

Horses + Kids!

The official Learn About Horses newsletter.

Welcome, reader, to another edition of Learn About Horses' fantastic newsletter, **Horses+Kids!** This exclusive, quarterly publication is just for you and all those horsecrazy kids out there.

In this newsletter I am focused on entertaining you with my step-by-step craft ideas, book and movie reviews, short story, expanding your mind with my breed profile and riding tip, and finally giving you a laugh with my funny photo and horsey joke.

There is also a shout out section at the end of this newsletter where you can ask me, Jessica, (author of *The Black Stallion* series and creator of Learn About Horses) questions, tell us a bit about you and your pony or just let your friends know that you are thinking of them.

Well, I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and have fun trying out the crafts. Remember to visit Learn About Horses (www.learn-about-horses.com) for all things horsey!

Breed Profile



Name: The Arabian

Height: 14.2 hands to 15 hands.

Colour: Mainly chestnut, grey, bay or black.

Best suited to: They are best at showing, endurance riding. There has also been a recent revival of Arabian horse racing.

Brief history: The Arabian is possibly the oldest breed of horse and said by many people to be the most gorgeous and exquisite of all the horses in the world.

They are known for their ability to thrive in harsh conditions: they have amazing endurance, soundness and are able to live on very little.

The exact origins of the Arabian are unclear, though ancient artwork of horses that appeared to be Arabians tell us that they seemed to inhabit the Arabian peninsula from around 2 000 B.C.

The Arabian has been the greatest influence in the breeding of horses out of all the other ancient breeds. It is one of the main influencers in the Thoroughbred, Anglo-Arab and many others.

For more information on Arabian horses, go to www.learn-about-horses.com/arabian-horse.

Riding Tip for Beginners



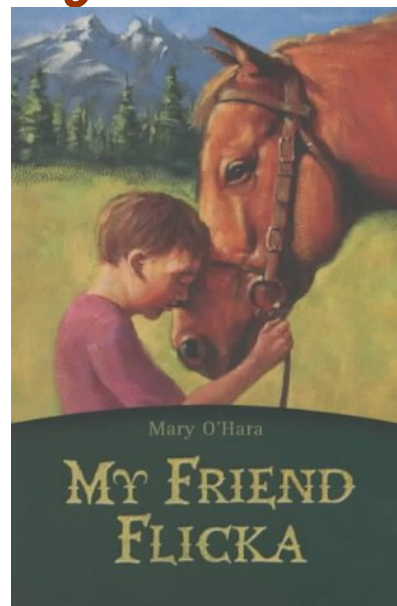
Do you find that you really struggle with balance while you are riding? Well, there is a very simple exercise that you can do at home

to improve your balance so that you don't flop around like a sack of mushy potatoes.

Try this! *Whenever you brush your teeth, stand on one foot with your other foot stretched out in front of you.* Doing this twice a day will definitely improve your balance.

You may think that doing this exercise looks a little bit silly and you are right, but you can take comfort in the fact that the professionals use this technique too! Hopefully you will be as balanced as them in no time.

Book Review



Title: My Friend Flicka

Author: Mary O'Hara

Pages: 279 (Egmont Classics)

My Friend Flicka is the touching story of a young boy named Ken who lives on a horse farm with his older brother, mother and father. All Ken wants is a

horse of his own, but his father will not give him one because Ken is a “dreamer” and valuable horses cannot be wasted on someone like Ken.

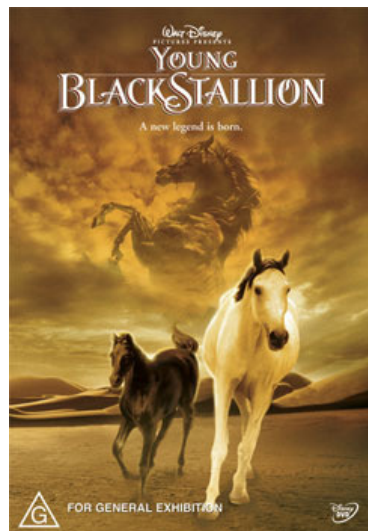
Eventually, Ken’s mother persuades his father to give Ken a horse of his own. McLaughlin has great plans for Ken’s young horse, but Ken falls in love with a young filly, the daughter of an untameable mare called Rocket. Despite the fact that the filly comes from a line of wild, mean-spirited horses, McLaughlin agrees to give her to Ken.

