

Equine Unlimited Lesson Program

Welcome to Equine Unlimited! A Brief Introduction:

Our goal as instructors is to create a safe, challenging, and fun environment in which to learn all about horses and horsemanship. We want to help students be confident and comfortable around horses, be knowledgeable about their care, and learn the many skills involved in riding. From the student's end, we expect a positive attitude and willingness to learn, as well as respect for the barn rules, the horses, and the staff and other students.

Rules of the barn:

- No running or screaming (it scares horses, which can be dangerous!)
- Helmet and close-toed shoes should be worn at ALL TIMES when working with a horse.
- Never leave your horse unattended, and don't leave the barn until your instructor says you're free to go.
- NO JUMPING unless you're in a lesson.
- Be neat and responsible for your own mess, and clean any school equipment you've used.
- Be polite to staff and other students, don't use equipment that is not yours or the school's, and go to an instructor if there is an argument or upset.
- Be on time for lessons, and call at least 24 hours in advance to cancel or reschedule (otherwise you will be charged for the lesson).
- Always ask if you are unsure about something, and get an instructor's permission before taking on a task you haven't previously done unsupervised.

Lesson Program:

For the first lesson, we ask that you arrive about ten minutes early. Your instructor will have a horse out for you, and will explain how get it ready. For the very young, much will be taken care of by the instructor, and for the more advanced rider we will mostly just show you where to find the necessary supplies. The general goal, after taking into account age and experience, is that students learn how to catch a horse, groom it, tack up (put on saddle and bridle), and mount in the arena all on their own. After the first lesson, we ask that you arrive about half an hour early to begin doing this. Your instructor, other staff, or advanced students will be around to help, and preparation might cut into the lesson while you are learning. Eventually, you will be expected to be prepared, mounted, and warming up in the arena at the scheduled lesson time (faster preparation = longer riding time). Similarly, you will learn how to cool down, un-tack, and put away the horse, and will be responsible for doing so once you are proficient. Again, this may shorten riding time in the beginning if the instructor needs to help you extensively.

Parents are invited to watch, learn, and help, but this is not required. Children under 10 should never be around the horse unsupervised, though once the instructor is available she will take care of supervision. For young students, it is helpful if parents learn catching, grooming, and tacking-up so they can help their child get ready for the lesson on time, but again this is not required and there will be staff help available. For older children we find it more helpful if the parent lets the student do most of the work and learn to be responsible for it. There are chairs and benches overlooking the arena and parents (or any other guests) are more than welcome to have a seat and watch the lesson.

For beginners we always recommend private lessons, at least until the student is no longer using a lunge-line. If the student is more advanced he or she can join a group or arrange a semi-private. We start all beginners in a Western saddle for security, and they can progress to English if

they desire and are ready (you can only learn to jump in an English saddle!). Students can also choose to continue to work on Western-style riding with a Western-trained horse if they prefer.

Bring a water bottle, and sunscreen if appropriate. You can also bring carrots and apples as treats for your horse and others (but ask first!). Lessons will usually be held in cold and wet weather, but if it's seriously raining or storming, the instructor will call to cancel. Call to check if unsure.

Appropriate dress:

Pants must be worn in any lesson (shorts or skirts are not acceptable). Jeans are fine, although stretch pants are usually more comfortable, and clothes should be comfortable and easy to move in, but not extremely baggy. Boots or shoes with heels are necessary (sandals are never okay at the barn!), but EUI has boots available for beginners. There are also school helmets, which must be worn AT ALL TIMES when around the horse.

Once you're sure you're interested in riding and are ready to make some investments in equipment (the sooner the better), paddock boots and a riding helmet are at the top of the list, followed by breeches and half-chaps. Ask an instructor for recommendations of where to buy them and what specific kinds to get.

To sign up for lessons:

The procedure for signing up for lessons is to check the schedule book in the office for an available time under the name of whichever instructor you would like a lesson with. If there is a vertical line through the time or the name isn't written for a particular day, that person isn't available. You can also call Malinda at (916) 718-8662 or Amy at (916) 208-1514. For semi-private lessons, the students are responsible for making arrangements with other students. Group lessons will be written in the book and you can sign up on the list if you ride at the appropriate level. Checks made out to Equine Unlimited, Inc. can be dropped in the black box in the office marked "checks for EUI." Ask for a price sheet, and don't forget that lessons can be bought for a discount in packages of ten.

Possible goals and things to look forward to:

Once you've caught the riding bug and are hooked, there are lots of options for improving your skills and enjoying the sport more. Riders of a certain level are invited to do "hack rides," without an instructor specifically helping you, which are great fun and great practice. Also, having your own horse to develop a partnership with will give you the opportunity to practice more and will dramatically improve your riding, as well as deepen the experience of horsemanship. Leasing a horse is a great and highly recommended option before you consider buying one, so you can get a risk-free appreciation for how much work and money is involved. Many EUI horses are up for lease or sale; talk to your instructor.

Competition is a different way to experience riding. EUI offers low-key local competition experiences for the beginner and high-caliber multi-day shows for advanced competitors. While no shows are held on the property, there will be announcements for events that the barn plans to attend (including clinics, which are elaborate group lessons with top riders/trainers). To go, ask your instructor if you're ready and have her tell you about the kinds of classes you could enter, then together choose a horse you'd like to take. EUI charges a trailering fee and a rail fee (for coaching at the show), and the shows charge entry fees and/or fees per class. Special attire is required, and extra preparation like bathing your horse and cleaning your tack. An instructor will be happy to give you advice, explanations, and help. Competitions are a great way to check your progress and challenge yourself, have an exciting experience, and bond with the barn "team."

And Now Let's Get Riding!!