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The Grand Re-Entry

June 12, 2018 | Tyler Lewis

Oftentimes life happens and takes a toll on us, causing us to drop the reins and step away from horseback riding. That break can be a few weeks, months or years. Despite the time away, getting back in the groove of things can be challenging and can take some getting re-used to. If you've taken an extended vacation from riding or if you're a first-time rider wanting to get your feet wet, this blog is just for you.

No matter your experience with equine, getting back in the saddle after an extended absence takes time and effort. Here is a list of tips to help you make a successful return:

1. Research, research, research.

The internet has proven to be our best friend, so use it. Don't be afraid to research those terrifying questions that you have regarding riding again. If you have any friends that are well versed in the horse world, reach out to them with questions and for tips and tricks as well. Lastly, if you need a little more help after getting all of the information to make your return a successful one, compile a list of potential riding centers and inquire about riding lessons. A little help never hurt nobody.



2. Take your time.

Keep in mind that you don't have to commit to anything just yet. Give yourself time to look around and weigh out your options. If you're a new rider, try a few stables in your area and see if the overall atmosphere works for you. Do they offer what you're looking for? Is the instructor a great one? Will there be others in the group that you can relate to? Nonetheless, you have the option to keep looking if it isn't a perfect fit.

If you have previous experience with horses, take it slow. You don't have to go above and beyond to be as good as you used to be nor do you have to remember every little detail about riding. Take some time to re-wet your feet and get used to the things you remember. Never forget that "slow and steady wins the race."

3. Don't get frustrated when you're not as good as you remember.

Unfortunately, skills that go unused tend to fade and that is perfectly fine. It is OK to be a little rusty because relearning a skill has proven to be better, easier and quicker than learning it for the first time. Before getting frustrated and upset, simply step away, take a break, dust yourself off, return when you're ready and repeat.



4. Make time.

One of the hardest things to do when it comes to a new hobby or re-introducing old habits is making time for them. We often have a long list of commitments including careers, families and other obligations. No matter the circumstance, the only way to improve as a rider is to make time for it and stick to it. It's easy to say that you'll do it tomorrow, next week and so on, but making an appointment and putting it on your calendar can help you more than you know.

5. Develop friendships in the equine industry.

Horse people get it and understand exactly what you're going through, and have the best tips. Try to find a few friends in the industry that can help, support and offer you advice whenever you're in need. They could recommend a local barn to ride at, a great trainer or they may offer to help train you themselves. They will be the ones to keep you going and motivated.

6. Try Trail Riding.

When all else fails, try Trail Riding. It's a less formal setting than riding lessons, and can be more comforting to you. Go out with friends, family members or alone to just enjoy the scenery and take your mind off of the technicalities of everything.

The most important thing to do is just have fun. Don't get so caught up in being the best or trying to immediately fit in with other riders. Take your time and be the best rider you can be; and while you're at it, don't forget to enjoy the ride.



Credits:

Nelson, J. (2017, March 21). 7 Tips For Getting Back In The Saddle. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <http://ihearhorses.com/7-tips-for-getting-back-in-the-saddle/>