

C = Cinch (belt used f/Western Saddles)

E = English girth

D = Dressage girth

Headpiece- either Halter/H, Side pull/SP (S, M, L) or Bridle/B (Most participants do not use)

Reins – there are a variety of reins that appeal to our riders sensory, cotton and leather

Some are referred to as Rainbow Reins/RR

English/Dressage

- Position Square Pad in front of the withers
- Put Shaped pad / *Riser* or *Gel pad* on top (if needed)
- Make sure stirrups are run up so they don't hit horse
- Grasp saddle and gently place it on top of the pads (higher on the withers)
- Pull saddle pads up into gullet of the saddle so not tight on the horse's back
- Make sure everything is even on both sides, gently slide everything back a few inches to smooth hair back
- Attach girth, starting with elastic end, place it on left side, eLastic on Left
- Put through girth loops on saddle pad (keeper)
- Buckle using first and third billet straps
- Go to the offside (right side) and place girth across belly behind armpits, going through keeper
- Tighten one hole at a time just enough to take slack out of girth.
- Only needs tight enough for saddle not to slip, leaving plenty of holes on left side to tighten evenly
- Final tightening will be made by the instructor

Western

- Place pad slightly forward and slide back to smooth hair, place stirrup on horn
- Gently lift saddle onto horse's back, pull front of pad up into gullet
- Attach cinch on right side
- From the right side, attach loop latigo twice through cinch ring and tie using 7-4-11 method.

You will learn more as you watch and do. Don't hesitate to ask for help. ☺

*****EMERGENCY INFO*****

All instructors are CPR and First Aid certified.
Please follow the instructor's directions in the event of a medical emergency.
There is also an emergency phone numbers and addresses in the tack room.
Though cell phones should not be used during lessons, don't hesitate to use for emergencies!

Emergency Dismount

If a situation occurs during a lesson which impacts the safety of a participant, a volunteer, or a horse, an **EMERGENCY DISMOUNT** may be needed.

The instructor will indicate this by saying "*dismount, dismount, feet out of stirrups*".

ALL horse handlers **HALT horses**, side walkers can prepare to execute an emergency dismount as follows:

- Both side walkers ensure student's feet are out of the stirrups
- LEFT side walker will become the primary person assisting the rider to the ground
- Right side walker assists rider with getting leg over the back of saddle
- LEFT side walker will help guide rider safely to ground and MOVE both of you AWAY from horse
- Horse handler will remain calm and at horse's head while side walkers/instructors execute dismount
- Horse handler will move horse away from people once safe to do so

If An Emergency Occurs While in a Lesson

- All horses will be halted
- All leaders will position themselves in front of horses; leaders are responsible ONLY for horses, not participant
- All side walkers will stabilize participants (arm over leg support), side walkers responsible ONLY for participant
- Instructor will supervise dismounting, either verbally or personally
- If circumstances call for arena evacuation, participant(s) will be escorted out first and then horses
- Instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance

Spooked Horse

- Should a horse become frightened, side walkers are to apply arm over thigh support hold to rider
- Horse handler should attempt to halt and calm horse
- Horse handler must always try to stay with horse
- Side walkers should attempt to stay with the rider and maintain a supportive hold
- Listen and follow directions from the instructor

Loose Horse

- DO NOT CHASE HORSE; if they feel they are being chased, they may run faster; horse are prey animals and use flight as a defense
- All other horses need to be stopped where they are; when horses are scared, they will seek comfort in another horse and may go to another horse
- Keep calm; horse will eventually stop
- If you are a SW in a lesson, stay with and calm your rider
- One person will be designated to approach horse to "catch" him/her
- Instructor will give instructions and who will be designated to catch horse
- If loose in barn, do not chase but alarm everyone by announcing "Loose Horse"; get to a safe area out of horse's path until horse stops
- If loose outside of fences/enclosed areas, close front gates until horse have been secured

Lesson Cancellations/Inclement Weather

- May need to cancel lessons based on availability of instructors, volunteers, horses or bad weather
- Any factor or situation considered a threat to safety of anyone will cancel operations
- Lessons will be cancelled if any of the following conditions occur
 - Okaloosa and/or Walton County Schools are cancelled
 - Tornado warnings/Severe Storm/Hurricanes, especially if 1 hour prior to lesson
 - Lighting during mounted activities will change to indoor/safer activity when needed

Please consider the weather at your home may be different than the weather at HHS.

In the event we must close due to weather, every attempt will be made to notify Volunteers at least two hours in advance to their scheduled volunteer time either with mass messaging, direct text message to you or a phone call.

We apologize in advance if we do not inform you in time as many, many calls must be made to both participants and their team.

First Aide

- Both an Equine First Aid kit & Human First Aid kit located in tack building
- Best to keep distance between each first aid kit
- Should not be blocked by anything

Volunteer Comments & Feedback

Instructors and staff depend on all volunteers for ongoing observations so please share your ideas, questions and concerns to help us be the best therapeutic program possible. We really do take your input seriously. There is a suggestion box in the Tack room if you wish to remain anonymous.

All final decisions and strategies will be determined by the instructor/barn staff and/or CEO.

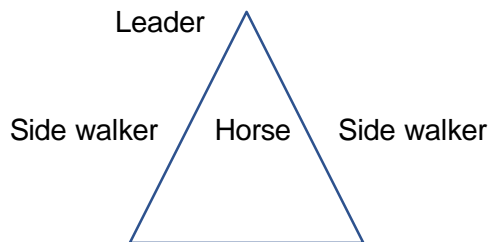
VOLUNTEER CONDUCT/SIGNATURE PAGE

Congratulations and thank you! You have completed the Written Volunteer Training!

The next step is the in-person orientation which will better prepare you in carrying out what you have read in this handbook.

You may have years of horse experience, or you may be meeting horses for the first time. Healing Hoof Steps horses have a special job, and you will have a special role as a key part of a safe and successful lesson team.

The Lesson Volunteer Team



Please check the Volunteer bulletin board and Facebook for dates, announcements, or updates.

As Volunteers, you are representatives of our organization.

All Volunteers are expected to set a good example for participants.

Inappropriate language, disruptive behavior or behavior which may threaten the safety of animals or others will not be tolerated. After a first attempt to correct the behavior, offenders will be asked to leave the premises by a staff member and withdrawal from the program will be immediate.

Please sign, date, and return this page to the Office Manager or Volunteer Coordinator at office@healinghoofsteps.org or susan@healinghoofsteps.org.

Volunteer Agreement: I have read and understand the Volunteer Handbook. I agree to the rules and terms, and I understand that failure to follow these rules and terms may result in loss of Volunteer privileges.

Print: _____

Signature: _____
(if under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign)

Date: _____

**Thank you for choosing our Volunteer Team!
We couldn't do it without you!!**