

Spring Tack, Barn & Pasture Care Tips

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Do you have spring fever? If you're like most horse owners, spring's warmer weather has you itching to take your mount into the competition ring or on the riding trail. But spring is also the perfect time to clean and maintain tack, stalls, barns, and pastures. So before you saddle up, harness some of your enthusiasm and energy to freshen your horse's surroundings and accessories. It is not as daunting of a task as you may think. And a thorough spring clean is sure to revitalize both you and your horse.

Repair barn exteriors

Winter takes its toll on every barn. No matter where you live in the country, colder weather, high winds, and constant precipitation beats at your barn's structure. If damages are left unchecked, you, your family, and your horse could be seriously injured. To help protect everyone who lives on or visits your property, inspect your barn from top to bottom. Some key areas to watch include:

roofs - replace loose shingles or tin sheets that can blow away in summer storms and injure bystanders. Weakened roofs also allow water, rodents, and birds free access to your barn's interior, which can create a whole mess of problems.

gutters - unclog gutters to deflect water away from your barn. Clogged gutters allow water to pool where disease-laden insects may breed or your horse could slip and fall.

eaves - carefully destroy any wasp nests. Then use perimeter sprays and traps to help prevent insects from returning. Just a few stings can panic even the calmest horse.

doors/windows - replace damaged doors and windows to help prevent weather, insect, and animal invasion. Prune decorative shrubs near entrances to keep walkways clear.

Refresh barn interiors

Barn interiors need daily care. However, barn maintenance tasks have a tendency to pile like winter snow. Spring is the perfect time to clean and repair stalls, wash areas, and aisles. While you care for your barn's interior, however, turn your horse out to pasture. The dust created as you sweep, repair, and tidy is not good for your horse's health. Some areas to focus on include:

rafters - clean away spider webs, which trap bugs, dirt, and other undesirables.

stalls - repair broken walls and doors. Replace chewed wood and spray with a chew-deterrent, such as [Chew Stop](#).

floors - fill holes in clay or dirt floors. These trap waste and create unhealthy living conditions. Inspect wooden floors for rot. Clean floors with an All-Surface Wash.

wash stalls - organize combs, shampoos, and other [grooming supplies](#) with a [caddy](#). Unclog drains to help prevent standing water and mold growth.

Rejuvenate pastures

Winter is harsh on pastures. Add daily turnout throughout the winter into the mix and your pasture can look considerably different in the spring than it did in the fall. Plus, natural erosion often exposes pipes, rocks, or tree roots that were not evident before. Unfortunately, most horse injuries occur while on pasture. So plan to examine every inch of your pasture each spring. Areas on which to focus include:



fences - repair loose wires or broken boards and replace protruding nails.

water troughs - tighten fittings and replace damaged pipes. Also consider water trough protectors to help prevent mosquito breeding.

pooled water - improve drainage by digging ditches or adding gravel, especially around gateways, water troughs, and stock tanks.

run-in sheds - fill in eroded soil, especially near entrances where legs can catch.

debris - remove fallen trees, limbs, stumps, wires, pipes, nails and other objects that could cut or puncture your horse.

Renew horse tack

Tack needs constant care and maintenance. Halters, leads, saddle pads, fly sheets, and other accessories help keep your horse safe and comfortable. A thorough cleaning allows you to spot minute defects in the tack you use daily and prepare winter accessories for storage. If tack is damaged beyond repair, however, it needs to be replaced. The cost of buying accessories is minimal when compared to the costs you might incur should your horse become injured because of damaged tack. Tips to care for your tack include:



blankets, pads, and boots - repair, clean, and dry turnout blankets, saddle pads, leg wraps, and hoof boots. Pack any blankets you plan to store in sealable plastic bags.

halters and leads - check halter and lead stress points and hardware for wear and tear. Clean nylon with an appropriate wash. Use [Leather New](#) for leather accessories.

fly masks and sheets - clean masks and sheets to prepare for the coming fly and mosquito season.

safety releases and trailer ties - inspect [tie](#) hardware for damage and strength.

Replenish horse accessories

Your horse's health depends on a variety of accessories. Equine [toys](#) encourage activity. [Manure forks](#) clean stalls and barns. [Wound care supplies](#) help heal injuries. [Buckets](#) and feeders hold water and food. These and other necessities need daily inspection. However, each also benefits from a thorough spring cleaning, which allows you to repair damages, replenish

supplies, and replace objects that are beyond repair. Accessories to inspect include:

grooming supplies - disinfect [brushes, combs, and hoof picks](#). Clean and oil clippers. Check your stock of [shampoos and conditioners](#) and specialty grooming supplies.

first aid supplies - check your supply of [liniments, poultices, bandages, and ointments](#).

hoof care supplies - review your supply of [moisturizers, conditioners, and dressings](#).

stable supplies - replace damaged or chewed [feeders and buckets](#). Consider storage bins and dispensers to protect feed and aid in rodent control.

supplements - evaluate your horse's need for [calming](#); [digestive](#); [electrolyte](#); [joint](#); [skin, coat, and hoof](#); [vitamin and mineral](#); and [weight-building](#) supplements.

toys and treats - inspect [toys](#) for excessive wear or damage, including any hardware that mounts or hangs each toy in the stall or pasture. Ensure [treats](#) are still fresh.

vaccines - confirm your horse is current on [prescriptions](#) and [non-prescription](#) vaccines.

wormers - start a [deworming](#) schedule to protect against internal parasites.

wound care supplies - restock your barn's [wound care essentials](#).

We Recommend:

[Manure Forks](#): Rugged horse manure fork simplifies the mucking of your stall, barn, or stable.

[Leather New®](#): Versatile, advanced formulas clean, condition, and polish horse saddles, halters, bridles, and more in a single application.

[Jolly Ball for Horses](#) This toy will quickly become one of your horse's favorite toys.