



Grooming Your Horse

The Professional Way

A series of 4 articles by Michael Glenn – H-10 Australia

Part 3 - Rugging

Thanks very much for subscribing to our 4 Part Horse Grooming Course. This course is written by a professional show horse competitor and covers the basics of the horse grooming process. By following this course, you'll learn how important grooming your horse really is, and you'll find out the best way to do it for really professional results.

The fact is that most of us horse lovers don't groom our horses properly. This could be due to lots of things - time, motivation, circumstances etc. What we need to realise is that time with our horse is bonding time. Remember that in the wild, horses groom each other and that's the basis for their relationships with each other. If we don't take the trouble to groom our horses properly, then we can't expect to forge the bonds we want between us and if this doesn't happen then we can't expect the partnership benefits we look for either. If we take the time, if we have the patience, if we use the right techniques AND the right products, then we'll forge a bond of trust between us and our horses that will last forever.

Domesticated horses rely on humans to provide the opportunity for skin care, unlike the wild horse where they have the opportunity to groom each other! Grooming should be incorporated into the daily routine of owning and managing your horse to maintain its health and happiness. This practice increases the circulation to the skin, releasing necessary oils that promote a vibrant and lustrous coat. Daily grooming allows the coat to be shed gradually, easing the burden of trying to remove long hair and excess dead skin. A horse that is worked regularly should be thoroughly and properly groomed at all times.

Grooming not only allows us to give our horses a shiny, short, healthy coat, it also gives us the opportunity to go over our beautiful animals from head to toe, to notice any abnormalities such as cuts, wounds, irritations, fevers that your horse may have developed. The H-10 product range for first aid, H-10 Ointment and Spray is perfect to treat these problems. Go to www.h-10.com.au

Stages Of Grooming - Rugging

RUGGING & RUGS –

Rugging - Horses should be rugged according to their environment, season, level of work, feeding patterns and whether they are stabled or kept in a

paddock. Rugging practices must be taken into account when you are caring for the health and happiness of your horse.

Poor rugging practices create a source of discomfort for your horse and can often be cruel. An owner may not see it as intentional act, however keeping your horse rugged all the time, irrespective of temperature changes can be highly irresponsible, i.e. leaving heavy weight rugs on in winter temperatures that are still in the mid twenties!

Horses are mammals, and all mammals to remain healthy must be able to maintain their body temperature within a narrow range to avoid metabolic problems. Certainly they can feel the cold like us; however they compensate for this by growing a coat in winter and then fluffing it if necessary, so trapping air to create extra warmth. But horses can also get very hot!

Horses, like us humans sweat to keep themselves cool. However, the evaporative cooling effects of sweating won't work effectively if a horse has a rug on. Overheating can lead to issues such as Heat Stress if your horse or horses cannot lose enough body heat due to impeding rugs. This in turn can lead to health problems such as dehydration, loss of electrolytes, lack of Vitamin D and possibly even to an inability to sweat!

Therefore, if you feel hot so too will your horse!

Do not try and substitute grooming for rugging and always take a practical and sensible approach to rugging! Good feed and hard work along with this sensible approach to rugging will assist you and your horse maintain a healthy coat throughout the year. Remember, rugging is no substitute for adequate food in keeping your paddocked horse in top condition in winter, or in giving horses in work greater performance.

Rugs & Rug Types – A good horse rug should fit properly and be suitably lined on the shoulders to avoid rubbing. There is an array of rugs ranging from heavy canvas to ultra lightweight cotton or satin fly sheets. A standard canvas paddock rug is waterproof and lined. Lighter fabrics can be used for paddocks and can be bought as a rip stop product. Quilted and fibre filled rugs are also available and price will always reflect quality! Tail and neck pieces on some rugs are added for protection and warmth. Wool or wool/synthetic mixtures are used for stable rugs or blankets.

Hoods also come in a variety of materials for both paddock use and stable use. They should also be used sensibly and fitted accordingly to the horse's size, and should be secured properly to the rug.

If you want to learn the secrets of a master horse trainer, then download a complete chapter of his course FREE here:

<http://www.h-10.com.au/beery/indexjb.htm>