

Enrichment Activities for Horses

Horse Enrichment Activities

Hey there, horse lover! Let's chat about how to keep your horse's mind and senses engaged. Horses can get bored and a bit frustrated, especially when they don't get enough exercise or time with their buddies. They thrive on companionship, roaming, and munching on fresh grass, so when they're cooped up or on a restricted diet, it's essential to spice things up a bit in their environment!

Indoor Enrichment for Your Horse



Scratching Mats

Do you know that pesky itch your horse just can't reach? A scratching mat or an old broom head nailed to a stable wall can do wonders! Your horse will love rubbing against it, and it's a fantastic way to help reduce their stress.



Music and Reading

Why not bring a little ambiance into their stable? Playing some soft music or even reading aloud can introduce new sounds and create a cozy, bonding atmosphere. Believe it or not, classical music has been shown to lower their heart rate.

Creative Treats

If your horse loves food (who doesn't?), you can get really creative with treats:

- Wrap non-toxic plants like cow parsley or willow around the stable bars for them to nibble on.
- Hide fruits and veggies in their stable to keep them busy and introduce them to different flavours and textures. Think bananas, beetroots, or even watermelon! Just be mindful of their diets if they're sensitive to sugars.
- Use treat balls filled with chopped-up feed to make them work for their goodies.
- Create a forage box with an old cardboard box stuffed with hay and tasty surprises for them to dig through.

Companionship Matters



Horses are social creatures, so let's help them connect! If your horse spends time indoors, consider these tips:

- Lower stable doors (where safe) can allow for a little grooming and socialising between horses. It's great for their mental and physical health!
- How about hanging an acrylic mirror in their stable? It creates the illusion of a companion, and many horses find their own reflection quite fascinating!

Outdoor Enrichment for Your Horse

But wait, the fun doesn't have to stop indoors! You can enhance their outdoor time too.



Food Exploration

Make feeding time an adventure:

- Scatter hay or oat straw in small piles across their field. This encourages movement, extends their hay, and keeps the area less muddy.
- Take your horse for a stroll in new pastures. The variety of grasses and herbs will keep their diet exciting.

Natural Resources

Bring the outdoors in by placing branches from safe trees, like birch or willow, in their field. Horses love to chew on bark and use the branches to scratch. Adding different elements can spark their curiosity and encourage exploration.

Long-Term Enrichment

Consider planting horse-friendly herbs, like dandelions and nettles, to keep their grazing area fresh and interesting.

Keeping Fit and Healthy

Exercise can be a blast for your horse! Here are some fun ideas:

Stretching

Grab some tasty treats and spend some quality time encouraging your horse to stretch! You can guide them to bend their neck and head from side to side or up and down.

Training Games

If your horse responds well to rewards, give clicker training a shot! Start with simple tasks, like teaching them to target an object. This not only provides mental stimulation but can also help them adapt to new experiences, like loading into a trailer.



Playtime Toys

Horses love play! Consider getting them a play ball they can kick around or a treat ball filled with chopped-up goodies. It's a perfect way to let off some steam. You can also attach scratching mats or broom heads outside for them to enjoy.

Grooming Time

Don't forget about grooming! Experiment with different brushes and find the spots that make your horse's lips curl in delight. It's not just a way to keep them looking sharp; it strengthens your bond and releases those feel-good hormones for both of



you!