

Basic Three Month Conditioning Program for Long Distance Riding

This is a suggested program for a horse that has not done any long distance riding. It can be modified depending on the horse's age, experience and fitness. A seasoned horse after a winter layoff will take a much shorter time to get back into condition. Any sound and healthy horse can safely complete a 20 or 25 mile distance ride in the maximum time allowed.

There are several types of workouts:

- LSD (Long Slow Distance) – Steady work at competitive ride pace of 7 to 8 mile per hour.
- Aerobic – Activity which utilizes the horse's oxygen without depleting it.
- Anaerobic – Strenuous activity which uses oxygen faster than it can be replaced.
- Quantity – Intervals of speed (gallop) followed by partial recoveries (for fit horses).
- Quality – Speed work followed by full pulse and respiration recoveries.
- Farlek – Swedish word for speed play – sprints, gallops, hill climbs with recovery throughout. To relieve boredom and build muscle, cardiac and respiratory system.

Month	Days per week	Type of Workout	Number of Miles	Miles Per Hour
1 st – first 2 weeks	3	LSD – Lots of Walking	5 to 7	4 to 6
1 st – last 2 weeks	3	LSD – More trotting	5 to 8	5 to 7
2 nd – first 3 weeks	4	LSD	7 to 10	7 to 9
2 nd – last week	4	LSD	15 to 20	7 to 9
3 rd – each week	2	LSD	10 to 12	8 to 10
3 rd – each week	1	LSD	15 to 25	7 to 9
3 rd – each week	1	Farlek	1 hour	Varied

Monitor your horse's progress and recoveries by taking the pulse and respiration frequently. You can use a heart rate monitor, but if you don't have one, get someone to teach you how to take the pulse under the throatlatch or you can purchase an inexpensive stethoscope for under \$20 at most medical supply outfits. Aim to arrive at 60 beats per minutes 10 minutes after the work. Stress and recoveries are the backbone of conditioning. Recovery time will vary. Metabolic changes take time to adjust. Each full recovery improves the efficiency and strength of each equine athlete.

Do not over-exercise. Pulse and respiration take only minutes to recover, but muscle strain can take 2 or 3 days of rest, and ligaments and tendons can take up to six months to heal before work can resume.

It takes two to three years to develop a horse to its full potential.