Rocket is killed in a freak accident and Flicka, the filly, is injured when her owners attempt to catch her. Everyone believes that Flicka will die . . . except for Ken.

This is the tale of a boy and his young filly that he protects and loves at all costs. It is first in the trilogy, beautifully written and completely gripping. I recommend it for ages 10 and up; teenagers will also enjoy it.

For more great horse book reviews, go to www.learn-about-horses.com/horse-books.

Movie Review



Title: Young Black Stallion

By: Walt Disney Pictures

Run time: 45.26 minutes

This movie is the prequel to the much loved *Black Stallion* movies. It tells the story of Neera, a young girl, and the Black Stallion as a colt.

Neera is abandoned in the desert with the Black Stallion after armed men steal Black’s dam and separate Neera from her caravan.

Together they escape the desert and find their way to the house of Neera’s grandfather, a retired horse breeder.

Determined to restore her grandfather’s reputation, Neera enters a gruelling race against her grandfather’s will, planning to ride the Black Stallion to victory.

This movie is absolutely lovely, with stunning photography and an interesting storyline. Arabian lovers will greatly enjoy it. Watch out

for the scenes with the armed men which may scare younger children. I recommend it for ages 8+.

For more about the Black Stallion series, go to www.learn-about-horses.com/the-black-stallion.

Horsey Joke



A cowboy rode into town on Friday. He hung around in the town for three days and then he rode out on Friday. How can this be possible? Three days after Friday is Monday.

Well, the cowboy's horse's name was . . .

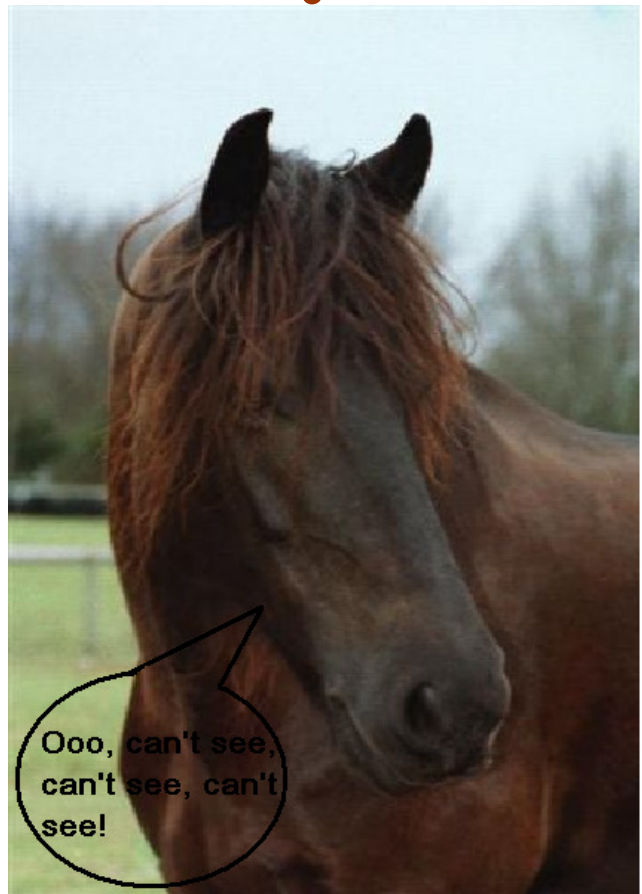
FRIDAY!

A horse is ordering a meal at a restaurant. He asks to the waitress, "Do you serve fresh grass?"

The waitress answered, "Yes, sir. We serve everyone."

