

Reminder for a hiker

If you come to Tori Stud and want to take part in a hike...

- Before going on a hike with horses and especially before sitting on a horse make sure you do not have allergies against them. It is quite difficult to transport somebody away separately from the group and in overall you may spoil the experience for other members of your party as well as for yourself
- Before sitting on a horse make sure you understand and are willing to face the risks involved in riding
- If your party lacks of people with longer riding experience do not overestimate yourself. Riding is more difficult than it first may seem and many people who are trying it for the first or second time get tired sooner than expected. Try to keep that in mind when you are asking more riding to the hike than we suggest
- Always follow the instructions given by the employees of the Stud
- Never stand right behind the horse!
- Do not lead your horse straight behind other horses; make sure that at least one horse could stand between your horse and the horse in front of you. Even the horses may have some arguments sometimes and they may try to kick the horse behind but the one who takes the hit could be you
- Horses have personalities just like people and they may have good days and bad days as well. Even the calmest and most reliable horse on the planet can sometimes be nervous or move faster than expected
- If the horse does not want to walk in the middle of the road and tries to stay on the side close to the ditch, do not be afraid. Not all the horses have shoes and they may look for a softer and more springy soil for walking
- If you come to a hike in summer, remember the warmth and nice weather attracts the horseflies. For them, horses are easy targets and their bites hurt. If the horse tosses her head or kicks herself under the belly do not be alarmed – she is not trying to get rid of you only the flies biting her. The more the horse has to stand still or walk slowly the more she suffers with the flies and the more restless she grows
- Remember that sitting on a horse is not the same as sitting in a car or on an ATV. They have their own thoughts and feelings. During the hike assistants give their best to keep an eye on everyone and help if necessary, but you have to pay attention by yourself as well. Remember while in the saddle, the horse may get spooked or move unexpectedly, you have to be prepared to regain the control over the horse by yourself as good as you can get until somebody reaches you and helps you. The most important thing is not to panic but stay calm and listen to the guidance given to you
- If you are not an experienced rider who does not know how to maintain the control over the horse in every circumstance, do not busy yourself with other thing besides handling the horse while in saddle (eg. talking on a cell phone, taking pictures with your camera etc.)

- Like driving a car, it is not recommendable when you have been drinking alcohol, riding a horse is not as well. If you have been drinking alcohol, we advise you not to get in the saddle but settle with a seat in the carriage
- Do not pass the carriage with your horse. The road home is well known to our horses and if you let them pass the carriage, they may decide to get home a lot faster than you would prefer. Since the horses have the herd instinct strongly evolved in them, the other horses may follow your horses' example. And not even the best sprinter in the world catches the horse running in front of him
- If the horse stays behind of the others, the herd instinct makes her to want to quickly run to them. So if your horse suddenly makes a faster movement do not be frightened but stay calm and pull the horse back from the reins if necessary. We are keeping an eye on the party and wait up for you if you stay too much behind. There is also somebody always behind the horses, so you are not left alone
- On a hike, the pace is always set after the "weakest link". It means if most of the people who are riding want to go fast but one of them is afraid and wants to go slowly, then most probably we all will go slowly. If you are an experienced rider and wish to gallop, you may get the chance on some pasture. Still, if you want to go really fast we advise you to come back with people who are all ready to gallop
- If you hold back the horse on the road to gallop after the others remember no horse likes to stay far from the herd. Scared to be left behind the horse who is being held back tries to go to the others as soon as possible. She may even try to stand up on two legs if

If you follow the suggestions given here your hike should turn out to be a pleasant experience. We'll meet you in Tori!

To help a beginning rider

- If you come for a ride, choose the upper part of your clothing considering the weather and your own comfort. While choosing the lower part one could follow these suggestions: the trousers should have long lower parts that do not go up by themselves. They also should be without big stitches inside (otherwise you could suffer from rubbed legs) and of a material that is not very slippery. For example, stretching jeans are very good. The shoes should also have a sole that is not slippery and small (ca 1 cm) heel. The shoes should not have big fastenings or other parts where the stirrup may get stuck behind. If the stirrup gets stuck, you cannot keep your foot properly and comfortably and it is more difficult to keep your balance
- Before you get on a horse make sure you understand the risks that go with it
- Before getting on a horse also put on a helmet
- Always get on the horse from the left side (the horse stays on your right). To get in the saddle put the toes of your left foot into the left stirrup, hold the front pommel of the saddle or the horse's mane with your left hand and the back cantle of the saddle with your right hand. Then push yourself up with your right foot, put the right foot over the horse's bottom and sit into the saddle. If you cannot make it right away you can stay in the saddle on your belly and then take the right foot to the other side of the horse

