



# Rider Certification Program

## Study Guide

### Level 2

This study guide has been designed to provide you with some of the important information that you will need to know for the Level 2 test. This information has been condensed from the larger Equestrian Bahamas Rider Certification Program Study Guide, which is available online at [www.equestrianbahamas.org](http://www.equestrianbahamas.org), or from your trainer. You will also need to be familiar with all the information contained in the Level 1 Study Guide.

The Level 2 test consists of three parts: a Stable Management test, an Under Saddle test, and an Over Fences test. The pass mark for each part of the test is 80%. The Stable Management test has a written portion and a practical portion. At this level, the Over Fences test is conducted over trot poles only.

You should present yourself and your horse for the test as if you were riding in a clinic. Required attire for the rider includes: an ASTM approved helmet that is properly fitted, hard soled, heeled, ankle boots or higher and fitted, seamless pants. Half chaps are permissible. A well-fitted shirt with a collar and tucked into the pants or breeches is recommended with a belt that is visible. Gloves are recommended at all levels. Hair must be either tucked into the helmet or kept tidy with a hair net. A single braid is acceptable if hair is very long. Your horse need not be braided or clipped, but your turnout should be neat.

In both parts of the Stable Management test, you will be asked to show that you have mastered certain principles and skills in stable management. The answers for these questions are all contained in this study guide. The Under Saddle part of the test will be conducted in a ride format: in other words, you will ride in a group with other test candidates. Each candidate will ride the Over Fences portion of the test individually. The test administrator will give you certain instructions which you should do your best to follow.

We hope that you will find this study guide useful. Have fun, learn lots, and good luck!

## HORSE FACE MARKINGS

You have already learned about horse colours. Facial markings are another important aspect of horse identification. Here are the names and examples of some of the most common facial markings in horses. (A horse may have one or more markings).

- Star: White mark between the eyes.
- Snip: White or flesh colored mark on the muzzle that may be connected to a stripe.
- Stripe: Also known as a strip or race, it is a narrow facial marking that runs down the center of the horse's face and may be connected to a star or a snip.
- Blaze: Wide white marking that runs the length of the horse's face.
- Bald face: Wide facial marking that extends to or past the inside corner of one or both eyes.

Markings can be further described as:

- Faint: A marking consisting of only a few white hairs.
- Interrupted: A stripe or blaze that is broken (not solid) for the entire length of the face.
- Connected: A star and stripe, a stripe and snip or a star, stripe and snip that are attached.
- Irregular or crooked: Refers to stripes and blazes.

Examples:



*Star*



*Snip*



*Stripe*



*Blaze*



*Bald face*



*Star and Snip*



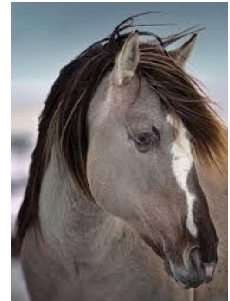
*Star, stripe and snip connected*



*Faint star*



*Irregular blaze*



*Irregular stripe*

## GROOMING

Grooming is a job that should be performed daily on a horse. The best time to give your horse a thorough grooming is after exercise when his pores are open. This allows the oils to be spread through the horse's coat and brings out a deep luster. However in tropical climates this is often not possible as the horse will require a shower or bath after being ridden.

### Reasons for Grooming:

- Grooming promotes circulation and general good health.
- Allows the groom to check for injuries, skin conditions, rubs or loose shoes
- Brings a sheen to the horse's coat through the distribution of oil
- Cleans the horse's coat of sweat, dirt and dandruff
- Allows additional time for training on ground manners
- Allows the groom to develop rapport with the horse

### Common grooming tools



*Left:* Rubber curry comb. Should not be used on the face, legs or other bony or sensitive area of the body.

*Right:* Dandy brush or hard brush: Many horses are too ticklish to have this brush used on clipped areas.



*Left:* Body brush: used to get deep into the coat to extract dandruff, oil and dirt that are against the skin.

*Right:* Face brush or soft brush: often made of horsehair.



*Left:* Metal or plastic curry comb: Used to clean out brushes. Should not be used on the horse.

*Right:* Rubber mitt: Used to curry the legs, face and bony areas of the horse's body.



*Left:* Mane and tail brush: Used to detangle the mane and tail.

*Right:* Hoof pick: When picking out the foot, care must be taken to work from the heel to the toe.



