



Activity: Long-lining



An alternative to riding for some participants (and volunteers) where social distancing means taking part would otherwise not be an option yet.

- Long-lining involves working the horse from the ground with two lines, or reins, attached to either side of the horse. Whilst its use is diminished in modern horsemanship, advocates of classical equitation value the practice of long-lining greatly. This can be appreciated through the Spanish Riding School of Vienna, who have been training and breeding horses for over 450 years.

Before any activity starts the group must complete and send in their Covid-19 risk assessment and trustee checklist to National Office for sign-off to recommence RDA activities.

The Benefits

- Long – lining provides a gentle, accurate rehabilitation/return to work method.
- It allows for the influence of inside and outside contact. This has a therapeutic benefit, as influencing both sides equally, developing symmetry.
- It allows for the praising release of contact, providing an elastic connection.
- Long-lining enables the contact to be influenced by a person, without the presence of a rider on the horses back. This is beneficial as it allows for an insight into how the horse moves and behaves without the weight of a rider.
- It provides a clear perspective to test efficacy of energy and voice communication aids.
- You can identify weaknesses that could be causing trouble under saddle.

Do you have all the resources to run?

- Coach to lead sessions.
- Volunteers to support.
- First Aider.
- Suitable ponies.
- Suitable, safe space.
- Participants.
- Equipment; not every group will have a roller – another way of doing it is to put the saddle on, remove the stirrup irons and run the long lines through the stirrup leathers.

Anyone taking part will be required to sign a consent form accepting the terms of their return.

Set up

- Horses must be of a suitable temperament; has it been long –lined before? If not introduce this activity slowly with an experienced coach and volunteer before opening up the activity.
- Are your volunteers suitably experienced to support?
- Consider participant's fitness and mobility. This could be an activity you offer your active volunteers. Suitable individuals must be selected.
- Select a suitable area to carry out the activity, be aware of the going under foot; deep or loose arena surfaces can not only be a trip hazard be can be hard work to walk on so be aware of volunteer and participant fitness and mobility.

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The session

- Participant arrives and follows normal covid safety procedures for the group.
- The lead volunteer brings the equine to the area tacked up ready to go.
- It is advised that the coach warms the equine up/demonstrates
- The coach hands over the reins to the participant.
- Coach remains with the participant to lead the session.
- To finish the participant hands the reins back to the coach.
- The coach would be looking after the participant and a volunteer would have a lead rope attached to the horse.
- Hat and gloves must be worn.
- This exercise has the potential not only to give participants and volunteers another activity but also to help with bringing the equines back into work gently.

Developing the session

- Take time to reflect on the session and consider ways to improve and engage with the participant.
- Long - lining over poles is a great way to build the equines strength.
- Setting out obstacles to manoeuvre round will work on the contact and rein feel.



Remember

- Your risk assessment must cover the session from the participant arriving to departing.
- You must have a qualified first aider who is comfortable to administer first aid if required.
- Make it clear to participants what will be required of them and anyone who accompanies them.
- Be guided by what your participants want and need, be clear what aspects are non-negotiable for example for health and safety reasons.
- Not all equines will be suitable for this activity – select them carefully.
- Have a run through with the equines and a few volunteers beforehand to highlight anything that may not have been picked up on in planning.
- Give yourself time to make changes following the run through if necessary.
- Start small with just a couple of sessions at a time and learn from each session how things can be done to better suit your situation, volunteers, equines and participants.