



## EASE WINTER CHALLENGES

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**The winter months can be a challenge for horse owners, here are some useful tips to help make winter a breeze.**

### Exercising your horse

-Darker mornings and evenings often mean that it can be difficult to get in as much riding as you would during the summer. But Don't feel bad for riding less, just make the time you have count. Reducing the frequency of sessions but keeping the intensity up is just as worthwhile.

- A 20min lungeing session will enable you to keep your horse fit if you don't have the time to ride him as normal.
- Variety is key when trying to keep your horses fit and entertained. Take every opportunity to bring in as much variety as possible into your reduced sessions
- If you have multiple horses then riding and leading could be beneficial for you. It will allow you to get more horses exercised during less hours of proper light.
- If you know you are going to be doing much less work than normal then consider adjusting the diet, especially if you will be working less for 3weeks or more.

### Diet changes

- Ensure you have stocked up on good quality hay especially as hay in winter can often be in short supply.



- Forage is fermented in the gut where bacteria are active. Bacteria produce considerable heat that the horse can use to warm himself from the inside out. Therefore, feeding more forage (hay) should always be the first port of call.
- Many owners feeding ad lib already, often don't think of increasing the amount provided per day, but this should always be factored in. Unfortunately, winter forage often has a reduced quality which means more hay should be provided than in summer to ensure the same calorie/nutritional value is maintained. For example, a horse eating ad lib hay in summer may finish a ¾-bale a day, however in winter he would perhaps need to eat 1.5 bales per day to provide the same calories and/or to increase his energy demands for maintaining body temperature.
- When selecting Hay look for good quality hay that is clean and dust free.
- Consider feeding a higher calorie hay like Lucerne or Teff should there be a need to boost a horse's calorie intake during winter.
- If your workload is only reducing a little then its not really necessary to make any changes to his concentrate feed. However if the workload will drop dramatically or if the length of reduced work is longer then 3 weeks then look at reducing the amount fed or look at switching to a less "heating" feed should your horse become hot.
- Feeds based on 'slow release' energy sources such as fibre and fat, these release energy gradually and are less likely to promote hot behaviour compared to sources of 'quick-release' energy such as starch from cereal grains or sugars from molasses.
- If your horse tends to drop weight in winter consider adding oil. Oil contains 2 ½- 3 times more energy compared with the equivalent amount of feed. It therefore allows you to give extra calories in a smaller amount.
- If there has been a frosty night, check water buckets and troughs first thing to ensure the horse still has access to water.
- Place a ball on top of your horse's water. The constant movement will help prevent ice forming if you live in colder areas.
- Still provide turnout. It may be cold but your horse wont mind. Ensure you have a good quality rug and let him enjoy the paddock.
- Horses that sweat during exercise will need to be dried out completely. Remember a thick coat can stay wet for a long time especially if you ride in the afternoon when temperatures will start to drop. Dry by rubbing with a towel, keeping the horse under cover or in the sun for a while, or by applying a sweat sheet/cooler rug.
- You might consider clipping your horse if he will be exercised often. You will still need to ensure he dry's fully in the same manner as above but it will reduce the time it takes to dry.
- If clipping your horse don't forget a winter coat is his natural defence against colder weather and therefore you must blanket accordingly day and night.
- Use the right blanket for the right use. For example a stable blanket is not waterproof and a blanket that isn't waterproof may become damp if your horse is turned out in the paddock during a frosty morning. This will make your horse cold, which is the opposite of the desired effect you wanted.
- Winter days in South Africa are often quite warm so don't forget to remove or exchange a thick night rug for something more suitable for the day.
- As the winters generally, in south Africa, don't get that cold we can often forget the small things. Check your water pipes are sufficiently lagged to avoid them bursting should there be a cold spell.

## Healthy happy horses

- Cut down stable dust by using good quality hay and dust-free bedding.
- Colic during winter can often be related to horses not drinking sufficiently. Consider providing warmer water in the winter as many horses don't like to drink cold water.
- A small electric heater for your tack room can help prevent tack getting damp or mouldy.
- Ensure the stable lights are working so that you and your grooms have plenty of light to check your horses each day.





# CONGRATULATIONS

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**Stacey Lee-Weston and Weston Farriers Saratoga Maxine** on your win in the 1.45m Riders Grand Prix, at the Puresan World Cup, Stokkiesdraai, Brits. Saratoga Maxine is proudly fed the **Epol Cool Rider** cubes.

Picture courtesy of Denford studios  
<https://www.denfordstudios.co.za/>



## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**Ronaldo October and Lansig Paran**, owned by Kira Gronewald, on winning the Pony Rider Prelim at the Western Cape leg of the DSA challenge in Stellenbosch. Lansig Paran is proudly fed **Equus Nice n Easy** and **Equus All time Balancer**.

Picture courtesy of Jessica Röhl Photography  
<https://www.facebook.com/PhotographybyJessicaRoll>



For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard.

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