Got a horsey joke that I haven't heard yet? Submit it at www.learn-about-horses.com/my-horse with "horsey joke" in the subject line and if I like it I will put it in the next edition of **Horses+Kids!**

Funny Photo



What do you think the horse in the picture below is saying? Enter your submissions in www.learn-about-horses.com/my-horse with "funny photo" in the title. The best submission will appear in the next edition of **Horses+Kids!**



Step-by-Step Crafts

The craft for this edition is how to make horse head-shaped gingerbread cookies.

Ingredients:

- 340 g (12 oz) of plain flour
- 115 g (4 oz) of butter
- 2 tsp of ground ginger
- 1 egg (beaten)
- 4 tbsp of golden syrup
- 175 g (6 oz) of soft brown sugar
- 1 tsp of bicarbonate of soda

Utensils:

- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 large baking tray
- 1 rolling pin
- 1 sieve
- 1 wooden spoon
- 1 palette knife
- 1 knife
- 1 spoon

- 1 fork
- 1 mixing bowl
- 1 wire rack
- 1 small bowl
- 1 saucepan

Instructions:

First cut out the horse head pattern I have created on the last page of this newsletter using your scissors. This will be your template for the cookies.

Put your oven on to 190 C (that's 375 F or Gas Mark 5). Melt a little bit of your butter in the microwave and use a wad of paper towel to grease your baking tray.

Place the rest of the butter, the sugar and all the syrup in the saucepan and melt them over a low heat, stirring all the while.

Sift the flour, ground ginger and bicarbonate of soda through the sieve and into the mixing bowl. Then mix in the melted substance from the previous step and the beaten egg until all the dough is moist.

Using clean hands, knead the dough into a smooth ball, then cover the bowl with cling wrap and leave it in the fridge for about 20-30 minutes to cool.

Sprinkle some extra flour on the counter top and onto your rolling pin. Take the dough out

of the fridge and roll it out on the counter top until it is about ½ cm thick (that's ¼ inches for the American readers).

Take the horse head you cut out in Step 1 and place it on the cookie dough, then cut around it with a knife. Take your time and get it as accurate as you can.

Make as many cookies as you can from the dough. It is easiest if you start by cutting out the shape at the edge of the dough and slowly move inwards; that way you will use as much of it as possible. Any leftover dough can be eaten raw. Remember to share!

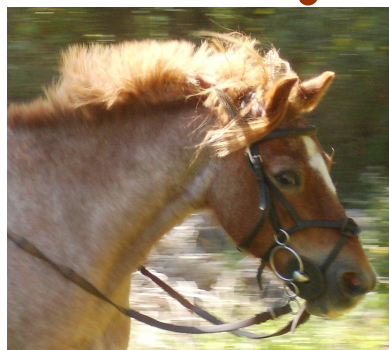
Use the palette knife to carefully lift the cut-out shapes onto your greased baking tray. If you want you can decorate the cookies. I recommend using 100s&1000s for the mane and chocolate chips for the eyes and nose.

Bake your cookies in the oven for 10-15 minutes until they are golden-brown. Ask your mom or dad to help you get them out of the oven once they are done.

Use the palette knife again to lift the cookies off the baking tray and onto the wire rack to cool. While you are waiting for them to cool you should wash up all your dishes. Don't leave Mom to do them all!

Why don't you invite some friends around to bake the cookies with you? Baking is always more fun when you do it in groups. There are also more people to share the washing up afterwards. Have fun!

Short Story



The Adventures of Tinker

Part 1

It was a lovely summer afternoon in the beautiful valley of Constantia. A cool breeze wandered gently through the leaves of the trees, making them whisper like soft-spoken giants.

Tinker the pony felt the breeze ruffle his spiky mane as he grazed on the fresh, tasty grass of Little Brook Estate. Glancing up, he looked at his friend, Darcy, the retired Thoroughbred racehorse, who was munching on a fallen apple.

“Lovely day,” Tinker remarked.

“Oh, yes. I completely agree,” Darcy answered. His open, greying face was clearly visible to Tinker in the pleasant sunlight.

