

Group task suggestions for coaches

Below are some suggestions for group tasks, discussions and friendly debates that you can incorporate into your sessions. We have listed them by topic.

About the Horse

Handling your horse

Bronze group tack cleaning: Strip clean tack, discuss with each other the condition of the leather, is it safe?, quiz each other on the names of the parts of the bridle. Help each other to put the tack back together. Can they pick out the correct parts from a pile of tack?

Silver group discussion – accident / incident scenarios: Investigate running a first aid course at your yard. Accident report sample sheet can be downloaded for the group to complete

Silver pairs task: Turn out or bring in a horse. Help each other with gates

Knowing your horse

Bronze pairs or small group task: One person describe a horse on the yard using colour and markings. The others guess which horse on the yard it is (works if the learners are all familiar with the horse's names). Could also use pictures of famous horses.

Silver pairs or small group task: Measure the height of each other, try to convert this to hands / inches. Work out the height difference between the tallest and shortest horses/ponies on the yard.

Silver group task: feed the horses on the yard. Help prepare feeds, give to horses, clean buckets after, sweep yard

Caring for your horse

Bronze group task: Field care group clean up. Poo pick / litter pick / repair fencing / remove ragwort. As a group tidy up a field with tasks shared across the group

Bronze group discussion: 1. what you might do if it was windy and you had to change a rug outside? 2. What to do if you're half way through putting on or taking a rug off and it slips off/down your horse with some straps still done up?

Silver pairs task: Muck out including, fresh water, hay, tidy muck heap. Set a time limit.

Silver: discussion/debate: pros and cons of rugs/rugging a horse

Silver group task: On a nice day thoroughly groom horses, wash/trim the tails of a group of horses. Sponge the body of the horse to remove dust, possibly add quarter marks if you have stencils? Who is the best turned out/biggest transformation?

Lungeing your horse

Bronze: In pairs or small groups practice coiling the line, feeding it out and rolling it up

Silver group task: prepare an area for lungeing

Silver: give each other feedback on lungeing

About the Rider

Riding flat

Bronze group exercise: Think of a group warm up to loosen up and stretch your muscles before riding. Repeat this once you have got off and untacked for a group cool down! Discuss: benefits of a warm up/cool down not just for the horse but rider too. What muscles do you think you need to stretch?

Bronze pairs task: footfalls. Requires canes or lungeing whips (use a bit of tape to stick the lash to the handle so it's not loose) etc. In pairs (one behind the other), holding a cane in each hand, practice the footfalls of horses. One person will be the front legs, the other the back legs. Work together to recreate a realistic beat. Task is done well on a hard surface so you can hear when the cane is put to the floor

Silver: Improving balance – mounted games/pony club races/gymkhana games

Great for doing something different and improving co-ordination and teamwork. Things like moving flags from one flag pot to another, moving mugs from one pole to another with require the rider to engage their core whilst they lean to one side and pick up equipment with one hand. A team game can be achieved by a relay race with the rider passing a piece of equipment to the next rider so they can then complete the race (if you're not sure how the horses will react to the rider's riding up to each closely, do this bit in walk). Get the riders to encourage each other and talk to each other as they complete the race. If you have a big group you could split them into teams/pairs and either race against each other (if space/equipment allows) or time them and see who completes in the quickest time. Complete the Mounted Games challenge award

All levels: hold a mini informal competition at your yard (dressage/show jumping). The group can pick the tests/design the course/arrange prizes. Can include an in hand show for best turned out, cleanest tack. Or enter an online dressage test

Riding jump

Bronze task: Practice jumping position/light seat balanced on a step – who can keep their balance the longest?

Silver task: Practice jumping position/light seat balanced on a round pole – who can keep their balance the longest?

Silver task: Walk/measure distances for placing poles, measure your stride length

Riding out safely

All levels: Arrange a picnic hack or a pub ride!

Riding fit

Bronze group task: Meet up outside of the yard and go for a group walk

Bronze task: Make some flavoured water or smoothies, have a taste test and come up with ways to increase your hydration and water intake throughout the day

Bronze discussion: Encourage a group chat about mental health and well-being with open-ness and no judgement. How can you support each other

Silver group task: Home Challenge suggestion on page 15 of information booklet

Silver group discussion: Read the report 'The effects of rider weight on horse performance' described on page 17 of information booklet. Discuss as a group how they feel about the topic.

Silver group task: discuss as a group positive thoughts you can think or say out loud as you ride; put these into practice in your next group lesson – did it have a positive effect?

Silver group discussion: Each group member suggest the little things that bring them joy to their day (could be walking the dog, being helpful to someone, being at the yard), it may give ideas to other members of the group things they can do to have a positive impact on their day and bring a bit of joy.

Silver group task: Think of a charity you would like to volunteer for, make a commitment to volunteer some time (pair up if need a bit of support) and then discuss each other's experience. Or you could work as a team to volunteer to clear a bridleway, rubbish pick a stretch of beach or plant some trees. There will be different charities in your local area that will benefit from a group effort – research and make a pledge with the group to offer to help.

If you have any further suggestions, share them on the [APC facebook page](#) – we'd love to hear them!