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34 epic
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PONY NUTS HAS A LESSON WITH JOE STOCKDALE



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Add rhythm to your pony's paces, pb

WIN

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SEE P12

SUPER-CUTE POSTERS!
SEE P41



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YOUR MAG...

PONY Team adventures

This month...

We've come up with a brilliant idea to help you focus on your pony's schooling over the winter months! In this issue we're giving you the lowdown on the scales of training, which is an epic way of making your pony awesome at flatwork. We're also going to talk you through each of the training steps it involves, starting with putting rhythm in his paces. Turn to p6 to find out all you need to know!

We were super-excited to be invited along to watch social media star Pony Nuts have a lesson with top showjumper Joe Stockdale. We learnt loads of great tips, which we're sharing with you on p10.

Are you feeling Christmassy yet? Well, you will be after reading our brilliant festive features! You can browse for your perfect present from Santa in our gift guide that starts on p50, and find out how to make the best-ever tree decorations on p64!

Plus don't forget to take the latest Pony Academy test on p38, to be in with the chance of winning a certificate!

Jo
XX



Our pony Christmas tree decs are totally awesome! See p64.

MEET THE PONY TEAM

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DIGITAL MARKETING



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CAN'T FIND
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magazine

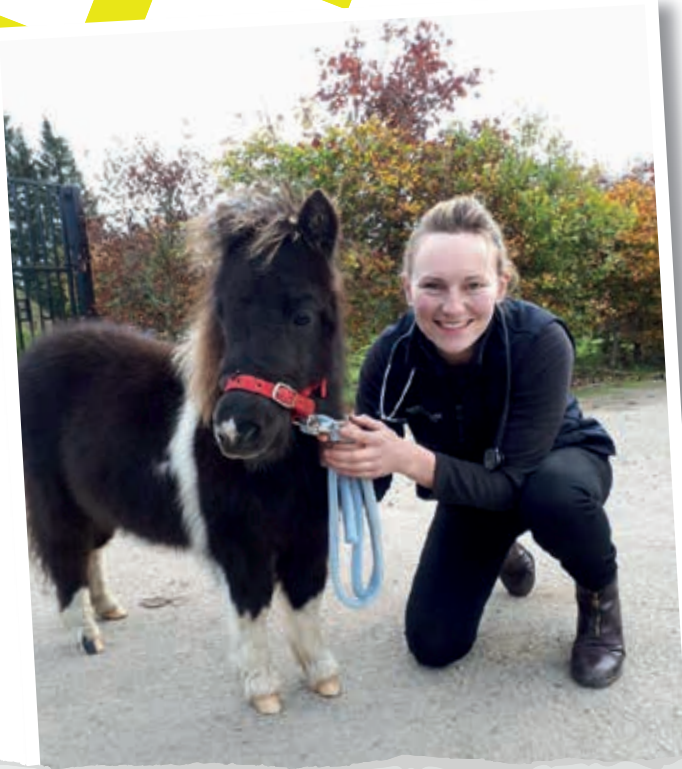
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NOSY PONY!

Horsey news, views and goss!



READY, SET, VET!

An equine vet has been busy raising lots of money for charity! Mairi Sinclair, who's from Aberdeen, set herself the challenge to run 100k during October. Her goal was to raise as much money as she could for the Equine Grass Sickness Fund, as she's seen first-hand how devastating the disease can be.

"Grass sickness is a horrendous condition and, where I work in

Aberdeen, there's an increased risk than in other places," said Mairi.

Through her Just Giving page, Mairi's raised over £1,500, which she says is way more than she expected! Grass sickness research is ongoing, and the money will help the charity learn more about it. Why not take on your own challenge to raise money for charity? It's a great way to help your fave animal, and stay fit, too!

5 FAST FACTS

Learn all about Spanish horses.

- 1** If a horse is a purebred Andalusian they will be known as a PRE. This stands for Pura Raza Española, meaning pure Spanish horse.
- 2** Lipizzaners are well-known for performing intricate dressage moves at the famous Spanish Riding School in Vienna.
- 3** Around 80% of PRE horses are grey, but they can be bay or black, too.
- 4** Andalusians are often used in films because they're so intelligent and calm to work with, not to mention beautiful to look at!
- 5** Aside from performing classical dressage moves, Spanish horses can be seen doing loads of different activities, including showjumping, cross-country and even barrel racing!



PONY HOROSCOPES

Is your pony's star sign Capricorn? Find out what's in store for him this month.

23 December – 19 January

Capricorn ponies are very kind and caring, and love to please.

Your pony's sure to be on his best behaviour this month, so make sure you reward him with lots of cuddles, and maybe even sneak him an extra treat or two! Remember, the more time you spend with him, the stronger your bond will become.

Next month: Aquarius

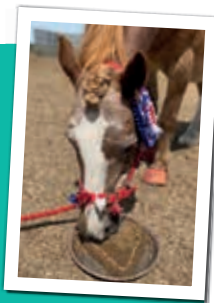
STEPPING BACK

Beloved Redwings' pony Dolly is retiring from her duties as an adoption star. Dolly has been with the charity since 1998, after being rescued from a ditch where she'd been stuck for three days! A firm favourite with visitors, she was part of the adoption scheme for 15 years.

Now, at the grand age of 25, Dolly is putting her hooves up and enjoying a slower pace of life.

Debbie Scott, Redwings' Head of Fundraising, said: "Dolly's delighted countless visitors with her friendly nature, and has helped raise money for her fellow ponies, too!"

Visitors can still see Dolly at the Sanctuary, even though she's no longer available to adopt.



A CHRISTMAS DRESSAGE TREAT

There's some great news for dressage fans! The sport's top riders will be taking part in an exciting celebration just before Christmas.

The LeMieux Grand Prix National Championships are set to take place at Hartpury College, Glos, from 21-22 December. There'll be a Grand Prix on the Monday featuring 25-30 riders, then the top 15 will go through to a Grand Prix Freestyle the following day. The horse and rider with the highest combined score will be crowned the overall champions!

You'll be able to enjoy all of the dressage action because it'll be live streamed on Horse & Country TV. For more info, visit: britishdressage.co.uk



RIDING OUT THE STORM



Splash and mum Marina.

Four donkeys who were rescued during the height of Storm Dennis are thriving at The Donkey Sanctuary. Marina, Splash, Storm and Dennis were found living in a waterlogged field strewn with

rubbish and pieces of glass. All four were very underweight, and Marina had severely overgrown hooves that were causing her lots of pain. She also had a foal, Splash, with her.

After the rescue, the donkeys were treated by a vet and had their feet trimmed. They're now living at the charity's Sanctuary in Devon, where their health has improved and they're growing in confidence.

Adele Crompton, Donkey Welfare Advisor at the charity, said: "If it had not been for our intervention, they would not have been able to survive."

Ponies usually sleep for around

3

hours per day.

THE MISADVENTURES OF CHARLIE!



ON THE SCALE

Learn all about the scales of training

Ever heard of the scales of training? Well, they're the important stepping stones that riders use when they're schooling a pony for dressage, and judges use them to score a test, too. The idea is that you follow each scale in order, to set a fab foundation for your pony so you can score super-high marks. Plus, it'll help his body become strong and supple. Read on to find out more, including how to ace the first scale, which is rhythm.

COLLECTION

STRAIGHTNESS

IMPULSION

CONTACT

SUPPLENESS

RHYTHM

THE GREAT PYRAMID

It can help to think of the scales of training in a pyramid shape, so you work from bottom to top! Rhythm comes first, because it should be the very foundation of everything you do with your pony. Then you move up through suppleness, contact, impulsion, straightness all the way to collection.

Knowing which order the scales come in is really useful, because you can work on exercises that'll help improve each level. It's a great way to keep track of your schooling progress, too.

DID YOU KNOW?

The scales of training aren't just useful for dressage. Working through them will come in handy when you jump, too, as it'll teach your pony to be responsive to your aids and help him stay balanced round a course.





DID YOU KNOW?

The scales of training were invented by the German cavalry to school their military horses, and now they're used all over the world.

NAIL EACH SCALE

Find out what it takes to ace all six scales of training...

1. RHYTHM

Having a good rhythm means your pony can walk, trot and canter in a regular beat without getting faster or slower. He'll need to have enough energy to keep moving forward, but not so much that he races off!

2. SUPPLENESS

Once you've got rhythm sussed, focus on getting your pony to feel more flexible by doing bending exercises, and allowing him to stretch his neck down and out. He'll also need to stay relaxed through his whole body to be truly supple.

3. CONTACT

While you're getting your pony nice and elastic, he'll soon start working in a natural outline, which is scale three. A contact will happen when he's working through his whole body and you have a good connection from his mouth, through the reins to your hands.

4. IMPULSION

Now you can add some extra energy to the mix to really make your pony's paces sparkle! Impulsion happens when he's engaging his hindquarters to push himself along. It doesn't mean he goes faster, it's when he moves with more power and expression.

5. STRAIGHTNESS

To be able to move super-straight, your pony will need to be really balanced. The earlier scales will help prepare him for this, but you'll have to ride extra accurately, too.

6. COLLECTION

The final scale of training is something that can take years to achieve. To collect his paces and take shorter steps, your pony will need to be able to sit his weight back onto his hindquarters and become super-light on his forehand.

TURN OVER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RHYTHM...



SCALES OF TRAINING

PART ONE

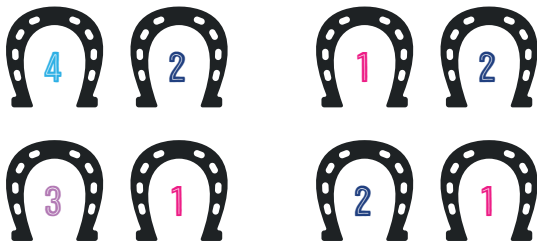
THE RHYTHM SECTION

Now you've learnt all about what the scales of training are, we're going to talk you through the first one, which is rhythm. Acing this scale will be an awesome start your schooling journey!



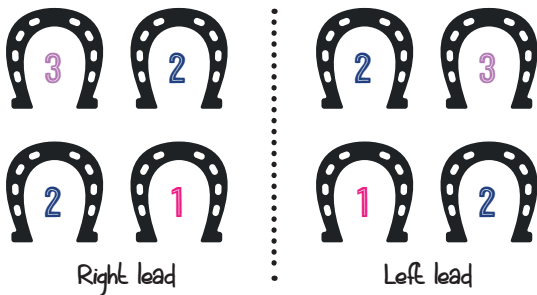
ON THE RIGHT FOOT

It's really useful to learn the order in which your pony's hooves touch the ground, for all of his gaits. To have perfect rhythm, they'll always need to fall in the right order.



Walk is four-time which means you can count four beats for every step he takes (1-2-3-4).

Trot is two-time, so you can count two beats in a stride (1-2-1-2). His legs will move in diagonal pairs.



Canter is three-time, so you can count three beats in a stride (1-2-3). Remember, though, that the order of his footfalls will change depending on which rein he's on, and there'll be a moment of suspension where all four feet are off the ground.

You need to make sure his legs are moving in a regular tempo

SET THE TEMPO

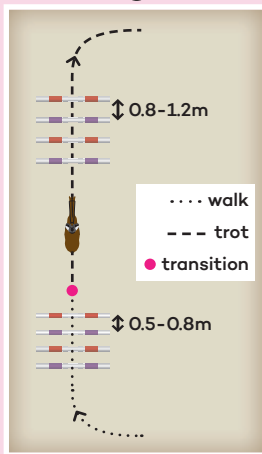
Once your pony's footfalls are in order, you need to make sure his legs are moving in a regular tempo – he shouldn't speed up or slow down within a pace (unless you ask him to!). A good way to practise this is in rising trot. You can set the tempo with your rising by counting 1-2-1-2 in your head, and try not to rise any quicker or slower than the rhythm you started with.



EXERCISE

IN POLE POSITION

A great way to encourage your pony to find his rhythm is to pop over a line of poles in walk and trot. Not only will he have to move his legs in a regular tempo, he'll also need to lift them a bit higher, which'll help lengthen his stride and make his paces look a little more flashy!



Set it up

You'll need 6-8 poles for this exercise. Place some of the poles on the long side near K, and the others by H. Stride out the first set of poles for walk (0.5-0.8m), and the second set for trot (0.8-1.2m). Leave enough room between each set of poles for you to make a change of pace.

TOP TIP

You can make the exercise more challenging by leaving a smaller gap between the two sets of poles. It means your pony will need to be super-responsive when you ask for the transition, so he can get the correct striding for each set.

How to ride it

1. Start in walk on the right rein, and go over the first set of poles. Encourage your pony to take you forward in a marching walk. Keep your legs wrapped around him and have a steady contact on the reins, so he doesn't get slower or quicker.
2. After stepping over the last pole, ask him to pick up trot.
3. Trot through the next line of poles and use your rising to keep his rhythm consistent.
4. Do the exercise once or twice more, then change the rein.
5. On this rein, you'll go over the trotting poles first, then make a transition to walk before riding over the other poles.
6. Ride it like this a couple of times, before letting your pony have a break on a long rein.

PROBLEM BUSTER

Finding it tricky to encourage your pony to stay in a consistent rhythm? Here are some ideas to help!

Fault: My pony gets faster and faster in trot.

Fix: Try to keep your rising slow to set the rhythm you want – don't speed up with him! Also, riding walk-trot-walk transitions every 5-10 strides will help because he won't get the chance to go too fast. Plus, it'll get him listening to you, and he'll start waiting for your next instruction rather than rushing off.

Fault: My pony's canter feels like it has four beats, rather than three.

Fix: It sounds like he might be lacking in energy, and doesn't have enough power in the canter to get three clear beats. Have a go at pushing him forward down the long side of the arena so he's taking longer strides, then sit taller and deeper in the saddle to collect him up a little round the short side. Keeping the power you created down the long side will help bring a bit more lift to his canter round the short side.

