



# DOMS

## What is it and how can it affect my RideAbility participant?

DOMS stands for “delayed onset muscle soreness,” or more simply, the muscular weakness, stiffness, and soreness you experience after participating in an activity you don’t do regularly. Believe it or not, horseback riding is most certainly an activity that causes DOMS. Your participant, if they don’t frequently ride horse (about 3 times per week) will probably begin to experience this 12-24 hours after getting off the saddle and it will peak in intensity 24-48 hours after riding. Although DOMS will eventually dissipate, there are a few tricks you can implement to quicken the process.

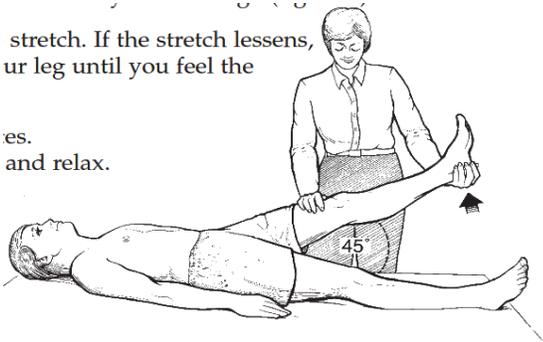
- Encourage your participant to keep moving! Inactivity will only increase stiffness. By moving more, you can get your joints, muscles and ligaments loosened up and increase your tolerance of pain, resulting in a decrease of the DOMS symptoms!
- Take a warm bath/shower and massage the affected area. This will increase blood flow to the muscle which quickens the healing process.
- Stretch! When you stretch your muscles for 30-60 seconds at a time, you can decrease tightness, and ultimately get rid of some of that soreness. Stretching, although important for warming up prior to horseback riding, is even MORE important after riding! Make this a routine for your participant the night/next day after RideAbility. But be careful not to overstretch! On the back of this page you will find a few stretches that will help your participant target the muscles they use to ride a horse.



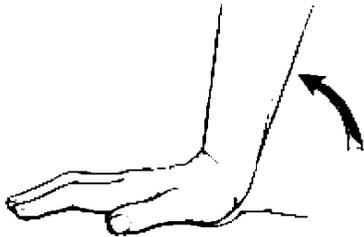
- For this stretch, lie on your back and bend your knees and hips, with your feet flat. Have your partner slowly push your knees apart until you feel a mild stretch.
- This stretches your inner thighs, which are necessary for squeezing your legs to the horse and helping you sit up straight while riding!

stretch. If the stretch lessens, lift your leg until you feel the

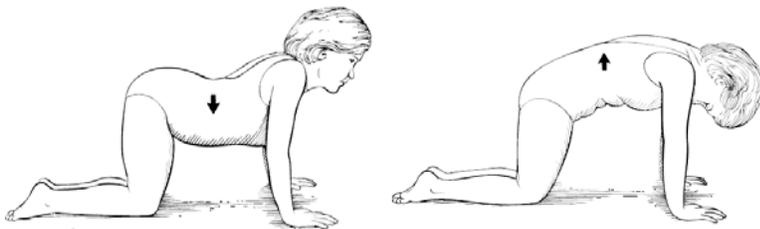
stretch. Relax.



- Lie on your back and have your partner lift up your leg approximately 45 degrees from the ground.
- This stretches the muscles in the back of your thighs, which work to keep your knees bent and therefore help keep your feet in the stirrups!



- Place your palm and forearm on the table. Keeping your palm on the table, slowly bend your wrist, moving only your forearm and elbow off the table.
- This stretches the muscles in your fingers and forearms, which are necessary for holding onto the reins!



- Kneel on your hands and knees on the floor. Slowly let your back sag to the floor. Then slowly make an arch and bring it back up.
- This stretches your back muscles, which are needed for helping you sit up straight and keep your balance on your horse!