

# Top 10 Horse Stretching Guidelines

- 1) Safety first....for both rider and horse!! Be aware of your surroundings prior to starting any stretch. Practice good ergonomics and body mechanics when helping your horse stretch. Stretches can be performed in cross-ties, a single tie, a ground tie, or with a holder depending on your horse.
- 2) All stretches should be performed on warm muscles. Stretching cold muscles can cause tears, strains and other injuries and issues.
- 3) No cheating!! Proper stretching form is critical for your horse to gain the maximum benefit of the stretch. Proper form and less stretch is better than poor form and more stretch. Most horses are a lot smarter than you think when it comes to finding ways to "cheat the stretch."
- 4) Most stretches can be performed up to 5 days a week on a healthy horse with the exception of tail pull stretches which should not be performed more than 4 days per week.
- 5) The frequency and type of stretches that are appropriate for a horse recovering from an injury can vary greatly. Do not assume that a stretch that was appropriate for a horse with an injury similar to your horse's injury is appropriate for your horse.
- 6) The duration of the stretch will vary depending on many factors such as muscle tightness, prior injury, conformation, and nutrition level. Generally, start with a 5-10 second hold time and gradually increase to 30 seconds.
- 7) Never push or pull on joints or support a stretch by pressing on a joint.
- 8) Breathing deeply and relaxing your hands as much as possible will help your horse gain the maximum benefit of the stretch.
- 9) Never proceed with a stretch if discomfort or pain is noted.
- 10) Not all stretches contained in Stretch Your Horse videos are appropriate for every horse. Always consult an equine healthcare professional prior to beginning a stretching regimen.