NEXT ISSUE: SNAZZY SUPPLENESS

LOADS TO LEARN



Social media star Pony Nuts has a lesson with Joe Stockdale

I'm a big fan of showjumper Joe Stockdale, so you can imagine how excited I was to be invited to have a lesson with him! Here's how it went and some of the awesome tips I picked up from such a brilliant rider and teacher!

TOP TIP

Always be consistent when you're training your pony, and do things in the same way. Then he'll always understand what you want him to do.

DREAM TEAM

I almost missed out on my place in the lesson because my event horse, Bella, went lame and needed some time off. Then, amazingly, a lovely rider called Alice Goring phoned me and asked if I'd like to take her eventer, The Little Frenchman, along instead.

Finley, as he's known for short, is an incredible horse, who's only around 15hh but competes at Advanced level. I just couldn't believe my luck and, of course, I said yes straightaway!



CHECKING IT OUT

After warming Finley up, Joe talked me through some of the important things I need to have in place before I even start thinking about going over a fence – Joe calls it his jumping checklist! First, he asked me to make sure Finley was listening to me, so I rode lots of transitions to get his attention! Then, I had to think about Finley's canter, so it had plenty of energy for jumping and stayed in an even rhythm, too. Straightness was the next thing on the list, because Joe said if I can't achieve this in my flatwork, I'll struggle to get a perfect approach to fences.



BE ON TARGET

When we were ready to begin jumping, Joe asked me to pop Finley over a small, easy upright fence. He told me to make sure I was super-straight and aim for the middle of the fence, to give Finley the best chance of clearing it. He also reminded me how important it is to always ride straight after landing, too, especially when you're just jumping since fences in training. If you let your pony drift to one side, it'll start to become a habit that'll make riding a course really difficult.

COURSE PLAN

After going over the upright a few times, Joe set me a short course to jump. My challenge was to keep Finley's canter rhythm all the way round, and jump the exact centre of each fence.

Joe reminded me to keep Finley moving forward in the canter, as it would help me stay straight. Slowing down to try and correct your line will just make your horse wobble even more! We also talked about not confusing an energetic canter with speed, to make sure I didn't rush Finley out of his rhythm. It's a bit trickier when you've not ridden a horse before, but I soon got the hang of it. Of course, Finley made things really easy for me!



TURNING POINT

Riding good turns in showjumping is so important. It'll set you up for the perfect approach to your next fence, and can save you loads of time in a jump off. Joe's advice was to ride more of a direct turn than a curved line because it gives you the best chance to get straight for the next fence. Otherwise your pony might drift out too far, and you'll either end up coming into the fence on an angle or waste precious time correcting your line.

FOR THE HIGH JUMP

We rounded off the session by popping over a few higher fences, and it was incredible to feel the power Finley has. We were jumping up to 1.10m and he wasn't even having to put in much effort at all to clear the fences! He's just so awesome.

A day to remember

Wow, the lesson with Joe was the most fun I've had in a long time and it made my entire year! Finley was amazing to ride, and I'm so grateful to Alice for lending him to me. He made things really easy for me, but I still learned loads from Joe and I found his advice about proper preparation and having a checklist especially useful. It helped me work out how to get the best from Finley before we popped over any fences, and it's something I'm definitely going to use with my own horses!

Thanks to **Jump4Joy** for their help with this feature. Visit: showjumps.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Straightness and rhythm are crucial, whether you're jumping 40cm or 1.20m.

WIN

A MINI-JUMPS SET
AND COMPETITION
TIMER KIT!

THREE LUCKY READERS
WILL WIN A NATIONAL
SET FROM MINI-JUMPS,
PLUS A COMPETITION
TIMER KIT!

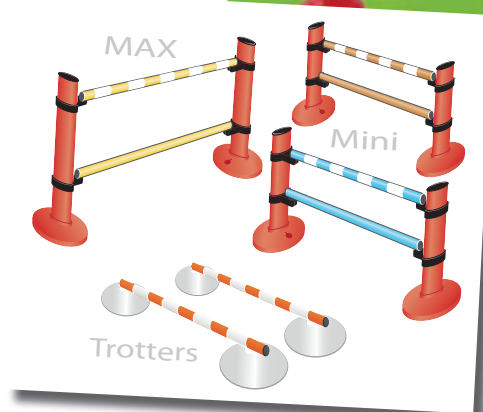


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3
WINNERS!

QUESTION
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ENJOY THE RIDE

Have fun on a winter's hack

Going for a hack's the perfect way to relax after a busy week at school, and it's great for spending quality time with your fave pony, too. Just because it's cold and wet in winter, doesn't mean you can't enjoy an epic ride out. All it takes is a bit of careful planning!

WRAP UP WARM

Your hack won't be much fun if you're freezing cold and your feet and hands feel like ice blocks, so dress for the weather conditions. Layering up is a great idea, so try to wear a few thinner tops rather than one bulky jumper. It'll trap warm air between the layers and you should find it easier to move around, too.

Don't forget your gloves, and keep your toes toasty with some warm socks, or invest in a pair of thermal riding boots! If rain's forecast, cover up with a waterproof coat and some over-trousers that are designed for riding in.



DID YOU KNOW?

Lights can make you extra visible, so look out for hi-vis gear that has some built in.

TOP TIP

Layering can work a treat for your feet, too! Two pairs of thinner socks can keep you warmer than one thicker pair.

WATCH THE WEATHER

It may sound a bit annoying, but you'll need to plan your winter rides around the weather. Going out in light rain is OK, and it's fine to ride if it's a bit chilly, but it's not safe to hack in bad weather conditions. Heavy rain makes it harder for motorists to see you, and likewise riding in fog's a definite no-no. It's best to avoid windy days, too, as some ponies find it super-spooky, plus there could be loads of debris flying around.

If it's frosty, it's really important to postpone your ride until later in the day when the sun's come out and thawed any ice. Remember, though, that ice can linger in some places where trees stop the sun reaching the ground, so choose which route you take with care.



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Leave enough time so you get back to the yard before it's dark. Winter days are really short, and the light can start to fade as early as 3pm, especially if it's a gloomy day.



TOP TIP

Always wear hi-vis or light-coloured gloves to make sure motorists can see your hand signals. Dark gloves or sleeves can blend into the background and go unnoticed.

BE VISIBLE

Wearing hi-vis is important whenever you go out for a hack, so you can be clearly seen by motorists and other bridgeway users. Try to make both you and your pony visible from all angles, so pop on a hatband as well as a tabard, and consider a tail guard, ear bonnet, noseband cover, martingale and leg boots for your pony.

SHARE YOUR PLANS

Whatever the time of year, always tell someone where you're going and what time you expect to be back. Try to give them a brief rundown of the route you're going to take, just in case they need to come and find you. You should do this even if you're riding out with someone else. Make sure you keep them updated if you get delayed or change your plans, so they don't worry.

GO FOR GOOD GROUND

If you can, steer clear of bridgeways that tend to get really muddy in winter. Your pony won't enjoy wading through boggy ground, plus it'll risk pulling off his boots and even his shoes! Also, using paths when they're wet can spoil them for the rest of the year. If you don't have many other routes nearby, why not ask a parent if they'll box you and your pony out to access tracks that'll be drier and more fun to ride on?



STEP

IT UP

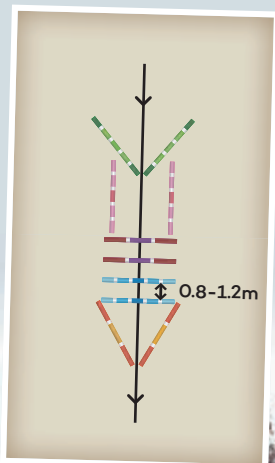


This Esme and Casper school over a fun pole layout

Polework's so much fun, and Casper loves it as much as I do! There are loads of awesome ideas out there for you to try, but I really love this one because there's lots of different ways you can ride it. It's really useful for improving your pony's suppleness, straightness, rhythm and balance, and it'll test your accuracy as a rider, too!

TOP TIP

If riding through the whole layout in one go seems a bit daunting, build it up step by step. Start with just the trotting poles, then add the triangle and so on.



SET IT UP

You'll need 10 poles to create this layout, which looks a bit like a fish! Start by creating the triangle at the top, then add three poles that are all one trot stride apart, which is approx 0.8-1.2m. Position two poles vertically on either side of your last trotting pole, then use two more to create the V-shape at the bottom of your layout.

TOP TIP

Walk your pony through the pole layout first, to help him work out where to place his feet.



TOP TIP

To help you stay straight, look up and ahead to something in the distance, such as a fence or tree!

HOW TO RIDE IT

To practise straightness and rhythm, ride from one end of the layout to the other. You can do this from either direction, but start at the V end, as the poles will funnel your pony forward and help keep him straight. Make sure your pony's moving in an energetic trot, and look up and ahead so he knows where you want him to go. You can widen your hands a little and wrap your legs around his sides to help stop him wobbling. Then have a go at approaching over the point of the triangle, which will really test your accuracy!

TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH

There are a few other fun things you can do with this pole layout. Why not ask for a transition to walk or halt in the triangle or box, or ride a different change of pace in each one? You could weave around the middle poles in a serpentine shape, which will be great for suppleness as well as straightness, and enter and exit the triangle and box from different directions.



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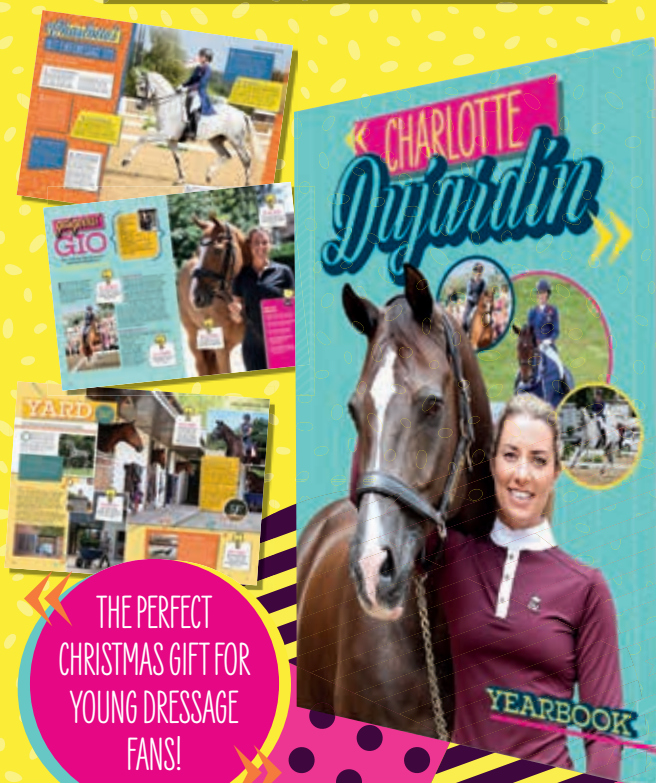
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LEG LIFTER

10

MINUTE EXERCISE

PONY
magazine

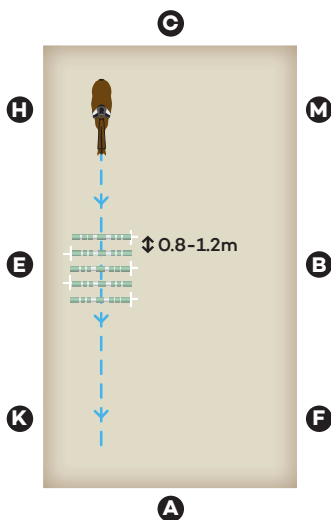
Build your pony's strength with raised trot poles

Working over raised poles is really useful for your fave pony. He'll need to think about where he's placing his feet, which will make

him more careful. Plus, he'll have to push from his hindquarters, which will strengthen his muscles and encourage him to take longer, higher steps.

SET IT UP

Set out a row of four or five trotting poles, which should be 0.8-1.2m apart, depending on your pony's stride length. You'll also need the same number of low blocks or jump wings to raise the poles with.



HOW TO RIDE IT

1. Start with the poles flat on the ground and, when your pony's nicely warmed up, trot over them to make sure they're correctly spaced for his stride length. Approach in an energetic trot and aim for the middle of each one.
2. Ask a helper to raise one end of the last pole by approx 15cm, then trot over them all again. Keep everything the same, but cuddle your pony's sides with your legs to keep him going forward with lots of energy.
3. Now raise the opposite side of your second to last pole and, as before, trot over all of them.
4. Continue until one side of every pole is raised. You should really feel your pony's legs lifting when he trots through the whole line. To help him lift his back to clear the poles, bring your weight out of the saddle so you're in your jumping position.



TOP TIP

This exercise will be hard work for your pony, so only work on it for 10-15mins, and give him plenty of walk breaks.

DID YOU KNOW?

Raised poles can improve your dressage scores because they'll help give your pony's trot the wow factor!

SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

Find out why going to a riding school's an awesome thing to do

Are you a regular pupil at your local riding school? Well then, you'll probably be able to relate to all these fab reasons why going to one's so great! Whether you're just starting out, or you're a keen rider who's jumping and cantering confidently, riding schools have something for everyone!

1. YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE WITH PONIES

If you absolutely love ponies, then a riding school's the ideal place for you to be. You'll certainly get your pony fix each week, and are sure to develop a special bond with your fave school pony. You'll be spoilt for choice, though, as there'll be so many gorgeous ponies there that you may not be able to pick just one fave!

2. IT'LL GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE

Having a weekly lesson with a qualified instructor will help you become mega confident in your riding. You'll be able to get the basics nailed down while riding a calm and reliable schoolmaster. Once you've got the foundations in place, there's no telling what awesome things you'll be able to achieve in the future!

