

NORTH AMERICAN TRAIL RIDE CONFERENCE

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QUICK TIPS FOR NATRC™ RIDES

In-Hand Presentation – Grooming

- No parasites (bot eggs, ticks)
- Clean nostrils
- No residual sweat marks
- Clean hooves

In-Hand Presentation – Hands On

- Avoid holding on to halter or snap
- Don't loop lead around hand
- Fold excess lead, keep off ground
- Stand to side of horse
- Stand on same side as vet
- Keep two hands on lead
- Maintain attention & control of horse

In Hand Presentation – Trot Out

- Run beside horse
- Look forward, not back at horse
- Hold lead 12"-18" from horse
- Keep two hands on lead
- Turn horse away from you
- Make large circles
- Maintain consistent gait

Tack & Equipment

- Whip – OK to use at check-in and/or check-out
- Proper saddle fit
- Proper bit fit
- Proper curb chain fit
- Proper halter/bridle fit
- Halter buckle end fastened through keeper
- Cinch clean; not too tight or too loose
- Snug rear cinch + connector strap
- Saddle pad clean, in position
- Space between pad & withers
- Breast collar not too tight or too loose

Stabling

- Blanket straps snug
- Quick release knot; locked
- Stallions double-tied
- Rider # visible on trailer, halter, bridle
- Ground free of hazards
- Hay net not too low when empty
- Buckets secured
- Evidence of food

Stabling – cont'd

- Access to water
- Rope snap adjusted so horse's nose reaches ground
- Two horses tied not too close together
- Equipment out of horse's reach
- Sharp corners of latches covered/protected

Trail Equitation

- Light in saddle
- Soft rein contact
- Ankles relaxed; heels slightly down
- Balanced side to side
- Post, soft sitting or 3-point trot
- Light/ quiet/ low hands
- Subtle leg cues

Mount

- Don't lead with reins around neck
- Settle horse
- Adjust tack before approach to mount
- Use rein contact/ control
- Square up horse
- Use terrain/ natural mounting block
- Try to not pull horse off balance
- Don't dwell in stirrup
- Don't drag leg over rump
- Settle lightly in saddle
- Settle before cueing horse to walk off

Uphill

- Bring torso forward by folding at hip joint
- Light in saddle, not out of saddle
- Transfer some weight through thighs to stirrups; don't stand up
- Maintain soft rein contact
- Allow horse to use head for balance
- Hang onto mane above rein hand (if necessary)

Downhill

- Relax; don't lean back;
- Carry weight on thighs, not on seat bones
- Avoid swaying side-to-side
- Maintain soft rein contact

Obstacles

- Think stop, settle, slow
- Look ahead, not down

Backup

- Settle horse
- Think stop, settle, slow
- Check behind
- Use soft, subtle hands
- Give and take with reins
- Use leg aids for direction control

P&R Check

- Line up parallel to next horse
- Maintain contact/ control of horse
- Remain quiet with low energy
- Encourage horse to relax
- Sponge/ fan/ cool horse as needed
- Loosen cinch slightly
- Keep near side stirrup out of way
- Lead away with permission of next rider
- Follow directions to proceed

Trail Safety & Courtesy

- Keep rider # visible
- Keep at least one horse length between horses (don't crowd)
- Approach other riders from behind slowly
- Pass with permission, at a walk
- After passing, move on to create a quiet pocket
- Wait for next horse at obstacle/ gate/ etc.
- Be careful not to spook others with your actions

