

Introducing the EasiHorse “Extended Riding Program”

“What's next?” a parent asked, “Buying her own horse?”. Their daughter had been coming for lessons for quite a while and had gained considerable proficiency and confidence. Her parents wanted to know what options they had to further her thing with horses.

Owning you own horse, or leasing a horse, are two of the options. We have designed a “Extended Riding Program” as an intermediate next step that some of our “Lesson program” students might consider.

Each of these options is a different balance of instruction, supervision, responsibility, risk, commitment, exclusivity, hours with the horse, and cost.

| Program: | Lesson | <i>Riding</i> | Leasing | Owning |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Instruction | Full | <i>Less</i> | As needed | As needed |
| Supervision | Full | <i>Some</i> | None | None |
| Responsibility | Least | <i>More</i> | Full | Full |
| Commitment | Least | <i>More</i> | More | Full |
| Exclusivity | Hour | <i>Hours</i> | Days | All |
| Total Cost | Least | <i>More</i> | More | Most |
| Hours Spent | Least | <i>More</i> | Potentially More | Potentially Most |
| Cost per Hour | Highest | <i>Less</i> | Potentially Less | Potentially Least |

Owning A Horse

You buy a horse and he is your full responsibility. You may board him with us, but he is yours. Everything that happens to him is your responsibility – decision making, and financial and other consequences. You can do whatever you want with him, whenever you want, for as long as you want.

When you work with your own horse at EasiHorse you are unsupervised just as if you had your own barn. You can work with your horse even if we aren't here. If we are here we are typically concentrating on other activities. If we happen to notice you doing something that might be bad for you or your horse, or if you seek advice, we will offer advice, but the decision making is yours. If you want instruction, we offer lessons at a discount when you use your own horse.

Commitment

He's yours until you sell him or he dies.

Cost

The price of a horse is anything from “free” to high as you want. The typical, reasonable horse is in the range \$1000 to \$2000, which means that little of the cost of owning a horse is the purchase price. “Free” horses are not free; it will often cost you more to deal with whatever makes them “free” than you save on the purchase price..

Boarding your horse at EasiHorse costs about \$330/month. That is \$175/month for boarding plus our feed cost which is currently \$125/month. Our normal feed regime is the natural diet for horses: Hay and Grass, plus free choice supplemental minerals. This diet is all the feed that is necessary for a healthy horse. The cost is liable to vary according to the price of oil. (Hay is made out of fertilizer, herbicides and diesel.). Hoof care costs \$30/month if Ali does it, or an average of about \$45/month for your own trimmer, or you can do it yourself.

“Other costs” can be considerable or can be zero. Veterinary costs – call out fees, vet's time, supplies, and medications can mount up quickly.

We estimate that the typical total cost of keeping your horse at EasiHorse at about \$500-\$600/month.

The hours spent with your horse is entirely up to you. We estimate a typical owner spends no more than 30 hours per month with their horse, so the cost per hour is about \$18-20 or more.

Obviously if the horse is not well – because of how you used him, or bad luck – the cost is higher and the hours you can ride are smaller, or zero, and so the cost per hour gets high. These are the responsibilities and consequences of ownership.

The principal benefit of ownership is that he is “yours”. He gets to know you better than anyone else, and everything that happens to him can be done by you. Although if you don't have the time to do everything: we help out. We check on him twice a day and contact you if necessary. We take action if necessary. We give him your chosen special feeds or supplements if you can't. If you want, we allow other appropriate riders to ride him or work with him, when you don't have sufficient time.

The Riding Program is better than Owning (for the right rider)

- More supervision
- Less financial commitment and smaller total cost with no risk of extra costs.
- Lower cost per hour unless you spend at least 30 hours/month riding your own horse.
- Limited commitment in time and money.
- Substitute horse if yours is not well.

Leasing A Horse

We buy, or have bought, the horse. You purchase a contract to use him as if he is your horse for a fixed period. You can purchase a **Fractional Lease**, which means that he is “your horse” for part of the time and someone else's horse for the rest of the time. For example, for a “half-lease” he might be yours on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday; and someone else's on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday.

