



## Why do they need enrichment?

**Domestication can be tough for horses – they are dependent on humans to meet their needs. Lacking opportunities for making choices can impinge on welfare. Enrichment helps to mitigate these difficulties and:**

- ❖ relieves boredom
- ❖ better meets the horse's behavioural and emotional needs
- ❖ reduces likelihood of frustration and/or over-excitement
- ❖ reduces likelihood of developing behavioural problems
- ❖ aids health by lowering stress levels

**Not all of the following ideas will be suitable for every horse – always discuss with your vet if you have any concerns.**



## About EBTA

EBTA aims to:

- ❖ Improve public knowledge and understanding of the physical and psychological well-being of equines
- ❖ Promote awareness of human behaviour and its impact on equine behaviour
- ❖ Bridge the gap between academic research and practical application
- ❖ Protect equine welfare whilst maintaining safety and achieving equestrian goals

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## Enrichment for Horses and Donkeys



Equine Behaviour and  
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## What is Enrichment?

Enrichment improves the lives of domestic animals by providing additional variety and choice. This may involve increasing equine company, changing the environment and/or offering a wider array of food. The forms of enrichment can be changed periodically to maintain interest, and changes should be made slowly so as to avoid distress. Here we offer ideas you could try, if suitable for your horse.



## Enrichment Ideas

- ❖ Provide scratching posts (e.g. broom-heads or “pillow-post”, below left)
- ❖ Provide sandy area for rolling
- ❖ Take your horse on in-hand walks or hacks for grazing/browsing (if safe to do so)
- ❖ If stabling required, consider group-housing or adjoining pen?
- ❖ Provide stable with a window through to a friendly horse (but also allow privacy)
- ❖ Hide treats around stable/field/haynet...
- ❖ Provide a snack ball (as long as no frustration)
- ❖ Teach apple bobbing (initially in shallow water)
- ❖ Provide a “toy box” for supervised play. Large bucket or trug of objects with interesting textures, shapes or smells. E.g. dog toys, cut-open empty fruit juice cartons. Can include handful of treats to encourage foraging
- ❖ Puzzle feeders containing fruit/veg/nuts



## Different Foods

- ❖ Provide ad lib forage of different varieties to enable natural grazing habits
- ❖ Provide different feed types in different buckets, instead of mixing. See what combinations your horse prefers
- ❖ Provide root vegetables, hanging on strings or mixed in with forage
- ❖ Soak hay in different herbal teas (e.g. peppermint, chamomile)
- ❖ Provide browsing opportunities (oak, ash, poplar, willow, apple branches)
- ❖ Make a treat branch by adding polos, honey, fruit, vegetables, herb or fruit pastes.... (see pictures overleaf)