“They don't get sunlight like this back in England, do they, Darcy?”

“No, most definitely not. It is generally rather chilly up there and it snows in winter. Brr! I much prefer this warm weather. It's kinder on my old bones.”

Darcy was an old English Thoroughbred who had been raised in the UK. Bought by a South African horseracing farm in his earlier years, he had relocated to the Western Cape. He had been quite successful in his racing career, but an injury to one of his legs forced him to quit.

After recovering from his injury, Darcy had a bad limp, so he was unable to run. Nobody wanted a racehorse that could not race . . . nobody except for James Campbell, a highly-paid illustrator of children's books and the man who bought Darcy and kept him at his home in Little Brook Estate.

All of James' pets were rescued from one horrible fate or another. His dog, Boytjie, was a neglected puppy that James bought for R200 from a man on the side of the street. His tortoise-shell cat, Colleen, was a stray, adopted by James after the abandoned house she lived in burnt down and firemen saved her from the flames.

Like Darcy, Boytjie and Colleen, Tinker was also a rescue. One day while he was driving along in his car, James had seen a thin, starving young mare pulling an overloaded cart with a tiny, strawberry roan colt stumbling along behind her. While James was watching, the mare had collapsed. Frantic, James had called the Cart Horse Society and they had the mare and her foal picked up and taken to their headquarters.

The mare was very sick and despite all the rescuers' efforts to save her, she died a few hours after she was rescued. The foal, though undernourished and very small, was rather healthy, but completely alone. Since he was not yet weaned, the rescuers had to bottle feed him. James helped them look after him and in doing so fell in love with the big-eyed, spunky little fellow. As

soon as the colt was old enough to eat solid foods, he adopted him.

That colt was Tinker. Five years later, Tinker was still living with James on Little Brook Estate. He was happy there and very grateful to his owner who loved and cared for him as much as his other pets.

"I wonder when Sally will visit James again," Tinker commented. Sally was James' ten-year-old niece and a very keen little rider. Whenever she visited she spent hours grooming and riding Tinker, who soaked up all the attention.

"Yes, so do I," Darcy replied. "She always brings the nicest English apples and brushes me the best."

Just then, a short, stocky dark shape appeared at the paddock fence. It was Boytjie, the rescued Jack Russell terrier.

"Howzit, my friends!" he barked, trotting over to see them.

"Not bad, not bad," Tinker replied, happy to see his doggy pal. "What's James doing that is keeping him so busy? He didn't come down to have a picnic lunch with us like he usually does."

"Ah, he's got some super-important illustration he has to finish before the weekend," Boytjie said, sitting down, his long pink tongue lolling out of his mouth. "Say, guess who's coming here on Saturday?"

"Who?" Tinker and Darcy asked at the same time.

"Sally!" Boytjie yipped. "I heard James talking to her mother on the phone now."

"That's great!" Tinker bobbed his head while Darcy agreed. "It's been at least two weeks since she last came."

The trio was joined by James' final pet, Colleen the cat. She padded through the grass and jumped up onto the fence so that she could be at eye-level with the horses.

"Hey, boys, you won't believe what I just heard!" she said, curling her long, colourful tail around her body.

"What?" Boytjie asked. "There's a way to get into that dog-proof bin James just bought?"

"Ha-ha-ha. You dogs, always thinking of food," Colleen rolled her green eyes. "No, that's not it. I was just chatting to that tabby who lives next door in the house at Lazy Grass Meadow. He said that his owners are buying a pony for their son."

"No way!" Tinker whinnied, surprised. "That's awesome! There hasn't been a horse at Lazy Grass in years. In fact, I don't think there has ever been one."

"That's not completely true," Darcy corrected his enthusiastic friend. "There was a Shetland pony that lived there with his old owner before she sold Lazy Grass to the Thompson family."

"When did the tabby say that the new pony was arriving?" Tinker asked.

"Today," Colleen replied. "They should be coming back with it right now."

