

Handbook for Volunteers



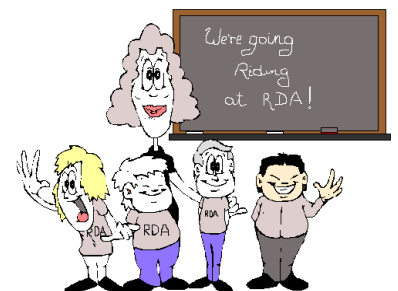
Riding Develops Abilities

THE RDA WAY

**RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION (NSW)
Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre**

Our Vision

- to develop in our riders, physical and social skills through the enjoyment of horses
- to enrich their lives



INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO RDA

This booklet focuses on explaining a little about RDA and safe interactions of horses and humans and basic horse care.

There are reasons why we ask for RT&LH Centre horses to be handled in a particular way and request all staff and volunteers to adhere to safe practices. These include:

- Safety rules apply to everyone. There is not one set of rules for beginners and another for experienced people. The only difference is that an experienced horse person has developed skills and judgment that a beginner does not yet have
- Horses at RT&LH Centre are handled by many people each week. It gets confusing for horses if we are asking and doing different things with them. Confusion can lead to misbehaviors.
- Personal safety is everyone's responsibility. Training and supervision is provided, however the likelihood of injury increases when safe handling practices are ignored.
- While our horses are trained, they are independent thinking animals who respond to behaviors or situations around them. By protecting themselves from what they perceive as a potential danger, they may accidentally cause injury to a person.
- Horses are used to a daily routine. Routine assists horses just as routine assists people – they work better if they know what is happening around them.
- **In all cases, the safety of humans comes first and then the horses**



WHAT IS RDA-

Riding for the Disabled Association NSW is a voluntary, charitable organization that relies on voluntary help, donations and legacies to deliver and finance our programs. Our horses and ponies provide therapy, achievement and enjoyment to people with disabilities. These programs are person centered, and may be therapeutic, recreational riding, carriage driving, dressage, or Hippotherapy. The RDA Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre has been operating since 1980 with help from around 100 volunteers allowing around 100 people with a disability to experience enjoyment, challenge and a sense of achievement through participation in horse riding activities that result in the development of life skills, improved quality of life and the attainment of personal goals.

We are one of 40 RDA Centre's in NSW and also affiliated with our international organization called Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI)

Carriage Driving is where a horse or pony is hitched to a wheelchair accessible carriage and driven by the RDA driver, with an RDA Whip holding to the other pair of dual reins!

Riding. Riders start by being led on the horse with a volunteer in control of the lead rein. There may be volunteers walking either side known as side walkers ensuring rider's safety and comfort. Riders may progress to off lead work once their skill level allows.

Dressage lessons offer the opportunity for the rider to learn more skilled movements and tests. There are often opportunities to compete in Dressage at the Centre, Regional, State and National Championships.

Hippotherapy- the use of horse riding as a therapeutic or rehabilitative treatment, especially as a means of improving coordination, balance, and strength.



