

Basic Skills in Hand Effective May 1, 2025

Basic Skills in Hand has been altered to allow younger horses to participate in Training Levels. The basic skills have not been changed, but the difficulty of how that skill is performed has been altered to allow for 2 or 3 Levels of Basic Skills.

The proposed Basic Skills in Hand has been divided into 3 Levels determined by age.

Level 1 (Safety) Minimum Age 6 months

Level 2 (Growth) Minimum age 12 months

Level 3 (Graduate) Minimum Age 18 Months - combination of previous skills but with additional difficulty

Each Level will be evaluated using the same philosophy as the current Basic Skills but with tasks appropriate to the age of the entry.

Basic Skills demonstrates that the horse has been handled from both sides and is respectful of the handler and is respectful of the handler's space.

Any practice deemed unsafe or dangerous or abusive for either horse or handler/rider will result in disqualification.

A horse that does not respect the handler's space will be disqualified. In all tasks, perfection is not the goal.

Safety for both horse and handler, respect and willingness are what is being evaluated.

It is expected that some new circumstances may cause a horse to stop or refuse. It is not the stopping that matters, but how the situation is handled by horse or handler. It is to be expected that a horse will react to some stimuli, but the horse should also calm down and work through the situation.

Basic Skills in Hand – Level 1, Level 2, Level 3

	6 months Safety	12 months Growth	18 months or over Graduate
Catch	In field/paddock/stall with mare	In enclosed space (Paddock, corral etc)	Field or large corral
Halter	Rope simulating a halter which can be dropped safely Correctly fitting halter acceptable	Correctly fitting halter of any type with lead rope attached	Correctly fitting halter of any style with lead rope attached.
Lead	If using a lead rope, handler beside horse If not using a lead rope, then following the mare with handler beside.	Horse beside Handler Handler on the off side	Horse beside handler Handler on the off side Horse behind handler
Gate	Through an open gate as foal follows mare	Through an open gate	Through a closed gate (open gate, lead horse through, close gate).
Tie	Do not tie – horse stands quietly beside handler for 1 minute Handler asks horse to move 1 step to the right and 1 step to the left	Stands quietly for 1 Minute Handler asks horse to move to the right and to the left Respond to the ask – not a side pass – just move from pressure	Stands quietly for 2 minutes Response to pressure
Groom – head, neck, belly, body, legs, tail, under tail, sheath etc.	Freestanding With a light touch of the hand, touch all part of the body	Freestanding or tied Touch all parts of body with a soft brush	Freestanding or Tied Touch all parts of body with grooming brushes appropriate to the parts of the body

	Could be in paddock with mare		
Lift feet	While not restrained – tap all section of at least one hoof	Freestanding or tied Tap all sections of each hoof.	Freestanding or tied Lift and clean all hoofs.
Wash face, ears and legs	Face, ears Use a soft cloth without water rubbing all over the face and ears. Move cloth around lower legs below the knee	Face and ears Use a damp soft cloth rubbing all over the face and ears. Use dampened cloth to rub around all legs below the knee	Wash face using a wet cloth.
Doctoring	Rub outside and around mouth and rub nose Run hose with spray near the feet	Rub outside mouth and lift upper or lower lip Hose frontlegs	Show Teeth Hose all 4 legs
Dressing	Cover back with a towel or a small horse blanket. Do not let straps or buckles hang Wrap one leg Fly mask if foal is familiar with one	Simulate a horse blanket Leg protection – wrap two legs Fly Mask if foal is familiar with one	Not necessarily a horse blanket – could be towel or ????? Leg protection – Put on and take off – polo wraps, shipping boots, splint boots, bell boots) Fly mask – put on and take off
L Tasks to simulate an obstacle course – no particular order	OPTIONAL Either following mare or being led Change in surface – grass	Leading Changes in surface – grass, gravel, water, mud Up and down a	Leading Through an open gate Through a closed gate – open and close Up a slope Down a slope

	<p>to gravel or dirt to grass Through water (puddle) Up and down a gentle slope Around a group of trees or shrubs Around a vehicle not running Around another animal Over 3 randomly spaced poles or logs</p>	<p>slope Around a puddle or mud Through a group of trees or shrubs Around a vehicle Around 2 other animals Over a minimum of 5 randomly spaced poles or logs</p>	<p>Through snow Around snow Through Mud Around Mud Around water Through water Around distractions Around machinery or vehicles or bicycles (still not running_ Noise distractions Through water Around distractions Around machinery or vehicles or bicycles (still not running_ Noise distractions Around machinery or vehicles or bicycles (still not running) Noise distraction or some type Around a minimum of at least one other animal (other horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, cats, dogs, ducks, chickens etc) Over and around a safe piece of plywood or tarp Over poles or logs with uneven spacing Move 6 steps to the left (light or no pressure) Move 6 steps to the right (light or no pressure) Back a minimum of 6 steps</p>
Trailer Loading	<p>Following mare or using a bum rope</p>	<p>With handler leading - may walk in, turn around and walk off</p>	<p>With handler leading Enter trailer and stand for 1 minute Horse leaves trailer either walking out or backing out</p>