At that moment, a car pulled around the corner of the stable yard that was just visible to the four creatures from their spot by the paddock fence. The car stopped and a young, sandy-haired boy got out and walked to the horsebox attached to the back of the car.

After opening the door of the horsebox, the boy disappeared inside. A few seconds later, a slender, graceful white mare backed out of the horsebox.

"Wow . . ." Tinker breathed, gazing at the beautiful pony with stars in his eyes. "She's . . . she's stunning!"

"Oh, yes. A truly magnificent British Riding Pony by the looks of it," Darcy added.

"Why don't you both go say hello?" Colleen suggested. "They'll put her out in the paddock that borders yours so that they can ready her stable and put away her tack."

Colleen was right. The boy led the mare over to the paddock and let her in through the gate. He gave her a loving pat, then unclipped her lead rein from her halter. The mare trotted away from him, her delicate legs lifting perkily and her long, silky mane flowing behind her like a rippling white waterfall.

"Look at those nostrils!" Tinker said in awe. "So perfectly shaped! And her coat – why, I know that there is no such thing as a 'white' horse, but she can only be described as gorgeous, shining white!"

"Just go introduce yourself and get it over with," Darcy snorted, tossing his head. "I'll join once the first introductions are over."

Tinker trotted away from his friend, heading towards the fence shared by the mare's paddock and his own. Deciding that he needed to make a good first impression, he started to canter, hoping that he looked strong and impressive.

Unfortunately, there was a dry patch of bare ground that had become very wet and muddy due to a dripping hosepipe that James had forgotten to turn off properly. Tinker was so focused on the mare that he did not see the muddy spot and as soon as he cantered onto it, his hooves skidded out from underneath him and he went slipping and sliding into the fence with a loud crash!

The mare had been peacefully nosing around her paddock when Tinker smashed into the fence. As he did, she jumped and whinnied in fright, then galloped away, rounding a corner and disappearing from sight.

To be continued in
The Adventures of Tinker
Part 2

If you liked this story, I am sure that you will be interested in one of my books. To find out more about them or to purchase one, go to www.learn-about-horses.com/horse-book-reviews.

If you are just looking for other horse books or series to read, try my horse book reviews at www.learn-about-horses.com/horse-book-series or www.learn-about-horses.com/horse-books.

Shout Out

Shawty says . . .

Here's a big shout out to my friends Claire and Paige who are having fun on their horse farm near Lesotho. I miss you, girls! XOXO

S.J. says . . .

Hi to my friends Emma and Emily, the awesome Es! Emily, you must come visit us in CT sometime with Tinky :P See y'all 'round.

Want your shout out to be in the next edition of **Horses+Kids!**? Just contact me at www.learn-about-horses.com/my-horse to tell everyone about your special horse, yourself or say hi to some of your friends.

Remember to put the words "shout out" in the title of your submission so that I know you want to be in the newsletter.

Q and A

Tammy: *Is there a difference between a stripe and a blaze? Most of the kids at the riding school I ride at think that they are the same.*

Jessica: *There is a difference between a stripe and a blaze. Stripes are narrow streaks that lie along the centre of a horse's face; blazes are much thicker than stripes and generally cover the muzzle as well.*

Stacie: *Somebody recently told me that there is no such thing as a truly wild horse. Is this true?*

Jessica: *What you were told is mostly true, Stacie. Brumbies, Mustangs, Kaimanawa horses, Konik, Sorraia, Assateague, Camargue, Exmoor, Dartmoor, New Forest, Highland and Connemara ponies are generally classified as "feral" horses nowadays because they either are descended from horses that were originally tame or because many of them have been tamed and bred by people. However, one breed of horse, the Przewalski Horse, is classified as a truly "wild" horse.*

Have you got a horse-related question that needs answering? Submit it at www.learn-about-horses.com/my-horse and I will answer it in the next edition of **Horses+Kids!**

Well, that's it for this edition of **Horses+Kids!** I really hope that you enjoyed it and that you have as much fun reading the next edition in three months' time. Enjoy your horses and stay safe!



Jessica Young

Templates, Cut-outs, etc

