



Your Horse's Perspective

Having a new owner is a major change for a horse. However much you try to preserve some level of consistency, the horse's experience will typically feel very different.

Your horse will need to learn new cues, new routines, new owner attitudes and personality. He may need to adapt to a new home and companions. None of these changes should be underestimated.

Some horses can appear to settle into their new homes quickly. Others take much longer. Allowing your horse the time he needs will help you develop a more positive relationship. Rushing is more likely to result in behavioural problems, even to the extent where you wonder if the horse was mis-sold.



More 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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Your New Horse



Equine Behaviour and
Training Association
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The New Herd

Gradual introduction to new horses is important to minimize stress and risk of injury.

Ideally, start with the new horse separated from the herd by a double fence. Over a few days, the fences can be moved closer together and the horses allowed to meet across the fence.

The herd can be introduced to the new horse individually before the new horse is finally added to the whole herd.

Transfer of faeces between the two sides of the fence can help horses adjust to each other.



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New Activities

It is tempting to maintain old exercise routines but it is often less stressful for your horse to have some time off to settle in to the new home and herd.

When you start riding again, build up slowly. The horse needs time to adjust to a new manège, yard area, hacking routes and riding companions. It may be a good idea to walk routes in-hand first.

Remember that your style of riding may be different from the previous owner and your horse will need time to learn your cues/aids/signals.

Think about new people (e.g. vet, farrier, yard staff, instructor) who will meet your horse and try to arrange for them to meet the horse before you "need" them.

Horse:Human Relationship

- ❖ Learn to recognise your horse's signs of low-level stress and avoid triggering
- ❖ Don't be tempted to resort to punishment for misdemeanors. Think about what caused the behaviour and make it easier for the horse to comply.
- ❖ Give your horse the benefit of the doubt. Most problems arise from the horse's confusion or fear regarding a situation, and/or pain.
- ❖ Aim for your horse to regard you as the "bringer of good things", such as food rewards and/or scratches. This will associate you with positive emotions.
- ❖ However strong your relationship, your horse will most likely be happiest living a life that is most suited to his evolutionary needs, including turn-out, movement, ad-lib forage and equine company for 24 hours a day.