



FALL SAFETY TRAINING REDUCING INJURY RISK

Fall safety training provides a practical and effective solution to reduce injury risk. Riders who learn these skills from a young age - in particular pony club riders, those doing higher risk equestrian activities such as jumps, and apprentice jockeys - can benefit significantly from the training and the associated muscle memory.

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In Australia alone, there has been an average of ten hospitalisations per day over a recent three-year period due to horse riding activity and from 2000 to 2012, there were 98 fatalities, of which 74% - six per year - were a result of a fall from a horse.¹

Younger riders from about age fifteen to mid-twenties carry the greatest risk of catastrophic horse-related injury.²

In equestrian competition the risk of serious injury is one in every 55 falls where the rider becomes unseated, one in 20 where the horse falls, and one in 5 in a rotational fall.³

¹ SafeWork Australia, (2014) 'Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons work with horses.'

² Cripps, R.A. (2000) 'Horse-related injury in Australia.' Australian Injury Prevention Bulletin 24, Research Centre for Injury Studies, Flinders University, AIHW, Cat. No. INJ26.

³ FEI, (2016) 'Eventing Risk Management Programme Statistics 2005-2015.'

Improving safety is the most important issue for jockeys and riders involved in equestrian sports

It is a known industry problem that the majority of serious injuries to jockeys and horse riders are a result of falling from a horse.

Fall safety training provides a practical and effective solution to reduce the risk of serious injury. Improving rider confidence in how to respond in an emergency will also improve the rider's ability to recover when they become unbalanced.

Riders who engage in higher-risk activities such as: track-work, racing, show jumping, cross-country, polo, polocrosse, campdrafting, and young and in-experienced riders who ride horses regularly, carry a high risk of falling from their horse on multiple occasions.

Riders who undertake fall safety training will:

1. Reduce their risk of catastrophic injury (death/disability)
2. Learn how to roll clear and reduce risk of injury from a falling horse
3. Improve their ability to recover when they become unbalanced

"Seven days after attending the falling off school, I hit the deck at top speed. I was thrown sideways/forwards at a flat gallop and as I left the saddle I recalled the simple instructions 'let go of your reins and get your arms up.' I landed on my arm/elbow/shoulder, rolled a couple of times then stood up and walked away. I am sure this basic instruction saved me from a much nastier result. Fall safety training could save your neck or your life."

Jeremy Bayard, Polo Player
CEO, ACE Farming Company
Chairman, Australian Polo Hall of Fame

THE TRAINING PROGRAM

It is highly recommended that riders undertake fall safety training before engaging in higher-risk riding activities. In water sports such as yachting and canoeing, participants must be competent swimmers before engaging in these activities to mitigate the risk of drowning if something goes wrong. Gymnasts are taught to land properly and learn basic rolling skills before learning to do a dive roll from height.

If a rider is thrown from their horse and is coming down head-first to the ground, how can they perform a dive roll or break their fall to protect their head and neck without prior training for this emergency situation? On many occasions riders simply do not respond (brain freeze) when falling and their fate is left to chance—for some the consequences are catastrophic.

Following an extensive video review of rider falls, the training program has been developed specifically for the purpose of rider fall prevention and emergency response action if a fall becomes inevitable.

There are a range of possible scenarios that may result in a rider falling. Video analysis has confirmed that the fall time to the ground also varies significantly depending upon the situation. While there may be some situations where the rider has very little time to respond, there are also many situations where training in emergency response action can save the rider from serious injury.



Training can be conducted for groups or individuals and is delivered using a mobile training facility to enable courses to be conducted in a variety of locations. Training can be conducted for riders of all disciplines - no horse rider has immunity from falling. A single introductory training session can be arranged to introduce the skills and training methods before riders commit to further training.

Juniors:	Age 8 to 12	1 hour session
Youth riders:	Age 13 to 17	1.5 hour session
Adults:	Age 18+	2 hour session

Training is conducted with equipment such as: tumbling and landing mats, foam vaulting box, incline wedge, springboard, mini-trampoline, full height replica horse and a mechanical horse and air-matress. There is no real horse-work involved which makes the training practical and reduces the risk of injury during training.

It is recommended that riders complete a course of 20 hours of training to develop their skill level and muscle memory. Courses can be completed intensively over 5 sessions, with a break in-between (such as over 2 weekends), or else over an extended period such as a 10 week training course.

“Every sport carries a risk of injury including a high-energy sport such as eventing. There is, however, a better answer to managing risk than relying on chance alone. My mother made me do five years of gymnastic training... I believe this is one of the reasons why I am still here today.”

*Dr Rob Stevenson MD (Cardiologist)
Canadian Olympic Eventing Representative
FEI Risk Management Steering Group
Safety Officer, Canadian Eventing*

THE CURRICULUM

- Anthropometric and fitness assessment
- Training to 'let go of the reins' if a fall becomes inevitable
- Brace position (muscle memory) to protect the head and neck
- Feet-first landing practice
- Basic tuck-and-roll skills
- Aerial skills using a mini-trampoline
- Dive roll drills and skills
- Simulations using safety mats and foam shapes
- Vaulting skills using a foam vaulting box
- Video review of correct response action in fall incidents
- Emergency dismount practice using a replica horse
- Exercises to improve response time in an emergency
- Mechanical horse practice to teach recovery when unbalanced
- Physical conditioning exercises to improve rider fitness
- Sideways/backwards fall simulation exercises on a mechanical horse
- More advanced simulation skills for riders who have mastered the basics
- Learning pre-ride safety routines for skills retention and muscle memory
- Knowledge-based learning and discussion to improve rider understanding and dispel myths about falling



ABOUT THE FOUNDER



Lindsay Nylund is a former Olympic gymnast and coach of many national champions and has specialised knowledge in biomechanics, physiology of exercise and sport psychology. He has qualifications in fitness, training, physical education and human resource management and currently holds advanced accreditation in men's and women's gymnastics.

He has significant experience in the design and implementation of training programs in different learning environments. The fall safety training program and techniques are fit-for-purpose and have been developed by Lindsay in consultation with doctors, scientists and industry professionals and refined by training conducted with over 400 riders across many disciplines. The training program has now been recognised internationally as a worlds-best in rider safety.

"I attended Lindsay's course recently, I am a professional rider and thought as I have ridden for so long I wouldn't be able to adjust. I recently had a fall and it was potentially a very dangerous fall. The horse reared up almost over backwards and then bucked and went to go over the fence. I was thrown over the fence some distance and did everything you said and somersaulted 3 times. I am feeling quite battered and bruised but can't thank you enough for your help and hope to see you again in the future."

*Claire Seidl
Professional Rider and Instructor
(Two weeks after an introductory training session)*