

HORSE CLIPPING 101



Clipping is one of those activities that a horse owner carries out regularly, learning from experience just as their horses do. For human and animal, the first few clips can seem rather daunting, but after they get acquainted with the practice it becomes far more comfortable.

If the thought of clipping fills you with unease, you might be able to take solace depending on the type of horses you have. Younger, less experienced horses won't need extensive clipping, so even if they're nervous, they can be clipped in a relatively short space of time.

Competition horses, or those in heavy work, will need a full body clip or close to it, but it's quite likely that they'll be very relaxed about clipping already.

Even the most experienced horses, though, could be apprehensive about clipping in some of the body's more sensitive areas. Their skin tends to be at its thinnest around the elbows and flank, so you will need to take extra care when clipping these parts. The ears are also rather sensitive and, when clipping the inside and bottom of the horse's ears, the palm of your hand should be wrapped around the bottom of the ear so that you have a firm grip (so long as you're not gripping with excessive tightness).

Here is an infographic from Clippers Ireland which provides some useful pointers for horse owners on clipping, talking you through the process and highlighting the areas which require the closest attention.

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Clipping your horse's hair allows body heat to escape so that it doesn't become too sweaty, while trimming its coat makes it quicker to dry and hence less prone to colds and colic. Here are the fundamentals of clipping that every horse owner should know.

HORSE CLIPPING STYLES



Bib clip

Best for horses doing very little work



Irish clip

Best for young horses, school ponies and horses in light work



Trace clip

Best for young horses, school ponies and horses in light work



Blanket clip

Best for horses in light to moderate work



Hunter clip

Best for horses in full work



Full Body clip

Best for horses in full work and competition horses

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HORSE CLIPPING

1

Shampoo your horse and allow them to dry fully. This will stop the blades from catching when the horse is being clipped.



Spray any areas to be clipped with coat sheen or conditioner so that the blades will clip more smoothly.

2

3

Attach the blades to your clippers with the correct tension - tightened fully and turned for 1.5 anticlockwise rotations. This will increase the longevity of the blades.



Apply oil every 5 minutes to keep them cool and increase the lifespan of the blades.

4

5

Always clip against the grain of the hair for a neater clip that's more comfortable for your horse.



When you've finished clipping, use baby wipes to clear off any dust and little hairs. This will enable you to see if you've missed any hairs that you had intended to clip.

6

7

Rug your horse correctly for the weather to stop them from getting sick and losing weight.



Finally, remove the blades and clean them along with the head and fans of the clippers.

8

HOW TO CLIP TRICKY AREAS ON A HORSE

Inside the ears

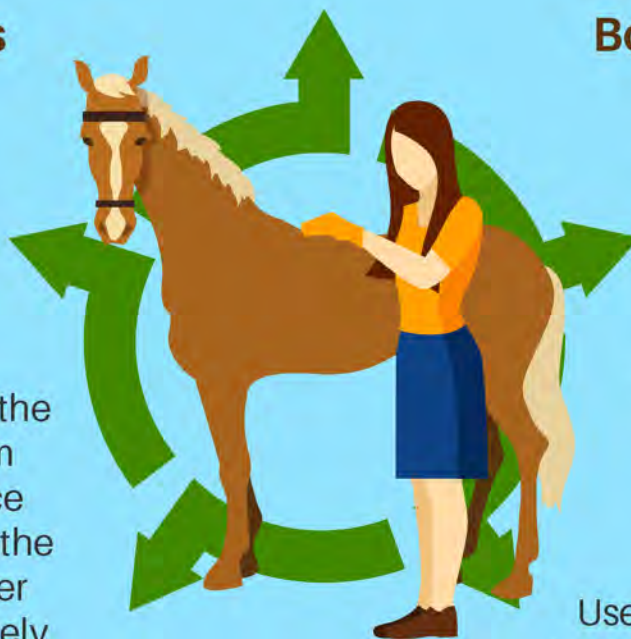
Wrap your hand around the bottom of the ear and use your index finger to pop out the inside of the ear, all the time keeping the bottom of the ear closed with the rest of your hand. This allows you to fully clip out the inside of the ear with hand trimmers.

Back of the ears

Hold down the tip of the ear and clip backwards towards the poll.

Elbows

Get someone to pull the front leg forward from behind the knee. Face the clippers towards the head and clip in under the elbow. Be extremely careful in this area as the skin is very thin and you could cut it quite easily.



Bottom of the ears

Wrap the palm of your hand around the bottom of the ear, pressing the two sides together. Use the trimmers facing down to remove the fluff at the bottom of the ear.

Flank

Use one hand to hold out the loose skin. Place fingers behind the skin and, using your thumb to keep the tension, clip the hair off. As with the elbows, be careful when clipping this area as the skin is rather thin.

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