

## Grooming

Grooming is important for horses, not only because it cleans their coats, but because it also brings out its natural oils, making them look shiny and healthy. Grooming also provides a good opportunity to check over your horse for any bumps or cuts that need to be treated. If you notice any cuts, loose/missing shoes, or smelly hooves, please bring it to the attention of an NCMT staff member if they aren't already aware. When not taken care of, cuts can become infected and hooves become home to bacteria (thrush). Infected cuts and thrush can ultimately cause a horse to become sore and lame. Grooming should not be viewed as a chore, but rather as a great opportunity to bond with your horse.

\*Remember: grooming your horse AFTER your ride is just as important as cleaning them before your ride!

### Equipment Needed for a Well-Groomed Horse:

- Hard brush/ dandy brush
- body/ medium brush
- small, soft face brush
- rubber curry comb and/or rubber curry mitt
- mane and tail comb
- hoof pick
- towel
- show sheen
- hoof dressing
- fly spray (during fly season)
- \*alcohol (to get rid of manure stains)

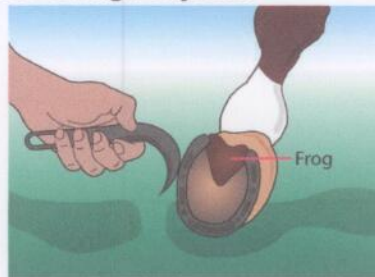
## Grooming in Steps

1. **Put your horse on cross ties.** If you choose to tack up your horse in his/her stall, you can tie up your horse with a halter and lead rope using a quick release slipknot.



2. **Pick out your horse's hooves.**

Using a hoof pick, start at the heel of the foot and pick forward to the toe, carefully removing all rocks, dirt and other foreign objects.

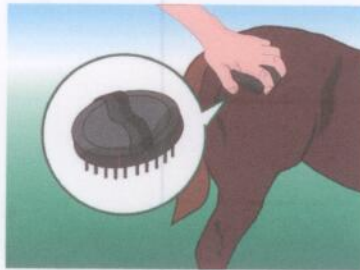


The frog (the V-shaped squishy part of the hoof) is extremely sensitive, so don't pick into that region. The most important part to about picking your horse's hooves is doing it before and after your ride.

- The hoof pick is held backwards in this picture, if you hold the pick so that your knuckles and the hook point in the same direction, hook nearest the pinky, you will suffer less strain on your hand and achieve more leverage.
3. **Use a rubber curry comb on the coat first.** It is especially helpful if your horse is shedding out the winter coat, has very thick, long hair, or is muddy. It should always be



used before brushing to bring out the dirt and loosen mud. Use the curry in strong, small circular motions over the horse's muscles, avoiding bony areas like the face, spine and legs. If you have a soft rubber curry comb, you can gently use it on the more sensitive parts of the horse (Face and legs). On one side, work your way from the neck, to the barrel, and all the way to the rear. Then, repeat on the other side of the horse. On chunkier, more muscular parts of the body, don't be afraid to use the curry comb a little harder.

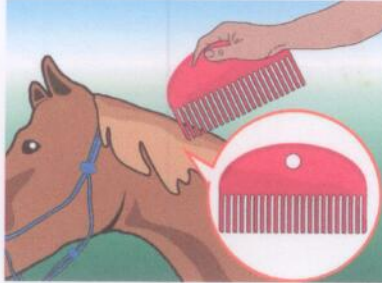


4. **Use a hard (dandy) brush.** A hard/dandy brush is a stiff-bristled brush used to take off the dirt and hair brought out by the curry comb. Use the brush in short straight flicking motions to allow the bristles to get all the way through the coat and whisk the dirt out. Do not use on the face, ears, belly, mane, tail, or any clipped area, as this can cause the horse discomfort.
  - o If necessary use a soft cloth on any parts of the horse where he/she may be sensitive. Unless you are using the hard brush on caked mud, do not use it on the head, the inside of the hind legs and between the hind legs.
5. **Use a soft brush.** A soft brush is a soft bristled brush that can be used on all areas of the horse. If you have a very soft brush, you can even use it on the face and legs, but be very careful and gentle. The soft brush removes any remaining surface dust. Make sure to avoid cuts.
6. **Take a damp rag, sponge, or baby-wipe and wipe your horse's eyes and clean out his nose.**

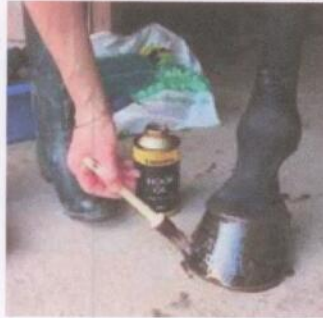


7. **Use a wide- bristled mane comb or tail brush to get tangles out of the mane and tail.** Before you start, give the tail a good shake to loosen up any shavings or straws of hay. A spritz of Showsheen can be used as a detangler (in the tail only!). Use your fingers to separate the hairs in both the mane and tail. Holding the whole tail in one hand

take a small amount of the tail (with the other hand) and brush this out. Continue taking small pieces from the side until you have brushed the whole tail. Horses have no feeling in their hair like humans do, but you should still always be gentle with your horse. Also, you want to avoid ripping out tail hair.



- 8. Apply hoof dressing.** Once you are done with the body, apply some hoof dressing. It helps to do this at the end so that no shavings from your horse's tail or body get stuck in the dressing on their hooves.



- 9. Spray your horse with fly spray.** This step is only necessary in the warmer months when the flies are out. If the sound of the fly spray bottle makes your horse nervous, you can spray fly spray on a towel and apply to the horse that way instead.



## Grooming Tips

- Fly spray is a life saver. It saves your horse from discomfort and also reduces the risk of it behaving unusually because of flies.
- If the horse is dusty or has dried mud, curry very thoroughly to bring it to the surface. Then take a slightly damp terry cloth towel and lightly run it over his coat. It will pick up a lot of dirt. Do not dampen the cloth too much, it will wet the remaining dust and you won't be able to brush it off. After brushing, dampen a clean section of the towel and use it to remove the last traces of dust. The damp towel is also good for removing dust from sensitive areas like around the eyes. Just be sure that your horse isn't spooked by the towel approaching his face.
- Don't be afraid to just get in there and brush! It will make them look very shiny especially on dark horses and ponies! Put the most effort into currying! It will really get your horse nice and shiny.
- When you are picking out the horses hooves, or working around a horse, it is best to remain close to the body. If you stand far out from him, he will be able to kick you easier and harder if he lashes out. Stay close to him and more in front of his hind legs. If you must be behind his back end or hind legs, keep a hand firmly on him so he knows you are there.
- Don't use too much pressure while brushing/currying the horse's legs. The skin is very close the bone here and can hurt the horse if you use too much pressure.
- Don't put fly spray or show sheen on the saddle area, or the saddle might slip!
- Make sure there are no sweat marks from the saddle, girth and/or bridle after your ride!