

Fall Horse Care Checklist

HEALTH

- ✿ Schedule your fall vaccinations. Depending on your horse's age, lifestyle and region, your annual spring shots may need to be supplemented by a six-month visit. Talk to your vet to determine your horse's individual needs.
- ✿ Call the dentist. Have your vet or equine dental technician out to check your horse's teeth to make sure they're in good working order as you head into winter. This is especially important for youngsters and senior horses.
- ✿ Use caution with fall grass. Spring grass is most commonly associated with laminitis, but cool, fall nights lead to increased accumulation of sugars in grass. Consider restricting grass intake in easy-keepers and other founder-prone horses.

HORSEKEEPING

- ✿ If you blanket your horse in cooler weather, check the fit of all your blankets now and make sure they are in good repair before cold weather arrives.
- ✿ Clean your fly masks and fly sheets and store them for the season. Bring your fly sprays, shampoos and other liquids into a climate-controlled location to prevent freezing and thawing that may render them less effective.
- ✿ Winterize your barn. Make sure your fence posts are secure as you won't be able to sink new ones after the ground has frozen. Insulate your pipes and always unhook hoses when not in use, especially overnight when the temperature may drop below freezing.

RIDING

- ✿ If your horse works up a sweat on a chilly fall day, throw a wool or fleece cooler over him while he's cooling out to prevent him from becoming chilled.
- ✿ Be aware of the hunting laws in your area, especially if you trail ride. Avoid known hunting areas and peak hunting times. Outfit yourself and your horse in bright orange gear. Tie bells to your saddle or enjoy chatter with your trail buddies to make sure you aren't mistaken for a deer quietly moving through the woods.