TOP TIP

It's a good idea to have a few private lessons to start with, to get all the basics in place. Then you can join a group when you're ready.



3.

YOU CAN LEARN LOADS

There are lots of ways you can learn all about your fave pony at a riding school, aside from just riding. You may get the chance to tack up or untack him before or after your lesson, and the grooms will show you how to do it correctly. Some riding schools even have their own Pony Club, so you can sign up and go along to rallies to earn badges for stable management and riding.



4. IT'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO OWNING A PONY

Ever heard of an own-a-pony day? Well, lots of riding schools offer them and it's where you get to look after your fave school pony as if he was really yours! You're sure to pick up loads of pony care know-how, and you'll get to ride lots, too! It's a great way to learn what's involved in pony ownership ready for when you can do it for real.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some riding schools offer part-loan schemes for their ponies. If your parents agree, it's the perfect stepping stone to owning.

5.

YOU'LL MAKE NEW FRIENDS

One of the best things about going to a riding school is there'll be loads of like-minded people who love ponies just as much as you do! You're sure to get talking with some of the other riders in your group and, if you go to a pony morning or pony day, you'll have tons of time to get to know them even better.



TOP TIP

To find a local riding school, visit bhs.org.uk or abrs-info.org

6.

IT'S LOTS OF FUN!

Above all, going to a riding school's amazing fun! You might get to do flatwork or polework one week, showjumping the next, and maybe even go on a hack, too! You'll have something epic to look forward to each week, and the best part is you'll be hanging out with your fave animal the whole time you're there!

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A-Z of BUYING A PONY

Everything you need to know about getting a new pony

Are you thinking of buying a pony? Even though the thought of owning one probably makes you want to jump up and down with excitement, there's lots you need to think about before you find your perfect one and take him home. From A to Z, our handy guide will give you all the info you need to help you find your perfect four-legged partner!



DID YOU KNOW?

Your instructor will be able to help you work out if a pony has good conformation or not. The vet will also assess it during a vetting.

A ADVERT

Looking through for sale adverts is a great place to start the search for your ideal pony. You can even filter online ads so only the ones who are your preferred size, age, and the right location show up. Once you've found a pony you like the sound of, you can contact the seller to ask for more info and arrange a viewing.

C CONFORMATION

This means the size, shape and how well proportioned a pony's body is. Learning to spot good conformation is useful for viewing a pony. When a pony has good conformation, he's

more likely to stay healthy and the better he should perform. Poor conformation can put him at a higher risk of health problems, such as lameness. It's really important that his conformation is good enough for the job you'll use him for.

B BREED

You'll need to put some thought into which breed of pony would be ideal for you. Choose one that's capable of doing all the things you want to do, whether that's dressage, jumping or hacking, and one who's the right size and temperament for you, too. Native breeds make great children's ponies, because they can turn a hoof to anything and are usually easy to look after.

D DEPOSIT

If you really love a pony, you can agree to pay a deposit so that no one else swoops in and buys him before you collect him or have him vetted. It's often a small amount of money that's a percentage of his full price, but it's best to only do this if you know for sure that you want him. You'll lose the deposit if you back out.



E EXPERIENCE

Before you jump straight in and buy a pony, think about whether you have the knowledge and experience to own one. It takes lots of pony care know-how, so try to learn as much as you can by reading books, watching videos and attending pony days at your local riding school. Of course, PONY mag's always packed full of really great advice, too!

F FAMILY

Are any members of your family going to be riding your new pony as well, such as brothers and sisters or a parent? If so, you'll need to make sure the pony you choose is suitable for everyone, not just you. He'll need to look after the least confident rider, but also be happy to up his game so the more experienced riders can enjoy him as well.

G GROUND WORK

It's not just important that a pony's good to ride, he should also be polite on the ground, too. When you view a pony, ask to see him being caught in the field, and try leading and tacking him up yourself. This is the best way to check that he's going to be easy for you to handle.

H HOME

Before you even start looking for your dream pony, you'll need to find the perfect place for him to live! When you're searching for a new yard, make sure it has everything you need, like big fields, airy stables and a school if you want one. It should offer the right type of livery service for you, too, whether that's full, part or DIY.

I INSTRUCTOR

It's a really good idea to take your instructor along when you view a pony, as they'll be able to tell if they're ideal for you. They can come to the first or second viewing and, if he's the right height, they might even ride him, too. That way, they can get a clearer picture of whether he'll be suitable.

J JUMPING

If this awesome part of riding's something you want to do lots of, make sure that you buy a pony who's capable. So, pop him over a few fences at the viewing to check he loves it as much as you do. If you're keen to compete in XC, ask the seller if the pony can be boxed to a schooling course so you can put him through his paces properly.

K KIT

Always check whether the pony's tack is included in the sale price, or whether you can buy it separately. If it isn't, you'll need to book your saddle fitter for a visit ASAP.





LOAN WITH A VIEW TO BUY

Sometimes seen in ads as LWVB, this gives you the option of having a pony for a trial period. You can take him back to your yard on loan and really get to know him before deciding whether or not you want to buy him. The trial period can range from a few weeks to a few months, depending on what you agree with the pony's owner.



MONEY

Not only do you need to consider whether you and your parents can afford to buy a pony, you must be sure you can pay all the costs involved in caring for one. They can easily mount up every month and include livery, feed, bedding, regular farrier visits, insurance and vet call outs. If it's too expensive, consider sharing instead.



NOVICE

If you're a novice rider, or get a little bit nervous from time to time, you'll need a pony who can help you learn and grow in confidence. This means it's important you choose a safe, experienced pony who isn't going to be too strong, spooky or fast for you.



OPEN SPACES

You'll need to check your new pony is safe to ride in open spaces and, if you're confident, it's a good thing to trial at the viewing. Why not ask to take him on a hack with another person at the yard, as that way you'll get to see how he behaves with other ponies, too.



PASSPORT

This is an important document which every pony should have. It tells you lots of information about him such as his date of birth, breed, colour, markings, microchip number and family tree. It also has a record of all the vaccinations he's had. If you buy a pony, make sure the seller gives his passport to you on the day you collect him. You'll then need to get it updated with your details as the pony's new owner.



QUESTIONS

You'll need to ask lots of these, especially when you view a pony. His advert should tell you all his basic info like his height, age and breed, so when you arrange to view him, take a list of extra things you want to know so you don't miss anything out. Ask all about his history, and whether he's had any injuries, illnesses or has any vices you should know about.



RIDE

It's super-important that you enjoy riding your new pony, so make sure you test everything you have planned at the viewing. Ride him in the school, over a few fences and take him out on the roads for a hack, too. You may need to go back and ride him a couple of times before you decide if he's the one for you.



SETTLING IN

When you bring your pony to his new home, he'll need time to settle in. He'll need to be quarantined for two or three weeks to make sure he doesn't have any diseases that could be passed onto the other ponies. It's best not to ride and just have some bonding time with him for the first few days, so he can get to know you and his new surroundings really well.





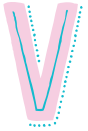
TEMPERAMENT

The pony you buy should have the ideal temperament for you so that you can be the best of friends! For example, if you love grooming, make sure the pony's happy to stand still for long periods. Whereas if you want to compete and do tons of fun activities, he'll need to have a get-up-and-go attitude!



UNCERTAIN

If you feel unsure about anything to do with a pony, or their seller, it's probably best to walk away and keep looking for the perfect one. Even if the pony seems totally cute, if you don't feel safe riding him, or he does something that worried you, speak up as the right pony will be out there waiting for you!



VETTING

If you're serious about buying a pony, ask your vet to check him over. They'll examine him for signs of health issues, including lameness. Once the vetting's complete, the vet will issue a certificate if the pony has passed, which you can use to insure him later. If he failed for any reason, you might need to reconsider buying him.



WINNINGS

If you plan to compete your new pony, it'll be useful to find out how well he's done at shows in the past, so ask the seller to give you the lowdown. It's good to see a few photos and videos of him in action and, if he's competed in affiliated comps, you should be able to check his competition record online.



EXCITEMENT

You'll never forget the moment you find the pony of your dreams. The day you go to collect him won't come quickly enough and it'll

be super-exciting bringing him home! Just remember, though, not to let your excitement cloud your judgement when looking for a pony, and only choose one that really is right for you.



YOUNGSTERS

Some people prefer to buy a young pony because they can train him up and will know everything about his history. However, youngsters need careful training and you should only buy one if you're confident and experienced, or have someone with the right skills to help you. If you're looking for a first or even a second pony, choosing one who's older and can teach you loads about riding is a much better plan.



ZZZZZZ

Once your new pony arrives, you're going to be pooped! Caring for one takes up a lot of energy, especially when you're just starting out. You're sure to get a great night's sleep after being at the yard all day, but don't forget to set your alarm so you can get up early to go see him!



ON THE MENU

Find out why fibre's so important for your fave pony, and get the lowdown on hay replacers

In winter, if there's not much grass in your pony's paddock he'll need something else to munch on. Usually, ponies are fed hay or haylage when grazing's in short supply or they're stabled, but did you know these aren't the only options for making sure he gets enough fibre in his diet?



FABULOUS FIBRE

Fibre, which includes grass, hay and haylage, is one of the most important foods your pony eats. It helps keep his digestive system healthy, and reduces the risk of problems such as gastric ulcers, runny poo and colic. Ponies on low-fibre diets are also thought to be more likely to develop behavioural issues like crib-biting and wood chewing. Another reason why fibre's so important is that it helps keep your pony warm because it generates heat when it's digested.



CHEW CHEW

Some ponies struggle to eat hay or haylage, such as those with dental problems, and they're often fed hay replacers to meet their nutritional needs. These are bagged feeds that are either chopped fibres like chaff, or cubes that can be soaked into a mash. Because they're softer or fed wet, they're easier to chew. Always make sure a feed's suitable to use as a hay replacer by checking the info on the bag.

TOP TIP

If you're not sure what food your pony should be eating, or how much, ask an equine nutritionist for some help.

DINNER IS SERVED

If you decide to feed your pony a hay replacer, you'll need to think of ways to make his food last for as long as possible. Because they're fed from a bucket rather than a net, they can be eaten up more quickly, especially if soaked. You could, for example, divide the food into several meals that he can be given at regular intervals during the day. If he's stabled overnight in winter, give him half to eat then, with the rest split into 3-4 portions throughout the daytime.

You can also try using a wide-bottomed bucket or spreading the food out onto clean rubber matting, so he can only take smaller mouthfuls. Another tried and tested method to slow down eating is to place large, smooth pebbles into his feed bucket so he'll have to eat around them. Make sure you only use stones that are much too big for him to eat, and don't have any sharp edges.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fibre's digested in your pony's hindgut where there are a whole host of bugs that break it down in a process called fermentation.

VARIETY PACK

Hay replacers can meet all of your pony's fibre requirements, or you can use them to make up part of his daily forage ration. This is a great way to add variety to his diet, or help stop him getting bored when he's stabled. You could even put a few buckets containing different types of fibre around his stable to encourage foraging behaviour. Hide some pieces of apple inside for an extra treat!

DID YOU KNOW?

Other sources of fibre are alfalfa, soya hulls, sugar beet, wheatfeed and oatfeed. Straw also contains fibre, and can be fed chopped or pelleted. Because it's low in calories, it's often included in feeds suitable for good doers.

WEIGHING IT UP

Ideally, ponies should have free access to fibre so they can follow a pattern of eating little and often. However, this isn't a great idea if your pony puts on weight easily. Instead, only give him the amount he needs. Nutritionists currently recommend that ponies should eat a minimum of 1.5% of their bodyweight in fibre daily. So, if your pony weighs 300kg, that's 4.5kg of fibre per day, which should include any grass, hay, haylage or hay replacers he eats. He should only need more than this if he requires extra calories to maintain his condition.

TOP TIP

Always weigh out your pony's forage ration when it's dry – hay is a lot heavier when it has been soaked!



TOP TIP

If your pony has a forage-only diet, consider giving him a feed balancer to make sure he gets the vitamins and minerals he needs to stay healthy.

WINTER:

LOVE IT OR

LOATHE IT?

7 reasons why we're in two minds about winter at the stables

Riders tend to have a love/hate relationship with winter. It gets a bad rap for being dark, cold and wet, but if you look at things from a different point of view there's loads of reasons to make it your fave season of the year! Check out our list of pros and cons and see if you agree.

1 It's pouring down with rain – again...



BUT ...at least there are no pesky flies and midges to bug you and your pony. No chance of getting sunburnt either!



2 Picking ice out of water buckets and troughs has to be the worst job ever...

BUT ...snapping a pic of your fave pony looking super-cute in a glittery frosty wonderland will look epic on Insta.



3 It's just soooooo cold out there...

BUT ...it's the perfect excuse to get in some extra pony hugs to keep warm. You get to wear your fave super-snuggly winter fleece, too!

4

Mud, mud and more mud means getting your fave pony clean takes ages...

BUT ...he'll love all the pampering and that extra time you spend together will really strengthen the bond between the two of you.



5

On weekdays you never seem to see your pony in daylight...

BUT ...dark evenings are perfect for browsing through online tack shops and *PONY mag* for gorgeous horsey kit. That's your Xmas wish list sorted!



6

It's a real downer when the fields are boggy and your yard manager says your pony needs to come inside for longer...

BUT ...getting his stable ready so it's super-comfy and cosy gives you a warm glow inside.

7

Cross-country season's come to an end...

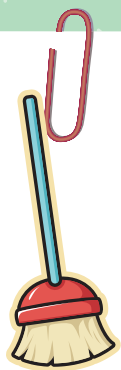
BUT ...arena eventing's a great way to practise both your showjumping and XC technique, plus it's awesome fun!