- Before you put your right foot into the stirrup make sure they have the right length for you. The bottom of the stirrup could stay just below the „bony ball” on the inner side of your ankle if you let your foot just drop loosely. But it is more the matter of feeling. If the stirrups are too short your legs begin to hurt and if they are too long you have difficulties to lean your body weight on them. Also make sure that both of the stirrups are of the same length (usually somebody helps you to get the stirrups right)
- Always keep the stirrups under the widest part of your foot (the changeover between the toes and the rest of the foot). Keep your toes in the direction of moving and push your heel as downward as possible (it may help to pretend somebody tied a millstone to your heel). The legs must be straight downward – do not straighten them forward or backwards. Try to keep them in position where your shoulder, hip and heel pointing down are on the same imaginary vertical line. Be bold to lean your body weight on the foot in the stirrup – the stirrups are there to help you
- Put your hands on the reins, not below them. Hold the reins in a way where your thumb points to you and your fingers are farther away from you. The thumb and the little finger have to go under the rein and the three fingers in the middle have to stay on top of the rein. Try to hold your hand in a position where the thumb is the highest part of your hand, so you can use it as a “stopper”
- Sit on the horse self-confidently, comfortably and with a straight back. If you want to lean in the saddle, lean backwards instead of forward. If you are leaning backwards, it is easier to stay in the saddle and regain the control over the horse in case the horse happens to make a sudden move. If you are leaning forward, moving is more uncomfortable for you as well for the horse. Leaning forward also makes it easier to fell down over the horse`s neck in case the horse makes some unexpected movements
- Behave very self-confidently and firmly while on a horse – the horse does not have to know it is your first time in the saddle. The horse must feel that you know what you want and you won`t give up until you get your way. If you give the horse a possibility to be lazy she will take it and take over control – nobody works more than asked
- Trust your inner sense holding the reins – make sure you do not pull the horse too hard from the mouth and hurt her. In the same time you have to hold them strong enough to have the control over the horse`s mouth and with that over the entire horse. If the horse tosses her head (to get rid of the flies for example) and the reins become too long boldly make them short again
- Try to hold your hands quite together and in the place where horse`s neck, mane and the front pommel of the saddle meet. Avoid situations where you have to raise your hands high or far on the sides or turn with your whole body to lead the horse. If you have to do that, your reins are too long and you do not have control over the horse
- Try to keep as much balance as you can using your feet and use as little of your hands for that purpose as possible. If you are feeling unsure you can also hold on to the saddle at first (at least with one hand). Hold on to the horse strongly with your legs all the time. You can even squeeze the horse with your calves so no light can be seen from between the horse and your leg
- To make the horse move push your hips forward (like you want to push a book or a magazine away from under you) and in the same time press the horse strongly with your calves. Since the pressure of the calves is often not enough with beginners you can try kicking the horse with your heels from both sides in case the horse refuses to

move with the pressure. If you kick, your calf stays on foot and only the heel moves. You also have to be very firm– there is no point drumming the horse tenderly and continuously with your heels, it only confuses the horse. She doesn't understand whether you want to move or no or is it really you she's feeling or just some flies. Kick the horse with your heels once or twice, but strongly. (You do not have to worry hurting the horse, the kick of your heel is nothing compared to the blows they sometimes receive from other horses)

- You can use your voice to encourage the horse (for getting moving as well as for moving faster) – click your tongue in the corner of your mouth (“squirrel sound”) or make the sound like you would like to kiss the horse
- To get moving you can loosen the reins for a moment (put your hands forward for a moment) to prevent pulling the horse instantly to a halt and letting the horse know she can really go. If the horse has taken a few steps regain the control over the reins (without pulling her to stop of course)
- If you have the horse moving, continuously give the horse pressure with your calves (squeeze the horse with them). As soon as you leave your legs at ease around the horse the signal for moving ends for the horse and she may stop. It is also harder for you to keep your balance if you let your legs be loose
- If you are moving straight forward make sure that the reins are of the same length
- If you wish to turn to right, pull the right rein calmly and firmly towards yourself (not to the side) until the horse turns. In the same time you may press the left leg harder against the horse
- To turn left pull the left rein calmly and firmly towards yourself (not to the side) until the horse turns left. You can press the right leg harder
- Try to avoid turning the horse around on the spot. A horse is a big animal so give her space enough to manoeuvre. Turning around on the spot has bad influence to horse's shoulders. If the horse is facing the direction you wanted, keep the reins straight and of the same length again
- If the horse starts to trot you will probably feel yourself as a sack of flour at first. Try to feel the rhythm of the horse – one, two, one, two etc. On every „one”, when the saddle throws you out, try to keep the legs on foot below the knees and above the knees lift yourself a little bit out of the saddle while leaning on the stirrups. On every „two” sit back in the saddle. That kind of activity is called „easing”. Do not be frustrated when you do not get it the first time – like every other thing this too needs practice. Once you have got it it is a lot easier for you as well as for the horse to trot
- If you wish to stop, press your knees strongly against the saddle and heels pointing downward slightly forward. Sit very deeply (and heavily) into the saddle, lift your bodyweight backwards (instead of leaning forward) and pull the reins calmly, but firmly towards your hips until the horse stops. If you pull the reins too rapidly you may hurt the horse unnecessarily
- To come down from a horse take both of your feet out of the stirrups. Bend over the horse's neck, make a round with your right foot taking it over the horse's bottom and slide yourself down on the left side of the horse (the same side you went on). If you think it is easier to dismount while having the left foot still in the stirrup consider the

fact that you may fall if the horse happens to be high. Your foot may get stuck in the stirrup and if the horse should start moving you may fall beneath the horse`s hooves

- Pat your horse on the neck and thank her, but do not let the reins out of your hand and hanging until somebody takes over the horse from you. Horse may step on the reins hanging down and break them. Horse caught up in reins will most likely be scared and tries to free herself uncaring of who she might hurt