

**First Time Horse Owner**

For Medicine Hat area

You think you are ready to make the big plunge into owning horses? I always recommend leasing a horse before owning as the commitment is larger than some people are ready for.

Step 1. Talk to your coach or a trusted individual about this new adventure. Lots of places will not let you try horses unless you have someone experienced with you. When you discuss things with your coach let them know your goals, budget, and some things you think you need in a horse. Your coach will also add to this list or change some things if they do not think it's the right search criteria. Budget is very important and will dictate a lot of things. If your budget is lower (which is fine) sometimes you have to compromise on age, training, or maintenance (vet care). If your budget is higher I find you tend to always want to reach higher so set a limit you would be happy with and stay there. The price of horses right now is higher and an average lower budget horse will cost around \$5,000.00, not saying there isn't good deals out there but keep that number in mind. If you are looking for a horse ready to go in the show ring be prepared to increase your budget to above \$10,000.

Step 2. Start searching. Most of the searching these days is done on facebook, some is word of mouth which is why it is good to let people know you are shopping, they might have a hidden gem that would be a perfect fit. Make sure you stay on task with your search criteria, if you want a pony don't look at giant horses. Think of what your goals are as you are searching. You can also post a search add on a FB page but be prepared for all the listings to show up.

Step 3. You have made a list of a few horses you think might fit the bill, now we need to try them. If you are lucky these horses are local and you can run out with you coach and try them, most horses in our area are farther away. I like to do a weekend trip of a few horses, these weekends however can be mentally and physically straining. When we go to try a horse try to arrange your coach to come with or see if you can video chat during the ride. You will bring all your riding gear and saddle if you have one. You will arrive at the facility, catch the horse on your

own, tack up and ride. As you do each step asses how the horse handles everything, horses wont tick every box so you need to think of the things you live without and things you really need in your horse. You usually only get to try a horse once, maybe twice if you are lucky.

Step 4. We found the horse! Horse sales are usually handshake deals, when you find the perfect horse you will decide if you wish to do a PPE by a veterinarian or purchase as is. I always recommend a PPE. This means we will arrange a vet to either go to the new horse or the horse to get to the vet. A PPE will asses the horse as it is that day for lameness, health problems or behaviour problems. These checks are not black and white and you usually find something. These are for finding out what you can handle as a new owner. Some mild arthritis will need injections in the future, okay. Some severe arthritis will need injections every 3 months, maybe not ok.

Step 5. The horse is coming home.... Where is home this needs to be arranged ahead of time. If you are keeping your horse at a barn then the barn needs to be given heads up to see if there is space available for your new friend. If the horse is going home, do you have pens set up, and water (did we buy a horse that can live alone? That can live in a group pen? That can be on grass?).

- Boarding involves paying the rate the barn has posted which for our area is around \$515.00 this usually includes your pen, hay, water, pen cleaning general care and monitoring. This is a bigger financial option but leaves you with less stress of having all the duties on yourself.
- Home/pasture: this means you are in charge of daily feeding, watering, pen cleaning, finding and arranging hay, checks of your horse regularly. This is usually a cheaper option financially but a bigger commitment for time. I do recommend you learn some first aid and have your own horse trailer for option.

Step 6. Routine care: horses require their feet to be done every 6-8 weeks. Depending on the horse this can mean 4 shoes, or just a trim. Trims average around \$60.00 while shoes range from \$120.00-\$250.00. When buying your horse

make sure to ask these questions to the previous owner. If you are boarded somewhere farriers usually come out on a schedule, you will need to contact a farrier to see if they have availability for new horses and when their schedule is. Some farriers you book on your own for just your horse. Farrier days require you to be there to catch and hold your horse during this process. If you are at a boarding facility and cannot make it that day you may be able to arrange someone else to do this for you for a fee. It is good to know what is happening with your horse's feet so I try not to miss any of these appointments.

Another routine care for your horse may be injections, if you decided on a horse that requires these the price ranges from \$500-\$2,000. You will need to arrange these with your veterinarian.

Step 7. Annual care: Horses require their teeth to be checked yearly as well as vaccine and deworming. Every spring it is recommended you check their teeth floated by a professional, the cost of this varies depending on the amount of sedation and work your horse needs. On average it's about \$350.00, you will need to be there to bring your horse in and assist in anyway, horses are sedated for this and will require time to wake up (plan for a few hours). At this time we do our annual vaccines, it is required at most barns to be vaccinated this costs about \$100.00 depending on the vaccines needed. Deworming is also given at this time for about \$30.00. Dewormer is given 2-3 times a year, you can pick some up at the vet or local tack store and do the other 1-2 times yourself in the summer and fall.

Step 8. Feed: some horses are what we call easy keepers meaning they may not require any additional feed in their diets where some are hard keepers and may require a lot of additional feed. Lots of horse owners like to add supplements to their horse's diets and some may be needed while some are just extras to make our horses healthier. The cost of certain feeds and supplements can range from \$15.00 a month to \$200.00 per month. When trying out horses this is something to ask about.

Step 9. Insurance: this is something that is optional, I use it depending on the price of the horse. The main companies out there are Capri and BFL, both will need a copy of your bill of sale and your PPE from the vet. Insurance can cover

things like surgeries (upwards of \$10,000) and medical problems. The cost varies depending on what you want covered and how much the horse costs.

Step 10. Tack: tack rarely comes with a horse and must be purchased separately. This means making sure you save some money to buy it. Tack includes bridle, bit, saddle, pads, girth, jump boots anything extra your horse requires. Bridles range from \$50.00- \$500.00 while saddles range from \$500.00 to \$10,000. Depending on your budget and what you want.

Step 11: Blankets: depending on what your doing with your horse in the winter with tell you what blankets you need. If your horse is being worked all winter and is full body clipped you will require heavier blankets, if your horse is living in the field with minimal work you may not need to blanket at all. I like to have a flysheet, rainsheet, 100g, 200f, and 300g to cover most of the bases. Blankets costs from \$100.00 to \$500.00.

Step 12: Enjoy your new horse, the best advice I've ever hear is " it takes a year to unbox your horse" that's a year to figure each other out that's a year to bond that's a year to learn new things. This is not a timeline or a rush it could take less it could take more. Patience is important!

Leasing: Leasing your new horse is always an option, do remember you yourself are unboxing this new horse and bonding with them so I never recommend leasing out horses right away. If leasing is something you really want you must think about that when buying a horse, if you buy something that needs lots of training leasing might not work out for you. You can look up my leasing doc for more information in detail on leasing options but I always tell clients that leasing is not a guarantee whether no one is looking at that time, maybe you choose to do more things with your horse so leasing is too difficult to arrange.

Hopefully this guide gives you some answers to your questions. If it is missing things please email and let me know what you would like to see in here.

## Quick fee guide

Item	Low cost	High cost
Horse	\$2,000.00	The sky
PPE	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Farrier (6-8 weeks)	\$60.00	\$200.00
Injections (as needed)	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Dental (annual)	\$350.00	
Vaccines (annual)	\$100.00	
Dewormer (2-3 per year)	\$30.00	
Blankets	\$0	\$1,000 (for multiple)
Bridle	\$50.00	\$500.00
Saddle	\$500.00	\$10,000.00
Insurance (annual)	\$300.00	Up
Feed (Monthly)	\$15.00	\$200.00