



INFORMATION FOR NEW 20K AND 40K ENDURANCE RIDERS

INTRODUCTION

This information is designed to help those who are new to Endurance riding and thinking of entering their first ride.

Endurance is a sport for every horse and rider, and all healthy and sound horses are capable of completing introductory (20k) and intermediate rides. For a 20k ride in particular, if you are riding your horse fairly regularly, your horse will be quite capable of completing the course and it is a great way to start in endurance. There is no special equipment, breeding or bells and whistles required! You do need to be aware that helmets are compulsory for all riders when mounted at the ride base or on track; and spurs, crops and tie-downs are NOT permitted.

The key ingredients for success are a solid training foundation, gear (particularly saddle) which is comfortable and allows your horse to be free moving, and also providing your horse with some mental training.

For many horses the following things can be as challenging as completing the distance:

- being at what can sometimes be a busy ride base
- being examined by the TPR / vet
- being in company with other horses on course

It is good to expose your horse to social situations and to being handled by strangers and being around other horses.

That might sound intimidating, but really it's just about understanding what an event might look and sound like for your horse. Endurance is open to everyone, and everyone is encouraged to give it a go!

MEMBERSHIP

You do not need to be a financial member of the State Association (TEERA) to compete in distances under 80 kms. You can nominate for a ride as a **Day Rider**. To enter the ride online you need to be registered with AERAonline.

To do this, go to www.aeraonline.com.au and click on 'Login' at the top of the screen, select 'Register as a New User' and follow the prompts.

The cost for a Day Rider is \$25 **plus** the ride entry fee as specified by the ride organisers. When you arrive at the ride base and your horse is settled in his/her yard, take the required forms you have printed and filled in to the Ride Secretary where you will finalise your entry.



HOW DO I TRAIN FOR A 20/40K RIDE?

You should ride 2-3 times a week in the 4-6 weeks leading up to the ride.

Your most important ride will be your final long ride, in which you should cover around 15 kms in one session. This should be done 1-2 weeks before the ride and completed at around your ride pace. At the ride, the Chief Steward will confirm minimum and maximum times for your ride. There's no need to train excessively, just enough that you and your horse can comfortably complete the distance.

TIP:

There is no one way to train that works for every horse and rider!

Slow and steady is the best way to complete, compete, and set your horse up for a long career in endurance. REST is also vital. Rest is when your horse builds muscle and gets stronger - don't be tempted to overdo it.

Cross training - such as riding in an arena or jumping - is also great to include in your routine, as it develops a well rounded and balanced horse, and this counts as training too!

WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR THE RIDE?

FOR THE RIDER:

- Food, drink
- Riding gear - don't forget your helmet (no helmet, no ride!)
- Cash/cheque for entry and food from the canteen
- Any medications or painkillers you may need & basic first aid kit
- If camping then tent, bedding, etc.

TIP:

**Don't use your new gear for the first time at a ride - this goes for horse and rider!
Make sure you've tested everything so you don't get any nasty surprises.**

FOR THE HORSE:

- Saddle and girth
- Clean saddle blanket (important to be clean, dirty gear can rub)
- Headgear (bridle/hackamore, headstall and leadrope)
- Leg boots if usually used
- Hoof boots if usually used or as a spare if a shoe is thrown
- Rugs as required
- Sponges, scraper and clean towel for strapping
- Hoof Pick
- Grooming brushes
- Stethoscope or heart rate monitor (perhaps borrow one) & thermometer (You will need to take your horse's temperature for **four days prior to the ride** (including the morning of the day you arrive at the base) and complete the Health Declaration Form)
- Feed and water buckets
- Fresh hay
- Horse feed (keep grains or high carb feeds to a minimum prior to the ride and save these for after the ride)
- If staying overnight you **MUST** bring a yard which will adequately retain your Horse and which complies with AERA rules. Practice at home first!



I'M AT THE RIDE - WHAT NOW?

WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE:

Find a space to park your float and offload your horse. Take him for a short walk and offer him food and water to let him unwind after the float trip. If you're setting up a yard, do so now. If not, make sure your horse is safe and secure. When he is settled, check that your forms are fully completed and head to the ride office to submit the forms.

The ride secretary will give you a riding bib with a number on it and, if the horse you are riding does not have a log book, a Vet Card for your horse. Now you are entered and you can head back to your camp!

TIP:

Before pre ride vetting, trot your horse up and down to make sure they haven't injured themselves on the way to the ride.

PRE RIDE VETTING:

When the vet ring is open, take your horse - don't forget your Vet Card (or Logbook) - over to the vet ring (make sure you wear your rider bib). A TPR (temperature/pulse/respiration steward) will check your horse's temperature (your horse needs to be ok with a stranger putting a thermometer in his bottom), heart rate and respiration.

Then you will go to the vet who will check your horse quickly all over and ask you to trot your horse up and back on a **loose rein**. Assuming there are no issues with the vet check you are now ready to start your ride.

Head back to your float and get everything ready you will need now and after the ride. You should have a few buckets of water to cool your horse after the ride and clean water for him to drink, as well as some horse food. Once you are all set up have something to eat, make sure your horse has had enough food and water, and start to get ready to ride!



