

EQUIPMENT FOR MOUNTING



1. All riders should be encouraged to mount at least from a block. Discourage mounting from the ground as it can damage the horse's back and the saddle. Horses must be trained to stand still, square and straight at whatever mounting facility is used.

a. **Blocks** - Blocks must be stable, non-slip and have no edges or corners that could cause injury. They must be large enough for 2 people and sited where there is plenty of room for the horse to walk straight in and away.

- (1) Purpose-built from brick, block, wood or metal.
- (2) Plastic mounting block with two steps on one side. Standard or Large sizes are available from Martello Plastics. (Tel: 01303-256 848, Fax: 01303-246 301).
- (3) Circular heavy-duty polythene block (light and easily portable).
- (4) Two upturned milk/beer crates (bolted together and covered with a sheet of strong plywood bolted down) make a cheap, efficient block useful for any Group.
- (5) Naturally-occurring features such as a step, bank or tree-stump that are deemed safe to mount from.

b. **Platforms with Ramps** - A platform with a ramp enables riders to mount from a wheelchair. The ramp may also be used as a mounting block at various points along its length. Most RDA Groups will find it very useful but its size may make it impractical in some yards.

Ramp

- (1) Gradient must be no more than 1:12 (a 30 foot long ramp for a 2ft 6in high platform).
- (2) Non-slip surface (e.g. slip-resistant floor paint, rubber matting or coarse sand in varnish).
- (3) Hand rails along one side to assist riders, and safety rails as appropriate.
- (4) Well-defined 'open' edge (e.g. a thick line of yellow paint or aluminium strip).
- (5) Can be made in sections hooked or bolted together for greater mobility or in hinged sections that can be folded up when not in use.

Platform

- (1) Minimum 4 foot square to accommodate a wheelchair and two helpers.
- (2) Height 2ft 6in suits 13.2-14.2hh horses/ponies. An additional small block can be put on the platform when larger horses are being mounted.
- (3) Rails on two sides.
- (4) Non-slip surface (as for the ramp).

c. Ramps and platforms can be made of wood (heavy and expensive), brick/block (permanent) or metal with a ply-wood surface. They are usually best made locally by agricultural engineers, builders or joiners. Some Groups have received ramps from students or apprentices who have constructed them as a course project. For advice on commercially available mounting ramps and platforms, you should contact the Special Equipment Advisor or RDA National Office.

d. **Hydraulic Platforms** - Hydraulic platforms can be used for mounting from a raised platform when there is not enough room for a ramp and platform. For advice on commercially available hydraulic platforms, you should contact the Special Equipment Advisor or RDA National Office.

e. **Pits** - A pit has the advantage that the rider approaches on one level and does not have to cope with a ramp or step. It is inexpensive and effective provided that it is well-constructed.

- (1) Well drained so that it does not puddle in the bottom.
- (2) Very gradual slope in and out so that the riders do not have to cope with balancing on a hill as soon as they are mounted.
- (3) 2ft 6in deep so that helpers on the side do not have to stoop to assist.

f. **Hoists**

(1) Hoists are increasingly used in hospitals, homes, schools etc. and many of our riders are very familiar with them. A hoist is essential for any rider who needs more than minimal assistance to transfer from a wheelchair onto the horse. **WE MUST NOT LIFT RIDERS** (except for very small children) onto small ponies.

(2) Any Group considering acquiring a hoist should contact RDA National Office for help and advice.

(a) Overhead tracking hoists used with a toileting/access sling or a handmove attachment are the most suitable.

- (b) Hoists can be added to the platform or pit side.
- (c) Hoists can have electric or hydraulic controls.
- (d) Horses must be well trained to the use of the hoist.
- (e) Acquisition of a hoist must not encourage a Group to accept heavy or challenging riders if it does not have suitable horses or helpers for them.

(3) There are several suppliers of hoists but RDA Groups have used:

Southern Counties - Chiltern Medical	(Tel: 01869-246 470)
Northern Counties - Westholme Ltd	(Tel: 01422-377 623)

RDA National gives no warranty in regard to equipment supplier and neither of these businesses is an exclusive or preferred supplier to RDA