THE BIG clean up

Brilliant tips for making mucking out a breeze

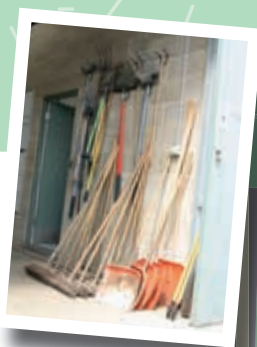
In winter, one of the downsides to having a pony who's stabled for some of the time is mucking out! It's sure to feel like hard work, but it's super-important that you do it properly so your fave pony has somewhere clean and dry to lie down. It'll help his hooves and airways stay healthy, too. Here are some handy tips to help you keep his stable spotless!



Kitted out

You'll need the following yard tools to muck out your pony's stable...

- shavings fork or muck fork
- shovel
- wheelbarrow
- broom
- poo scoop
- rubber gloves



Keep it fresh

Standing in wet, dirty bedding isn't good for your pony for several reasons. It can weaken his hooves and it also puts him at risk of thrush. This is a painful condition where bacteria gets trapped in his feet and causes an infection.

Stables that aren't cleaned properly could also be harmful to his breathing. Stale bedding can get dusty and make him cough, plus wee contains ammonia which can irritate his eyes, nose and airways if it's left to build up.

TOP TIP

Put your pony's water bucket outside the stable before setting to work, or dust and dirty bedding will fall into it. Don't forget to refill it and put it back in when you've finished.

TOP TIP

Always pick out your pony's feet before you take him out of his stable, so he doesn't walk bits of bedding onto the yard.



Banking on it

Some owners like to have banks in their pony's stable, which is a raised area of bedding against the walls. As well as making the stable look extra smart, it's said to help stop a pony getting too close to the walls and becoming stuck if he rolls. The downside to banks is that dust and mould can build up in them if they're not refreshed often. Ideally, pull the banks down into the main bed every few days, then build them back up with new bedding.

TOP TIP

Never muck your pony out while he's in the stable. It can cause lots of dust to fly around, plus you could spook or hurt him if you accidentally catch him with the tools.

Mucking out step-by-step

Every time your pony comes into his stable he'll need a clean, comfy bed that'll cushion his feet and legs from the hard floor and be tempting to sleep on. To get his stable looking spotless and feeling super-cosy, follow our handy guide...

1. Using your fork, start by picking up any droppings and put them in your wheelbarrow.
2. Throw all the dry bedding over to one side of his stable and take out the wet patches.
3. Sort through the rest of the bedding to make sure you've not missed any bits of poo. If you scoop up a bit at a time then gently shake your fork, it should separate the muck from the clean bedding. Or, you might find it easier to pop on a pair of rubber gloves and pick out the bits!
4. Sweep up any remaining dirt from the floor and put it into the wheelbarrow. A shovel can be handy for this bit.
5. Pull all the bedding you're left with into the middle of the stable and use the back of your fork to pat it down and level it off. Then fluff up the bed around the edges to create neat banks. You can add some fresh bedding to the middle of your pony's bed if you think he needs it.
6. To finish, sweep any shavings back from the doorway, to make your pony's home look super-neat.
7. Don't forget to empty the wheelbarrow onto the muck heap and put your tools away when you've finished.



Digging deep

When time's short in winter, there's a way to manage your mucking out so it's a lot quicker. You can follow a method called deep littering, where you only remove the droppings, and let any wet sink to the bottom. You then keep adding fresh bedding every few days.

You can deep litter during the week, then muck out properly at the weekend, or keep the bed that way for the whole winter! While it will save time, it might make the stable a bit smelly. Plus, when you do decide to dig it all out, there'll be an awful lot of wet bedding to remove!



TOP TIP
If you muck out before school, pop a pair of overalls over your uniform to stop it getting dirty.

TOP TIP
Consider buying bedding in bulk if you've got enough storage space, as it should save you money.

TOP TIP
When shopping for bagged bedding, always check the packaging to make sure it's dust-free.

DID YOU KNOW?
Some ponies don't like to wee straight onto rubber matting in case it splashes their legs. They'll much prefer to have some bedding on top of it.

Time for bed

Check out some of these popular bedding types, to help you find out which might suit your pony best...



SHAVINGS

Pros: Soft, fluffy and comfy to lie on, shavings are easy to use and they'll soak up a lot of your pony's wee. Plus, you can easily buy them from tack and feed shops.

Cons: Shavings can stick to your clothes and your pony's rugs! Plus, they take a long time to compost down, so it can be harder to dispose of your muck heap.

WHEAT STRAW

Pros: Usually the cheapest type of bedding, it's warm for your pony to lie in. Also, it rots down quickly and can be spread onto fields.



Cons: Straw is often dusty, and greedy ponies may eat it. Also, straw's not super-absorbent and might not suit ponies who do a lot of poo and wee as it can make their stable messy.

CHOPPED STRAW

Pros: Sold in a bag like shavings, this bedding has been treated to get round some of the downsides straw usually has. It's been chopped to make it more absorbent, had the dust extracted, and been coated with something that tastes nasty to stop ponies eating it.

Cons: It's more expensive than traditional bales of straw.



WOOD PELLETS

Pros: Said to be great at soaking up wetness, these can be handy if your pony's messy in the stable.

Cons: They can cost more than shavings, and you need to remember to sprinkle water on them when they're on the stable floor to make them soft and fluffy.

PAPER/CARDBOARD

Pros: Free from dust, paper and cardboard are a healthy bedding option for your pony.

Cons: Paper can get soggy quickly, plus it can blow around the yard

on windy days. It may be tricky to dispose of your muck heap, too, because farmers won't want to put paper or cardboard on their fields.

MISCANTHUS

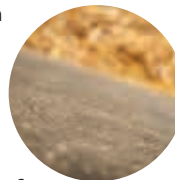
Pros: Made from a plant that's also called elephant grass, you can use it just like shavings. Bio-degradable, miscanthus composts down quickly, and it's absorbent and low-dust, too.

Cons: Not all shops may stock it, and make sure your pony isn't tempted to nibble it.

RUBBER MATTING

Pros: Putting mats in your pony's stable will cushion him from the hard floor, and provide a layer of warmth. You can put a full bed on top of the mats or just use a little to soak up any wee.

Cons: Rubber matting's costly to buy initially, although you may save money on bedding in the long run. You'll also have to lift the mats every few months to clean underneath, which can be hard work.





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FEVER PITCH

How to protect your pony from the common winter condition mud fever

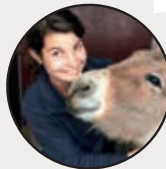
With rain much more likely than snow during the winter months, your pony's paddock can quickly become really wet and muddy. It makes grooming him more of a challenge, but it also puts him at risk of a painful skin condition called mud fever. Here's all you need to know about it, plus handy tips on how to protect your pony.

SKIN DEEP

Mud fever affects your pony's lower legs and can make them really sore. It happens when his skin becomes damaged and bacteria gets inside, causing an infection. Any pony can get mud fever, but those with white hair and pink skin tend to be more at risk, as well as those with lots of feathers around their fetlocks.



OUR EXPERT



KAYLEIGH COOK
is an equine vet at Gillivervet in Lancashire.

DID YOU KNOW?

If your pony stamps his feet a lot he might have leg mites. Give your vet a call to find out, and get them treated.

TRIGGER FACTORS

The most common cause of mud fever is standing in wet conditions for long periods, because it weakens the skin on your pony's legs. It's not the only trigger, though, and some ponies who get mud fever may have leg mites, which are microscopic bugs that hide in his feathers and chew on his skin – gross! As well as making him feel really itchy, they can damage his skin and let in the bacteria that cause mud fever.

Spot the signs

If a pony's suffering from mud fever, he'll develop small, red scabs on one or more of his heels. If not treated straightaway, they can develop into oozing sores and may spread higher up his leg. In really bad cases, his lower leg can become swollen and painful, and he may be lame.



Should I call the vet?

If you're worried about your pony it's always a good idea to contact your vet, and they should be happy to give you advice over the phone. However, it's really important to speak to them if your pony's mud fever gets worse as he may need antibiotics and painkillers to help treat it. You should call them straightaway if...

- he has open sores on his legs
- his legs swell up
- he's lame



PREVENTION PLAN

Keeping your pony out of the wet and mud will help keep mud fever at bay, but unfortunately some ponies are particularly prone to it. Try to check his legs carefully every day, especially if the weather's been wet, so if he does get it, you can catch it early when it's easier to treat.

Washing his legs can weaken his skin and lead to mud fever, too, so try to avoid doing this when you bring him in from the field or after a hack. Instead, leave the mud to dry, then brush it off carefully.

There are also barrier creams you can apply to his legs before he goes out to keep water away from his skin. Some people put boots on their ponies to protect them from the mud, but only do this if they're specially designed for turnout and a really good fit. Otherwise, they could cause nasty rubs.

ACTION STATIONS

If you spot mud fever early, you should be able to manage it yourself, with the help of your yard manager. The first and most important thing to do is move your pony from his muddy paddock to somewhere dry, such as his stable, so his skin can heal.

The sore area will need to be cleaned twice a day using an antibacterial wash. Afterwards, gently pat the skin dry using a clean towel or paper towels, then apply a protective barrier cream on top – your vet can recommend one.

It's common to remove the mud fever scabs, so you can get to the bacteria that's hiding underneath them. However, this will be painful for your pony and you shouldn't try to do it. Instead, ask an experienced adult, such as your yard manager or vet.

TOP TIP

If your pony has long feathers, it can be easier to manage mud fever if his lower legs are clipped. This'll give you better access to his skin.

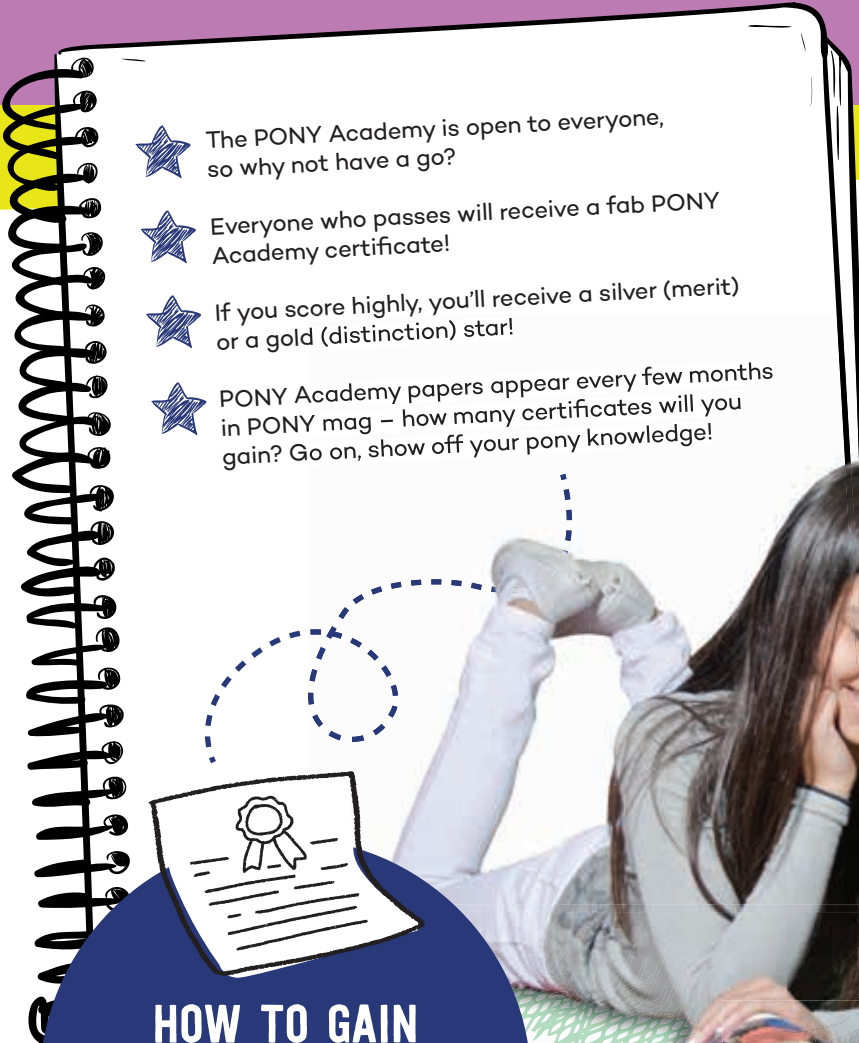
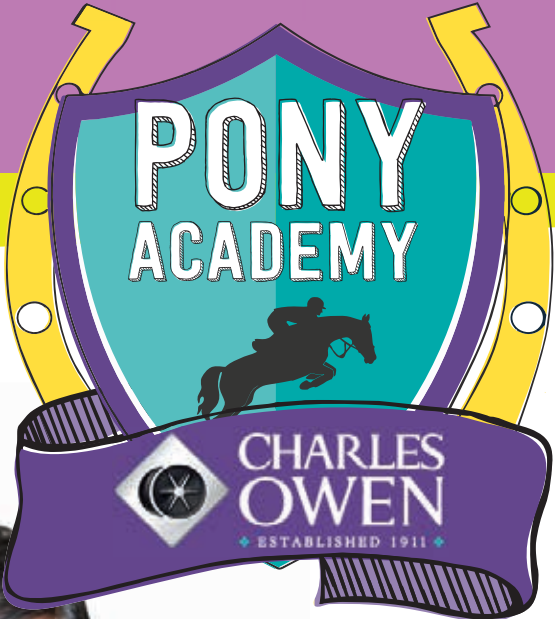
DID YOU KNOW?

A similar condition called rainscald can cause scabs to appear on your pony's back, body and face. It's managed in a similar way to mud fever by keeping him dry, and popping a rug on when it's raining.