THE RIDE

STARTING THE RIDE:

You are required to attend a briefing before leaving on your ride when you will be told about any important information about the course.

You should be saddled up about 15 minutes before your ride start time to warm your horse up. You must call out your rider number to the chief steward or ride organiser as you leave the ride base to head out onto the course.

You can leave up to (but no later than) 10 minutes after the official start time. But **DO NOT LEAVE WITHOUT HAVING YOUR NUMBER CHECKED OFF BY THE CHIEF STEWARD OR RIDE ORGANISER.**

TIP:

You're working hard too!

Don't forget to take care of yourself by eating, drinking and taking electrolytes if needed.

Your horse can only be as good as you are.

FOLLOWING THE COURSE:

A rider should not get lost due to course marking, however you must also be aware that there is a degree of personal responsibility on you to go the right way. It is easy to get distracted and miss a turn, follow other competitors, or become disoriented when tired. If you think you may be lost:

- 1) Consider if there is evidence of other horses having travelled this way. If so, continue for a short distance and check if there is a marker ahead
- 2) If not, consider when you last saw a marker. It is advisable to return to this point and carefully look for the correct way
- 3) If you are at a crossroads and can see no marker, turn around and travel a short distance back, then return, looking again for a marker. If you still can not see a marker, but you are sure you are on the right path, it's possible it has fallen down or been removed. In this case you can backtrack to the last checkpoint to ask for help, call the number provided at the briefing, or if safe and obvious which way to go, continue.

It is rare (but not impossible!) to get lost, so please use your common sense and be aware of your orientation in regard to the ride base. Your horse may know more than you and get you home if you are very lost!



RIDER MANNERS:

While out riding please be polite and friendly to the volunteers at the checkpoints and gates as they are helping to run the ride for your pleasure.

When giving numbers at a checkpoint call your number out and wait for the number to be called back before continuing. It is the RIDER'S responsibility to ensure checkpoints record your number. Failure to do so can result in elimination.

Remember also that checkpoint people can help you – if you or your horse are not able to continue wait at a checkpoint and they will get help to you. If you are unable to make it to a checkpoint ask another rider to pass the message on and stay where you are. Endurance riders look after each other, so don't hesitate to ask for help and don't leave another rider in trouble!

TIP:

All your hard work has paid off - now don't forget to enjoy yourself!

Horses who **may** kick should wear a red ribbon in their tail to warn other riders to give that horse plenty of personal space on the trail. Riders of horses who kick must also manage their horse's behaviour. You must not put other people or horses in danger through the behaviour of your horse.

Stallions wear blue ribbons in their tails. Most endurance stallions are extremely well behaved but as a courtesy it's best not to ride too close.

If you want to pass a rider or group of riders in front of you, call out to the rider/group that you wish to pass on them on **their** left or the right, whichever is most suitable – if there is more than one horse passing call out the number as well, i.e. "*2 horses passing on your right when you're ready*". The other riders should then move to the side and acknowledge your request, so you can pass and move on out of their way.

Ride to road rules – if on a road do not ride in the middle or on the wrong side of the road. This is an important safety note to ensure you are visible to cars.

When at water stops on course, be mindful of other horses. Allow your horse to drink as much as he needs, but move on once he has finished to allow others access.

In summary, have a wonderful time, use common sense and be friendly to volunteers and other riders.



NOW YOU HAVE FINISHED:

So now you are back at base and perhaps tired, but you have finished the course!

Even if you needed a float ride back to base, everyone has to present to the vet for a final time. As you cross the finish line your time will be noted and your Vet Card/Logbook written up or, if electronic timing is being used, you will be given a time slip. Make sure you pick it up as it will have your finish time and a vetting time 30 minutes later written on it. You **MUST** present at the vet ring with your vet card and horse within your 30 minute vetting time or you will be disqualified.

Take your horse back to camp, put on a halter and take all the tack off including any brushing boots or bandages. You can leave hoof boots on if you wish.

The exercise is probably going to raise your horse's heart rate, particularly if it is warm. Your horse must have a heart rate of 55 bpm or less to pass the vet check. Cooling your horse down will aid in lowering the heart rate. But if you make your horse too cold the heart rate will go up - so take care to not over-cool him.

Cooling down too much can also cause stiffness or cramping, particularly in the hindquarters. If there is any chill in the air, a towel or light rug over the rump is a good idea.

Once you have cooled your horse let him relax for a while, remembering that you must present to the vet within 30 minutes of your finish time. Offer water, hay (not hard feed as this elevates heart rate) or grass and do some slow walking to make sure your horse doesn't get stiff. Encourage your horse to pee as this also lowers HR.

Watch the time and leave enough so you can slowly walk to vetting. Let the horse pick along the way, and make sure you're still wearing your number bib. Vetting is the same as pre-ride except temperature and respiration will not be taken. TPRs will record the HR and the vet will do the rest. If you aren't able to run your horse for the vet, then your strapper or any other helper can trot your horse out. Remember to trot with a loose lead.

Hopefully now you have vetted through successfully and you're feeling terrific! Make sure you attend presentations to hand in your bib and collect your completion prize.

CONGRATULATIONS!