*Left:* Rub rag: A rag that is used to put a final polish on the horse's coat.

*Right:* A sponge is used to wipe sensitive areas like the eyes, nostrils and dock.



*Left:* Fly spray: In tropical climates flies are often an annoyance to horses. Keep your horse comfortable by misting him with fly spray at the end of his grooming session.

## Steps to Grooming

1. To start your grooming, make sure that the horse is dry. A wet horse cannot be groomed properly.
2. Assemble all of your tools and make sure that they are clean. It isn't much use to clean a horse with a dirty brush. Brushes should be washed in a mild soap once a week.
3. Tie or cross tie your horse and start out by picking out his feet. Horses are creatures of routine and appreciate their feet being cleaned out in an order. Check your horse for loose shoes, missing nails and thrush.
4. Curry comb your horse beginning on the left side of the body behind the horse's ear. Be careful not to curry on any bony area of the horse's body. Respect your horse's ticklish areas!
5. Brush the horse using the dandy (hard) brush. Flick the brush up away from the horse at the end of each stroke to take the dirt out of the horse's coat.
6. Next, go over the horse in the same fashion with the body brush. A good body brush should fit your hand well. Most of them have a strap across the back to help you get good leverage while you groom.
7. Clean manure stains that cannot be brushed out require either by spot washing or by spraying with alcohol and rubbing out with a towel.
8. Continue on to the horse's legs with the dandy brush. Squat down while you brush. Keep one hand on the horse's leg and brush with the other hand. Keeping one hand on the horse's leg helps you to feel if a horse is going to move his leg suddenly and helps you push away from him in an emergency. It is very painful to get a horse's knee in your face. For safety reasons, never kneel down while grooming or put your hands on the floor where they could be stepped on. Pay special attention to the horse's heels and behind his fetlocks. Check for burrs, cuts and skin irritations.
9. Gently clean the horse's face with the face brush. Some horses enjoy having their face gently scrubbed with a rubber grooming mitt. Each horse is an individual and a good groom learns to work with the horse. Make sure to unclip the throat latch of the halter and groom under the horse's head.
10. Brush the mane flat. If the horse's mane won't stay on one side of the neck, it can be put in training braids.
11. Untangle the tail. The best way to work with the tail is to untangle it by hand. Never rip out the tangles. If you must use a brush, gently brush the tail starting at the bottom and working toward the top. Make sure to remove any shavings, hay or straw from the tail. Look at the roots of the mane and tail as you brush. If the horse has scurf, which is the equivalent of human dandruff, his mane and tail needs to be washed.
12. Wipe out your horse's eyes and nostrils with a clean, damp sponge. Wipe under his tail with a separate damp sponge.
13. Finish by wiping your horse down with a clean rub rag. Put a small amount of baby oil on his muzzle to make him look extra fancy.
14. Protect your horse from insect bites by misting him with fly spray. If spray bottles make your horse nervous, put fly spray on a rub rag instead and use this to wipe him down.

## CLEANING TACK

Your tack should be cleaned each and every time that you ride. We clean our tack to keep it clean, supple, and above all safe!

Leather requires constant checking to make sure that it is not dry rotting, stretching, weakening, wearing, ageing or has loose or rotten stitching. For safety purposes, check your tack every time before you ride and inspect it closely when you are cleaning it.

### Steps to cleaning tack

1. The first step is to take some warm water and wring out a sponge until it is nearly dry. Wash the dirt, sweat and hair from the tack, keeping the leather as dry as possible. Water rots tack so instead of making a sudsy lather with the soap, use elbow grease instead. If the tack is especially dirty, use castile soap to help loosen the dirt and grease that has accumulated (particularly on the underside of the leather).
2. Next, if the tack needs oil, put a light coating on the leather. Leather does not need to be oiled often and over-oiling can be just as destructive as under oiling.
3. Finish with a light application of glycerine soap which serves to seal the leather.
4. The buckles on unused tack can be treated with petroleum jelly to prevent rust.

