

# Ivy Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center

1811 Mill Road  
Perkasie, PA 18944

## Volunteer Manual



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## Ivy Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center: Our Riding Program

Ivy Hill Equestrian is a non-profit organization supported by a very dedicated group of paid staff and volunteers. Our mission is to provide the highest quality services to individuals who can benefit from the programs we offer. Our staff members have degrees in areas of Special Education, Physical Therapy, and Psychology, with additional specialized training and certification in Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy.

Ivy Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center creates therapeutic programs for individuals with cognitive, physical, emotional, behavioral and psychological needs utilizing the equine experience. Our vision is to be the recognized standard bearer for professionalism, excellence, advocacy and sportsmanship in equine-assisted activities and therapies.

### *Therapeutic Riding & Hippotherapy*

Therapeutic riding uses horseback riding to address the needs of individuals with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral challenges as well as individuals with physical disabilities. Therapeutic use of the horse involves the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Horseback riding has been shown to improve posture, balance, and self-esteem while fostering personal growth. The horse often serves as a strong motivator in helping these individuals work through challenges to improve the quality of their lives.

Hippotherapy is physical therapy utilizing the natural movement of the horse to help riders regain physical strength, mobility, and coordination. The similarities between a horse's pelvic movements at a walk, and the movement of a normal human pelvis enables the rider to physically learn or relearn skills and movements that may have been lost or compromised. Speech, physical, or occupational therapy patients can improve muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, respiration, strength, and body awareness as they sit upon and ride a horse in an enjoyable and effective method of treatment. Hippotherapy patients tend to be the best motivated physical therapy patients, as they enjoy the work!

*Therapeutic riding has shown strong benefits in a variety of populations, including but not limited to: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Multiple Sclerosis, Spina Bifida, Developmental Delays, Intellectual Disabilities, Speech Disorders, Brain & Spinal Cord Injuries, and a variety of other mental health diagnoses.*

### *Benefits of Therapeutic Riding*

The benefits of therapeutic riding are available to individuals with all forms of disabilities. Research shows students who participate in therapeutic riding can experience physical, emotional, and mental improvements. For individuals with impaired mobility, horseback riding gently and rhythmically moves their body similar to a human walking gait. These riders can experience increased balance, muscle control and strength. Individuals with learning or mental disabilities are motivated by riding to increase concentration, patience and discipline. If a psychological or emotional diagnosis is present, the unique relationship formed with a horse can help improve interpersonal relationships. As is expected, the majority of riders experience increased self-esteem, confidence, and independence.

*Hippotherapy has shown strong benefits in a variety of populations, including but not limited to: Spinal Cord Injury, Convulsive Disorders, Amputation, Muscular Dystrophy, Scoliosis, Arthritis, Autism, Spina Bifida, Head Trauma, Paralysis/Paraplegia, Stroke, Dyspraxia, Down Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, and Cerebral Palsy.*

## Volunteer Policies

### Record Management:

All Ivy Hill Volunteers are required to fill out volunteer paperwork which includes volunteer information, a confidentiality agreement, and criminal and child abuse background checks. Volunteer records, including application, reference checks and background checks, are confidential. Volunteers are responsible for submitting and updating information contained in their files to the Volunteer Coordinator.

### Dress Code:

Volunteers are representatives of Ivy Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center and are responsible for presenting a positive image to constituent and the community. Volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Barn and lesson volunteers will wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes. Volunteers that serve in a capacity as a presenter, speaker or other face-to-face constituent contact will wear an Ivy Hill name tag. Volunteers who work as support in an office situation will dress according to the code of that office. Individual volunteers will be informed of the dress standard for their duties at the time of assignment.

### Attendance and Time:

Volunteer attendance is important to the operation of each program. Volunteers should notify their supervisor one week in advance if they are unable to be present on their scheduled day or presentation. Volunteers are responsible for completing and submitting their volunteer time either electronically or manually. Time not accounted for is the responsibility of the volunteer.

### Change of Placement:

Volunteers may request a change in placement anytime during their volunteer service. If a volunteer elects to be re-assigned, inform the Volunteer Coordinators and they will set you up to receive all appropriate training.

