

# Equestrian *plus*

If you have a question for us email [admin@redpin.co.uk](mailto:admin@redpin.co.uk)

## Q I want to build an outdoor school but have no idea where to start. Could you give me a few pointers?



Hilltop Equestrian Services offer their professional advice:

**A** Firstly, you have to consider the requirements for your arena.

**Planning permission:** Planning permission is required to construct an outdoor school. We offer a planning service, dealing with all planning queries and applications on behalf of the customer. If you wish to handle planning yourself contact your local council for advice.

**Where will you construct your arena?** The best naturally draining, level ground on your premises with easy access from your stables. Also consider the access, as having large lorries makes haulage a lot cheaper.

**Size:** Construct the biggest size you can afford. In event or dressage competitions, you will be riding in either a standard size 20m x 40m arena or an international size 20m x 60m. If you do more jumping than dressage, consider a wider arena, such as 25m or 30m.

**Surface:** Many people regret trying to save money by purchasing a cheap surface and end up replacing it a few years later.

**New Surface:** After your arena has been constructed it is very important that it is well watered in before you ride on it. Think of dry sand on a beach which never gets the sea on it and how deep it is and how difficult it is to walk on. Compare the feel of sand after the tide has gone out, that sand is solid under your feet. That is how you want your silica sand to be, almost impenetrable. The rubber and/or fibre is added and mixed into the top 25mm of sand to give a firm riding surface, which holds the moisture and, protects it from the sun drying it out.

**Maintenance is essential:** The more you maintain your arena, the longer it will last. We recommend using an arena grader and roller to keep your surface level and firm. We advise all droppings to be picked up.

**Conclusion:** You will wonder how you ever coped before you had an arena. Your horses will improve, your riding will improve and your competition results will be better. It is also likely your horses will stay sound for longer as they are being ridden on a level and consistently 'giving' surface.

Hilltop equestrian services [www.hilltopequestrianservices.co.uk](http://www.hilltopequestrianservices.co.uk)  
Tel: 0191 3750516

## Q How long after my mare has given birth can she be back in work?

**A** I personally would not ride my mare with a foal at foot although I have seen this done. I would not look to ride the mare for about four to six weeks you would have to take into consideration how the foaling went and the general well being of the mare and the foal.

Careful consideration would need to be given as to where you will ride the mare as the

foal will be running alongside. If you want to wait until the foal is weaned at five to six months old then I would not bring the mare back into work until one month after weaning. This will give her udders a chance to shrink. Remember that weaning is as stressful for the mare as the foal.

Answered by Sally Burns from Rachan Sports Horses [www.rachansportshorses.co.uk](http://www.rachansportshorses.co.uk)



## Q Where can I get some good quality, comfortable gloves that dry quickly if they become wet whilst riding?

**A** The ground breaking technology of the MacWet Equestrian Glove guarantees all grip with no slip.

The glove's unique breathable characteristics ensure maximum grip and feel across all climate conditions, and as well as equestrian pursuits the gloves are now proving extremely popular in a number of outdoor sports including shooting, fishing and golf.

During use, MacWets adjust to the climate and they dry

out within five to ten minutes ensuring a consistent grip.

With three current variations of MacWets, the short cuff, long cuff and ClimaTec®, the company are always looking to update their designs and to improve their products. The gloves are available in sizes 6.5 – 12. Colours available are Black, White, Navy, Brown and Hunting Green.

Contact MacWet on 08456 039075.

## Q My horse is rushing the practise fence, is there an exercise I can use to slow him down?'

Philippa McKeever BSc (Hons) Equine Science BHSAI – Specialist show jumping coach and Area12 BSJA accredited coach answers.

**A** With this problem there are several things to check:-

- Make sure the horse has a good jumping canter around the corner before the fence, often horses rush to the fence as a direct consequence of the rider being defensive around the corner, and hence the horse feels the need to increase his impulsion in order to generate the power to jump.
- Also check that you have a suitable bridle on your horse, you should consult a qualified coach for advice with biting.
- Make sure your horse is not overly fresh before a competition by riding him the day before.

A good exercise for horses that rush the practice fence is to halt after the fence.

Practise before the show cantering over a pole on the floor and then riding a smooth transition down to halt after the pole. Keep repeating this on both reins until the horse starts to relax and maintain a steady canter rhythm before the pole. Then progress to a small jump, still halting on the landing side. As the horse starts to anticipate halting after the jump he will slow down on the approach.

Once you have established this at home your horse should not be so inclined to rush the practise fence as he will be expecting you to halt on the other side.