

Double Diamond Equestrian Center LLC

Dexterity Benchmarks Needed for Horseback Riding

Age 6 (Kindergarten – 1st Grade)

- **✓ Can tie shoelaces independently**
 - *Horse care example:* Tying their own shoes is helpful when tying horses to tie rails.
 - **✓ Can cut simple shapes with scissors**
 - *Horse care example:* Grooming and tacking up need hand strength and coordination.
 - **✓ Can button and unbutton clothing**
 - *Horse care example:* Understanding how tack fastens is imperative.
 - **✓ Begins to fasten simple buckles** with guidance (e.g., backpack strap or belt buckle)
 - *Horse care example:* Learning to **buckle halters** or **girth straps** with adult guidance while helping tack up a horse.
 - **✓ Prints letters and numbers legibly**
 - *Horse care example:* Able to help write or track simple **feeding schedules, lesson times, or horse care notes.**
 - **✓ Can catch and throw a ball using both hands**
 - *Horse care example:* Helps with hand eye coordination while riding.
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Age 8 (2nd – 3rd Grade)

- **✓ Can tie shoes independently**
 - *Horse care example:* Important for **tacking up** and making sure the rider is prepared to handle horses without distractions.
 - **✓ Uses scissors accurately to cut complex shapes**
 - *Horse care example:* May help **trim the horse's mane** or **cut leg wraps** for horse care.
 - **✓ Can fasten and unfasten basic buckles independently** (e.g., saddle girth, backpack chest straps)
 - *Horse care example:* Learns to **buckle the girth** of the saddle **tightening straps** and **bridle buckles** independently.
 - **✓ Writes neatly in full sentences**
 - *Horse care example:* Can help **write notes about the horse's health, behavior, or feeding routine** (e.g., "Horse 1 needs more hay today").
 - **✓ Can thread a needle or bead small objects**
 - *Horse care example:* May assist in **repairing reins, adjusting tack** or sewing up **horse blankets.**
 - **✓ Can throw and catch with one hand**
 - *Horse care example:* **Throwing hay** to horses, or **passing grooming supplies** to another rider, building coordination with the horse's movements.
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Age 10 (4th – 5th Grade)

- **✓ Can write in cursive or type efficiently**
 - *Horse care example:* Can **track riding progress** in a journal or help write up a **showing schedule**.
 - **✓ Can fasten and adjust complex buckles** (e.g., horse tack, helmets, sports gear)
 - *Horse care example:* Independently **fastens and adjusts bridles, saddles, girth straps, and helmet buckles**.
 - **✓ Performs precise hand movements** (e.g., playing simple instruments, detailed drawing)
 - *Horse care example:* **Braiding a horse's mane, polishing tack, or applying fly spray** in small, controlled movements.
 - **✓ Can use small tools (screwdrivers, grooming brushes, utensils) with control**
 - *Horse care example:* **Brushing, combing** the horse's coat with specific brushes like **curry combs**, and applying **hoof oil** using small tools.
 - **✓ Demonstrates bilateral coordination** (e.g., holding tack in one hand while fastening a girth)
 - *Horse care example:* Can **handle reins** or **hold the saddle** while adjusting the girth or **leading the horse**.
 - **✓ Can dribble a ball with control and switch hands**
 - *Horse care example:* Helps with **riding exercises** where the rider moves around obstacles or **engages in hand-eye coordination** with the horse.
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Age 12 (Middle School)

- **✓ Can perform fine motor tasks efficiently** (e.g., adjusting stirrups, tying knots, grooming mane)
 - *Horse care example:* Independently **adjusts stirrups, ties knots** to secure tack, and **grooms the horse** using delicate brush strokes.
 - **✓ Can secure and adjust multiple buckle types** independently (bridle buckles, girths, helmet straps)
 - *Horse care example:* **Fastens saddles, adjusts bridle buckles** and **secures helmet straps** for safety before and after riding.
 - **✓ Writes, types, or draws for extended periods with control**
 - *Horse care example:* Keeps a **horse care log**, takes notes on **health** or **training** sessions, or keeps **ride journals**.
 - **✓ Uses precision tools and sports equipment with accuracy** (e.g., reins, braiding combs, horse boots)
 - *Horse care example:* Handles **reins** with **precision**, applies **hoof boots**, and **braids** the horse's mane or tail.
 - **✓ Shows fast reflexes and advanced coordination**
 - *Horse care example:* Reacts quickly to a horse's sudden movements while riding or when securing **horse tack**.
 - **✓ Can plan and perform multi-step tasks involving precise hand use**
 - *Horse care example:* **Tacks up a horse** by gathering the right equipment, saddling, and bridling independently in a precise and efficient way.
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Why Dexterity Matters for Riders:

- Rein control requires **finger precision** and **light touch**.
- Grooming and tacking up need **strength and coordination**.
- Safety tasks like tightening girths or adjusting stirrups depend on **fine motor skill + control**.