



So, you finally got a horse: Congratulations! Horses are awe-inspiring. They look to you for companionship, and in return give you the feeling of freedom. Whether it's wandering through the woods on a quiet morning, riding the perfect dressage test, or nailing every distance to every jump, there's just nothing in the world like horses. Let's keep your horse happy and healthy with these 5 things we wish every new horse owner knew:

1. Feed good feed.

Just like you, your horse should eat mostly high quality foods. Just like you, cheaper (McDonald's) is not better. A high quality diet keeps your horse happy and healthy, which saves you tons of money. Start with good hay, then choose a grain. Read this [blog post](#) for more information on hay. Or, even **easier**, call Beth in our Clinic for a nutrition consult and get a *customized* nutrition plan for your horse and property.

2. Build a good fence.

Much like great fences make great neighbors, great fences make horse ownership so much easier. We can't overemphasize this enough. What makes a good fence? Good posts, tightly packed into the ground, are the most essential element. From there, we find boards (no fewer than three), wire mesh (we recommend no-climb or sheep/goat wire) with something on top like a board, or electric tape, (again no fewer than three strands) work best. No matter what fencing you choose, some type of electric fencing along the top is the best option for long term durability and safety. Horses do NOT like electric! Avoid barbed wire! Horses will cut themselves on it when they have an itch.

3. Learn constantly.

Horses are great teachers. They often pick the moment when you least want to learn to teach you something, but we love them anyway. Look for lessons or clinics, explore different activities, and try new things. The more training you and your horse have, the better your relationship will be. Just like a marriage, the better trained your spouse is, the happier you both are!

4. Develop a relationship with your veterinarian BEFORE you need them.

Horses are like 5 year old kids: an accident looking for a place to happen.

Regular visits with Springhill Equine veterinarians allow us to know what normal is for your horse, and lets us see them outside of an emergency situation. These routine visits also allow us to identify small, readily treatable issues before they become big, expensive hospitalizations. At a minimum, you should have us out to do vaccines twice a year, which also lets us look over your horse, and answer all your questions.

5. Find a great farrier!

As the saying goes, *No hoof, No horse*. Keeping your horse's feet in great shape will prevent endless problems. Your horse will probably need a farrier visit every 4-6 weeks. If your horse has problems, we are happy to work with your farrier to see what's going on. We can shoot x-rays for your farrier, and discuss solutions. For a great blog about what your horse's feet should look like, [click here](#).

Final Takeaway: No one knows your horse better than you.

If you are concerned about something, chances are good you are right. Call or text us, and we will talk about what's going on. We have horses too, and we know what you're talking about when you say they just don't look right. Sometimes it's an emergency, and sometimes it isn't, but never hesitate to check in with us. We're on your team!

Important numbers:

Springhill Equine Veterinary Clinic

(352) 472-1620

After-hours Emergency Hotline

(352) 474-5007