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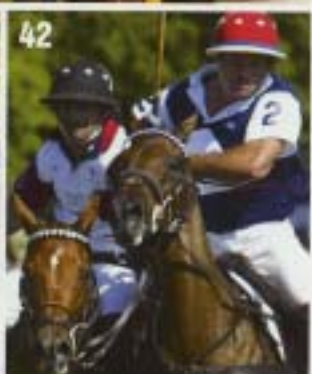
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Grooming for Health

By Diana Armstrong-Wilson



Grooming is essential for all horses, whatever they do. Horses in the wild roll and rub their coats to keep them clean. However, stabled horses usually have a more intensive diet and this causes them to excrete more waste materials through their skin and their internal organs. Therefore grooming is crucial in helping to keep the horse or pony both healthy and happy. Also, in this current era of popular fitness regimes, grooming is good for the rider's health too – as effective (and cheaper) as any workout in the gym.

An old wives' tale says that a good grooming is as good as a feed. This is no doubt true as grooming helps to improve the horse's metabolism. Other plus factors for regular grooming are that it improves the horse's circulatory system, enables the sweat glands to work better; helps prevent hoof infections and enhances the horse's appearance. However, perhaps the most important reason for grooming is that it gives the groom an opportunity to pick up any injuries or swellings. Early diagnosis of cuts or the appearance of strange lumps may well help to avoid hefty vets bills later.

It is important to remember that the first thing that happens to an ill horse is that it loses condition in its coat. Like human hair and skin, horses' coats are a great guide to their inner wellbeing. This applies equally to a hairy pony club pony or a sleek thoroughbred polo star.

Regular Worming

Forgive me for stating the obvious, but the first rule of good grooming is regular worming. As stabled horses are not free to roam across vast areas of pasture, worming is essential. Worms can cause anaemia and have been known to result in aneurisms. They can also cause colic and in some cases have contributed to damage to the heart. It is essential though that a variety of wormers are used to prevent the horse building up a resistance to one particular brand. Making sure that pastures are not overgrazed and droppings are collected

also helps in this long-running battle against worms. There is a huge range of wormers to choose from, including popular brands such as Equimax and Eraquell (tel: 01359 243243 or 07887 642486), Strongid P (tel: 01737 331333) and Eqvalan Duo (tel: 0845 6014236). If in doubt about which one to choose, always consult a vet.

Grooming Kits

A well-equipped grooming kit is also essential. It is advisable to have one for the stable and another for the lorry/trailer. Well-known polo suppliers Tally Ho Farm (01344 885373) and Polo Splice (01730 814991) sell grooming kits and a variety of kits would be available

from your local tack shop. Also check out online tack shops such as www.robinsons-uk.com or www.bluepony.co.uk. A new online tack shop, www.equestrian.co.uk has just been launched and is also worth a look. This site sells plenty of aids to help with grooming including the luxury Chamrock Range Sheepskin grooming mitt, which helps put a shine on a horse's coat. The elegant grooming brushes from E Jeffries & Sons Ltd (tel: 01922 642222) are available from most equestrian retailers. With wooden backs, leather straps and goats' hair for the body brush, these brushes are smart enough to grace a dressing table, let alone a tack box.





Good grooming is as good as a good feed...

Hoof Oil

Essential in any grooming kit is hoof oil. Strong and healthy feet are a must in the fast-paced game of polo and so particular care should always be taken with the hooves.

There is a huge range of hoof oils on the market including **Shur Hoof Dressing from Horsensense (0800 867283)**. Shur Hoof is an ultra-thick long lasting dressing containing pine tar, fish oil, turpentine and iodine which protects and aids the texture and elasticity of the hoof. **Carr & Day & Martin's Vanner and Prest Hoof Oil (tel: 0800 413136)** not only gives a gleaming shine but also protects the hoof from infection. Another option is the company's **Stockholm Hoof Tar** which seals and protects cuts and nicks in the hoof.

The Pony Clubbers or the young at heart among you may also be interested in coloured hoof oil to make your pony stand out in the line-up. Products such as **Red Rum**



Coloured Hoof Oil (tel: 0845 2267437) are available in five different colours.

Time Savers

Some companies have also taken into account the fact that many horse owners today do not have a lot of spare time to devote to their horses and any time spent at the stables is ideally spent in the

essential item if there are plans for the Pony Club polo star to shine in the show ring too. It produces the same effect as a traditionally pulled mane without the pain for both pony and groom.