INTRODUCTION TO THE RDA WAY

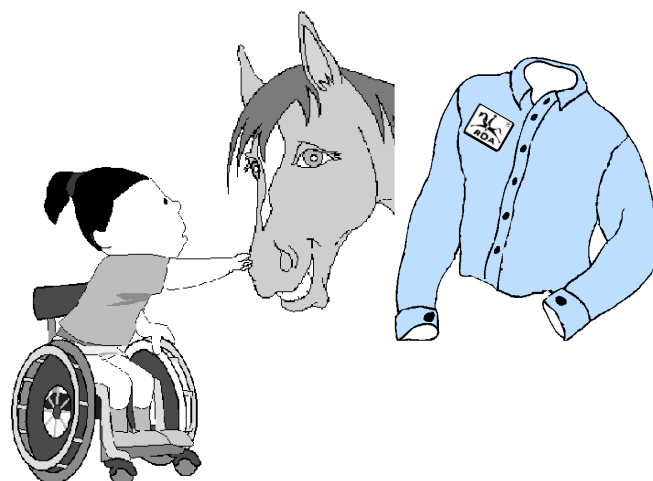
Programs at RDA RT&LH – 2024

| Program | Day | Start Time | Finish Time | Comment |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| General Riding | Monday | 8.00 am | 12.30 pm | BYO lunch |
| Dressage | Monday | 6.00 pm | 9.00 pm | Currently unavailable |
| General Riding | Tuesday | 8.00 am | 4.00 pm | BYO lunch, 30 minutes break |
| Carriage Driving | Tuesday | 9.00 am Stroud | 12 noon | Every 2nd Tues |
| General Riding | Wednesday | | | |
| General Riding | Thursday | | | |
| General Riding | Friday | | | |
| General Riding | Saturday | 8.00 am | 1.00 pm | Every 2 nd Sat ONLY |

DRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR RIDING PROGRAMS

Avoid loose flapping clothes as they can scare horses or get caught. Fitted clothes such as jeans and tops are better. Volunteer shirts are available to buy through the office. **Hats** are recommended for sun protection.

Wear closed-in shoes as horses can and do stand on feet. Heavy grade, comfortable shoes are recommended.



BENEFITS TO THE RIDERS

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- Improved Balance
- Strengthened Muscles
- Improved co-ordination, faster reflexes & better motor planning
- Stretching of tight or spastic muscles
- Increased range of motion of the joints
- Improved Respiration and Circulation
- Improved Appetite and Digestion



PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

- General Sense of well-being
- Improved Self-confidence
- Development of Patience
- Emotional control & self-discipline
- Increase interest in one's own life
- Increased Interest in the outside world
- Sensory Integration
- Sense of normality



SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Friendship
- Development of respect and love for animals
- Increased experiences
- Enjoyment



A TYPICAL DAY AT RDA

Horse handling comes with a whole new vocabulary....

The head and tail end stay the same but the sides have special names.

The **NEAR** and **OFF** sides which translates to-

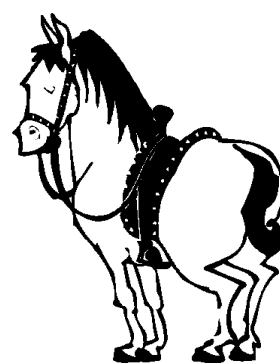
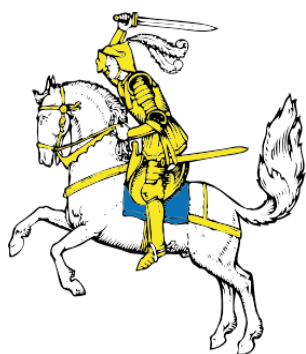
The **NEAR** side is **the Left hand side** of the horse. The **OFF** side is the **right hand side** of the horse

We **lead** horses, **do up** their tack, and **mount** from the **near side**.

Believe it or not, this all goes back to the days of wearing swords on horseback.

Since a sword is usually hung from the left hip, mounting from the **left** means the scabbarded sword does not have to cross the horse's back as the rider swings his leg over. Also, if you are mounting with sword in hand, your left hand is able to control the reins, and the right hand, your sword, as you mount.

Horses don't really know they have a right and left hand side!!



ON ARRIVAL

Attendance Book - all people coming to and leaving the Centre must sign in & note time of departure. This is an Insurance requirement.

Sunscreen - is provided for volunteers in the Tack Room & the Function Room.

Antibacterial Gel- provided in the function room

PRIOR TO LESSONS – STABLES

You should always let a horse know where you are by speaking as you move around it. It doesn't matter what you say, but the sound of your voice will enable the horse to locate you when you're in its blind spots. Many kicks occur because the horse was startled and kicked in defense.

When moving around horses you should always stay alert and observant. You should stay either very close to the horse or at least 3-4m away, preferably more, remembering that a horse can run backwards to kick.

'Very close' means within an arm's length, because at this distance a kick is more a shove. Also, if you are touching the horse you will feel the muscles tense or the weight shift as the horse prepares to kick.

