

Daily exercises for your horse

Be smart. Go easy. Start slowly. Think “loosen, warm, supple, cool”— in that order.

Walk to loosen. Easy walking is the part of a warm-up many experts stress the most. Put your horse on a loose rein and in as relaxed a frame as possible to loosen him up. Use your whole arena, or work in extra-large circles to keep stress on joints and tendons/ligaments low. Allow 5 minutes at this easy walk, more if your horse is older and/or especially stiff. Like aging human athletes, older horses need extra time to get the blood flowing and the muscles/tendons ready to work.

Trot and canter to warm. After that critical walking period, ease into a trot to get your horse’s blood flowing and heart rate up. This begins the actual warming up of your horse’s muscular-skeletal system. Continue to use your whole arena and large circles as you work for a few minutes at a trot, then advance to a steady canter.

Bend to supple. When you can feel your horse settling in and warming to his work at the trot and canter, begin some bending to further stretch and supple his muscles. Make your circles smaller, and add serpentes, figure-8s, or other exercises to the mix. Be sure to work equally in both directions, so you supple both sides equally. After a few minutes of bending, your horse should be ready, mind and body, to focus on whatever you want to work on in earnest.

Cool to recover. Ensure you finish with an easy walk to reduce lactic acid build up in his muscles. Recovery via an easy walk also allows his heart rate and breathing to slowly return to normal while he cools down. Cooling down properly ensures ligaments and muscles relax slowly, assisting in the prevention of injury. Always hose down his legs and saddle areas (including the girth path) to assist with muscle/ligament relaxation and sweat (salt) removal.

Short on time? Just warm up and cool down (never go straight into jumping or general riding). On days when you don’t have a lot of time, use the warm-up/cool-down as your saddle time. You’ll keep your horse tuned up and avoid the risk of injury—so you can ride again tomorrow.

And remember some ground work occasionally (junior handler, show horse or just having a wander together around the paddock) is not only good for your horse, but good for you too.

Plan for success

Horse: _____

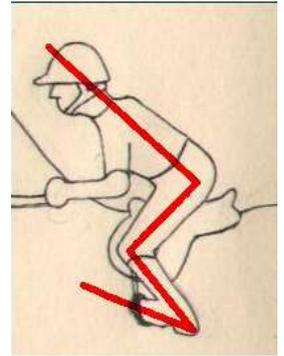
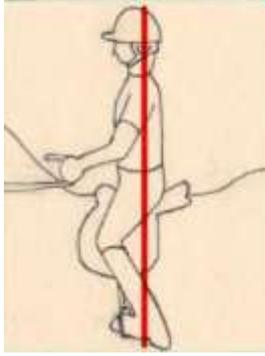
Discipline: _____

Aim: _____

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

**IMPROVE YOUR RIDING POSTURE, STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE AND
INCREASE YOUR BALANCE**

DAILY EXERCISES FOR EQUESTRIANS



Core Strengthening exercises

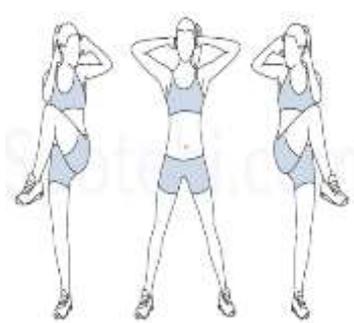
Lunges



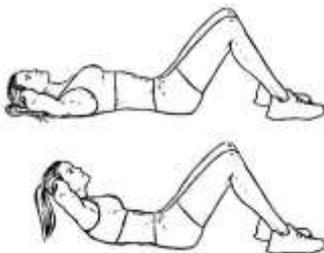
Side bends



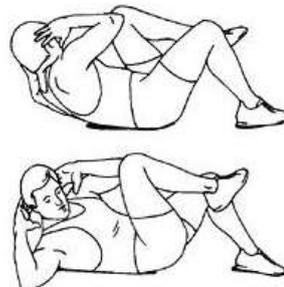
Knee to elbow



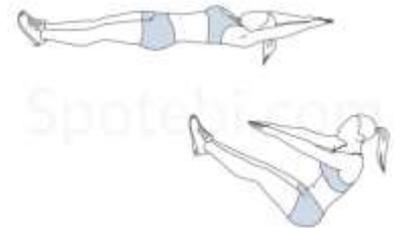
Crunches



Twisting Crunches



Jack-knife Crunches



Achilles and calf stretches

