EVENT RIDER FITNESS

3 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR RIDING FITNESS



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Add In Strength & Resistance Work

Working on yourself off horse is a non-negiotable & your strength plays a huge part in your riding ability.

Being stronger means you will be more stable, it will help you to reduce imbalances left-right, you'll have better balanced & you'll be able to support your horse with your riding.

If you've not ever done any resistance training before it can be a daunting place to start! But don't panic it's not as complicated as it may seem.

The reason we need to add strength work in is because it will strengthen the joints & leads our muscles to become stronger & more powerful.

If you're panicking you're going to turn into the incredible hulk don't! As women we don't have the hormone make up to build that kind of muscle mass so you're good!

Depending on your level of experience bodyweight & banded movements will be plenty to get you started but I would recommend you add in some weights if you've trained before!

Focus on full body sessions incorporating the following movement patterns...



Squat e.g BW Squat/Goblet Squat

Hinge/Bend e.g Glute Bridge/RDL/Hip Thrust

Pull e.g Banded Rows/SA KB Row/Lat Pulldown/Weighted or Band Pullover

Push e.g Shoulder Press/Push Up

Single Leg e.g BW Lunges, Suitcase Lunge, Marching Bridge, SL Bridge, SL Hip Thrust

Core e.g Deadbugs, Side Planks, Farmers Carrys, Plank Taps, Plank Pullthroughs, Pallofpress

Try to hit all your movement patterns regularly throughout the week to ensure your programme is balanced.

An example training week could be...



Monday
A1 Goblet Squat
A2 SA KB Rows

B1 Banded Shoulder Press
B2 SL Hip Thrust
B3 Deadbugs

Wednesday
A1 Weighted Hip Thrust
A2 Bodyweight Push Ups

B1 SA Pulldown
B2 Suitcase Reverse Lunge

C1 Side Plank Hold
C2 Plank Pullthroughs
C3 Wall Sits

Friday
A1 KB RDL/Hip Hinge
A2 Banded Pullover

B1 Step Up
B2 Standing Row

10 Mins AMRAP
8 x Down Ups
20 x Deadbugs
15 x Prisoner Squats



This is just an example of how you could layout movement patterns across the week but your training should be personalised to your needs, goals & any weaknesses.

Make sure you're progressively making sessions harder, that's really important & is key to you becoming stronger, faster & more balanced over time. That means increasing the amount you do or resistance/weight used session to session/week to week.

- I would suggest to start with trying to add in 2-3 sessions per week & building from there. The most important thing is to find a routine you can stick to!

- Be consistent! Results take time.

- Put the effort in, be persistent, have patience & changes will come.



Get Your Aerobic System Fitter!

When it comes to rider performance your aerobic fitness is just as important as your strength.

You could be the strongest, most balanced, stable rider in the world but if you're aerobic fitness is poor your stamina & ability to resist fatigue is going to be very poor.

That out of puff feeling you get at the end of a lesson or XC course is a good sign you need to get yourself fitter!

The better your aerobic fitness the longer you'll be able to keep going for, your energy levels will be better & your recovery will be faster too!

Now for the golden question...what should I be doing HIIT or cycling?



In all honesty the fitness space seems to have got a bit lost here when it comes to the right type of conditioning/aerobic work you should be doing

We have 2 cardiovascular energy systems;

Anaerobic
Aerobic

Our aerobic system is our long, slow fitness that is done at a very low effort & we can keep going for hours on end. E.g a marathon, an endurance ride.

Our anaerobic system is our fast, powerful system that allows us to work at our maximum for extremely short periods of time. E.g 100m Sprint, attacking in polo.
So what do we, as riders need?



Well to be the absolute best ideally a good dose of both but we have to EARN THE RIGHT to be able to do that fast, powerful stuff.

For most of us if we focus on really improving our endurance system through aerobic work that will most likely give us all of the fitness we need
for our riding.

Not many people will truly benefit from the short, hard stuff & you have to be able to express that power.

Where things have got a bit lost is with things like HIIT classes.

You've only got 20 mins for a session so you're lead to believe going in & creaming yourself at 100% intensity is the best thing to be doing.



But it's not. That type of training is incredibly taxing on the central nervous system & if you consistently train like that you'll lead yourself to burn out & likely injury.

If you are short on time that's fine but focus on short sustainble efforts that build your long term aerobic base first. For example;

30 Mins As Many Rounds As Possible Working at 7/10 effort
-300m Cycle
-300m Row
-20 Plank Taps

Roll through as many rounds in the time as you can & the focus is trying to keep every round time within 10 seconds of each other for the full 30 minutes.



