



These horses at Shreveport
AAA Bred at a SNV show
in Hamilton, Va.

EQUINE RECOVERY

BY AMY OLSON

Essential to Stay on Top

So you've been on the road for some time competing and you've made it home safe. What now? You and your horse could be exhausted, drained from the drive, early mornings, late nights and long hot summer days. Keep these things in mind as you allow your horse and yourself to recoup.

1. Rest Days

Many folks like to give themselves and their horses a few days to rest and recoup. This is a great idea! It wouldn't hurt to leave your horse in their stall for a day. However, if you plan on a few days off, think about active recovery options for your horse. Turnout time is amazing, if they have a good pasture option, grazing can help their gut recover from the stress of travel and hours they might have spent without food. If pasture isn't an option, consider turning them out in an arena, round pen, or dry lot for an hour or two each rest day so that they have a chance to stretch their legs as they feel fit. If turnout just isn't an option, lunge your horse but don't keep them locked in their stall for too many days in a row.

2. Reduce Inflammation

Performance at the top level is hard on your horse just like it is for any athlete. Think of ways you can help your horse physically recover. Ice boots can help reduce inflammation and minimize some damage your partner may have incurred to their muscles, joints and tendons. Mag netic blankets and boots increase blood flow, as does PEMF or other electrode treatments, increased blood flow can lead to quicker and a more full recovery. Consult your veterinarian if your horse is lame or extremely stiff after competition, they may need Bute. Prevaline or another form of medication to aid in their recovery.



John Olson and John
Olson riding together
near CDD in the
Richmond, Va. area

3. Hydrate

Some horses don't drink well on the road, over the counter electrolytes can assist with that. Electrolyte powders are easy to find and feed, but many horses won't powder products put in their grain. Many feed stores sell electrolyte paste that are apple flavored and taste just for horses. If your horse is hard to provide paste to put some gatorade in a smaller bucket with some water and let your horse drink that.

4. Feed Well

Traveling puts more stress on your horse's gut. Gut prevention is something you should greatly consider if you're putting miles in with your equine partners. Check to see if the grain you are feeding has pre and probiotics or is high in moisture. Alfalfa provides higher moisture than hay and can keep your horse's gut at a healthier pH. If your horse has started wetting some of their grain you might have them evaluated for ulcers. Your veterinarian can provide a diagnosis and the best treatment plan if needed.

5. Re-Braid

If braiding manes and tails is part of your routine horse care you might already have a day planned out for this, but if you don't, spend some recovery days braiding. Oil, condition, or use detangler before brushing out and braiding your horse's locks. Then, for braids that will last a month, tie off with elastic tape instead of rubber bands. Consider tail bags, but if the time are had in your area look up other tail techniques.

Don't forget to give your self a few rest days as well and travel safely this summer.



Kate Houch caring for
Two Texas Red



Kate Houch takes
extra precautions
when her horses
are on the road

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