



HORSE BLANKETS EXPLAINED



A brief explanation and description of blankets and blanketing your horse or pony.

Types of Blankets

- Rain sheets
- Fly sheets
- Quarter sheets
- Coolers
- Summer sheets
- Stable blankets
- Blanket liners
- Dress sheets
- Turnouts

This list is not all inclusive, but some of the most commonly used blankets.

To Blanket or not to Blanket

(an individual choice)

Horses are blanketed for many reasons. They include:

- ❑ Keeping the horse dry
- ❑ Keeping the clipped horse warm
- ❑ Keeping the horse clean
- ❑ Reducing grooming time
- ❑ Allowing the horse to work in the winter and dry faster by keeping his winter coat lighter.
- ❑ Keeping the hair growth of an unclipped horse to a minimum
- ❑ The horses is elderly or sick and required more help to keep warm.
- ❑ To reduce bleaching of the coat during summer months.
- ❑ To keep the horses coat appearance “show ready”

To Blanket or not to Blanket

(an individual choice)

Horses are not blanketed for many reasons.

They include:

- The horse lives a natural life outdoors and has plenty of shelter against the elements
- The horse has a long thick winter coat and does not require extra heating or protection
- The horse is not being ridden or worked
- The horse is turned out in a group which enjoys ripping each others blankets off.
- The horse has a long, thick, warm winter hair coat and is not ridden hard
- The weather is mild.

Important features

- **Durability** Horse blankets must be extremely hardy and durable to withstand energetic outdoor play, some chewing and tugging as well as all around wear and tear. No blanket is 100% wear and tear proof but diligent care and attention should extend the life of your blankets. Straps and buckles can be replaced as required. Some horses are extremely “hard” on blankets while others will wear them and leave them alone.
- **Fabric** Outdoor turnout blankets for horses must be both waterproof and breathable. The material of the blanket is based on what the blanket is designed to be used for. There are many different types of blanket materials, each with a different reason and use ranging from rip stop canvas to light cotton. Turnout blankets should be waterproof, stable blankets do not need to be.

Important Features

- **Fit** A proper fitting horse blanket may protect an equine from the elements, while also providing comfort and warmth. Well-constructed horse blankets may feature chest buckles, hook-and-loop front closures or both. Horse blanket shoppers also look for tailored shoulder gussets, adjustable belly straps, tail strings and detachable leg straps. The horse must be able to move comfortably and naturally wearing a blanket. Make sure you measure your horse correctly and talk to the tack store staff regarding your horse, they will be able to assist you with a choice. Your coach may also be able to help you fit your horse. Neck styles vary from a regular neck, a high or comfort neck or a complete neck that resembles a hood.

Important Features

- **Price** Horse blanket prices may vary considerably. Heavy winter horse blankets for turnout may range from approximately \$50 to more than \$400. Often it is possible to purchase used blankets for a reasonable price.
- **Appearance** When purchasing a new or used blanket, buyers may select certain colors and styles of horse blankets to suit their horse's color, their barn colors or just a personal favorite color. Color should never be the deciding factor when choosing the right blanket! Blankets can also be equipped with tail flaps, gussets or hoods to add extra usage and coverage.

Waterproof or Not?

- If you have purchased a blanket that you intend to use when your horse is turned out during seasons where there is rain and snow, the blanket should be waterproof. A cold, wet, soggy blanket does more harm than good.
- If the blanket is for use in the stable, as an blanket liner, stable sheet or cooler then it does not need to be waterproof.
- Once washed, blankets may require an application of a water-proofing substance to remain useful and waterproof. Always read the manufacturers directions when washing a blanket.
- No blanket will ever be 100% waterproof, be sure you check your horse often to make sure they are still dry.
- Blankets that bulge open at the shoulder will often allow water to drip down inside the blanket. Make sure that the blanket fits as well as possible.
- Periodic inspection of blankets for tears or leaks is recommended, be sure to “scotchguard” any repairs made before using.

Weights and Fills

Turnout blankets come in a variety of weights, fills and materials.

When purchasing a blanket make sure that you match the intended usage with the blanket that fits your horse's needs.