### Training:

Volunteers receive training as part of their volunteer service with Ivy Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center. All volunteers must complete an orientation, on-the-job or program training, and participate in a volunteer education class. Volunteer orientation provides an overview of Ivy Hill, its mission, history and goals. The training details the skill and knowledge necessary to perform their volunteer assignment.

### Youth Volunteer and/or Service Learning:

The minimum age requirement for Ivy Hill Volunteers is 14, in accordance with PATH Standards. Volunteers under 18 must have written consent of a parent or guardian before volunteering. Students volunteering for service-learning credit hours for their school, must submit school name and contact information before volunteering. Volunteers 18 and older must have Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Background Check and Federal Background Check and Fingerprints pursuant with Pennsylvania Law.



## Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities:

### Horse Leading

- A good leader is CALM, CLEAR and CONFIDENT!
- As a leader, you are in charge of the horse, not the rider. In an emergency situation, you are responsible for the horse, and instructors and side-walkers are responsible for the rider.

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#### Leading Technique

- Walk on the horse's LEFT side.
- You should be between the horse's ears and shoulder at all times.
- When the horse is calm and attentive, there should be a "smile" or a curve in the lead rope between your right hand and the horse's mouth.
- Hold excess rope in your left hand. NEVER wrap the lead rope around your hand.



#### Communication With Your Rider

Side-walkers are in charge of aiding riders. However, sometimes communication between the rider and leader is necessary for everyone to be on the same page. If you are leading a rider's horse with a lead rope, say the commands you are giving the horse out loud. For example, before halting, say "We are going to halt in 3, 2, 1. *Woah.*" This will help ensure that you and the rider are giving the same command at the same time. When a leader and rider give differing cues, it can confuse or even frustrate the horse.

#### Types of Leading

*Active leading (on lead):* Leader is in control of the horse and is responsible for steering and stopping.

*Passive leading (on lead):* The rider is responsible for controlling the horse. The leader gives more slack in the lead rope to allow the rider to control the horse themselves, but stays attached to the horse in case the rider needs assistance.

*Passive leading (off lead):* The leader un-clips the lead rope and simply walks next to the horse between the horse's ear and shoulder. The leader usually holds a lead rope in case the rider needs to clip up again.



*Spotter:* The role of a spotter is to stand a few feet back from a horse and rider and be prepared to offer assistance if needed. A spotter should keep their hands by their sides and maintain a calm, confident presence.

**\*\*All leaders should keep their arms below their shoulders to avoid startling their horse**

#### Mounting at the Ramp

When a rider is mounting, the leader will stop the horse in front of the ramp as instructed by the riding instructor. Head the horse off while the rider mounts by standing directly in front of the horse. Gently hold each side of the bridle at the cheekpiece.

### Where Does The Instructor Want Me to Go?

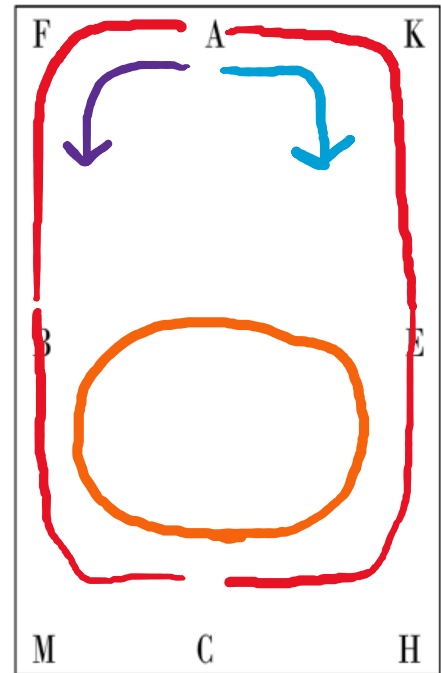
#### **Common terms:**

**“Track Right”**— (illustrated with blue arrow) The leader walks around the arena with their right hand closest to the inside (clockwise).

**“Track Left”**— (illustrated with purple arrow) The leader walks around the arena with their left hand closest to the inside (counter clockwise).

**“Go large” or “Ride on the rail”**— (illustrated with red line) Walking around the entire arena along the rail.

**“20-meter circle”**— (illustrated with orange line) A 20-meter circle is a little less than half the arena.



**Letters around the arena**— Different parts of the arena are labeled with letters on the wall. The instructor will use these letters to communicate where they want the leaders and riders to go. For example, an instructor may say: “Begin at C and walk towards H. When you reach H, pick up the trot and continue trotting down the long side. Come back to a walk at K.”

