

## How to Bring Your Pony Back to Full Fitness

Fitness takes time, there are no shortcuts, you may need help from an adult to do this properly. Doing too much with your pony before they are fit enough could injure them, this is why we make a plan.

### PREPARATIONS

First preparations must be made for returning your pony to riding after they have had time off you will need an adult to help you with the following;

- Check tack. Clean, oil and check stitching. Check the fit of your tack as your pony may have changed shape and an uncomfortable saddle can cause your pony to misbehave. Make sure your numnah and girth are clean.



- Have your pony's feet shod or trimmed.



- Have your pony's teeth checked and rasped if necessary.



- Check your pony's 'flu' and tetanus injections are up to date.



- Worm your pony if due.
- Give your Pony a good groom and have an adult help you tidy mane and tail.



## STAGES

Your plan can be divided into two stages.

1. Walk work
2. Trotting, schooling, and training.

**Stage 1** – If your pony has had a long holiday you will need to start with 3 weeks of walking exercises only with the help of an adult. You should to start with 20 minutes 🕒 and gradually build this up over the 3 weeks to 1 hour. 🕒 Look out for stiffness and if your pony is tired stop as you could risk injury. Keep an eye out for any sores in the saddle and girth area. Make sure you sponge away all sweat marks. If sores are seen wash with salt water.

An Adult should keep checking the fit of your tack and if they think your pony has a sore back, they may want to have this checked by a vet or physio.

Pony's returning from injury, that are older or very young may need a longer period of walking, up to an additional 3 weeks before moving onto stage 2. If in doubt have an adult consult with your instructor or vet for guidance.



**Stage 2** - If your pony has been kept in work your fitness plan could commence at this stage. For the next 3 weeks you can begin to introduce some slow trotting.

Some schooling work on the flat can begin. Start with 30 minutes 🕒 and concentrate on transitions and suppling exercises, these could include using barrel bending exercises and riding in and out of poles and halting in boxes on the floor. Asking a pony to do lots of halt, walk and trot transitions helps your pony get stronger. Gradually increase the time you ride you pony for 🕒 and continue to hack with an adult.

By week 6 your pony should be ready for you to start having lessons.


You may now be ready to start to jump.

After a few lessons a small competition could be your next goal.



**Example Plan**

		MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Stage 1	Week 1	DAY OFF X	20mins - walk only *Adult (ride & lead)	20mins Hack - walk only 	DAY OFF X	25mins - walk only *Adult (ride & lead)	25mins Hack - walk only 	30mins Hack - walk only 
	Week 2	DAY OFF X	30mins Hack - walk only 	40mins Hack - walk only 	DAY OFF X	20mins - walk only *Adult (in-hand)	45mins Hack - walk only 	45mins Hack - walk only 
	Week 3	DAY OFF X	20mins - walk only *Adult (in-hand) 	50mins Hack - walk only 	DAY OFF X	55mins - walk only *Adult (ride & lead)	1hr Hack - walk only 	1hr Hack - walk only 
Stage 2	Week 4	DAY OFF X	1hr Hack - Walk with some slow trotting 	30mins Schooling	DAY OFF X	20mins - *Adult (lunge)	30mins Schooling	1hr Hack - Walk with some slow trotting 
	Week 5	DAY OFF X	1hr Hack - Walk with some slow trotting 	40mins Schooling	DAY OFF X	Walk & trot *Adult (ride & lead)	40mins Schooling	1hr Hack – woodland ride 
	Week 6	DAY OFF X	1hr Hack 	45mins Schooling	DAY OFF X	20mins - *Adult (lunge)	Lesson 	A picnic ride 
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\*Adult = This is when an adult can help you exercise your pony by lunging (20 minutes only ) , in-hand work or leading your pony off another horse.

To maintain your grass kept pony’s fitness they should be exercised 3-4 times a week.

***This Plan is an Example only, your fitness plan needs to be made to suit your facilities available and your pony’s needs. Don’t forget to read your Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship.***

***If in any doubt please ask your instructor.***



Now it is over to you to make your own plan  for your pony.

Please keep notes , pictures  and videos  of how you get on.