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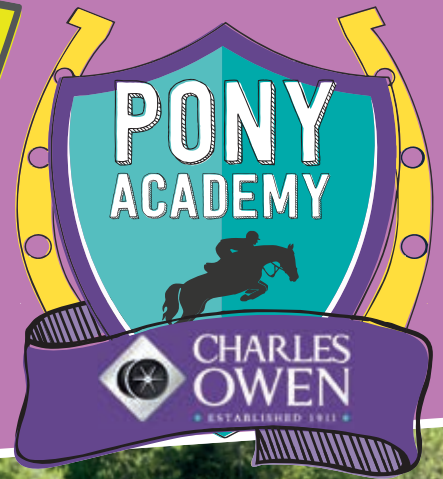
JOIN IN...

All topics and questions are based on features in previous issues of PONY magazine.

“



This month: YOUR PONY'S BACK



This month, our paper's all about your pony's back. Answer as many questions as you can, but don't worry if there's an answer you don't know – you can still send in your paper for marking. **This paper's based on Back in Action from the September 2020 issue of PONY Mag.**



1

What's your pony's spine designed to do?

- Grow hair so he doesn't get cold
- Carry a rider
- Protect his delicate spinal chord

2

How many small bones, known as vertebrae, does a pony have in his spine?

- 54
- 33
- 12

3

How often should you have your pony's saddle checked by a qualified saddle fitter?

- Three times a month
- Once every five years
- Twice a year

4

Where's your pony's spinal cord located?

- It runs from his skull all the way to his tail
- It goes up his legs to his backbone
- It's in the lower part of his back

5

To help look after his back muscles, how long should you spend warming your pony up before a schooling sesh?

- 5 minutes
- 10-15 minutes
- 30-40 minutes

6

Fill in the blank. The gluteus medeus is the muscle in your pony's body.

- Strongest
- Longest
- Smallest



7 Which of these are signs that your pony's back might be hurting him? (Tick all that apply)

- Bucking or bolting
- Being grumpy when you put his saddle on
- Rolling more than usual
- Carrying his tail to one side
- Not eating or drinking



8 Who should you call if you think your pony has a problem with his back?

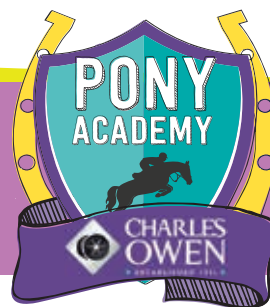
- Your equine dental technician
- Your farrier
- Your vet

9 Which of these can you do to help your pony's back stay healthy? (Tick all that apply)

- Keep him slim
- Never put a numnah under his saddle
- Always use a mounting block rather than getting on from the ground
- Only ever do sitting trot rather than rising



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10
MINS

WITH

GEMMA TATTERSALL

The star eventer answers
your burning questions



Gemma Tattersall is a top event rider who's competed for Great Britain at the 2016 Olympics and won a team gold medal at the 2018 World Equestrian Games. She's been placed third at Badminton and Burghley Horse Trials, too, on her amazing horse Arctic Soul (Spike). Plus, Gemma's shown she's a really versatile rider by successfully competing in top level in showjumping as well! To help you find out even more about her, we gave PONY mag readers the chance to put their questions to Gemma. Here are her awesome answers...



@x.laurs_x

Can you tell us about your first pony?

He was an amazing dun Connemara called Hamish, who was a rescue. When I got him, we were both the same age – just three years old. Hamish gave me a great start to riding and we formed an amazing partnership. I'd jump anything and everything on him.

@elh_equestrian13

How old were you when you did your first one-day-event?

I was only seven and I can't remember much about the day, but I know that I won! I was riding a superstar palomino called Woody.

@_ava_eq_

What do you enjoy most about eventing?

Eventing's brilliant because it's such an exhilarating sport, and completing all three phases gives me a massive sense of achievement.

@lileejing

What's been your most embarrassing moment on the XC course?

I actually don't have one! I've fallen off and had refusals when competing, but I've never had one of those moments when I've wished the ground would open and swallow me up!

@l3ig4_neighbother

What's going through your mind when you're in the cross-country start box?

At top level my horses, especially Spike and Santiago Bay, will be very keen to get going. So, in those few seconds before we head out onto the cross-country course I'll be focusing on keeping them calm. I'll be feeling excited myself, but probably a little nervous, and hoping I do the best I can.



@gabrielle_keywood

If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?

There's always another day, so don't get upset if an event doesn't go your way. There have been times when I've got cross with myself for not doing well, but it's important to enjoy yourself and remember that you can learn from every experience, good or bad.

@sonny_thepony

What achievement are you most proud of?

It's difficult to pick just one! I'd have to say coming third at Badminton on Spike in 2016 stands out. It was such an amazing feeling and one I'll remember forever.

@izzyequestrian9

You always look really confident when you're riding, but do you ever feel nervous?

I get very nervous, especially before big events, because I want to do well. I've found sports psychology really useful, though, and it's given me a better understanding of how my mind works, so I can stay focused.



Gemma and Spike at Badminton



@orla.equi

Which horse has taught you the most?

It has to be Spike. He's a complicated horse and it has been a challenge to work out how to get the best from him. I've had to learn patience and empathy, and how to ride a very strong, feisty horse across-country. I've also learned to control the crowd, because he loses confidence if it's noisy. I signal to the spectators to stay nice and quiet while I'm showjumping.

@thefellpony

Who was your eventing idol when you were growing up?

It was – and still is – Pippa Funnell. She's an amazing rider who works so hard. I'm lucky to have trained and competed alongside her, and if I've ever asked her for advice she's always been happy to help me. It was a dream come true when we were both selected to compete at the Rio Olympics. I just kept thinking 'Is this really happening?'

@niamh_aspell_eq

What's your fave eventing competition?

Badminton is so special, and there's no other event in the world like it. Walking under the archway into the stables gives me goosebumps, and it's a feeling I haven't got tired of in the six years I've competed there.

Thanks to hicksteadschooling.co.uk for their help with this feature.

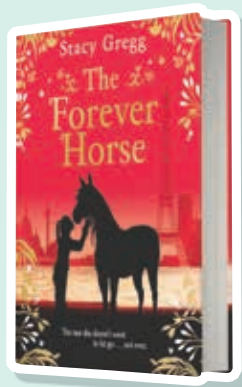
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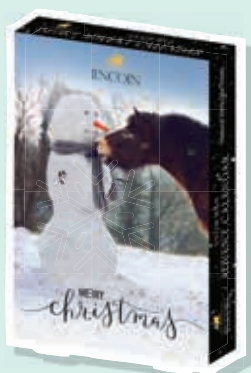
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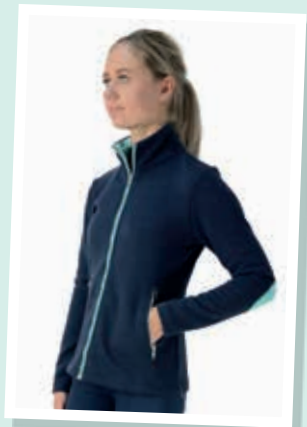


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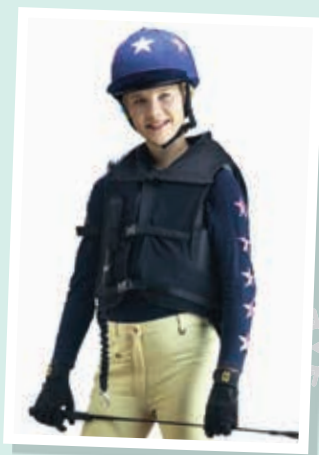
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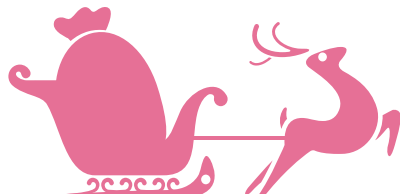
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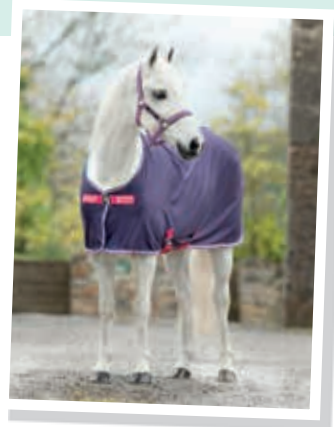
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SUPER LILS'

SJ DIARY

Social media star Lilli shares her showjumping champs experience

It was a dream come true when I qualified Flower for the British Showjumping Pony Newcomers Championships. It had been my goal for months, and to say I was super-excited to be heading to the finals is an understatement. I had such an amazing time that I wanted to share it with PONY mag readers – I hope you enjoy my champs diary!

DAY ONE

6am My alarm goes off super-early, but I'm already awake. I couldn't sleep because we're heading to Aintree Equestrian Centre for three days of competing and I'm just soooo excited.

7.30am I spent two hours bathing and grooming Flower yesterday, but this morning she looks like a hippo! After she's eaten her breakfast, we head back to the horse shower. It's a good job I cleaned my tack and packed the lorry last night.

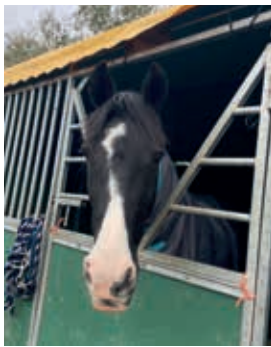
8am At last, we're loaded up and ready to begin the super-long journey from Devon to Liverpool.

3pm Seven hours later, and we're here! To say I'm blown away is an understatement – the racecourse is huge and so beautiful. We drive through the gates, but before we can go any further we have our temperature checked. Luckily, everyone's fine and we're waved on to the lorry park.

3.30pm I head off to find Flower's stable in the temporary block. I'm really pleased to find that my friend Tom's pony is next door.

6.30pm After unpacking the lorry and making sure Flower's stable's perfect, I take her for a leg stretch so I can explore the racecourse. It gives me goosebumps thinking I'm walking the same path as loads of famous racehorses.

8pm I say goodnight to Flower and go in search of some dinner. I'm planning to get an early night – I just hope I can sleep!



DAY TWO

7.30am I didn't need my alarm this morning, either! I give Flower her breakfast, then take her for a walk. I'm not usually nervous before a show, but today I feel sick. As I won't be riding until 3pm I'm going to feel like this for hours!

8.30am Another friend, Oscar, has come over to keep me company. He says the best way to settle my nerves is to help him muck out and groom his pony! Who knew, hey?

12pm Back at my stable I find Mum chatting to Flower's old owner, Gina. She's driven all the way from Devon to help me – how amazing is that?

1.30pm My nerves resurface when we walk the course for my first class – the Pony Discovery Champs. It's much tougher than I was expecting.

2.20pm I find out my class is running early, and there are only five riders to go before me! I don't have time to warm-up properly, and I've forgotten the course! I tell Mum and Gina I'm going to pull out, but they reassure me I'll be fine.



2.25pm It's a disaster and we have five poles down. Then I lose my stirrup over the final fence and burst into tears.

3pm I'm really upset, but my lovely friends rally round to cheer me up. I decide to watch my round back to see if I can learn from what happened and use it in a positive way!

7pm Oscar and I catch up on some homework in the lorry, then we head over to the arena to watch the senior Grand Prix qualifier.



DAY THREE

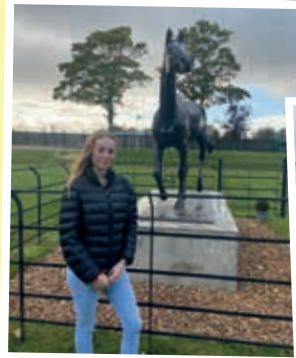
7.30am I'm feeling more positive, and my nerves have disappeared! I'm excited about the two classes I'm riding in today because they're not championships, which means I won't be under so much pressure.

9.30am Yay, that was way more fun! We have two poles down in the 1.05m class for eight faults. I blame myself because I cut the corners to a couple of fences, but it's still a good result.

11.30am Flower feels amazing in the 1.15m class and just has one pole down. I can tell that she's loving the atmosphere here today.

2pm After lunch I spend a couple of hours doing some more exploring. Aintree's such a magical place. I look out across the course from the stands, get up close to a jump or two, then visit the statue of Red Rum, who's famous for winning three Grand Nationals. I loved the wall of legends, too, and spot a few more horse names that I recognise.

2.30pm Before I head back to check on Flower, I pose for a photo in the winner's enclosure. I'm really hoping it's a taste of things to come!



DAY FOUR

7.30am It's the day of my big class, and my nerves are back with a vengeance! I feed and muck out Flower, groom her and plait up, then take her for a leg stretch.

9am The course walk sets the butterflies fluttering in my tummy. The fences are massive and it's the biggest course I've ever jumped, with some at least 1.25m high. It's also very technical and the approach to every jump is either off a corner, on an angle or on a dog-leg line. Even if I make it over the first fence I'm going to consider today a huge success.

10.30am Wow, we made it round, and Flower was incredible! She could sense I was nervous and really looked after me. On paper it wouldn't be considered the best round, but I'm so happy. We had four poles down, but that's far less

than I expected. The faults were down to my inexperience, but I can't explain how good it feels to have jumped in the class of my dreams.

12 noon We've packed the lorry and I've loaded Flower, so we're all set for our trip home!



An amazing memory

Wow, what an experience! I'm so proud of Flower for how she jumped this weekend, and I loved being at Aintree so much. I've created memories that will stay with me forever. I'm determined to qualify again next year, maybe with Nelly as well as Flower, and I'll come back with more experience and hopefully fewer nerves!



As if by magic

Enjoy this story about a rider finding her confidence in a very unusual way

Juliet had wished for a pony of her own for so long, and now her dream had finally come true! She couldn't believe it when her family bought a house with a paddock and stables, and they'd started looking for a pony as soon as they moved in. When they viewed a gorgeous black gelding named Magic, Juliet fell in love with him straightaway. She was so excited about all the awesome things they were going to enjoy together.