5-10km Run

Distance done depends on your current running ability. This run should be done at a super easy pace, you should feel by the end you could have kept going for hours it was easy.

8 Mins Work 4 Mins Rest x 2-3 Rounds

16 Mins of total work time but taking rest time to allow you to keep the efforts sustainable. Working at 8/10 effort.

40m x Farmers Carry
20 Calories x Skierg
10 x Burpees

Roll through as many rounds in the 8 mins of the above as you can. Rest for 4 mins & repeat. The work done in section 1-2 should be equal!



These are just a couple of examples of what you could be doing.

Start with the long slow stuff building your ability to work your aerobic system for 40-60 minutes & then in time start to make the periods you're working for shorter & at a higher intensity of work & you'll find your stamina hugely improves.

Just don't forget you need to build the long, slow base first & earn the right for the fast stuff! Just like putting the ground work into a 4 year old-same goes here!



Work on boosting your energy levels

Every rider I've worked with at the start of their journey admitted their energy levels were not good.

Being exhausted after a competition day then driving home & barely making it through the door absolutely knackered.

Your energy has a huge impact on your ability to withstand fatigue, ride effectively & be there to support your horse all the way around. As I mentioned above aerobic fitness is key here but there are some other factors too!

Let's be honest at that last combination 2 from home you don't want to be flopping about like a fish!

Energy wise there are 3 main nuggets to think about...



SLEEP

STRESS

FOOD

Sleep is 1 of the most underrated things.

If you're not prioritising your sleep you're going to end up burning out.

Aim to get a minimum of 6 hours sleep a night ideally working up to 7-8 hours of good quality sleep.

If you're experiencing the changes of the menopause & finding sleep is disrupted there's lots of things you can try to help but I highly suggest checking out Dr Louise Newson; hit the link below to find out more.



Most of us have an incredibly high level of stress.

Stress is all of the physical & mental stresses you have going on.

Your body doesn't separate a bad lesson with your horse to an argument at work stress is stress.

If your CNS is experiencing a high level of stress you're going to be knackered!

Balancing stress time is essential.



Food is fuel just the same as what you feed your horse fuels his performance.

It makes me laugh when riders spend 100s of £ on their horses supplements, high quality hard feed & good hay or haylage then feed yourselves McDonalds & Red Bull.

Start by improving your diet quality. Reduce the amount of high sugar, processed foods & drinks in your diet!

Start to focus on each meal having protein, fat & carbohydrate in it.

80% of the time have your food coming from wholefoods. Natural products like fruit, veg, meat, potatoes, grains etc

20% of the time allow yourself the foods you like. Choc or wine is fine!



Be more aware of your eating behaviours.

Sit at the table when you eat, no eating at your desk, only fruit in the car, give yourself some boundaries. Chew your food & slow down!

You're probably overeating if you're rushing.

If weight loss is a goal reduce your portion sizes or snacking & make sure you're in a calorie deficit.

Focus on quality not just calories.

I'll add in some example recipes for breakfast, lunch & dinner meals from my recipe book on the next page.

Ps. these recipes are 30 minutes max! I know time is an issue, I got you ;)





SALTED CARAMEL OATS

SERVES: 1

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

45g oats
20g whey protein, chocolate flavoured
1/2 tsp maca powder
250ml almond milk
20g 70% dark chocolate
1 tsp coconut oil
1 tbsp crushed peanuts

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all of the ingredients for the base and stir well, poor in a jar and leave to set.

Add the chocolate and coconut oil to a microwaveable bowl and microwave on full power for 10 second blast until fully melted, mix to combine.

Add the peanuts on top of the jar of oats and top with the chocolate mixture. Allow to fully cool until the top has set, refridgerate for 30 minutes or ideally overnight.

MACROS PER PORTION

CALORIES	556	PROTEIN	32
CARBS	53	FATS	24
FIBRE	5		

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OVERNIGHT BRAN

SERVES: 1

TOTAL TIME: OVERNIGHT

INGREDIENTS

40g bran flake cereal
150g 0% fat greek style yoghurt
80g frozen raspberries
1 tsp stevia or powdered sweetener

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine the ingredients in a bowl or dish mixing together very well.

Leave to set in the fridge overnight.

MACROS PER PORTION

CALORIES	246	PROTEIN	16
CARBS	41	FATS	2
FIBRE	7		

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