Clippers

A final essential bit of kit is a pair of clippers. Horses and ponies start to grow their winter coats



saddle. Therefore the **BackPack Groom n Vac (tel: 0796 3009912,**

website:www.backpackgroomer.co.uk) is an innovative and welcome design for those who are pushed for time. This is an electric vacuum grooming machine that is worn on the back. The manufacturers claim that it helps the horse owner achieve a dust free environment and so is ideal for both horses and riders who suffer from allergies and asthma. Interestingly, the company also makes an attachment that can be fitted onto certain household vacuum cleaners, enabling one to have a DIY Groom n Vac.

A smaller and cheaper timesaver is the new **Solo Comb (www.equine-world.co.uk)** which makes short shrift of pulling horses' manes. This is an

in late August and so if they are not to be turned away they will need to be clipped to stop them from overheating. There is a vast choice of clippers on the market, ranging from mains-operated clippers such as the **Lister Neon (tel: 01453 544832)** to portable sets like the **Moser Avalon Rechargeable (tel: 01291 650543)**.

The best advice on any grooming product is surely to be found on the yard or in the pony lines. Never hesitate to ask a fellow groom or player their advice on a particular product. Tried and tested evaluations from people in the same game are invaluable and save both time and money.



Jeffries Flyover Saddle – Ultra Lightweight

THE Jeffries Flyover is a high-performance saddle built on a unique tree, and only half the weight of most saddles.

Rigorously tested by international event riders including Jeffries sponsored rider Captain Richard Waygood, the saddle has proved to be tough and durable.

Ultra lightweight materials have

been used to offer a saddle weighing less than five kilos. The water-resistant leather is very hard wearing and its suppleness allows a superb contact. Extremely comfortable for both horse and rider, the saddle is flexible and has very little bulk. This has shown a marked increase in the horse's freedom of movement encouraging the horse to be athletic.

Said Richard: "Jeffries manufacture excellent quality leather goods, especially the bridles, and the Flyover saddle which is comfortable and a revolutionary product for the cross-country sector."

Based in Windsor, Richard has a busy schedule as Riding Master of The Household Cavalry. He is also a BE accredited trainer and Chef d'equipe for the Riding Clubs European Championships to be held in Germany this year.

The Jeffries Flyover Saddle retails at around £936.

For further information contact E Jeffries & Sons on 01922 642222 or visit www.ejeffries.co.uk

Go Groovy launches new product range

Designed with Groovy Geldings and Marvellous Mares in mind, Go Groovy have launched its own range of 'must have' products for your pony or horse this season. Using their unique Zebra designs, Go Groovy products are now available in leg bandages, tail bandages and fleece rugs ready for the show season.

Only available on-line at www.gogroovy.co.uk these products will be supplemented further with travel boots, hoods



and other products in these bright funky colour designs.

For further information or to order Go Groovy products please visit www.gogroovy.co.uk



Dust free rapid grooming plus

Definition of grooming: brushing dust, scurf and hair from your horse's coat and leaving it all over yourself!

Not anymore with the new Backpack Groom 'N' Vac electric groomer, the first electric groomer that you wear on your back like a rucksack.

Vacuum grooming is ideal for the busy owner/rider, professional yards and people with asthma or horsehair allergies. The Groom 'N' Vac takes the sweat out of grooming. It comes with a selection of four different grooming brushes to leave the kind of show ring polish and shine you only get with a traditional "strapping".

Most horses are quite happy to accept vacuum grooming provided you

introduce them to it carefully. Used regularly it can help clip shy horses as they get accustomed to a machine being used around them.

The Backpack Groom 'N' Vac costs £299 but has lots of other uses around the yard. It's great for getting up the ladder to clear away dust and cobwebs or for cleaning your tack room or lorry. The Groom 'N' Vac also solves the problem of stubborn horsehair on rugs and numnahs.

Apparently some people use it for dog grooming!

The company also sells a budget option attachment for standard vacuum cleaners. For more information visit www.BackPackGroomer.co.uk or call 07963 009 912



Jeffries Launch New Happy Mouth Bits

IF you are looking for something fun and funky this summer the new coloured Happy Mouth Bits from Jeffries could be just the answer.

There are three new bits in the range, a Loose Ring Snaffle, a Dutch Gag and Hanging Cheek Snaffle, all available in blue, pink and lilac, sizes 12.5cms and 13.5cms. These new additions are three of the most popular bits chosen by horse owners and the new pastel colours are sure to catch your eye.

Prices are Loose Ring Snaffle £18.00, Dutch Gag and Hanging Cheek Snaffle £26.00.

For further information contact Jeffries on 01922 642222 or visit www.ejeffries.co.uk