



# Grooming Your Horse

## *The Professional Way*

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

## *Part 4 - Trimming & Clipping*

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.

**D**omesticated 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.

### *Stages Of Grooming - Trimming & Clipping*

**TRIMMING and CLIPPING** – In the wild, horses have the ability to shed their coats naturally, assisted by climatic change. Domesticated horses need help by their owners to remove any excess hair. Horses in competition from pony club to elite performance level, require further areas of excess hair to be removed in conjunction with having a short, shiny coat. Particularly around the head, the areas that are trimmed accentuate and define the horse head and overall appearance. The owner of the show horse or professional competition horse should be aware of the correct grooming, clipping and etiquette that reflects excellence in the care of their horse.

It should be known that there are a variety of clippers available to remove hair in different areas. Safety and precaution must always be taken into consideration when trimming your horse, especially if it's the horse's 'first time' or if the horse is young. Rub the clippers over the horse's body whilst

still switched off to get them used to the size and feel of the clippers. If need be, let the horse have some hay or other feed to ease its mind. Following this, switch on the clippers and allow the horse to stand until it is comfortable with the sound. Rub the clippers over the horse again to gain its confidence, trust and acceptance of the clippers. Always keep blades well oiled and if possible have someone to stand with the horse too.

Form the bridle path – this is dependant on the breed. A horse with a shorter neck should have a short bridle path and vice versa for long necks. Start by clipping downwards on the mane, from a point that is directly even with the back of the ear. The bridle path edges can be neatened by turning the clipper blade at right angles to the mane and making a defined edge.

The ears can be trimmed by folding in half vertically and holding in one hand. Pinch the ear shut and by using a finishing trimmer and remove the hair from the edges of the ear. Start at the top edge of the ear and clip to the bottom.

Remove the inside hair of the ear of a show horse. You can finish the ear by clipping the back side of the ear, holding it flat and clipping against the direction of the hair.

Next, the muzzle. Begin by trimming the longer hairs. A finishing trimmer can be used for this. Trim carefully around the nostrils and edges of the horse's mouth. To clip the underside of the muzzle, work against the coat up to the throat and finish by blending off at the cheek muscle. Long hairs around the eyes can also be trimmed off if you choose to. Always take your time when clipping/trimming around the head, paying attention to eyes and ears as these are highly sensitive parts of horses.

Legs require trimming as well, another necessary part of making your horse look its best. Remove the coat just above the coronet band, clipping against the coat. The fetlock hair over the ankle can be clipped off too, along with any excess longer hairs that are on the back of the leg. Clip against the fall of the hair, up from the ergot mark on the back of the ankle to the knee. White socks can be clipped out completely taking care only to clip out the white area.

Horses in top competition that have the coronet hair and fetlock hair removed should have their legs towel dried after washing or being hosed off to avoid fungal infections from excess water. If any problems occur, try any of the H-10 First Aid range (ointment or spray) to treat these. [www.h-10.com.au](http://www.h-10.com.au)

To clip your horse's tail at the dock or to braid it entirely is an individual decision. Seek the advice of an expert prior to clipping a tail as this can be executed well or very poorly!

Depending on climate, stable conditions, feeding, rugging and level of exercise, body clips can be used to remove body coat hair that is unwanted in winter months. It aids to assist areas that sweat the most.

For more information on body clipping have a look at this link:  
[www.horsemagazine.com/CLINIC/B/BROWN\\_ROBYN/clipping.htm](http://www.horsemagazine.com/CLINIC/B/BROWN_ROBYN/clipping.htm)