### What to Avoid as a Leader

**Dragging your horse**—Be sure to stay between your horse’s ears and shoulder. Try not to get out in front of your horse, as it can lead to dragging. Dragging will make your horse hesitant to move forward.

**Crowding your horse**—Make sure to give your horse the space they need. Give your horse a foot or two of space between their body and your shoulder.



**Touching or helping the rider**—Speak to the rider only as needed to maintain proper spacing and safety. Otherwise, focus on the horse and allow the side walker to give the rider any help they may need. If you do not have a side walker and a rider needs help with something such as getting their foot back in the stirrup, do not move or take either hand off the lead rope to help them. Instead, ask an instructor to come over and help the rider.

***NEVER wrap the lead rope around your hand!***

# Sidewalking

## Holds



*Heel or Ankle Hold:* Wrap all 5 fingers around the rider's ankle

*Arm Over Thigh Hold:* You may hear this referred to as a “thigh hold.”

- 1- Grasp the front edge of the saddle
- 2- Place your arm over the rider's thigh



*Full Hold:* A thigh hold is done with the hand closest to the rider, and the other hand holds the rider's ankle.

*No Hold:* The side-walker walks beside the rider lined up with the rider's shoulder and gives verbal assistance when needed. The side-walker is prepared to provide further assistance if prompted by the instructor.

**\*\*When there are two side-walkers, always use the same hold as the person on the other side!**

## Being a Helpful Side-Walker!

*Processing directions:* Some of our riders may require extra time to process directions. When the instructor gives a direction, wait about 5-10 seconds. If the rider does not follow the instruction after 5-10 seconds, repeat it to them. If a rider ignores repeated instructions, a side-walker can tap the rider to gain their attention.

*Example:* A rider is told to put their heels down. They do not react to the instructor or to repeated instructions, so the side-walker says, “Heels down” and taps the rider's heel.

*Interacting Respectfully:* It is important to use People First Language at TRAC. An example of People First Language is “a rider with cerebral palsy” versus “the cerebral palsy rider.”

### *Helping With Riding Skills:*

The riding instructor is in charge of correcting riders' positions and helping them learn new riding skills. Here are a few of the most common skills we teach at TRAC, and how you can help your rider be successful with these skills if needed.

## **Riding Position:**

A rider who has the physical capability will be encouraged to maintain proper riding position. Your instructor will tell you if your rider needs any riding position reminders from their side-walker.

*Hands up off the saddle:* Almost all riders should be encouraged to keep their hands up instead of resting on the front of the saddle. This encourages them to remain focused and allows them to better control their horse.

*Heels down:* Riders who do not have physical limitations should keep the stirrup on the ball of their foot, and keep their foot level or their heel down. Stirrups that slip too far back on the foot and toes that point downward are not ideal because they make it harder for the rider to get their foot out of the stirrup in the event of an emergency.

*Safety Stirrups:* We use safety stirrups at TRAC, which allow the feet to slip out of the stirrups easily in the event of an emergency. For safety stirrups to be affective, the curved side of the stirrup needs to be facing out. A quick glance at your rider's stirrups throughout the lesson can ensure they are in the correct position.



### **Negative Behaviors**

Any negative behaviors should be brought to the attention of the riding instructor, either when they occur or after the lesson, depending on the severity of the behavior. Behaviors that may impact the safety of a rider, volunteer or horse should always be brought to the instructor's attention immediately. These behaviors include:

- A rider taking off their helmet
- A rider attempting to dismount
- Hitting

A side-walker can help with less severe negative behaviors by:

- Redirecting (giving a direction or pointing out something unrelated)
- Ignoring the behavior

### **Praise**

Praise is a powerful motivator to encourage success! When side-walking, try to give your rider specific praise.

*Specific Praise:* "Johnny, I love how you held your forward position for 10 seconds!"

*Non-Specific Praise:* "Good job, Johnny."

