

## Make Them Carry Their Saddle

A father of a darling girl and I were talking last week and he said that he wanted his daughter to ride more and not have to do the work part of the catching, grooming, and saddling. I smiled as I explained.

Riding horses is a combination of strength, timing, and balance. Kids in this country are physically weak (unless they are actively involved with weight training and physical conditioning 4+ times a week.)

When you walk out to the field, you are clearing your stress from being under fluorescent<sup>OBJ</sup> lights all day; feeling the sun soak into your bones. As your body moves on uneven surfaces, it strengthens your legs and core.

When you groom your horse (especially currying), you are toning your arms and stabilizing your core.

When you carry your saddle, your arms, chest, and back are doing isolated strengthening work.

Being near horses, calms and makes you tune into the splendor of these empathetic animals.

When you ride at a posting trot, it's equivalent to a slow jog calorie burn wise.

After a lesson, the riders are physically tired and mentally quiet and balanced.

Horses feel your heart beat and mirror your emotions back.

Riding large and somewhat unpredictable animals makes you resilient and pushes your expectations.

Working with horses is so much more than learning how to ride.

So parents, make your children carry their saddles. Don't do the hard parts for them, as long term it actually hurts them. To advance with their riding, they must get stronger. You can help by doing the high parts.

I love having you all at the farm, and am so grateful to get to share these fascinating animals with you.