Only do tasks you have been taught and are comfortable doing



The CARETAKER will have horses in yards with their morning feed/water and will update Paddock Board list.



Each morning, whoever can come early, starts to groom the horses i.e. brushing and cleaning the feet, under the supervision of the coach or designated groom.



All the horses have been put in their stalls by the caretaker. (All stalls have the horse's name on the front).

Boxes' containing grooming equipment are found in the tack room -each horse has its own set of gear with their name on each bag

First, tie the horse up to the safety twine on the railing in the following way. This is the **RDA quick release knot** which you can pull undone easily but the horse cannot



One pull at the end and it comes undone

Rugs are to be removed after tying horse up by undoing crossover straps or surcingles, undo chest strap first, and then undo the leg straps take the rug off—then ensure buckles are re-clipped into "D" rings on rug. (Reverse when putting rug back on horse at end of the day)

Groom in yards using horses own brush bag

Check with coach if horses eyes need wiping or hooves need oiling

Rugs are placed on the front of the horses stall.

CLEANING THE HORSES HOOVES

Picking out a horse hoof means removing mud, bedding and any stones compacted in the underside of the hoof, using a tool called a hoof pick.

Begin with the **FRONT near SIDE** foot, then the **BACK near SIDE** foot, **BACK OFF SIDE** foot and **FINISH** with **FRONT OFF SIDE** foot.



- 1. Make sure your horse is calm - there is no point trying to ask it to stand on 3 legs if there is a load of excitement going on.**
- 2. Make sure** the rope isn't **tied too long**, as the grazing instinct might take over and throw off the horse's balance if he lowers his head.
- 3. Start on the near side.** Introduce yourself, and let the horse know you have good intentions - give him gentle strokes on his neck and shoulder and speak to him softly. Stand near the shoulder and turn your body to face his tail. Have your outside leg slightly in front of the other for better balance and efficient maneuvering.
- 4. Run your hand down the leg, and tap the back of his leg.** This should warn the horse what you are about to do, and let him square himself up.
If the other three legs are positioned too awkwardly, it's no good! He won't pick up a leg if he feels unbalanced, so give him a chance to sort himself out.



5. **Squeeze the leg above the fetlock if the horse doesn't automatically pick up the leg at the first command.** Have patience and be gentle, as this may take some convincing if the horse is not responding.
6. **Hold the hoof in one hand.** Some horses are much happier if you do not hold the **pastern or coronet area**. If he tries to pull away or put his foot down, hold the toe of the hoof and lift it towards his elbow. Relax the pull as soon as he does. It takes very little effort from you, but is very effective at preventing him from stamping his hoof down. Once the horse standing calmly on 3 legs, use the hoof picks to scrape mud and stones out.

NOTE: DO NOT pull the horses leg out toward you as this may cause serious pain. Keep the leg in its natural place.



HOWEVER, if ever in doubt or unsure when handling the horses, ask for help.

Once groomed, the horses are led to the arena to be saddled and bridled – each horse is tied up at a designated spot, labeled with its name

HORSE GEAR

Collect appropriate saddles & cloths, gel and/or saddle pads, bridles, brushes, hoof cleaning gear and eye bucket & cloths from Tack Room. Bridles are marked with horse's name.

- **Saddles.** Each saddle has been fitted to a specific horse and the name tag is on the saddle
- **Gel Pads / Saddle Pads** are used under most saddles to protect our horses backs
- **High Risers** with inbuilt front or rear risers, assist in the fitting of saddles
- **Stirrup** leathers should be on the saddles. Spare stirrup leathers are colour coded with tape to ensure pairs of the same length are stored together.
- **Clogs** are attached to stirrups at the direction of the coach, and must be attached, if rider is not wearing riding boots
- **Halters and bridles** are labeled with the horses name and so all gear is located easily.

SADDLING & BRIDLING HORSES

As instructed by coach or designated groom

Horse is to be tied securely to baling twine (on tie-up points) using RDA Quick Release Knot.

