

Riding Lessons at Diversity Horsemanship- FAQ

What do I need to wear to my Lesson?

If you do not own riding breeches or riding jeans, wear non slippery pants/jeans that allow flexibility of the hip joint, with an inseam that will not rub your leg against the horse. Do not wear shorts. Wear sturdy footwear with a smooth sole (thick treads like a hiking boot get stuck in the stirrup), and have a minimum ½ inch heel. ***If you are coming with less than ideal footwear, let us know ahead of time and we will put closed or hooded stirrups on your saddle for your safety (to prevent your foot from being stuck in the stirrup).**

-NO SANDALS ARE ALLOWED FOR ANYONE RIDING OR ANYONE WALKING OR STANDING NEAR A HORSE. If you bring a guest and they are wearing sandals they must remain a minimum of 20 feet from the horses.

In winter, how warm is the indoor arena so I know how to dress?

We keep the indoor arena heated on a thermostat around 10 degrees C. I would suggest dressing warmly for the outdoor temp (for walking from the car to the barn, catching the horse, or just to keep your muscles warm for riding while you wait for your class to begin). Wear layers that are easy to remove. Start your lesson in the warmer layers, and let your instructor know once you are too hot so they can take the appropriate measures to allow you to remove layers safely.

Many people wear jeans/breeches and a light jacket or light sweatshirt during winter lessons once they get moving - especially during a more physically demanding lesson. It can feel cold when you are not moving, so having warm layers is wise. Those who are watching the lesson (aka- not moving around) should dress warmly in winter.

Horses may require a reduced level of exertion when they are living outside in extreme weather, and in all below freezing weather they need extra cooling out and drying, and likely need to be kept in stalls before work – to have a break from the cold and warm up, and after work- until they are dry.

How hot is the indoor arena in summer?

The indoor arena is much cooler than the outside temperature because it is well insulated. We ride, even on the hottest days, it is not too hot for most people or the horses. If the horses are struggling outside due to the heat, we ride lighter than usual, and bring them inside to give them a break from the heat before and after riding. Cooling with cool water and fans before and after riding may be needed, supplementing electrolytes when they sweat, and riding during the cooler times of the day- morning and evening- instead of in the heat of the afternoon.

Are lessons ever cancelled due to the weather?

Lessons are rarely cancelled due to the weather, as the indoor arena allows us to ride in all conditions. If roads are closed or travel is deemed inadvisable by authorities, then lessons will be cancelled/rescheduled, and Diversity Horsemanship will schedule a make -up lesson for the class, or issue a refund. If you have a lesson scheduled on a day when road conditions may be an issue, make sure to keep an eye on your email for communications about possible rescheduling of your lesson. Periodically check your email Spam or Junk folder, as sometimes the emails from Diversity will randomly trigger your email filter- even if you normally receive the emails just fine.

Do I need to own a riding helmet?

Anyone under the age of 18 is required to wear an approved and correctly fitted riding helmet, as is any age of rider who is jumping. All other riders are recommended to wear one. It is recommended that every rider buy their own helmet, and replace it with a new one after a fall, or every 3-5 years (whichever comes first). However, we do provide helmets for those who have not purchased their own helmet yet, those who have forgotten their helmet, and for those who arrive with an improper helmet or one that does not fit properly. Helmet fitting guidelines are posted in the barn outside the arena door that all riders must read.

All helmets must be ASTM/SEI approved and designed for equestrian use- no bike helmets or any non- horseback riding or non- approved helmets are allowed. Remember to check the fit of your helmet before each ride. A new haircut will change the fit, as well the straps do sometimes loosen over time, so make sure to recheck the fit every time you place the helmet on your head or on your child's head.

How early should I arrive for my lesson?

Before your first lesson, you will be required to fill out a waiver form. Come at least 15 minutes early to ensure enough time to read and sign the waiver. If you are tacking up, you will need to allow enough time to do so.

Do I “tack up” my own horse (catch, groom, saddle) before the lesson?

If you are bringing your own horse, you will be tacking up your horse and doing whatever warm up is needed before your lesson start time. If you do not have a horse, or are using a Diversity Horsemanship lesson horse, students are not allowed to tack up until they have taken the “Horse Handling Safety and Ground Skills Course”, or have taken the necessary ground work/theory in lessons at Diversity Horsemanship, or have passed a ground work test with a Diversity Horsemanship Instructor. In this case, we will tack the horse up for you until you are cleared for tacking up. We also offer some lessons for beginners that include tack up time in the lesson, under the guidance of our instructors.

I have already ridden before, or have some level of experience, but want to join a group- what do I do?

If you have already acquired some riding skills from past lessons/experience, it is best you come for a private lesson (one hour or half hour options are available), to assess where you are at. If there is a group currently underway that is at your level, you will be offered the date and time of that group- after your assessment

ride. If there is not a group at the right level, you may wish to continue in private lessons or semi-private lessons until you catch up to an existing group. Learning is often accelerated in the private lessons due to the one on one instruction.