First ride

Looking out of her bedroom window, Juliet could see Magic in his stable, munching on a few bits of hay that were left from the net she gave him last night. Today would be their first ride together since he arrived, because they'd given him a few days to settle in. Juliet and her mum trudged through the wet grass to the stables, and she gave Magic the biggest hug ever. "I can't wait to ride you today, boy," she said.

Her mum helped her groom and tack Magic up, then they led him over to a part of the paddock they'd sectioned off for schooling. Juliet's mum gave her a leg up. "Be careful and just stay in walk," she said. "The ground's still a bit slippery from the dew." Juliet nodded. She was so excited to be on Magic that, as they walked round together, she couldn't stop smiling.

Shooting off

As Juliet rode around in a circle, her mum gave her a few instructions to help fine-tune her position. Juliet was only half listening, though, as she was so overwhelmed by the thrill of riding her very own pony. Then, all of a sudden, a pheasant flapped out

of the hedge. Magic stuck his head in the air and cantered off. He was so scared, he kept going round and round the schooling area and, even though Juliet tried, she couldn't stop him. She screamed as his back feet slipped from under him on the grass, and it unbalanced her so much that she toppled to the ground. Her mum rushed over to check she was okay. Luckily, she just felt winded and after a moment to catch her breath, she sat up and looked across to where Magic was now standing with his head down, munching on some tasty grass.

Juliet took the hand her mum was offering to help her get up, and together they walked over to catch Magic. Her mum tried to encourage her to get back on, but Juliet shook her head. She looked down at her hands and noticed they were shaking.

Losing hope

Feeling deflated, Juliet watched helplessly as her mum fetched her own riding hat and got on Magic instead. They looked amazing together, which just made Juliet feel even worse. Afterwards, she didn't want to lead Magic back to the stable either, and let her mum untack him. She moped back to the house, hanging her head and feeling ashamed of how nervous she was of her own pony.

That night, Juliet struggled to get to sleep. Her stomach kept churning at the thought of getting back on Magic and him running around out of control again. "Maybe I've made a mistake," she kept thinking. "Perhaps I'm not a good enough rider to have my own pony after all."

A knock at the window

After what felt like hours of tossing and turning, Juliet heard something tapping against her bedroom window. She ignored it at first, then it came again, so she got up and wandered over to pull back the curtains. Juliet gasped when she saw two bright white flapping wings hovering in mid air. Attached to them was the most beautiful glowing

 *Glittery sparkles were dancing off his hooves* 

white pony she'd ever seen. "You're a... a... Pegasus," she breathed. She locked eyes with the gorgeous creature and felt all her anxious energy drain away. The Pegasus whickered, encouraging Juliet to open the window. Her bedroom was on the top



floor, but the Pegasus positioned himself so Juliet could easily hop onto his back. She sank down between his two wings and, before she knew it, he flew her down to the ground, and into the riding paddock.

Practice makes perfect

Juliet sat deep into the Pegasus' soft, warm back as he walked around the paddock, just as Magic had done earlier that day. She could just about make out her pony watching them over his stable door. He didn't seem at all phased by the Pegasus, even though the magical creature glowed brightly against the dark night sky.

Once Juliet had found her balance in walk, the Pegasus picked up the pace and started to trot. It was the smoothest trot that Juliet had ever ridden. Then he made a transition into canter, and it felt like she was riding a rocking horse.

As they circled, Juliet noticed they were moving further and further away from the ground. Glittery sparkles were dancing off his hooves and his wings beat a little faster. They were taking flight, and Juliet realised she didn't even feel scared. They soared up into the sky, so high that everything below them looked like tiny twinkly dots. They flew between the clouds and Juliet spread out her arms wide as the cold night air blew across her face. It was like she had wings herself.

Feeling more positive

Just as smoothly as he'd soared into the air, the Pegasus gradually flew lower and lower towards the ground. He landed lightly right outside Magic's stable. Juliet's pony put his head over the door to say hello, and he and the Pegasus touched noses with each other, as if they were having a private conversation. Then, the Pegasus lowered his head for Juliet to stroke, before taking off and disappearing into the night sky.

Juliet was disappointed that he'd gone, but scratched Magic's neck and felt like she'd reconnected with her pony. "I'm sorry for being scared of you before," she whispered to him. "Just don't take off with me like that again, okay?"

A second chance

Next morning, Juliet woke up and found herself back in bed. She had no memory at all of how she'd got there. She gazed out of her window and sure enough, Magic was munching the last of his



haynet, exactly the same as he had yesterday morning, as if nothing strange had happened during the night.

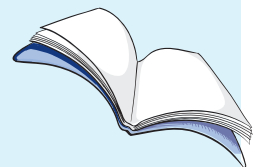
Juliet was suddenly filled with a feeling of confidence, remembering her ride on the Pegasus. If she could fly that high into the sky, then she could certainly trot Magic around the paddock. She raced down to her mum and asked if she could have another ride on him.

Once again, Juliet found herself in the saddle. She gave Magic a scratch on the shoulder as they walked around the paddock, but this time her mum was close by, just in case. But she didn't need her help and felt confident enough to move up into trot. It was just as exhilarating as flying through the clouds on the Pegasus!

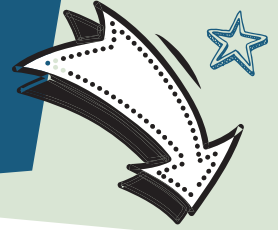
After changing the rein, riding a few simple school moves and having a short canter, Juliet walked Magic round on a loose rein to cool down. Then she jumped off and gave him an enormous hug. "You're the best pony ever," she told him.

When she looked up into the sky she could just make out a Pegasus-shaped cloud floating above them, almost as if he was watching. But as the day wore on, it was as if last night had been a very vivid dream,

Either way, Juliet couldn't wait to keep riding Magic so her confidence would continue to grow and grow. Every time she was a little bit nervous, she remembered her adventure with the Pegasus and it helped her feel brave enough to do anything!



January issue



Brilliant riding tips and horse care advice



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HELP!

Got a pony problem? Write to or email Team PONY and we'll answer as many as we can on these pages

Works a treat

Q Is it okay to feed my pony treats?

A Your pony's sure to enjoy a tasty treat after he's finished a ride, or just as a fun reward! Giving them to him is often okay, as long as the treat's low in sugar and healthy for ponies to eat. If you want to feed your pony a treat put it in a bucket so there's no chance of him forgetting his manners and nipping you by accident.

Ponies love carrots, apples and other fruit and veg, too, so you can



TOP TIP
Why not offer your pony a small selection of treats in different buckets as a fun game to discover which ones he likes best?

chop some up and add them to his feed. Always cut them longways, though, and in big enough pieces that he won't try and swallow them whole. If your pony's prone to laminitis, it's best to avoid feeding him anything sugary. If you're unsure what you can and can't feed him, ask an experienced adult or your vet.



HOLLY STUART,
Physiotherapist
at Stride Forward
Physiotherapy,
answers

Right handed

Q My pony finds it harder to bend to the left than the right. Why is this and what can I do?

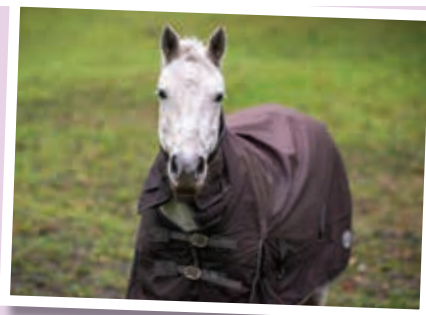
A Ponies often have one side that's stronger, just like people are left or right-handed. If you think he's finding it harder to bend one way than the other, it's extra important that he's well warmed up before you ask him to do anything too challenging. Start by walking him large on a loose rein in both directions, then gradually take up a contact and, still in walk, ride 20m circles, three-loop serpentines and figures of eight.

When he's starting to feel looser, you can increase the pace to trot and do the same exercises. Make sure you spend an equal amount of time on each rein every time you school him. If you do this he should start to feel more supple and even on both reins in no time.

Rain, rain go away

Q Do ponies mind being out in the field in the rain?

A Some ponies are more hardy than others and, while some are happy to stay out 24/7, others may prefer coming into their stable on cold, wet nights. This often depends on the pony's breed and age but, whatever type of pony you have, it's always important that he has access to some form of shelter while he's out. A field shelter's ideal, especially if he lives out 24/7 so he can choose where he wants to stand.



You can also use a waterproof rug to protect him from the elements. Even though a pony's coat contains natural oils that are water resistant, if he's clipped or it's raining heavily, he's sure to appreciate a rug to keep him warm and dry.

WRITE to Pony using our address on page 2 or **EMAIL** pony@djmurphy.co.uk



Keen to learn

Q How can I practise my stable management and riding in between lessons when I don't own a pony?

A There are tons of things you can do to improve your horsemanship, even without a pony! The first thing you can do is read PONY mag and horsey books, and watch videos on stable management topics, too. You can learn about mucking out, grooming, and even horsey first aid from books and vids, so you're ready to try it out for real if you do get your own pony in the future.

It's also a good idea to work on your strength and fitness at home so you can become a better rider. Look up some stretches you can do to help improve your balance and core strength, plus you could run, cycle or swim to build up your endurance, too. It'll definitely pay off when you're in the saddle!

TOP TIP
Why not become a member of the Pony Club and work towards stable management badges? You can join at a riding school, or even as a non-riding member!

On the bit

Q How do I get my pony to work on a contact? Everyone else in my lesson can do it except me. Help!

A A true contact is something that happens when your pony's moving with lots of energy, working every part of his body correctly, and is supple and relaxed. It's not something you can force by pulling on the reins.

The best way to encourage your pony to work on a contact is to use

your legs to create energy in his paces. The energy should come from his hindquarters, and flow all the way through his body to his head.

When you've got him moving forward, hold your reins so you can feel his mouth on the end and keep your elbows bent. If he needs a little more encouragement, you can play with the reins a little by softly sponging your fingers so he softens to the bit and relaxes his head down. If you ride like this, he'll soon learn to soften to the contact, and lower his head.

Saying goodbye

Q My friend's moving to a different yard, which is making me feel sad. How will I cope?

A It's always going to be sad when you have to say goodbye to a friend, but the best thing to do is try and be happy for them.

If you're true friends you can stay in touch and see each other regularly. You could arrange to meet up for hacks, and message each

other all the time about what you've been doing with your ponies!

Even when they've moved yards, you're sure to still have fun at yours because you'll have your fave pony there! And, who knows, you may make a brand new friend who you can have fun with, too.

If the yard your friend's going to isn't too far away, why not ask if there are any other spaces so you could move with her? If not, try to stay occupied by setting new goals to focus on with your pony. Then, you'll have lots to share with your friend when you talk!

Be safe, be seen

Q How can I convince my sister to wear hi-viz out on a hack?

A Wearing hi-viz while you're hacking out is really important so you can be seen easily by traffic. If your sister's reluctant to wear any, try reminding her that, not only will it help keep her safe, it'll keep her pony

safe, too. To help persuade her, you can show her lots of useful road safety info on the BHS website, bhs.org.uk

You could also try and convince her by letting her know you can buy loads of different types of hi-viz gear, so she can look super-stylish, and stay safe, too! If you find she won't take advice from you, try asking an adult she respects to talk to her, such as her instructor or yard manager.



WRITE to Pony using our address on page 2 or **EMAIL** pony@djmurphy.co.uk

Hands down

Q Why are ponies measured in hands?

A A hand is an old-fashioned way of measuring that nowadays is only used for ponies. One hand equals four inches, which is about the width of a man's hand. This unit of measuring can be traced all the way back to the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, but it was King

Henry VIII in the 1500s who made it a rule that a hand was four inches.

No one really knows why ponies are still measured in hands today, but some people say it's because using hands is an easy way to measure livestock in a field. However, some organisations like British Showjumping and showing societies more commonly refer to a pony's height in centimetres, which is much more modern.

TOP TIP
You can use a measuring stick or tape to find out how high your pony is in both hands and centimetres.

All clear

Q Is there a way to stop my pony knocking jumps down?

A If your pony's knocking poles regularly, the first thing to do is get him checked over by your vet to make sure he's not hurting somewhere. It's also a good idea to have his saddle checked by a qualified saddle fitter.

If he's given the all-clear, ask an instructor to help you work on your canter rhythm, approach and jump position, so you can be sure you're giving your pony the best chance of clearing the fences.

Remember that you should stay in your jumping position long enough that you don't interfere with your pony's jumping action. Allow a little with your hands, too, so he can use his head and neck to balance. It's also a good idea to practise over low,



Practising over lower fences will help build your pony's confidence.

easy fences for now so you can both gain confidence at a height you're comfortable with. When he's jumping well over a lower height, you can start to raise the fences a little each session. Don't push him out of his comfort zone, though, and be ready to take a step back if you need to.

Best of both worlds

Q I feel I'm ready to share a pony, but I love my riding school and don't want to leave! What can I do?

A It's super-exciting that you're looking for a pony to share! Why not ask if any of the ponies at your riding school are available to share? Lots of riding school's have schemes like this which will cost more than your lessons, but you should be able to ride more often and help look after the pony on some days, too.

Even if you find a pony to share elsewhere, there's no reason why you can't keep having weekly or monthly lessons at your riding school as well. It'll help you continue to improve your



riding, and you'll get to stay in touch with all your friends. Or maybe you could ask about having a lesson there on your new pony? That way, you'll get the best of both worlds!