### **What to Avoid as a Side-Walker**

- *Touching the horse:* As a side-walker, you are responsible for the rider, not the horse. Refrain from touching the horse in any way, as it may make the horse feel over-crowded. The closest you should get to a horse while side-walking is if you need to do an Arm Over Thigh Hold or a Full Hold. Grooming/tacking time and after lessons are the ideal times for volunteers to interact with the horses and give them some love!
- *Chatting with the rider during the lesson:* Before the lesson officially starts is a good time to chat with your rider. In fact, many of our riders enjoy developing a friendly relationship with their side-

walker. However, once the instructor starts teaching in the center of the arena, encourage your rider to listen to the instructor instead of chatting.

- *Reaching both hands up towards the rider:* If a rider requires any kind of physical assistance, try to do so with just the hand closest to the rider when the horse is in motion.
- *Trying to control the rider's upper body:* Trying to physically control the rider's upper body can be invasive, and is also ineffective. While seated in the saddle, the rider's main base of support is their hips. If a rider becomes unbalanced, a Thigh Hold or a Full Hold is the best way to assist them.

## Volunteering In the Barn

Volunteers in the barn are responsible for:

- Grooming and tacking up horses on time for lessons
- Untacking horses coming out of lessons
- Brushing off horses coming out of lessons, if needed
- Assisting riders with grooming and tacking
- Putting away tack and brushes (keeping the cross-tie areas clean)

## Ivy Hill Disaster Policies

### In the Event of a Fire:

- All lessons shall stop; riders dismount and exit the Indoor Arena with their horses through the door at the parking lot.
- All riders on property shall dismount and meet on driveway.
- The Most Senior Staff Member is responsible for all directions when outside and will assign someone to call 911.
- All riders, parents, volunteers, guests, and staff shall exit barn and meet outside.
- Survey the scene to make sure it is safe to enter.
- The senior staff member will designate staff and individuals to begin evacuating horses when all participants are out of the barn.
- Lead horses through the nearest door beginning with horses closest to the fire to the nearest paddock.
- Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls...talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice, it may be necessary to cover their eyes with a towel or cloth.
- If a horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave its stall, leave the door open and move to the next horse.
- Be prepared that a horse may try to run back to the barn once outside.

### In the Event of a Thunderstorm or Loss of Electricity:

- All lessons in Indoor Arena shall stop; riders dismount and horses should be returned to their stalls.
- All riders outside shall dismount and return horses to their stalls.
- The most senior staff member is responsible for all direction.
- All office personnel, instructors, riders, parents, volunteers, and guests shall proceed to the office and hallway.
- If the horses are outside, leave horses in pasture.

## Ivy Hill Emergency Procedures

### Procedure in Case of Emergency

- A. Person sent by instructor to call for help.
  - a. Call 911.
  - b. Also inform any staff on duty.
  - c. Stay calm.
  - d. Tell the operator:
    - i. Your name
    - ii. The location and directions.
    - iii. Phone number.
    - iv. What happened?
    - v. The injured persons(s) condition.
    - vi. The help being given.
    - vii. Stay on the phone until Emergency Medical Service (EMS) arrives. Request no lights or sirens.
- B. Person(s) sent by instructor to wait for EMS:
  - a. Open all gates to location of injured persons(s) if necessary.
  - b. Obtain the injured person(s) medical form from the filing cabinets in the office to give to the EMS crew.
  - c. Go to the end of the driveway to wait.
  - d. Explain to EMS the exact location of injured person(s).
  - e. Ask the EMS to shut off lights and sirens.
- C. Person(s) sent by instructor to obtain necessary supplies:
  - a. Obtain the First Aid Kit and Blanket from office or tack room.
  - b. Locate the parent/guardian of injured persons(s)
  - c. Follow additional instructions by instructor only.

### Things to Keep in Mind:

- It is most important for necessary communication with all people who are working in the emergency.
- Stay calm and communicate.
- If a horse suddenly pulls backwards, do not pull against him. Instead, slowly and calmly follow the movement of the horse until he stops.

