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Welcome to Clairvaux's lesson program!

Riding is a sport and a life-long skill. Horses teach us so much regarding compassion, teamwork and responsibility. We are committed to each rider's advancement and achievement of his or her own goals and we ask that you share that commitment with us. Riding is a wonderful release from the stresses of life. It instills a strong work ethic, teaches grace under pressure, encourages organization and attention to detail, increases fitness, and the list goes on. Above all, it's fun! We at Clairvaux strive to enrich lives through riding and working with horses. In order to best serve our clientele, as well as run our business efficiently, we have the following policies in place:

LESSON POLICIES

Payment

For regularly scheduled weekly lessons, we charge a flat rate per month. This is for four or five lessons. Payment is due at the beginning of each month. Your credit card will be kept on file and we auto-bill by the 3rd of each month.

Cancellations

24 Hour Cancellation Policy – We understand that emergencies arise, but in our efforts to run our business effectively, we require 24 hours' notice when you are unable to attend your scheduled lesson. When you give us the appropriate notice, you can do a make-up lesson. If less than 24 hours' notice is given, we will not be able to do a make-up. In extreme cases where your instructor must cancel a lesson, or if weather makes it impossible to run lessons, a make-up will be given.

Make-Ups

You can make up missed lessons during the same month as the absence, or the next month, if 24 hours notice was given. If the following month has passed, any owed lessons will be forfeited. It is the rider's responsibility to schedule makeups. We are not able to adjust the next month's lesson bill for any owed lessons.

Lesson Availability / Hours

Lessons are taught Monday through Friday. Lessons are an hour long and there are normally no more than four or five riders to a group. Riders are grouped by ability, not necessarily by age. Weekday afternoon lessons begin at 4pm and, currently our last lessons of the day begin at 7pm (Friday's last lesson begins at 5pm). We offer Saturday

lessons at 9am and 10am and at other times, depending upon availability. Please contact us for availability.

Schedule

Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of your lesson so you can groom and tack your horse. After your lesson, you will need to properly cool out your horse, untack and groom (or hose off in the summer) again, so plan to stay another 30 minutes after your lesson has ended. Please clean/wipe down your horse's bridle after each ride.

Attire

Safety is our number one priority. For anyone starting lessons, the two required pieces of equipment are a properly fitted, ASTM/SEI-approved riding helmet and a pair of hard-soled boots with heels (no hiking boots or sneakers). Once you are regularly involved with lessons, you'll want to purchase some riding pants. You can add to your comfort with a pair of half-chaps or full chaps (or even tall boots for those tall enough), which will prevent any leg rubs. Although not a necessity, gloves are helpful when battling cold weather. If you are considering purchasing boots, please ask your instructor for recommendations.

Most of the school horses go with a crop. It is worth having your own, especially for showing. Spurs may be a good idea, but make sure you get your instructor's permission before wearing them.

In addition, we have the following rules in place regarding attire:

- Fitted shirt neatly tucked in
- In cold weather, close-fitting jackets or outerwear
- Hair neatly contained under helmet (hair properly secured in hairnet is preferred, minimum should be a ponytail or braid)
- Jewelry kept to a minimum (no dangling earrings)

Also:

- No spaghetti straps or bra straps
- No bare midriffs
- No visible underwear
- No low-cut tops or visible cleavage
- No cut-off shorts

For riders and their support group (parents, friends, family), please do not wear open-toed shoes or sandals in the barn. Broken toes are often the result of getting stepped on when wearing inadequate shoes.

RIDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Grooming

Horses should be thoroughly groomed prior to tacking up. Coats curried and brushed. Manes and tails brushed (or picked out) and feet picked out. This should be repeated when you are finished with your lesson before putting your horse back in his stall (or field). No saddle or sweat marks!

Bridle Cleaning

After each lesson, please wipe down the bridle you used, and make sure the bit is clean. Please figure-eight the bridle when finished. If you need help, we are happy to show you how to do these things.

Clean-up

Please sweep up your area when you are finished grooming, before and after your lesson. There are brooms, muck tubs and dustpans or shovels for your use in the cross-aisle and wash stalls. Please return all tack to the appropriate place: saddles and bridles on racks, saddle pads on the rail in the cross-aisle, grooming tools under the bench in the aisle.

Blanketing (in the colder months)

If your horse has a blanket when you get him from the field or stall, please make sure you put it back on and that the straps are correctly attached. Most straps across the belly get crossed, as do leg straps. If your horse is used in a prior lesson, please ask your instructor or the rider who tacked the horse if he gets a blanket and where it is located.

Lights

If you are the last person in the barn or the indoor/outdoor arena, please turn-off all lights before you leave. In the winter months, the heater in the corner of the indoor may be on; please turn it off. In addition, the heat in the tack room is on, so please be sure to shut the door when you leave the room.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Lesson Structure

Once riders are competent at the grooming and tacking process, each rider should enter the ring ready to mount. Things like adjusting stirrups should be done prior to bridling and leading the horse to the arena. Once at the arena, riders should do one last check of their equipment and a final tightening of the girth before mounting. For riders not ready to groom and tack up on their own, this will be a part of the lesson.

Riders who are able can mount and begin walking around the ring to limber their horses. Once the instructor is ready, she will call out instructions for the warm-up, which will normally include posting trot, jumping position at the trot, transitions, bending/steering exercises and lengthening and shortening of stride, before moving onto to canter. We strongly feel that a comprehensive warm-up on the flat translates into successful jumping.

If riders are capable of jumping, the second half of the lesson usually involves jumping. This may include specific jumping exercises, grid work (gymnastics) and course work, either sections of courses or entire courses. For riders just learning, this will usually be done with poles on the ground, to simulate the pattern of a jumping course. Things like pace and track will be addressed.

Sometimes, depending on what riders are working on, we might do only flatwork. Sometimes we run games or do trail rides. Sometimes we ride out in our “jumping field,” or do a conditioning ride in one of our other fields. Our goal is to further each rider’s education and timing, as well as body awareness and control, all while building confidence and having fun!

How Can We Help You?

If you have any special needs, please let us know when you schedule lessons. That way, we can tailor our teaching methods and style to each rider’s needs. Learning will be fun and progress made more quickly when we know these things in advance.

We have a fun, supportive environment which supports a great learning environment. We love riding for all that it teaches: teamwork, compassion, time-management, problem solving, and grace under pressure. We are excited to help you on your journey to becoming a better rider and horseperson!