Gel OR Saddle pad to be used **on top** of saddle cloth.

Saddling the horse- Buckle-up girth starting with the left then right. Reverse order when unsaddling. Always girth up gently and gradually.

Bridling horse - Ensure horse is **UNTIED** when bridling / unbridling. Ensure halter remains on horse when bridling (**under BRIDLE**).

After bridling, ensure reins are **SAFELY** buckled through throat lash or as per coach's instructions. **NO bridle is to be altered after being correctly fitted to each horse by Horse Management Team.**

After saddling lead horse for a walk, making small, tight, circles to right and left, to stretch the skin under the girth. **DO NOT PULL** front legs forward.

Check & tighten girth as necessary.

Check/ Adjust rider's stirrup length and leave stirrups run-up until rider ready to mount. Save time by keeping a note of stirrup length for each rider.

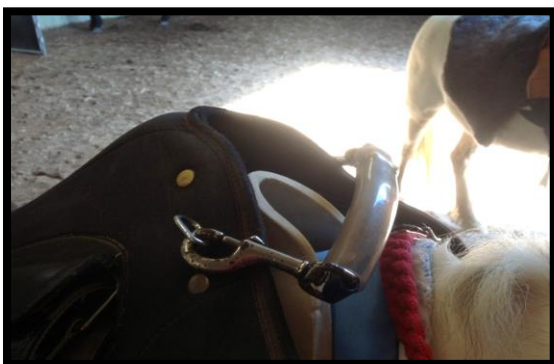
Check girth again when coach calls for horse to mounting ramp or block and release reins from throat lash.



If your horse is giving you messages or signs, by his body language, that you cannot interpret, check immediately with the coach.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

- **HAND HOLD** - clip across the front of the saddle



In the tack room they hang on the wall



- **Clogs** –put on stirrups for children with incorrect riding shoes

Putting on clogs may require a degree in engineering, but we all get the hang of it after putting them on backwards once or twice.



- **Pipes** – placPipes - placed on reins help riders learn to hold the reins correctly



SETTING UP THE ARENA

A folder showing different arrangements of the gear is available. Variety in games, activities and differing levels of challenges allow riders to learn skills develop their abilities - While having FUN



MOUNTING

Mounting is overseen by Coach /appointee

Have horse ready according to list provided and bring to mounting ramp or block when coach has rider ready to mount.

Only the horse being mounted is to be in mounting area. All other horses, mounted or unmounted, are to be in the tie-up area, arena or outside.

Leader is to lead horse to mounting area by changing sides as you approach the ramp to get as close as possible to the ramp. It's the leader's job to ensure the horse is comfortable and quiet prior to and whilst the rider is mounting. Always follow coaches specific instructions as some horses may need adjusted approach to the ramp.

Minimal number of people should be around horse when mounting rider at ramp. Near-side sidewalker is to be available to walk off with rider as directed by coach. There always needs to be an off side helper when mounting. If a wheelchair is in use, a helper is required to remove it. All other people are to be away from ramp.

"Walk-on" once rider is settled and agrees to "walk-on" with leader and sidewalkers (if required), accompany rider into arena.



DURING THE LESSON

The Coach is responsible for the overall control of the lesson and those involved including the horses, riders and volunteers.

HOW TO BE AN EFFICIENT LEADER

- Leaders, at all times, have the responsibility of the horse they are leading. A leader must remain with the horse they are leading and must not leave to attend another horse or rider with a problem. If no sidewalker present the leader is responsible for their rider.
- If rider has sidewalkers then the Sidewalkers and not leader are responsible for the rider
- Leaders may even have to draw the Coach's attention if a problem is unnoticed by the Coach
- The Leader should be walking at the horse's shoulder unless there is a side walker on that side in which case the leader will need to be further forward
- Leaders must observe correct leading and safety techniques. Training will be given in correct RDA leading procedures.
- Ensure a safe distance between horses always at least one horse length

HOW TO BE AN EFFICIENT SIDEWALKER

Sidewalking is an important role and is essential in passing on coaches instructions to the rider and helping develop the rider's skills.