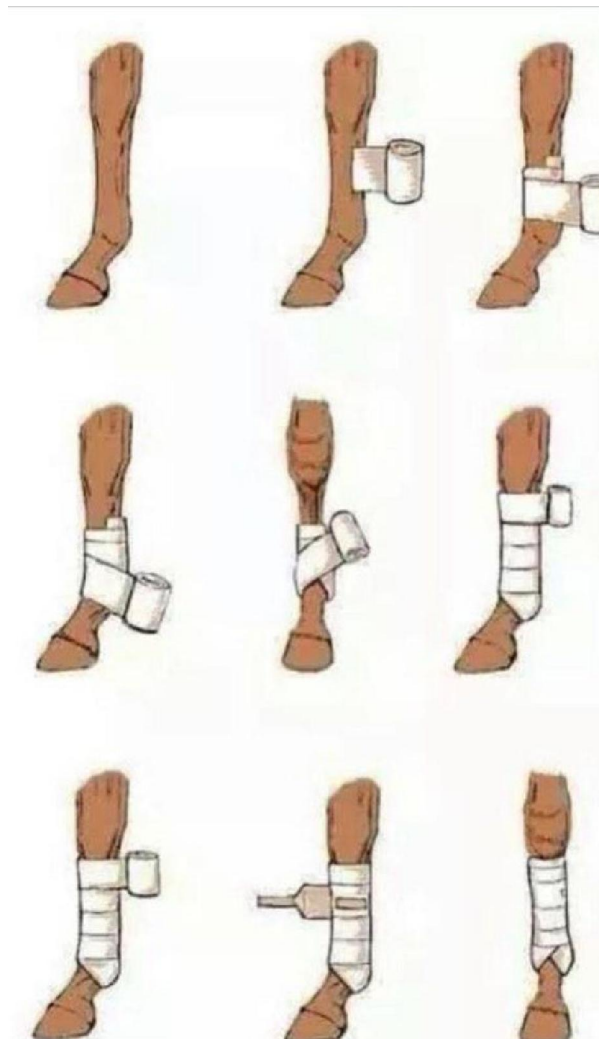
## POLO WRAPS AND BOOTS

### Polo wraps

Polo wraps are a form of exercise bandage. They provide some support and protection for a horse's legs. Be careful as they absorb water and can become quite heavy in wet conditions.

It is important to apply polo wraps properly to avoid harming the horse's legs. Begin to wrap at the top of the cannon bone, always wrapping towards the horse's tail. Keep an even tension, and an equal distance of 1-2" between each wrap. Be careful not to twist or jerk the wrap, which can put pressure on the horse's tendons.

Drop the wrap around the bottom of the fetlock joint and bring it up on an angle in front. This should create an upside-down "V" at the front of the joint, providing support to the joint and allowing the leg to bend.





## Boots

Boots come in many forms. It is extremely important to make sure that boots are clean and well fitting. Make sure to check their fit once the horse has warmed up. Some horses “stock up” and boots can slide down the leg causing irritation or injury. Some of the more common boots are:

- Bell: Used on the front legs to protect the horse from an overreach or grab. These rubber or plastic boots come in pull on or Velcro.
- Splint boots: Used on the front legs to protect the splint and tendon areas
- Galloping/Tendon boots: Used on the front legs, these have more support than splint boots.
- Open front: Used on the front legs to protect the horse’s tendons and provide support while jumping. The front of the leg is left unprotected so the horse can feel the jump if he rubs it.
- Scalper or grab boots: Used on the front feet to protect the horse from an overreach or grab. These rubber boots pull on and have a narrow piece of rubber across the front of the foot.
- Shipping: Used on all four legs to provide protection without support. They are suitable for short trips.



*Bell boots*



*Splint boots  
(left)*



*Galloping  
boots (right)*



*Open front  
jumping  
boots,  
front (left)  
and hind  
(right)*



*Scalper or grab  
boot*

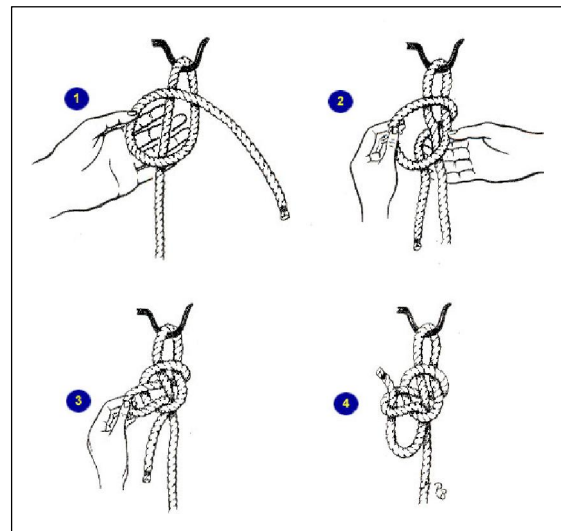


*Shipping boots*

## Tying a quick release knot

Here are the steps to tying a safety release knot:

1. Put the end of the rope through the tie ring or around the post.
2. Wrap the loose end once around the rope, creating a circle.
3. Fold the loose end into a loop, and pull it through the circle.
4. Pull the loose end through the final loop and tighten.