## Introduction to Common Disabilities at Ivy Hill

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder:**

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>

### **Down Syndrome:**

Down syndrome is a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome. Chromosomes are small “packages” of genes in the body. They determine how a baby’s body forms during pregnancy and how the baby’s body functions as it grows in the womb and after birth. Typically, a baby is born with 46 chromosomes. Babies with Down syndrome have an extra copy of one of these chromosomes, chromosome 21. A medical term for having an extra copy of a chromosome is ‘trisomy.’ Down syndrome is also referred to as Trisomy 21. This extra copy changes how the baby’s body and brain develop, which can cause both mental and physical challenges for the baby.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/downsyndrome.html>

### **Intellectual Disabilities:**

A disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

<https://aaidd.org/intellectual-disability/definition/faqs-on-intellectual-disability#.WQoQeLxlk8Y>

### **Cerebral Palsy:**

A neurological disorder caused by a non-progressive brain injury or malformation that occurs while the child’s brain is under development. Cerebral Palsy primarily affects body movement and muscle coordination. Though Cerebral Palsy can be defined, having Cerebral Palsy does not define the person that has the condition.

<http://www.cerebralspalsy.org/about-cerebral-spalsy/definition>

### **Paraplegia:**

Partial or complete paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs that is usually due to injury or disease of the spinal cord in the thoracic or lumbar region.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paraplegia>

### **Stroke:**

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or severely reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die. It is a medical emergency. Prompt treatment is crucial. Early action can minimize brain damage and potential complications.

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/stroke/home/ovc-20117264>

### **Emotional Disabilities:**

It is a term which is used to cover many mental and emotional health issues. It is an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors and an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/emotionaldisturbance/>



**Learning Disabilities:**

A neurological disorder. In simple terms, a learning disability results from a difference in the way a person's brain is "wired." Children with learning disabilities are as smart or smarter than their peers. But they may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling and/or organizing information if left to figure things out by themselves or if taught in conventional ways.

<http://www.ldonline.org/ldbasics/whatisld>

**Selective Mutism:**

A complex childhood anxiety disorder characterized by a child's inability to speak and communicate effectively in select social settings, such as school. These children can speak and communicate in settings where they are comfortable, secure, and relaxed.

<http://selectivemutismcenter.org/whatisselectivemutism/>

**Speech Delays (expressive and receptive disorders):**

When a person is unable to produce speech sounds correctly or fluently, or has problems with his or her voice, then he or she has a speech disorder. Difficulties pronouncing sounds, or articulation disorders, and stuttering are examples of speech disorders. When a person has trouble understanding others (receptive language), or sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings completely (expressive language), then he or she has a language disorder. A stroke can result in aphasia, or a language disorder.

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/>

## Soon to be Second Nature

### **The Stall**

#### Entering a Stall

Announce your presence when entering a stall by saying hello to the horse. Approach the horse at the shoulder.

#### Taking A Horse Out of The Stall

When taking a horse out of the stall, always use a halter and a lead rope. Be sure to look up and down the aisle before exiting. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

#### Putting A Horse in The Stall

When putting a horse back into the stall, always use a halter and lead rope. When entering the stall, make sure to walk ahead of the horse, turn the horse's head to the stall door and remove the halter before leaving the stall. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

### **Placing A Horse in Crossties**

The horse must be placed in the crossties always for grooming and tacking up. *When attaching the crossties to the horse always make sure to attach the snaps to the halter, NOT the bridle.* When placing the bridle on the horse, slide the halter from the horse's head and place it on the horse's neck. Leave the crossties attached to the halter during this transition; only remove the crossties once the bridle is completely secured.

### **Grooming**

Each horse should be groomed before and after each lesson. First use a currycomb in a circular motion to loosen the excess dirt. Then use a hard brush to clean and loosen dirt away by brushing in the direction of the hair. Then finish the body with a soft brush. When the horse's body is clean, use a hoof pick to clean the dirt out of the hooves. Please remember to watch for cuts, scrapes, or other sores and tell the instructor before the lesson. If at any time, you do not feel comfortable please ask for help.

### **Hoof Picking**

Horse's feet should be picked before each lesson either by a volunteer or an instructor, depending on individual volunteer comfort level and horse personality.

### **Tacking**

Each piece of tack is labeled with each horse's name and photo. The schedule on the board next to the tack room will give you specific information about what tack is being used. The information will include the instructor's name, the horse name, the tack needed and what time they are needed.

Please ask for help if you are not sure what something means, we are happy to help!

### **Instructional Locations**

The primary arena available for all lessons is the indoor arena. Be sure to stop at the door and look to avoid colliding with other riders/horses. Call out, "door," before opening the door to enter or exit the arena. It is important to close all doors when entering or exiting the arena for safety. Please follow rules of etiquette of passing left to left in the arena or communicating where you are going next with other riders and instructors.