- For the side walkers to be of any benefit to the rider they must be in the correct position - i.e. level with the rider's body. Too far forward and the side walker may not be aware of the position of the rider in the saddle; too far back and they are not in a position to assist the rider should there be a problem and they may also annoy the horse and cause him to display his annoyance by kicking.
- If there is only one side walker they should be on the side opposite the leader.
- Sometime it is necessary to support a rider due to a physical disability. The coach will decide the level and type of support, as there are many support holds and these may change as the rider progresses.
- An effective way to allow the riders to feel secure without actually holding them is for the volunteer to hold the front of the saddle flap or the knee roll and placing their forearm across the rider's thigh. This keeps the rider in position without really holding them. Indeed it is not always a good idea to hold some riders on the thigh, as young men are easily aroused when held this way. In this instance the choice of volunteer is important.
- The volunteer must be careful not to lean or pull on the rider causing discomfort, pulling the rider off balance, as it prevents the rider moving with the horse.
- **When a rider does not need support, do not lean or rest hands/arms on the horse or saddle.**

Volunteers are asked not to talk between themselves during riding sessions as your rider will 'switch off'. Riders may appear not to hear, but they 'take in' everything you say.

Talk to your riders.



AFTER THE LESSON

- **Ensure the horse is tied securely** with an RDA Quick Release Knot before removing saddle. Horses must be **untied** before removing bridle.
- **Brush and cool down horse** this may involve wiping with a damp towel or hosing the saddle and girth areas.
- **Rug horse** if required being sure to put the correct rug on each horse. If not sure ask coach or experienced helper.
- **Releasing horses**

Release horse into appropriate paddock as **listed on blackboard in the mounting area**

Before removing halter stop horse a small distance from the gate, turn the horse to face toward the gate and then remove halter. If other horses are in the paddock near the gate ask another volunteer to assist you for your safety and the horse's safety.

Clear arena - All equipment must be put away unless other arrangements have been made with next program coach. Horse manure cleared into wheelbarrows.

Clean stables- ensure stables clean and barrows emptied.

Horse Tack is to be put in Tack Room. **If you are unsure where some things go, ask coach or experienced Helper.**

- All saddles must have stirrups "run-up" for safety.
- Clogs to be removed from stirrups, attached together and stored appropriately in signed container.
- Knots in reins are to be untied and pipes removed
- Bits to be washed or wiped clean.
- Gel Pads are to be stored flat so as not to distort "gel".
- High risers are stored on shelf below Gel Pads

DEBRIEF OF LESSON

Advise coach of your riders and horses progress/difficulties in the lesson and suggestions for change. Your comments are an important part of the riders program.

THEN.....

You can have a cup of coffee/tea or go home.



AROUND HORSES

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER!!!

- **NEVER** mount a rider when the horse is tied up.
- **NEVER** leave your rider unattended to attend to another rider.
- **NEVER** tie a rider onto a horse.
- **NEVER** walk behind a horse without speaking to it.
- **NEVER** kneel or sit on the ground near a horse; squat so that you can get away quickly if necessary
- **NEVER** approach a horse from behind or chase him to make him walk or trot
- **NEVER** rest an arm behind the saddle or hit the horse on the rump or flank.
- **NEVER** tie-up a horse in the riding arena while riders are mounted.
- **NEVER** tie the horse up with a long rope in which it can become entangled.
- **NEVER** tie-up a horse too low or too high.
- **NEVER** tie a horse to a movable object,
E.g. A garden seat, car door, rubbish bin, jump wings, taps, water pipes, wires or veranda railings.

RDA NSW CODE OF CONDUCT

RDA provides a quality Duty of Care while implementing all RDA activities – the conduct of all participants must be of a standard that will be a positive influence on riders' behavior. This Code of Conduct shall apply to all members, officials, office bearers, volunteers, riders, parents and carers, participating in or in attendance at all activities conducted under the control of, or when representing an RDANSW Centre.