## UNDER SADDLE

### Correct carriage of crop and reins

The picture at right demonstrates correct rein and crop position. A few things to note:

- The reins should lay flat against the horse's neck from the bit up to the rider's hands, with no twists.
- The "bight" of the reins (the loopy part at the end including the buckle) should come upward out of the rider's hands and fold neatly under the reins.
- The crop should rest on the rider's thigh.



#### **Common rein mistakes:**

*Left: Reins and bight twisted (also noseband not in keeper!)*

*Right: Bight flopped over reins, not neatly tucked in beneath.*



#### **Common crop mistakes:**

*Left: Crop hanging straight down from rider's hand. This creates a break in the wrist, interrupting the elbow-hand-bit line.*

*Right: Crop sticking out perpendicular to the horse. Note how the rider's hand is turned sideways in a "piano-hands" position.*



### The Two-Point Seat, or "Jumping Position"

In the Level 2 Under Saddle test you will be expected to demonstrate a two-point seat, or "jumping position" at the trot. The two-point seat is also known as the half seat. You use a two-point seat in several situations: when hand-galloping, when jumping, and any time you want to take your weight off your horse's back (when walking up a steep slope, for example).

In the two-point seat, the rider's legs are the only two points of contact with the horse, and the normal third point of contact, the seat, is raised out of the saddle. The two-point does not depend on your reins or stirrups for security.



*Left:* The elements of a good jumping position: Heels down, seat lifted out of the saddle, back straight and soft, hands forward, head and eyes up!

*Right:* Even as the fence heights go up, these elements don't change. A solid jumping position allows your horse to move freely, and keeps you secure in the saddle.



### Riding at, behind, or ahead of the vertical

Your body position should alter slightly depending on the motion of your horse. It can be helpful to think of the position of your body as relative to a vertical line that is drawn from the rider's shoulder to their heel.

1.



1. Riding at the vertical

2. At the posting trot the rider's body should be slightly ahead of the vertical.

2.



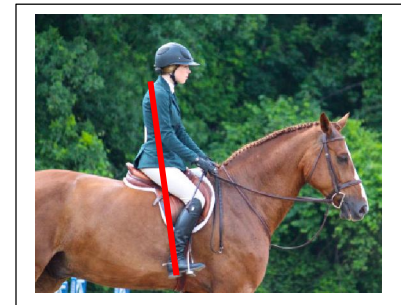
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3. At the hand gallop the rider's body will be inclined ahead of the vertical.

4. Slightly behind the vertical: use on a spooky horse, or when approaching a jump your horse might refuse.

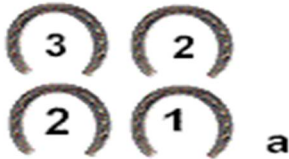
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## THE CANTER

The canter is a three-beat pace. Depending on whether the left side or the right side of the horse is leading, the sequence of footfalls is different. When the left side of the horse is leading the horse is said to be on the 'left lead'. When the right side of the horse is leading the horse is said to be on the 'right lead'.

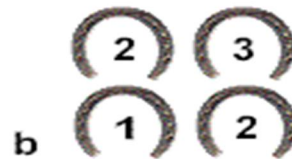


Sequence of footfalls on left lead:

1. Right hind
2. Left hind and right fore together
3. Left fore



*A horse on the left lead: note the left fore and hind appear to be "leading".*



Sequence of footfalls on right lead:

1. Left hind
2. Right hind and left fore together
3. Right fore



*A horse on the right lead: the right fore and hind appear to be "leading".*

A horse is said to be cantering 'united', when the leading foreleg and leading hind leg appear to be on the same side. When the leading hind leg appears to be on the opposite side to the leading foreleg, the horse is said to be cantering 'disunited', or '**cross-cantering**'. When the horse is cantering to the left with the right fore leading, or to the right with the left fore leading, he is said to be '**counter-cantering**'.

## The Square Halt

At Level 2 you will be expected to recognize a *square* halt. In a good halt transition the horse remains straight, and calm, with all four legs lined up *squarely*, as shown at right.

