

Rainy Day Horse Activities: 13 Things To Do With Your Horse

in Lifestyle by Carmella Abel



ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR HORSE ON A RAINY DAY

A rainy day can be a real bummer for a horseback rider. Not only can the rain ruin your chance to ride but it can also make a sloppy mess of everything else. The great news is that even if it's raining, there's still work you can do with your horse.

Give Your Horse a Makeover

If bad weather is deterring you from riding, now may be the best time to clean your horse up. Maybe your horse has become a little scraggly looking lately; their chin hairs and fetlock have grown out and their mane is uneven.

A rainy day creates the perfect opportunity to pull out the clippers and give your horse a makeover. If you body clip or do a trace on your horse, now would be the perfect time to get it done.

Be sure to take before and after pictures so you have a record of all that you accomplished over the rainy day!

Deep Clean Your Horse's Stall

If you've been wanting to do a deep clean of your horse's stall but haven't had the time to, a rainy day makes the perfect opportunity to get this task done. Get your wheelbarrow and pitchfork and get to work!

To deep clean a horse's stall, you can remove all the sawdust and strip it down until you can see the matted ground beneath. From there you can scrub or sweep the mats.

Soak the stall's water and feed buckets to get them nice and clean. You can also scrub down the walls. When you're finished, there's no better feeling than putting fresh sawdust on the ground and looking back at your work.

Tie Your Horse to Work on Standing Still

If you plan on deep-cleaning your horse's stall, this also means your horse can work on standing tied. Many horses get impatient when tied up, and this is definitely a task you can work on during a rainy day.

Tie your horse up outside of the stall. From there, go about your business. I've seen horses get upset if they're tied up and not getting any attention; they'll start to paw the ground and throw a fit. The best way to break them from this is to simply ignore them. Only give them attention when they're standing quietly.

Practice Leading Your Horse

A barn aisle on a rainy day becomes your training ground. If you have a horse that is horrible when it comes to being led, whether you have to drag them behind you or they drag you behind them, now's the time to work on helping your horse lead better.

Get a rope halter and a lunge whip and start leading your horse up and down the barn aisle. The proper leading position for a horse is to have their head right beside the handler's elbow.

If your horse is trying to pull passed you, make them back up and stand. If your horse is having to be dragged, use the lunge whip to encourage them to keep up. Do many stops and change up your speed quite a bit. After a session like this, your horse should lead much better.

Reorganize Your Tack Area

I don't know about you, but my tack area seems to get messy and cluttered in a blink of an eye. One day it's clean and the next day it's dirty. On rainy days, cleaning out my tack area is one of my go-to activities.

I'll take the time to organize all my supplies into their own separate areas. I'll also wipe down bottles, clean leather pieces, and throw out anything that I don't need or is empty.

Having a clean tack area will make it much easier to find things when you need them. I've had my horses be injured before and I would spend hours looking for a certain ointment that was simply lying at the bottom of my bin.

Teach Your Horse a Trick

Rainy days give you the time to work on teaching your horse a specific trick. Horses are smart and can learn a vast number of tricks and cues. My mom taught her horses how to kiss for a treat; I taught my horse to come when I call him.

Whatever the trick is you plan on doing, research a few different methods of teaching your horse the trick. I've found that by doing this, I can find the best way to teach and communicate with my horse.

Remember that horses have short attention spans, so it may not be the best idea to work on teaching your horse a trick for 2 hours straight. However, I've found that horses will catch on very quickly if you incorporate the trick into everything you do. Practice it sporadically throughout your rainy day and see what happens.

Give Your Horse a Massage

Want to give your horse a nice relaxing rest on a rainy day? Add a nice equine massage to the mix and your horse will be in horsie heaven. Massages

can help circulate and loosen your horse's muscles and be a stress reliever from rigorous training.

As a certified equine massage therapist, I know of some super easy and simple massage techniques to try on your horse. Simply find a muscle and gently work it by rubbing your hand in a circle. This move alone can help bring about the positive benefits of massage.

Another way you can massage your horse is simply by brushing them. The movements of the curry comb massage and work the muscles of your horse as you brush them.

Practice Carrot Stretches

Another way you can help your horse loosen up on a rainy day is by doing carrot stretches. Use a carrot to beckon your horse to stretch from one side to another. See how far they can bring their head towards their flank.

This type of stretching helps your horse limber up. It also helps to work muscles and help your horse become more flexible. I try and do these types of stretches with my horse as much as I can, and they're also a great thing to try on a rainy day.

Work on Softening & Flexing



A simple groundwork technique you and your horse can practice on a rainy day is softening and flexing. These exercises will help your horse respond better to pressure on the bit or halter.

To ask your horse to soften, simply apply a light and steady downward pressure to the lead rope. Your horse should dip its head to follow the pressure; however, some horses may fight the pressure in the beginning. If this is the case, continue to hold the pressure until your horse gives even the slightest correct movement.

To ask your horse to flex, your goal is to bring the horse's head around until their nose can touch just behind their shoulder. Do this by bringing your hand up and out towards your horse's withers. Hold the pressure until the horse dips their nose to their side.

See What Treats Your Horse Enjoys Most

A fun thing to do with your horse on a rainy day is to see what treats your horse likes and dislikes.

Play With Your Horse's Ears

There are a few benefits to doing this regularly, and especially on a rainy day. Many horses are very sensitive about having their heads and ears touched. This can be serious where a horse throws it's head up and tries to shy away, or it can look more subtle like a horse simply jerking his head away. You can work on desensitizing this type of horse to having its head touched. Another reason to work with your horse's ears is that it is very relaxing for your horse. Horses hold a lot of tension from their ears to their poll, so this can help relieve that tension.

Bring Along a Non-Equestrian Friend to Get Familiar With Your Horse

If you have a non-equestrian friend you want to introduce to your horse, a rainy day makes for the perfect opportunity. It offers a low-pressure environment where your friend can brush your horse in the barn aisle or watch you do the other rainy day activities we've mentioned.

One of the first things I do when I introduce a person with no horse experience to a horse is that I let them lead the horse around and then I show them how to brush the horse. The barn aisle provides a safe and confined area for your friend to get used to your horse.

Practice Braiding for Competitions

Another thing you can do with your horse on a rainy day is practice braiding your horse's mane and tail for competitions. Braiding can be a tedious

process, so the more you practice, the more you'll become efficient at the task.

There are many braiding tutorials that you can find online to learn how to do all types of braids. I learn how to braid on my horse, which made me a great hair-braider in general. Nothing better than perfecting a skill on a rainy day.