



Your First Lesson

What to Bring

- A helmet
- A closed-toe shoe or boot with a heel
- Comfortable pants or jeans that do not restrict movement

What to Expect

Be aware that many barns will have a list of basic rules and safety tips that everyone on the property must follow. These rules keep both horses and people safe and can include

- No running or shouting in the barn or around the horses.
- Never walk directly behind a horse or approach a horse from behind.
- When riding, maintain at least one horse length between you and the horse ahead of you.
- No smoking on the property.

Barn policies vary from stable to stable, so ask the trainer about these prior to your first lesson.

What to Ask

- “What discipline will I learn?”

Although beginner lessons often cover similar aspects of horsemanship regardless of riding style, many barns do specialize in one riding discipline. Consider what goals you might have for riding. For example, do you want to compete or trail ride? Are you interested in learning to jump or not? Discuss with the trainer whether their program might be a good fit to help you reach those goals. For an overview of equestrian disciplines, visit the US Equestrian’s website at www.usequestrian.org.

- “Do you have helmets or boots available for lesson use?”

Many stables that offer lessons sometimes have these items available for students’ use, so it’s worth checking with the trainer before purchasing these items just for your lesson. If and when you do decide to buy a helmet, look for one that is ASTM/SEI-certified for horseback riding.



- “What are the instructors’ and the horses’ qualifications?”

It’s important to feel confident that a lesson program’s instruction and horses are likely to match your skill level and help you achieve your riding goals.

- “Do you offer group or private lessons?”

Stables often offer one-on-one instruction options as well as lessons as part of a group, and the trainer might recommend one or the other depending on the prospective rider’s age or experience level. Costs for each can vary, with private lessons usually costing more.

- “Do you have a cancellation policy?”

Many stables have a 24-hour cancellation policy, meaning that if you cancel within 24 hours of the lesson, you are liable for the cost of the lesson.

- “Can I bring my dog to the barn?”

Some barns will allow you to bring a well behaved, leashed dog, while others do not allow any dogs.

- “Do I need to sign a waiver?”

At many stables, you will be required to sign a waiver in order to ride, and some will require anyone interacting with a horse to sign.

- “Can I visit the barn if I do not have a lesson scheduled?”

Many barns do not allow lesson students to visit the barn without a scheduled lesson.