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Painless Riding

How to Go Long Distance Painlessly

Here are some tips to make your long distance riding a little more comfortable. Hot feet is a phenomena you might notice after about 15 miles on board. Try using endurance stirrups. Try a sole insert, like those foam ones used for fitting boots and shoes. They allow the toes to curl over support, protecting the nerve ending on the bottom of the foot.

Chafing from the knee down used to be part of the game before the brilliant idea of using bicycle pants or other tights for riding. Stretchy tights are like a second skin and allow nothing to slide against your tender hide. Colourful, fun tights are on everyone.

Remember for every gain there is a sacrifice and here it is: grip. Leather holds against leather. Ask any bronc rider why he wears chaps or jump rider why she wears real leather boots. So, if you need extra grip, slip on the chaps until your horse is less bucky. Another advantage of tights is that they dry so fast so one can stand in the stream or sit in the water trough and be dry 5 miles down the trail. On a cold day pull sweat pants over top.

On long rides, crotch chafing can cause that first visit to the outhouse to be a stoic affair. Coat the area with Vaseline KY Jelly or whatever. Take a jar or tube with you to the ride.

Does your saddle fit you? as well as your horse?

Because the name of the game is learn to PACE your horse before you RACE your horse, wear gloves at least at the start for that constant play with the reins.

Last and most important, your helmet. The most recent helmets are so light one hardly knows a cover is on the head.

So now you are dressed for Painless Riding. Take a water bottle with you either around your waist or attached to the saddle and sip water, juice or, Gatorade continuously before you're thirsty.

Dismount every 10 to 12 miles to get the blood circulating in your legs. Get off at the water trough or at a stream. Wash your face and rest your wrists in that cool water. Sponge your horse's legs too!

On a cold day dismount and remount just to warm up. Run with your trotting horse. Get off and walk the downhills.

Make yourself do this well before you feel STUCK in the saddle. When you are stuck in the saddle and don't want to get down you are starting to stiffen up.

For any ride, riders need sustenance i.e., a banana, an orange, cheese, grapes, cucumber, granola bar, power bar, or sandwich in the form of a wrap (still appetizing when squished from the pack!) etc.

Take care of yourself so you can take care of your mount.

Wear the clothes for the job.

Keep hydrated before the fact.

Keep the circulation going.

Keep fit.

Take care of yourself and above all - watch for the Trail Markers!