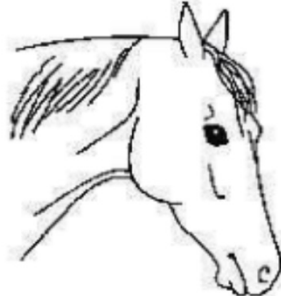
## Horse Body Language & Facial Expressions

### Reading a Horse's Ears

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



**Ears forward but relaxed**  
interested in what's  
in front of him



**Ears turned back but relaxed**  
listening to his rider  
or what's behind him



**Ears pointed stiffly forward**  
alarmed or nervous about what's  
ahead. Looking out for danger



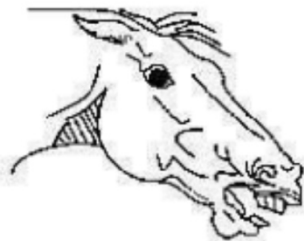
**Ears pointed left and right**  
relaxed, paying attention  
to the scenery on both sides.



**Ears stiffly back**  
annoyed or worried about what's  
behind him; might kick if annoyed.



**Droopy ears**  
calm and resting,  
horse may be dozing.



**Ears flattened against neck**  
violently angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

#### OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- **Tucking the tail down tightly.**  
Danger to the rear.  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.  
Watch out if ears are flattened too!
- **Switching the tail.**  
Annoyance and irritation:
  - at biting flies, stinging insects or tickling  
bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.  
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**  
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

## Tack & Equipment

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English Saddle



Soft Saddle or Soft Ride



El Compañero



Safety Stirrup



Devonshire Stirrup

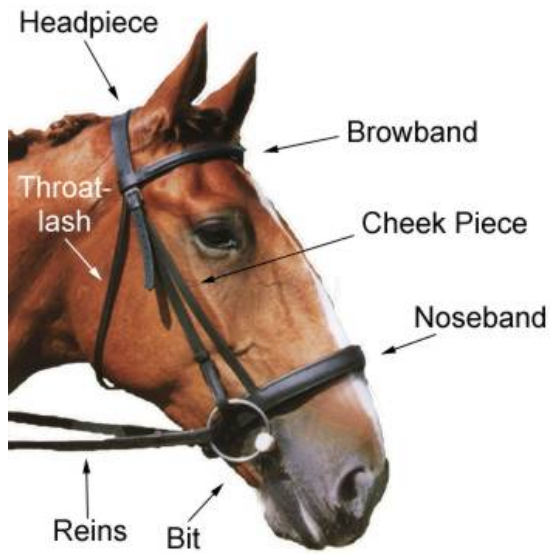


Rainbow Reins

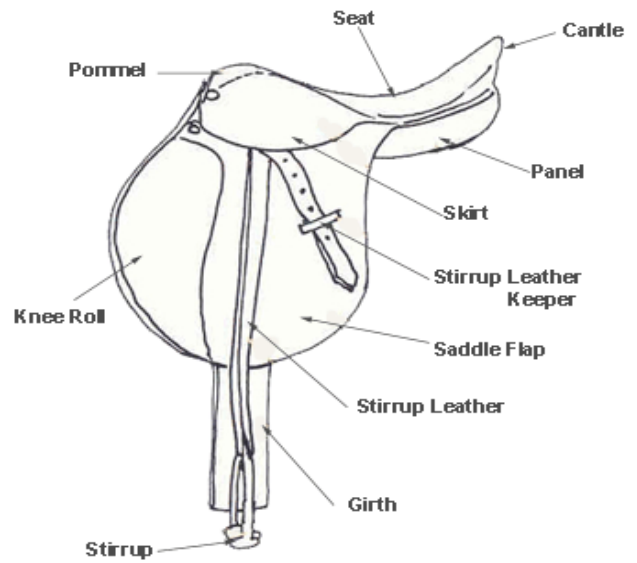


## Parts of Tack & Grooming Tools

Parts of an English Bridle



Parts of an English Saddle



### Grooming Tools: In Order

1. Curry Comb



2. Hard Brush



3. Soft Brush



4. Mane & Tail Comb



5. Hoof Pick



# Welcome to the Ivy Hill Family!

“Horses + Love = Hope”



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