

Spring Horse Care Checklist

HEALTH

- 🌍 Schedule Your Annual Vet Appointment. The early-spring visit is the time to get your vaccinations and Coggins taken care of and discuss any health care concerns with your vet.
- 🌍 Do a Fecal Egg Count Test. Find out which horses in your barn are carrying a parasite load, and consult your vet on deworming appropriately.
- 🌍 Watch the Grass. Fresh, spring grass can lead to founder or colic. As the grass comes in, reduce the amount of time your horse spends in turnout, move him to a dry lot for part of the day, or put on a grazing muzzle to limit his intake.

HORSEKEEPING

- 🌍 Clean and Store Your Horse's Blankets. Wipe down your winter blankets with mild soap and water, let them dry completely, then spray them with a waterproofing spray. You can also send them off to a blanket cleaning service. Make sure they're completely dry before putting them in plastic bags and storing them for the season.
- 🌍 Rotate Your Pastures. If you only have one turnout area, section it off using affordable electric tape fencing. Restricting horses from a section of pasture will allow the grass to take root before being grazed down to the dirt or trampled by hooves.
- 🌍 Check Your Fences. Winter weather does a number on fences. Take a walk or ride around the perimeter, checking for broken boards, loose posts or drooping wire.
- 🌍 Lose Your Horse's Winter Coat. Plan to spend a bit more time and elbow grease on your grooming routine to help get rid of the winter fuzz.

RIDING

- 🌍 Create a Conditioning Program. Allow four to eight weeks to work up from the slow winter riding schedule to your full, warm-season routine. This will reduce the risk of tendon and ligament injuries that could sideline your horse for months. Older horses will need longer to regain fitness than young horses.
- 🌍 Map out Your Season. Take a look at your possible show or trail riding schedule for the year and come up with a plan. Decide what you can afford, how much you and your horse can handle, and find out if you need any memberships or additional paperwork for your chosen competitions.