

Cinder Hill Equine Clinic



Box Rest Advice

Box rest can be stressful for both the horse and the owner. We have put together some basic advice to try to keep you both sane, but if you are struggling to box rest your horse, please don't be afraid to contact us for further advice.

Feeding

Your horse will only require "maintenance" energy levels. Many horses will put on weight on box rest and if they are being rested due to an injury this is not desirable - for feeding advice please phone and speak to one of our team.

- Horses do not need hard feed when on box rest. If you are giving them token feed opt for fibre-based feed (e.g. Hi-fibre cubes or Alfalfa) and avoid concentrates.
- It is important to provide vitamins and minerals, so it's okay to feed a low-calorie feed balancer or provide a vitamin and mineral supplement.
- Although hand-picking grass is time-consuming, all horses appreciate fresh grass, and it helps minimise diet changes if they are used to being turned out. Grass can be put in a double-net which keeps them amused for hours.
- Double-netting hay/haylage and tying up multiple nets around the box will mean your horse will spend more time eating and less time bored.
- Licks are good for keeping horses occupied, but feed them in the specially designed holders- it's not good for them to finish them too quickly.

Boredom

- Mirrors and stable toys are ideal for some horses and keep them amused.
- A room with a view is better - if you have access to a stable with windows, or an outside box, your horse will be happier.
- When you are grooming and mucking out, tying your horse up outside lets them have a change of scenery, but ensure they don't escape!
- Try to find a friend (or lots of friends on a rota) to keep your horse company.
- Play balls with fibre cubes is a low-calorie way to add a bit of fun into feed times.
- Regular grooming will help stimulate your horse and make him/ her more comfortable.
- Horses also enjoy listening to the radio for a few hours.

Extra Attention

- Pay extra attention to feet to avoid thrush. Feet should regularly be picked out (at least twice a day) and can be sprayed with commercial sprays if required.

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- Monitor droppings carefully, if they are getting hard or if your horse is passing less than normal, let us know. Box rest increases the chance of impaction colic, due to diet change and lack of exercise.
- If legs are getting “filled”, stable bandages with padding can be applied overnight or for a few hours of the day to reduce swelling.

A bit of extra help!

If you are struggling to keep your horse on box rest, oral sedatives or calmers may help. Please call us for advice.