

Double Diamond Equestrian Center LLC


Fitness Standards for Children by Age

How Physical Fitness Builds Strong, Confident, and Safe Young Riders


These fitness benchmarks support healthy development in children—and are especially important for equestrian sports, where **balance, core strength, coordination, and stamina** are essential for safe riding and responsible horse care.

Age 6

Completes 5 sit-ups independently

 *Why it matters:* Strengthens **core muscles** that help young riders sit tall in the saddle and stay balanced while the horse moves.


Completes 8 push-ups with good form (after 1 demonstration)

 *Why it matters:* Builds **arm and shoulder strength** needed to hold the reins correctly and assist with light grooming or leading the horse.

Skips forward 10 feet

 *Why it matters:* Demonstrates **coordination and rhythm**, both of which are important when learning to post the trot or follow a horse's gait.

Completes ½ mile run in 6 minutes

 *Why it matters:* Shows beginning **cardiovascular endurance**, which helps young riders stay focused and energetic during lessons or trail rides.

 **Focus at this age:** Developing basic strength, coordination, and listening skills—all critical for safely interacting with horses.

Age 8

✔ Completes 6 sit-ups independently

👉 *Why it matters:* Improved **core strength** helps riders maintain posture over longer periods and adjust with the horse's movement.

✔ Completes 8 push-ups with good form

👉 *Why it matters:* Stronger arms and upper body make it easier to **lead horses, hold grooming tools**, or help with light barn chores.

✔ Completes 4 pull-ups

👉 *Why it matters:* Pull-ups build **upper body and grip strength**, both of which are useful for handling **reins, tack, and halters**.

✔ Rides a bike 20 feet independently

👉 *Why it matters:* Bike riding develops **balance and coordination**, key for **posting, turning, and staying centered** in the saddle.

✔ Completes ½ mile run in 6 minutes

👉 *Why it matters:* Cardiovascular fitness improves **endurance** during rides and helps prevent fatigue-related errors.

◆ **Focus:** Gaining control of body movements, developing riding-specific strength, and building confidence in physical ability.

Age 10

✔ Completes 12 sit-ups independently

👉 *Why it matters:* A strong core supports **proper posture**, especially in faster gaits like cantering or while riding bareback.

✔ Completes 10 push-ups with good form

👉 *Why it matters:* Upper body strength helps with **lifting tack, grooming**, and managing **larger horses** more independently.

✔ Completes 4 pull-ups

👉 *Why it matters:* Grip strength and control are needed for **adjusting buckles, leading horses**, or handling a horse that resists commands.

✔ Completes 1 mile run in 12 minutes

👉 *Why it matters:* Endurance becomes critical during **longer riding sessions, clinics**, or shows, when riders need to stay strong and alert.

◆ **Focus:** Improving stamina, body awareness, and the ability to ride and care for a horse independently.

Age 12 and above

✔ Completes 18 sit-ups independently

👉 *Why it matters:* Excellent core control enables riders to stay **stable during transitions**, over jumps, or while riding outdoors on uneven ground.

✔ Completes 10 push-ups with good form

👉 *Why it matters:* At this level, riders should begin **tacking up on their own**, requiring strength to tighten girths, lift saddles, and work with heavier tack.

✔ Completes 4 pull-ups

👉 *Why it matters:* Reinforces strength for handling **horses hooves, adjusting equipment**, and managing unexpected moments (e.g., holding a horse that spooks).

✔ Completes 1 mile run in:






- **9 minutes (boys)**
- **11 minutes (girls)**

👉 *Why it matters:* High endurance helps riders stay **calm and responsive**, even during demanding lessons or competitions, where fatigue can lead to unsafe riding.

◆ **Focus:** Preparing for athletic-level riding with strong physical control, endurance, and ability to care for a horse responsibly and safely.

Why These Standards Matter for Riding

Each of these fitness benchmarks prepares children to:

-  **Maintain safe posture and balance** in the saddle
-  **Control reins and tack** without overusing hands or arms
-  **Avoid injury or falls** by keeping their body strong and alert
-  **Care for their horse independently**, building responsibility and trust
-  **Stay focused and in control**, even in long lessons, shows, or trail rides

Physically prepared riders are safer, more confident, and more connected to their horses—making riding a fun and rewarding experience.