



Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Best Exercise And Diet Program Offered By Horses

Burn the calories with a horse.

Exercise and diet programs go hand in hand with horses, plus there are added benefits of relaxation.

With obesity, inactivity and stress making headlines, a most obvious solution, the horse, is still usually overlooked. The idea is sometimes even smirked at when suggested.

"Horses offer many opportunities to improve a person's health," emphasized Shannon Justice, registered dietician and horse owner at Chetopa.

"Some people only think about riding horses, but there can be so much more a person gets from becoming involved with horses," she continued. "Actually regular care of a horse is a good twice-daily exercise program. Even if a person never rides, just the work around one can help keep their weight at an appropriate level and upgrade physical and mental wellness."

Feeding a horse and

mucking a stall gets a person on a regular routine. "For someone wanting more exercise, that alone would be equal to walking one-quarter to one-half mile at a brisk walk," Justice tabulated.

Horseback riding builds and tones muscle strength and improves balance and coordination, she informed. "It is also very therapeutic for the mind," Justice added.

First concern for one thinking of including horses in their exercise program is: no horse and nowhere to keep one. "There are a lot of riding centers where a person can become involved in working with horses," Justice confirmed. "Many communities have stables where a person can volunteer or possibly gain employment."

While Justice serves on the board at the Horses Of Hope therapeutic riding facility near Baxter Springs, there are able-bodied classes offered there too. "Qualified horses and instructors are readily available to as-

sist anyone at any level of ability," she recognized. "Once a person gets in motion, they can then decide how involved they want to become."

Riding is an aerobic exercise and develops muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory fitness. It stimulates arm and leg muscles as well as dorsal and abdominal regions. Isometric tension is provided for thighs and balance for equilibrium.

Particularly good for developing pelvic muscles, riding is beneficial for a pregnant woman, so rather than giving up riding, one should do as much as possible. The usual riding position is with a straight spine, which improves posture. Japanese engineers have even developed fitness ma-

chines that simulate actions and physical effects of riding a horse.

Charts indicate a 155-pound person grooming a horse one hour will burn 422 calories; cleaning barn, 563; riding at a walk, 176; trotting, 457; and galloping 563. This compares to 281 calories burned riding a bicycle at 10 miles per hour, 236 calories walking at a moderate pace and 563 running a mile in 12 minutes.

Additionally, there is mind and body connection along with meditative qualities one gets from riding. "A relationship with a horse will give benefits that cannot be beat nor compared," Justice evaluated. "I probably hear more about the positive emotional benefits of riding than the physical component."

Type of riding style affects the amount of energy one will exert. "Persons riding with English tack on Arabians and Saddlebreds burn more calories than one will on a stock horse," Justice explained. "The more activity the horse and rider do together, the higher the rate of calorie use."

First-time riders will often find extreme muscle soreness. "There are all kinds of books available to

help a person strengthen their muscles before they start riding and reduce pain which can occur," according to Justice.

Safety is always a concern, so the horse must fit the rider. "Make sure you have proper riding equipment and wear a helmet," Justice commented.

Balanced nutrition is essential for a horse-related exercise and diet plan to be successful. "An overweight person who wants to go on a conscientious program must reduce food intake by one-half and exercise 30 minutes a day," the dietician clarified. "Following this recommendation, a person could expect to lose one to two pounds a week and keep it off."

Obviously, this is easier said than done. "You have to learn how to say no," Justice stressed. "Instead of an eight-ounce piece of meat, eat three ounces, one the size of a deck of cards. Then add two non-starch vegetables such as broccoli and carrots, and you'll have a balanced nutritious meal."

Water is essential to the program. "People need to drink eight glasses of water a day," Justice prescribed.

"This will also reduce the amount of food desired."

If one has a strong appeal for coffee, Justice insisted that it must be decaffeinated. Pop drinkers can continue by consuming the diet variety. "Drinking diet pop versus regular pop reduces calorie consumption very rapidly," Justice verified. "Water is still the best though."

Just getting started is the key, Justice declared. "Even walking to the barn to do chores is better than taking the car or the four-wheeler," she said.

After a person becomes involved with horses and decides that they desire to own one, finding the right animal is no small task.

"Go to a professional who knows and has access to horses that will fit your need," Justice advised. "Just because you've started riding and enjoy it, don't go out and buy the first horse available. You must remember the commitment factor, because this is a substantial investment."

As Winston Churchill and Ronald Reagan have agreed: "The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man."



Scenes of beauty and scenes of destruction were everywhere last week across G&G country in the wake of the powerful ice storm. Tallies of over 150,000 at one point were left without power as lines were dropped and poles snapped under the weight of the ice. These images of the good and bad were taken in Geary, Dickinson, Morris, Marion and Riley counties by Frank Buchman and Beth Gaines-Riffel.

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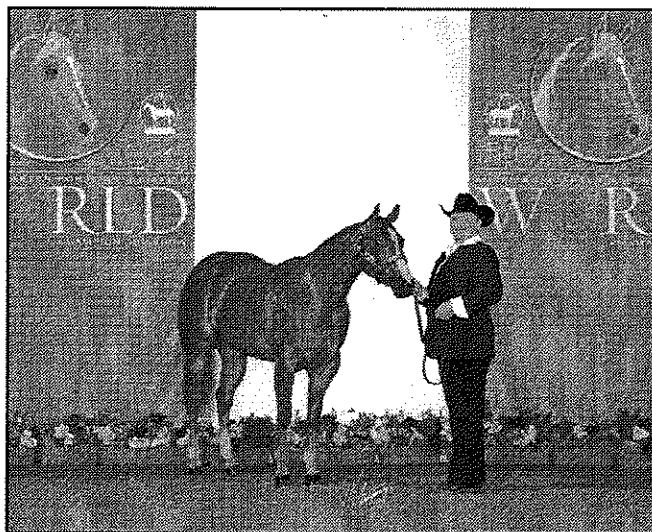
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Horses fit well into exercise and diet programs, according to Shannon Justice, registered dietician and horse owner at Chetopa. Following the advice given to her clients, Justice is heavily involved with horses competing successfully at all levels, including this entry at the American Quarter Horse Association World Show.