

LEARN MORE, FIND SUPPORT!

Links to the following information and resources are at HorseandRider.com this month:

- A basic, easy-to-do strength-training workout for riders (just minutes a week!) in the article "Get Fit, Ride Better."
- The latest information and research on health, nutrition, and fitness at the "Defy Your Age" blog.
- Ongoing nutrition and fitness support tailored to *you* at "Weight-Loss Resources for Riders," *H&R's* blog by Sandy Denarski.
- Tips on maintaining your horse activities despite major health issues in the article "Diagnosis: Health Problems (Yours, Not Your Horse's)."
- A place to sign up for *H&R's* trail-riding newsletter, "On the Trail" (click on "get newsletters"), plus a link to the Web site of the American Competitive Trail Horse Association.

Also check out these relevant books:

- *The Rider's Fitness Program*, Dianna Robin, Dennis Page, Johnny J. McCully, Paul M. Juris (available at HorsebooksEtc.com).
- *Fitness, Performance and the Female Equestrian*, Mary D. Midkiff (available at Twohorseenterprises.com).
- *Yoga for Equestrians*, Linda Benedik, Veronica Wirth (available at HorsebooksEtc.com).
- *The Rider's Pain-Free Back*, James Warson, MD (available at HorsebooksEtc.com).
- *Riding for the Rest of Us*, Jessica Jahiel (available at Amazon.com).
- *Taking Up Riding as an Adult*, Diana Delmar (available at HorsebooksEtc.com).
- *Centered Riding and Centered Riding 2: Further Exploration*, Sally Swift (available at HorsebooksEtc.com).

and will stay on when you're active. (The house brands available at Sunprecautions.com are excellent.)

Beyond that, "never be too proud to use a mounting 'assist,'" advises Bonnie Davis, whose Two Horse Enterprises (twohorseenterprises.com) offers products and educational materials for trail riders of all ages. "Rocks, stumps, trailer fenders, mounting blocks, a rise of ground—your horse should stand quietly next to any of these. This is especially important for those of us with bionic parts—I've had a knee replaced, and I always use a mounting block or whatever's available."

5 Share the Love

To address: Fun, doability, achievement.

If possible, get involved with like-minded friends. "Surround yourself with people who share your riding goals," says Paula Zdenek. "They'll be your support system, challenging and inspiring you. Someone will always want to be doing something with the horses, and will invite you along. It's much more fun this way."

If you're lucky enough to have something like the Maryland-based Old People's Riding Club (oldpeoplesridingclub.org) in your area, check it out. Such groups are set up to provide the sort of educational opportunities, ac-

tivities, and support desired by midlife (and older) riders.

If appropriate, include your own family in your horse activities, as well. "I'm hoping to involve my girls more at the barn come this spring," says Debbie Moors. "Making it a family activity allows it to be much easier to find the time."

Sharing your love of riding is another area where the effort involved will benefit not just your horse life, but also your health in general. Why? Research shows that people who involve themselves with others are less likely to suffer stress or develop dementia. Nice bonus!

6 Lighten Up!

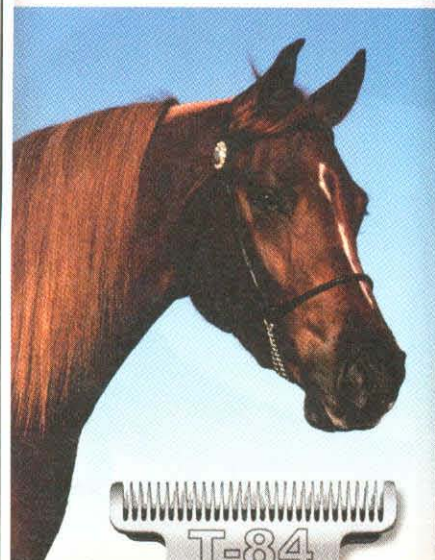
To address: Fun, doability, achievement.

Keep things in perspective, and maintain a positive attitude at all times.

"I work with so many midlifers who engage in negative self-talk," comments Zdenek. "They say, 'I'm too old for this,' or 'I'm too short/too fat,' or 'My joints ache too much.' They seem to have it in the back of their minds that riding, for them, is a pipe dream that will never really work. And that shows in their riding. I always counter, 'Concentrate on what you *can* do. Keep a sense of humor. Enjoy yourself, and your horse, in all the moments you have together.'"

And to that we say, Amen. ■

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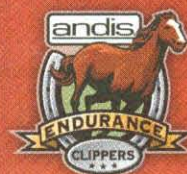
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