Persons subject to this Code shall...

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
 - Respect riders' confidentiality
 - Use age appropriate behavior and language with the riders
 - Refrain from using profane, insulting, harassing or otherwise offensive language, hand signals or other gestures
- Understand that coaches'/volunteers' intentions and riders' interpretation of "touching" will be influenced by cultural differences and religious implications
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with riders, especially undressing and personal hygiene
 - Not drink, be affected by, or in possession of alcohol or non-prescription drugs while responsible for implementing any RDA horse programme
 - Not engage in any other conduct, either on or in the vicinity of RDA activities, considered prejudicial to the best interests of RDA or in contravention of the Constitution, policies and procedures of this Association.

THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VOLUNTEER

As an RDA volunteer you have the right to...

- be assigned a suitable job and to say **NO** to any task you are unable or would prefer not to do
- express opinions, be listened to and have your opinion respected
- receive adequate information of what is expected of you
- ask questions about anything you may not understand
- receive support and training
- have your personal details kept in a confidential manner
- work in a safe and healthy environment
- be reimbursed for agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- be advised of insurance cover
- be treated fairly and without harassment or discrimination
- have access to Complaints Procedures

As an RDA volunteer you are responsible for...

- Providing a "Working With Children Check" as required by law before working in programs
- Arriving at agreed times.
- signing and noting your time in "Attendance Book" when you arrive and leave.
- Notifying the Coach or committee if you are unable to attend a planned activity.
- Respecting the rider's confidentiality.
- Adhering at all times to the safety requirements and regulations of RDA
- Following the directions of the Coach when in a riding program
- Providing feedback where appropriate
- Asking for support when needed

- Informing RDA of any medical condition or special needs you have, which may affect your ability to do certain tasks
- Reporting hazards, injuries or risk management issues
- Attending ongoing training
- Advising your Centre of any change of address, phone number etc.

WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY

RDANSW abides by The Work, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunity Guidelines of this State, and the Australian Sports Commission Policy on Harassment, copies of which are available from State Office.

Email: stateoffice@rdansw.org.au

Health and Safety is of prime importance for all at an RDA Centre. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the basic rules of safety, for both horse, rider and themselves by consultation with the Coaches, attending training days and reading the available literature. In line with current WH&S recommendations, practice good hygiene on the assumption that everyone is infectious (they may not know themselves).

RDANSW strongly recommends all volunteers make sure their immunisation against tetanus is up-to-date, also immunisation against hepatitis is advised.

All people at RDA are to be treated equally and fairly in compliance with Equal Opportunity Guidelines.

RDANSW PRIVACY STATEMENT

RDANSW collects and administers a range of personal and health information required for the primary activities of the organisation.

RDANSW is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the information it collects, holds and administers. RDANSW complies with the *Privacy Act 1988 including the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)* as outlined in the *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012*.

We recognise the rights of individuals to have their information administered in ways they would reasonably expect – protected on the one hand and made accessible to them on the other. These privacy values are reflected in and supported by our core values and philosophies.

SOCIAL MEDIA

RDA NSW recognises that many people involved and associated with our organisation use social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Whilst personal use and access of these sites are not under the jurisdiction of RDA NSW, it is important that personal use of these sites must consider our Code of Conduct to ensure no harm to our organization or our members. The use of social media, which may bring harm to RDA, our riders, our volunteers or our members including:

- Disclosing confidential information about them
- Harassment or discrimination of them
- Causing problems for the activities or the harmony of our Centre
- Threatening the reputation of them could lead to disciplinary action and possible discontinuation of association with RDA

No photos should be posted on social media without express permission from the person in the photograph.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CURRENT RDA ACTIVITIES

Contact us

Email: raymondterrace@rdansw.org.au

Web Site: rdaraymondterrace.org.au

FACEBOOK-: RDA RAYMOND TERRACE

Postal Address: PO Box 624, Raymond Terrace, 2324

Location: 3219 Pacific Highway, Kings Hill 2324