Winter blanket outer layers are measured in “denier”, essentially the higher the denier count the higher the thread weave and the durability of the material.

Blanket “fills” are the material in the blanket that adds warmth. Medium weight blankets have up to 200 grams of fill, while heavy weight blankets will have up to 420 grams of fill.

How to measure

- **Measure Your Horse**
- Find a level spot and have an assistant hold your horse. Use a flexible cloth measuring tape.
- Stand your horse squarely on all four legs and face him to the left.
- Hold the measuring tape at the center of your horse's chest (A) at the point where neck and chest meet, *and*
- Keeping your tape level, measure around the widest part of the shoulder *and* along the barrel *and* around the widest part of the hindquarter - to the side of the tail (B).
- Your tape should remain tight and level against all measuring points of the horse.



- The blanket size for your horse is the resulting measurement from point A to Point B. *If you measure 74 inches from A to B, then your horse wears a Size 74.* If your measurement is an odd number, use the next highest even number.

Rain Sheets

Rainsheet's are used to protect the horse from rain and weather and to keep them dry. They can be unlined or lined. A lined Rainsheet will also keep your horse warmer. When used over a liner or non-water proofed blanket, the rain sheet give water proofed protection to the liner.

Unlined light weight sheet can be used alone or over a liner



Fly Sheets

Light weight mesh

Fly sheets are used to protect the horse from flies and biting insects.



Quarter Sheets

Quarter sheet

Quarter sheets are used for several purposes. They keep the loin area of the horse warm while warming up or cooling down during exercise. They also provide protection from the rain while riding. Some even have “keyhole” flaps that can cover the horses legs as well. Quarter sheets can be made of fleece or wool or any other similar material.



Coolers



Fleece fitted cooler



Full wool cooler

Coolers are used to help cool out and dry a horse after work. They are also used to provide warmth to the horse while in its stall or being walked.

Summer Sheets

Light weight, unlined sheet

Summer sheets are used to help keep the horse clean at a competition or provide very light warmth when required. Summer sheets can also be used as a stable blanket.



Stable Blankets and Blanket liners



Stable Blanket

These blankets are used to provide warmth. The liner can be used alone to provide warmth in the stall or under a waterproof rain sheet . A stable blanket is used to provide warmth while the horse is stabled or for turnout in dry weather.

Quilted blanket liner



Turnout Blankets



High neck turn out



Regular neck turn out

Turnout blankets provide warmth and protection from rain to the horse while outside. They come in a variety of weights and fills, and should be waterproof.

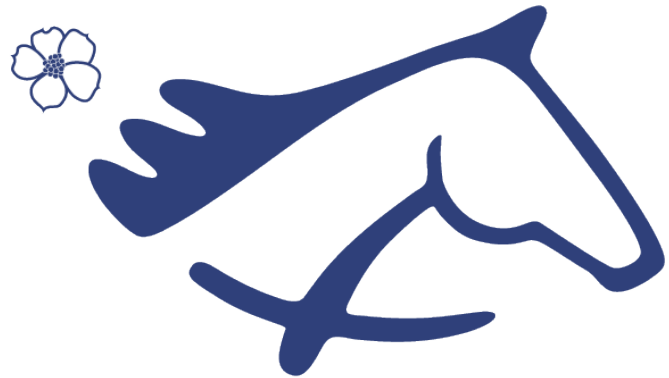
In closing.....

- ❑ Blankets should be checked regularly for wear and tear and repaired as required
- ❑ Blankets should be checked regularly for correct fit
- ❑ Blankets can be washed and dried, following the manufactures directions, or at a special horse blanket laundry facility
- ❑ Blanket rubs are an indication that the blanket may not fit correctly
- ❑ Blankets should be used for the purpose they were designed for or they may be ineffective or cause harm
- ❑ Winter blankets can be hung to dry when required, in a warm dry place. Ideally you would have 2, one on the horse and one drying.

Horse Council BC “Click and Learn” series

Blanket Basics

- Thank you to our model Brazil who was gracious enough to allow us to photograph him and his wardrobe.
- **Check out the HCBC Online Bookstore <http://store.hcbc.ca/catalog/> we carry hundreds of Equine Related titles on many subjects including blanketing horses.**
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