If Diversity Horsemanship does not have other riders at the same level, or at a time you can make it to, you might also wish to recruit friends or family members who also wish to learn how to ride. This way you can create your own semi private lesson or group. This will result in considerable savings to your lesson cost.

.

I don't seem to be getting any emails from Diversity Horsemanship.

Make sure to check your spam or junk email folder, as our emails often get sent to there. Make sure to watch for an email near the end of the month asking about interest in lessons for the upcoming month. If you check your spam or junk folder and are still not receiving the Diversity Horsemanship emails, please email chelsea@diversityhorsemanship.com or text 204-801-3489. You can also stay in the loop by joining the Diversity Horsemanship Discussion on Facebook, if you are a boarder or regular student.

How do I book a lesson?

Lessons are purchased on the online booking site Acuity <https://diversityhorsemanshipschedule.as.me/> however, new students, or anyone who wants to make a change to their current lessons, needs to communicate first with Diversity Horsemanship via email chelsea@diversityhorsemanship.com . Once we decide on the type of lesson and set a day and time, your lesson will be added to Acuity for you to book. When you purchase your lessons, be sure to read all the terms in the agreement that pop up before you pay (you will have to click a box that says you have read and agree to the terms- yet many people still ask questions that are answered in that short write up).

LESSONS CANNOT BE BOOKED 8 HOURS BEFORE THE CLASS TIME OR LATER, because we need to ensure we have the horses and staff scheduled. Please book your lesson 9 hours in advance or earlier or the system will not allow you to book.

What happens if I have to miss my lesson that I have already booked?

Diversity Horsemanship is no longer offering make up lessons for missed lessons. However, we often have a waiting list of students who will often buy lessons from other students who want to sell (or trade their spot). Make sure you have joined our group on Facebook, "Diversity Horsemanship Discussion". If you have to miss a lesson, with one quick post in that group, all of our students can see that you have a lesson for sale, and then you can quickly and easily sell your lesson to one of these interested group members. This way you won't lose the money you paid for your lesson, and some student that was looking to get in a lesson spot will get one. So it is a win- win! Also please give us a heads up, in writing **via email to chelsea@diversityhorsemanship.com**. **If the lesson you are selling/trading involves using a lesson horse, we need to be contacted about who is wanting to buy the lesson first, to ensure we actually have an appropriate horse available for that individual, before you sell the lesson to them.**

Should I use a lesson horse or my own horse?

After 2020, we downsized our herd and lesson program considerably, keeping only a few of our older, most special, lesson horses. This means we have fewer opportunities to offer lesson horses to people, and due to the age of the horses we do have, we can only accommodate children and light adults to prevent overloading these horses. These horses are also working fewer lessons per week, due to their semi-retirement schedules, which further reduces the number of students we can teach who do not own their own horse.

There is no extra charge for using a lesson horse. Our lesson horses are very well trained, up to the most advanced movements, and also are very steady and forgiving, so they are ideal for many learning situations. If you have your own horse, it is very beneficial to ride lesson horses periodically so that you can transfer the skills to your own horse. If there is an area your horse is not strong in, riding another horse who is solid in that area will help you improve your horse in that weak area, when you return to them. Likewise, if your horse is challenging in

an area that you are not strong in, riding a horse who is more forgiving in that area can help you improve yourself in that area so that you will be able to go back and succeed on your horse. Also, our own asymmetries as well as the horses tend to perpetuate one another, so riding other horses is one of the best things you can do to balance that out.

If you own your own horse, discuss with your instructor about which lessons would be better to use a school horse in. We can also set you up with a Boarder's horse for part board, if we have an appropriate match available.

What are the Covid- 19 Protocols at Diversity Horsemanship

We are following the public health measures, so make sure to keep up to date with those in this ever evolving situation. We ask that everyone wash their hands upon arrival (warm water, soap, and paper towels are available in barn bathroom and kitchen), and hand sanitizer is on the white board ledge when you first walk in. And to wash/sanitize hands when leaving or after touching common objects.

We ask that everyone wear a mask when indoors and in situations where social distancing is not possible, but we can have masks removed once riding or lunging a horse and are at least 6 feet away from other people.

How do I find out about other events and educational opportunities at Diversity Horsemanship?

If you would like to be kept in the loop about various educational workshops, clinics, schooling/fun shows, or other show opportunities, as to be added to our email list at chelsea@diversityhorsemanship.com. You can also "follow" us on Facebook. You can also stay in the loop by joining the Diversity Horsemanship Discussion on Facebook, if you are a boarder or regular student. We also have educational videos and videos of some of our competition/training rides on our Diversity Horsemanship Youtube channel, so be sure to check those out and subscribe if interested.