The principal difference between owning and leasing is that ultimately the leased horse belongs to someone else, and you have an obligation to the owner to keep the horse in good condition. This obligation manifests as some restrictions, especially for a fractional lease. It is unreasonable for you to

“ride him into the ground” on Monday so that “Tuesday's owner” can't use him.

For a full lease, he's “your horse”, and no one else's, for a whole year, just like owning him.

Commitment

Lease contracts typically run for one year. You get to choose how much time you spend with your horse. This is just on “your days” for a fractional lease, but typically you will find that your availability is more constraining than his availability.

Cost

The cost of leasing depends on the horse, the term of the contract, and on responsibilities and obligations specified in the lease contract. For example, a full lease typically requires you to pay vet bills.

The cost of leasing covers the same costs as owning but they are spread out differently. For a fractional lease we can cover “unexpected” vet costs in the leasing price (just like an insurance premium does). A fractional lease saves you money compared to a full lease because some of the costs are shared with the other fraction owners.

We estimate that a 50% leaser typically spends about \$350-400/month, including lease fee, extras and lessons.

The Riding Program is better than Leasing (for the right rider)

- More supervision
- Less financial commitment and smaller total cost with no risk of extra costs.
- Lower cost per hour unless you spend at least 20 hours/month riding your leased horse.
- Substitute horse if yours is not well.

Lesson Program

You may be familiar with our lesson program. Lessons are normally one hour of working with the horse, plus time to get him ready and to finish off afterwards. Lessons are normally “semi-private” which means in a group of up to three people with similar skill level.

Commitment

Lessons can be scheduled as frequently or infrequently as you want. We offer a discount for pre-scheduled, pre-purchased, blocks of eight.

Cost

Typically people schedule one semi-private lesson per week, in blocks of eight and so spend \$110 per month or \$27.50 per hour. Private lessons are \$35/hour. One-off semi-private hour lessons are \$30.

The Riding Program is better than Lessons (for the right rider)

- More Horse time
- Lower cost per hour

Extended Riding Program

Our new “Extended Riding Program” is designed to be an option for “What's next?” for riders that want “more horse”, but not the full commitment or cost of owning or leasing a horse, and a lower cost per hour than the lesson program.

This program is only available to riders who, in Ali's opinion, have the knowledge, skill and disposition to be trusted to engage in a more risky activity: risky for the rider and the horse.

It includes

1. A specific designated horse.
2. A number of hours of “free” (as in “autonomous”) riding. The hours must be pre-scheduled and regular. “Your horse” is reserved for “your hours”. You might think of this as “leasing by the hour”.

Unlike leasing, Ali (or , occasionally, Dave or another EasiHorse representative) *will be* on-site when the “free” riding happens to provide a degree of supervision, but not instruction. Ali's attention is likely to be primarily on some other activity. Unlike owning, we reserve the right to limit, in the interests of the horse or safety, what you do with the horse. You can't “ride him into the ground” because you are sharing him with others.

3. Riders usually have more fun riding with others. We recommend you consider a group of friends to schedule their riding hours the same. Obvious the friends must have different designated horses!
4. Two one-hour lessons per month, to ensure that the rider's skills are maintained and developed, and they maintain their qualification for the Riding Program.
5. In the event that your designated horse is physically unable to participate we will provide a substitute if possible. We cover vet and medical bills – there are no “unexpected” extras.

Commitment

The minimum commitment for the Riding Program is 3 three months. The “three hour” riding program commits you to 14 hours per month.

Cost

The price is \$280/month for three hours “free” ride per week and the two lessons per month, which works out to be \$20/hour with the horse.

Stick with Lessons ...

Unless you are able work with a horse on your own, and be safe enough, and are prepared to take the risk.

Buy your own a horse if ...

... you really love the horse, **and** have the financial resources and time to commit to taking care of him for a long time.