Get the Look

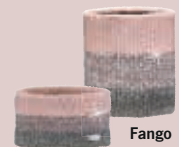
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Make

PONY CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Create these super-cute pony tree decs from gingerbread

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

For the shortbread

- 350g plain flour
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 125g diced butter
- 150g soft dark brown sugar
- 4 tbsp golden syrup
- 1 medium egg
- 2 tbsp water
- sugar paste
- writing icing
- edible sugar decorations

Tools

- two baking trays
- greaseproof paper or baking parchment
- large mixing bowl
- wooden spoon
- rolling pin
- sharp knife
- oven gloves
- cling film
- skewer
- ribbon to hang up the decorations
- pony templates

HOW TO MAKE THEM



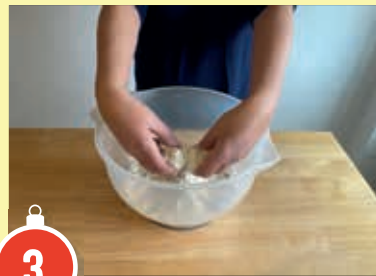
1

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4), and line your two baking trays with greaseproof paper or baking parchment.



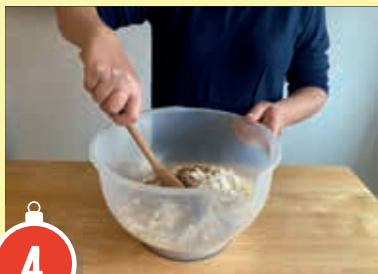
2

Place the flour, ginger, mixed spice and bicarbonate of soda in a large bowl, and stir them together using a wooden spoon.



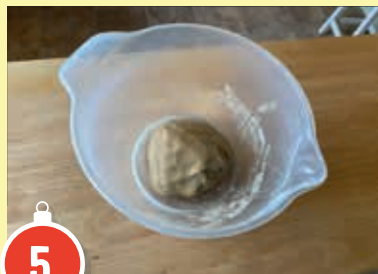
3

Add the butter and use your fingertips to rub it into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.



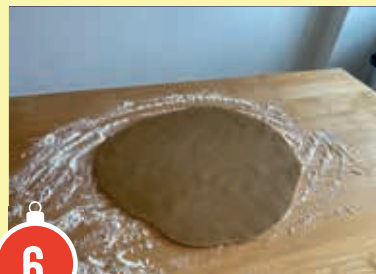
4

Stir in the brown sugar, followed by the golden syrup, egg and water, and the mixture will start to form a soft dough.



5

Knead the dough until it's smooth. Then, wrap the ball of dough in cling film and pop in the fridge for 30mins.



6

Roll your chilled dough out on a lightly floured surface until it's the thickness of a £1 coin (approx 3mm).





7

Lay your pony templates onto the rolled out dough and carefully cut around them using a sharp knife. Then take a skewer and make a hole in the top of each one, for your ribbon to go through.

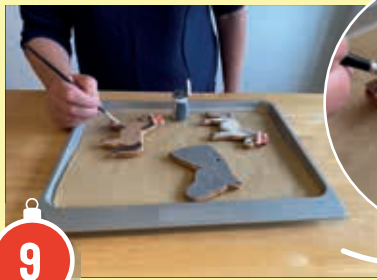


8

Place the biscuits on your lined trays and bake them for approx 10 mins or until they're golden brown. Allow them to cool fully on the trays.

TOP TIP

Always ask an adult for help when you're using a sharp knife.



9

Decorate your gingerbread ponies how you'd like them to look using writing icing, sugar paste and ready-made festive decorations, such as sugar snowflakes! You can then paint in any extra details using edible food colouring.

TOP TIP
You can draw your own pony templates or download the ones we used from bit.ly/XMAS_PONY

10

When the icing's set and dry, thread a piece of ribbon through the hole in each one. Your decs are now ready to hang on your Christmas tree!

TOP TIP
The biscuits will be really tasty to eat, but don't be tempted to nibble on them after they've been hanging on the tree!



WIN IT!

TWO WAYS TO ENTER

- Fill out the form opposite
 - Enter online at ponycompetitions.co.uk
- Entries close 30 December 2020



6

TO BE WON!



← Dodson & Horrell Health Mash

Six lucky readers will each win a bag of Health Mash from Dodson & Horrell. This tasty mash is ideal for lots of different ponies as it's non-heating and molasses-free, plus it's low in starch and contains vits and mins to help keep them feeling healthy. dodsonandhorrell.com

→ Perfect Ponies Subscription box

Three lucky readers will each win a January Subscription box from Perfect Ponies. The box will contain surprise goodies, including a range of luxury grooming products. You'll also get some fab grooming tips to help you turn your pony out to perfection. perfectponies.co.uk



3

TO BE WON!

↑ Heartland DVD box sets

One lucky reader will win DVD box sets of Heartland seasons 1-13, plus the Heartland Christmas special. Any pony fan will love this awesome series which is set on a horse ranch in Canada. There's tons of drama that'll keep you gripped from start to finish! 4digitalmedia.com

1

TO BE WON!

→ Chelico Whitby country boots

Two lucky readers will each win a pair of Chelico Whitby children's country boots from Elico. They have a waterproof outer and a soft lining that'll keep your feet lovely and snug on winter days. The boots also have a good grip on the sole so they're perfect for yard tasks. elico.co.uk



2

TO BE WON!

PONY MAGAZINE ENTRY FORM JANUARY

WIN! A MINI-JUMPS SET AND COMPETITION TIMER KIT! (PAGE 12)

Q: How many jumps are included in the prize?

A:

WIN IT! (PAGE 66)

Heartland DVD box sets

Dodson & Horrell Health Mash

Chelico Whitby country boots
Size (EU sizes 32 / 33 / 34 / 35 /
36 / 37 / 38)

Perfect Ponies January
Subscription box

What's your fave feature in this issue of PONY?
.....

What's your least fave feature in this issue of PONY?
.....

First name.....

Surname.....

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.....
.....

PostcodeCountry

Please give month and year of birth:

Month..... Year.....

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(If under 13 years old)

I have read and understood the terms and conditions

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Yes, I want to hear about the latest offers, competitions, news and videos from PONY

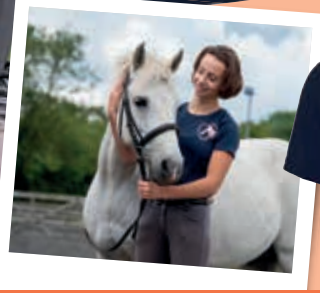
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Please confirm you are over the age of 13, or have your parent or guardian's permission to sign up to the PONY mailing lists

Send your entry to the address on p2. Entries close on 30 December 2020, unless otherwise stated. For PONY competition terms and conditions, and privacy and cookies policy, head to bit.ly/PONY_TERMS and bit.ly/PONY_PRIVACY



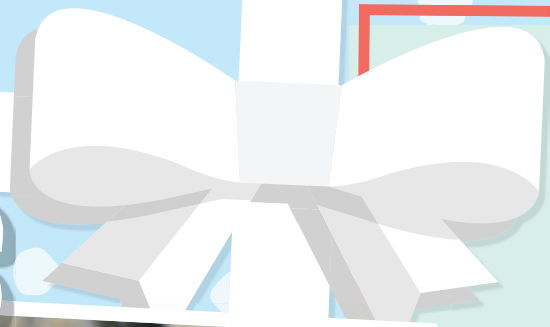
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CHRISTMAS CONUNDRUMS



Test your brain with our pony-themed
mind twisters!



CRACK THE CODE

Help Robin find out what his owner Sophia's getting him as a Christmas prezzie! Because he's a pony, he can't understand her code! Answer these questions correctly to help him decipher it...

1 What can you put on a pony to keep him warm and dry?



2 What type of tasty pony food is made out of chopped hay or straw?



3 Racehorses are known for being really...



4 What do you call a white pony with black patches?



5 What's the name for a stripy wild equine?



6 This is a popular type of bedding to use in a pony's stable.



7 Your pony needs to drink 25-55 litres of what each day?



8 At which Christmassy horse show did Valegro perform his last dance?



ROBIN'S PRESENT WILL BE...







DOUBLE MEANING

Turns out, there are a few Christmas words that also have horsey meanings! Even though they're the same word, they mean totally different things. Can you figure out what each word is based on the clues below?



Christmas meaning: Something a present might come in.

Horsey meaning: It can either mean a stable or a lorry or trailer.

— — —

Christmas meaning: Something Santa puts your presents in.

Horsey meaning: This is a white leg marking that goes all the way up to a pony's knee or hock.

— — — — —



Christmas meaning: You roast these yummy treats on an open fire at Christmas time.

Horsey meaning: These are found on the inner part of a pony's leg. They're supposedly left over from when the first ponies had toes a long time ago.

— — — — —

Christmas meaning: A decoration that goes at the top of the tree.

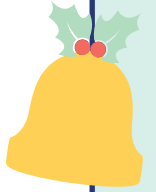
Horsey meaning: A marking that can be found on a pony's forehead, often in the shape of a diamond.

— — — — —

Christmas meaning: You'll often hear one of these ringing at Christmas time, and they're also on Santa's sleigh.

Horsey meaning: It signals the start of a dressage test or showjumping round.

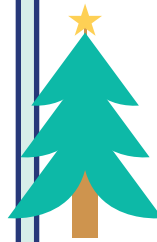
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Christmas meaning: You'll likely wear one of these to get into the festive spirit and keep warm in winter.

Horsey meaning: A type of horse who likes to go over fences.

— — — — —



Christmas meaning: You're sure to find lots of presents under this on Christmas day.

Horsey meaning: The inner frame of a saddle which is usually made from plastic or wood.

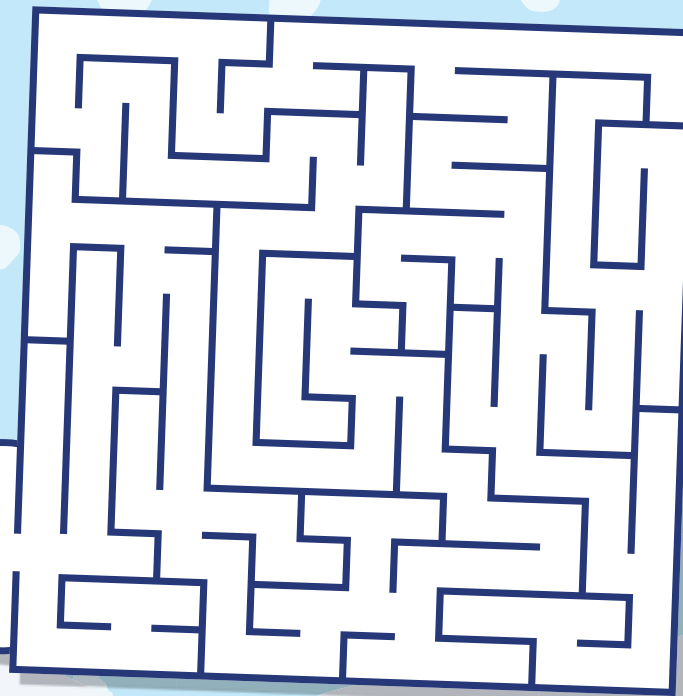
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THAT'S A-MAZE-ING

Help Holly the horse find her way to her stable, so she can get nice and cosy before it starts to snow!



START



FINISH

To find out how many you got right, head to bit.ly/JAN21_PUZZLE_ANSWERS



PONY SQUAD

Share your thrills, spills and, of course, your fails!

COOL COOPER

Cooper's the best horsey friend ever! He's the most awesome Pony Club pony, and we've gone from just doing trotting poles, to flying round a course of 70cm jumps!

Demi



DREAMY DOTTIE

I think my pony Dottie deserves a shout out because she's given me soooo much confidence! Before I got her, I would never have even attempted 80cm fences, and now we're jumping 90cm with ease!

Arabella



PERFECT PEACHES

This is Peaches, my gorgeous Haflinger who I got from a rescue centre five years ago. She's extra special, as she only has one eye! Peaches can still do lots of amazing stuff though, and I love taking her to shows!

Katie

IN THE FRAME



PONY will pick a star picture in every issue and the lucky winner will receive a fab copy of *The Big Book of Drawing Horses and Ponies*. Remember to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you'd like your picture returned!

WIN

The Big Book of Drawing Horses and Ponies





WHERE DO YOU READ YOURS?

I like to read PONY mag while I'm out on the boat!

Jasper

Send us a photo of you reading the latest issue of PONY for a chance to be featured here! Email pony@djmurphy.co.uk or upload your pic to Instagram using the hashtag [#wheredoyoureadponymag](https://www.instagram.com/wheredoyoureadponymag)

Tell us why your pony deserves to win by emailing kiera@djmurphy.co.uk

Meg is...

ARIAT
AWESOME
pony of the month



I think my beautiful Welsh pony, Meg, deserves to be Ariat Awesome Pony of the Month because she's my best friend! I've owned her for over four years now, and she's helped me learn lots about caring for ponies. Meg loves to be pampered and will stand for hours to be groomed, and sometimes she even falls asleep!

Phoebe

WIN THESE BOOTS!

The Ariat Heritage IV Paddock boots are perfect for yard chores and riding. Available in light brown or black, in a zip or laced style, and in sizes 3-8.5. Worth £129.99



DJ Murphy (Publishers) Ltd will collect and pass winners' details on to Ariat for prize fulfilment purposes only. For our full T&Cs and privacy policy, visit bit.ly/PONY_TERMS and bit.ly/PONY_PRIVACY

Fess UP!

CRINGE-METER



Kinda cringe!



Wasn't me!



Waaay cringe!

Out with a bang

I'd just finished an awesome cross-country round at my Pony Club's one-day-event. My pony, Doodles, had been incredible, and I felt super-tired having already done dressage and showjumping as well. Without thinking, I dismounted Doodles and, as my feet hit the ground, there was a really loud bang – I'd forgotten to unclip my air jacket! Luckily, Doodles was too tired to spook. I felt really embarrassed as everyone was staring at us wondering where the noise had come from!

Sarah



More tool you

My farrier, Kevin, had arrived at the yard to shoe my pony, Cindy. She can be tricky to handle sometimes, but she always behaves for him. However, on this day, Kevin had an apprentice with him called Stephen. Cindy was being as good as gold, but I was waiting for her to do something naughty. Then, Stephen popped over to his van and I could only watch in horror as Cindy turned her bottom towards his box of farriery tools and did a huge poo on top of them! When Stephen came back I quickly apologised, but I don't think he was too pleased.

Winona



Early bird

I'd arrived for my second lesson at a new riding school. I went and found Tommy, who I'd ridden last time. I remember the instructor had said I'd be riding him again. He was already tacked up, so I led him over to the arena and mounted up, but there was no one else around. We walked round for a while, thinking it was strange we were the only ones here, when four children on lead-reins came into the school. The instructor walked over to me looking confused, and told me this was the beginner class and mine wasn't for another hour – whoops!

Amira





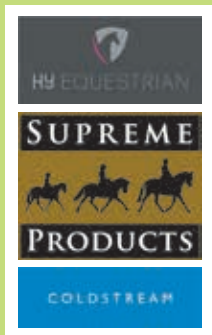
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chances to

WIN

THIS CHRISTMAS

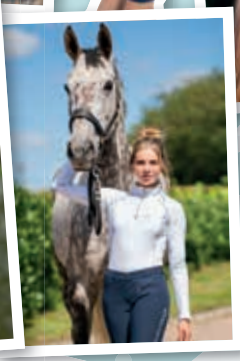
We've teamed up with HY Equestrian, Coldstream and Supreme Products to bring you the ultimate horsey advent calendar, with loads of prizes up for grabs throughout December. There'll be a different prize each day, and you could win gorgeous tops, matchy-matchy sets, and loads more for both you and your fave pony.



A NEW PRIZE EVERY DAY!



MORE THAN £750 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON



HOW TO ENTER

Keep your eyes peeled on the PONY Facebook page from 1-24 December, where we'll reveal a new prize every day, then head over to ponymag.com to enter!

PONY Mag @ponymaguk

PONY

magazine

NEXT MONTH...

PLUS!

SUPER-CUTE
**TEDDY THE
SHETLAND**

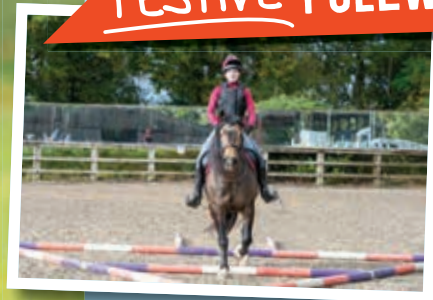
PENCIL TOPPER



10 EPIC WAYS TO
KEEP HAVING FUN
THIS WINTER

THIS ESME
HACKING TIPS

FESTIVE POLEWORK



AWESOME
SUPPLING EXERCISES

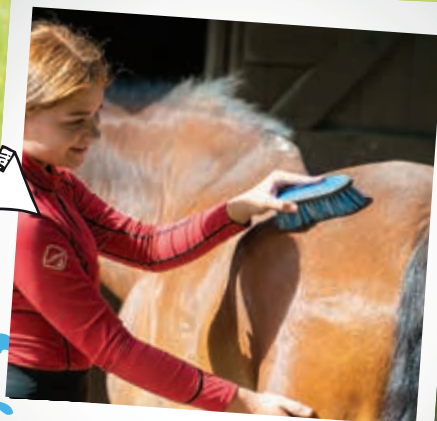
KEEP YOUR
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DON'T MISS FEBRUARY **PONY** ON SALE 16 DECEMBER

magazine

LOST AND



Mia and Holly
as
Lily and Bear



Lola and Beo
as
Emily and Firefly



Orla and Angel
as
Izzy and Flame



Bear and I had loads of fun riding with you and Firefly - thanks!

Yeah, it was really good!

I'm surprised Izzy's not back from her hack yet. I hope she's okay...



Let's go and look for her. She can't have gotten far.

What if I never find Flame? I should've just schooled with the others...

MEANWHILE...



We'd better hurry, it'll be getting dark soon! I'll let someone know where we're going on our way out.



OH NO!



I'm not hurt, but she's cantered off and now I'm worried I won't find her.



Did you hear that?

It sounds like a pony!

Flame, is that you?

FOUND

PART TWO

Izzy lands herself in trouble when she goes for a solo hack...



★ THE END ★

FEELING FESTIVE

Plan some extra special ways to celebrate Christmas with your fave pony

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Get your festive fancy dress on, then take an epic pic you can use for a cheery Xmas card or on Insta. Wear your fave Christmas jumper and pop some tinsel or a Santa hat onto your riding helmet. Your fave pony will look super-cute in a pair of reindeer antlers, or just decorate his bridle, mane and tail with ribbon or tinsel!

RIDE ON

When you've taken your pic, why not parade around the arena, or hack to the postbox to send your Xmas cards? A totally epic idea is to head out for a Christmas ride with a friend – you'll brighten up the day of everyone who sees you! Just don't forget to include hi-vis in your outfit if you're leaving the yard.

HUNT FOR XMAS TREASURE

Print out some festive images, like crackers, robins, gifts and trees, and hide them around the yard and inside the tack room. Then challenge everyone to spot as many as they can, and message you where they found them. It's really easy to set up, anyone can take part, plus it ticks all the social distancing boxes.

DECORATE THE TACK ROOM

Make it an extra cool yule by decorating your tack or tea room. If the yard doesn't already have any decs, ask a parent nicely if they can spare some. A mini Christmas tree would look especially awesome!

TOP TIP

Get your pony used to wearing any Christmassy items before the day you plan to take photos. Not all ponies enjoy being decorated and, if he seems unsure, keep it super-subtle or just dress up yourself.

TOP TIP

Always ask your yard manager before organising anything, and make sure you keep to all the latest lockdown rules.

THEME YOUR JUMPS

Pretend you're riding at Olympia by jumping festive fences. They'll look brilliant if you weave tinsel around the wings or stand little Christmas trees next to them! Another idea is to wrap some boxes up to look like presents, then place them either side or even under the fences – just put something heavy inside to stop them blowing away. Always make sure anything you use is secured safely, and won't spook your pony.

SET SOME XMAS CHALLENGES

Celebrate Christmas with your friends by setting everyone a series of epic horsey-themed challenges to do. These could be taking a cute festive pony photo, decorating a cake with a pony theme or using something horsey to create a fab tree dec. Take it in turns to judge each round and, if you can't meet up, you can share your incredible crafting on a video call. The winner of each task gets bragging rights!

PLAY CAROLS AT THE YARD

Nothing gets people into the Christmas spirit like listening to carols! Why not play some while you're mucking out, poo-picking or cleaning your tack, and sing along? You'll feel super-Christmassy, and are sure to find your stable chores are way more fun. You could even ride to Christmas carols and plan your own festive freestyle!



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Ponygram

This month we wanted to see your hilarious ponies with

#LAUGHINGPONIES

Here are our faves!
@ponymaguk

PONY
MAGAZINE

Make sure you check out our Instagram page @ponymaguk, where we'll be letting you know the themes each month for your chance to feature on this page!

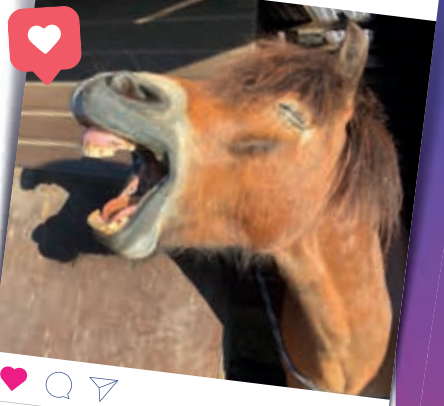
PONY magazine supports social media safety – to have a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube account, you must be at least 13 years old. Always get a parent or guardian's permission, too.

@32_sassystorm_32



❤️ 💬 📌

@sth.eventing

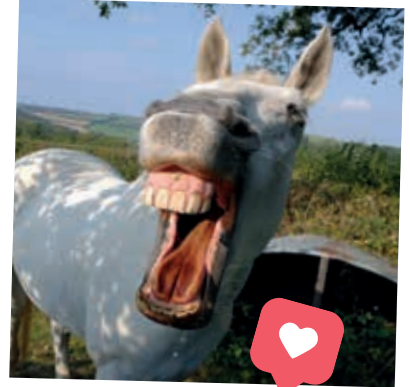


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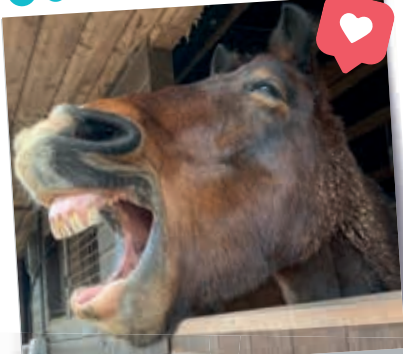


@13hcolouredpony



❤️ 💬 📌

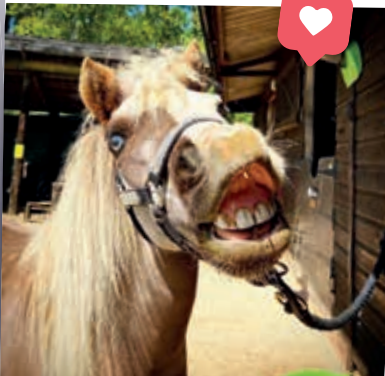
@twelve_epic_equines9



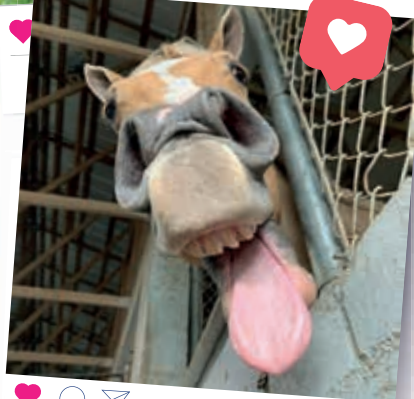
@little.legs.equestrians



@rome_the_mini



@eq.vickyyyy



@chardy16__ruby24



❤️ 💬 📌

Chardy smiling on her birthday this year!

Instagrammer
OF THE MONTH



Instagrammer

OF THE MONTH PRIZE BUNDLE

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★ **14.2hh**, 12-year-old Fell mare. Gorgeous looking show pony. Loves to jump. Can be forward going in open fields so needs a confident rider. Will be a good second pony. £4,550. **07591 638195 (South west)**

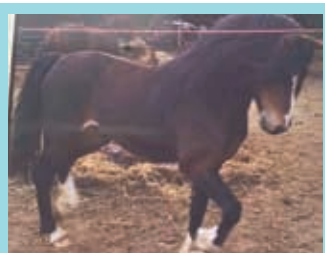


★ **15.1hh**, 11-year-old cob gelding. Fab hacking pony who needs a fun and active home. Confident rider required. Has done basic schooling. Lives out 24/7 in a mixed herd. £4,000. **07493 803331 (East mids)**

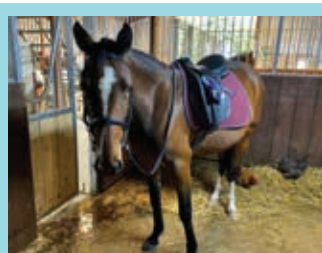


★ **12.2hh**, 12-year-old Welsh Section B mare. Easy-going, sweet pony who loves to be pampered. Done all Pony Club activities and hacks alone or in company. Barefoot. £2,500. **07796 887788 (South west)**

While PONY mag doesn't currently recommend viewing ponies, we hope that once lockdown restrictions are relaxed, buyers and sellers will be able to start the process, ready to conduct viewings when visits to other yards become possible.



★ **12.2hh**, eight-year-old Welsh X, gelding. Blank canvas who has a good temperament. Has been long-reined. Easy to do and lives out. Will make a lovely children's pony. POA. **07714 373446 (South)**



★ **15.2hh**, three-year-old bay filly. Lightweight hunter type who has a gentle and kind personality. Well mannered and good to do. Great ridden prospect for the future. £1,650. **07719 681751 (North west)**



★ **13hh**, three-year-old Welsh Section C filly. Top-class pony with excellent breeding. Very impressive movement. Has lots of potential for future success in the show-ring. £2,000. **07429 493513 (North west)**



★ **14.2hh**, 18-year-old Appaloosa X, gelding. Very well mannered and never silly. Ideal for beginners but would suit lots of disciplines. Patient and talented at all he tries. £4,750. **07591 638195 (South west)**



CHARITY PONY

★ **FOR REHOMING:** HORSEWORLD KIA. 13.1hh, eight-year-old Welsh X, mare. Unridden companion. Kia will need a patient home where she'll receive lots of attention. horseworld.org.uk



CHARITY PONY

★ **FOR REHOMING:** HORSEWORLD Lexus. 12hh, Welsh mare. Sweet-natured and affectionate pony who needs an experienced home. Non-ridden companion. horseworld.org.uk



CHARITY PONY

★ **FOR REHOMING:** MARE & FOAL SANCTUARY Rain. 11hh, three-year-old Moorland filly. Sweet natured and independent. Active home required to keep her healthy. mareandfoal.org



CHARITY PONY

★ **FOR REHOMING:** MARE & FOAL SANCTUARY Aero. 12.1hh, seven-year-old Dartmoor X, mare. Non-ridden companion pony. Loves being groomed and pampered. mareandfoal.org

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WHICH HORSES ONLY GO OUT AFTER DARK?

Nightmares

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Stable tennis

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WHY DID THE PONY EAT WITH HIS MOUTH OPEN?

He had terrible stable manners

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