

#### POINTS TO REMEMBER.....

1. The training schedule of the previous page is geared to a five or six year old horse. If the horse is younger, it should be reduced considerably; if he is seven or older and has an **athletic background**, one may increase the training or decrease the time taken to arrive at week 12.
2. Besides the age and previous condition of the horse, always take into account the **temperature and terrain** that you are working in that day. Even flat terrain at 95% humidity is tough on a horse. Add deep sand and you have another debilitating effect. Therefore, one hour of deep sand, high humidity and/or high temperature work might equal three hours of trotting on firm ground at low humidity and cool temperature. Always do stretching exercises or at least **warm up horse** slowly when you start. Also do this if you take breaks on trail for more than 20 minutes.
3. If you find yourself getting **really sore** or stiff, dismount & walk for five min. at least once an hour.
4. **Sore knees** – check stirrup length & torque of stirrup. Sore ankles - check leg position & length of stirrups. Knee rubs - could be your clothing. (blue jeans' seams are really tough on knees) **Sore bottom** - ride lighter by placing more weight in your stirrups. Remember; if you or your horses are carrying extra weight.... its just harder work for both of you. Use Diaper Rash ointment generously on irritated areas... before they become irritated if possible.
5. Observe the difference in your horse's sweat. At first it may be sticky, salty and froth a lot, but, eventually, with conditioning, it should become clear and tasteless.
6. Injuries occur more often when horse is fatigued. Horses will stumble more frequently, take that bad step and increase the possibility coming up with something pulled or sprained.
7. **Stress and adaptation** are the key. Stress to the point that the tissues (hard & soft) are scarred, rest them so they might build back, and then repeat the process.
8. The longer time spent in **Long Slow Distance** build up, the stronger the tissues are going to be in the long run. They will be less likely to break down during actual competition. It is not how high the pulse gets that is terribly important, but it is how rapidly it falls when exercise stops, that tells the tale of conditioning.
11. **Interval training** means a good pace for a short time with a short rest. This is a good time to check the heart rate recovery. If you become familiar with its normal recovery and it seems especially slow, then it's time to back off. The horse may be close to injury or overly tired.
12. When training or competing in heat and humidity, **watch carefully for dehydration**. It can lead to overheating, colic, thumps, tying up and many other problems. Learn how to do a skin pinch to test for dehydration.
13. **Trotting seems to be the best training speed**, as you always have two legs on the ground with his weight more evenly distributed both front & back. After a horse develops a good long trot, a good deal of competition can be done in this speed as well.
14. The aerobic system continually makes energy available by utilizing oxygen. The anaerobic system activates when the energy required cannot be met. Remember how it feels to "**run out of wind**"? The aerobic system is cyclic and ongoing. The anaerobic path is a good backup system but it leads to a dead end, the build up of waste products, which many times causes the horse to tie up.
15. When your horse is in good condition, he is able to travel further and faster without going anaerobic. (Once they go anaerobic, they have limited amount of energy left.)
16. Make sure your **saddle fits your horse properly**. Without question, a horse can get a sore back from a bad saddle, however, poor saddle fit can actually cause lameness as well.
17. A good rule of thumb is one day of rest for every 10 miles of competition run.
18. Do **Endurance for fun!!!!** Don't spoil it by becoming too regimented, listen to your instincts.

*Good Luck & Ride Really Ride -- Darosyn Butler 2008 . 11/08*

# FOUR MONTH ENDURANCE CONDITIONING SCHEDULE

By

**Darolyn Butler -- 29,000 Miles of AERC Competition**

**National AERC Champion 1984, '86, '89, 98 PAC 86, 88, 90, 92, 97, 99, 01, 03, 05**

**Gold Medal ~ WORLD NATURE GAMES 1997**

**USET Member – World Endurance Championship 2000**

## **1st & 2nd Week-**

Ride the horse at a walk/trot 3 to 4 days a week for 1 hour each day to begin initial legging up.

## **3rd Week-**

3 to 4 days riding - 1 to 1 ½ hour each day. Walk up and down all hills and ravines, trot on all flat areas.

## **4th Week-**

3 to 4 days riding - 1 to 2 hours each day. Trot up ravines or small hills when possible and over rough or primitive terrain. Walk up some very long, steep hills, (if possible,). Always walk down all hills & ravines.

## **5th & 6th Week-**

3 to 4 days riding - Rotate the following regimen for the days you are able to ride. #1 Two hour slows trail ride. #2 Two hours primarily trot, some walking, a little cantering on primarily flat surfaces. #3 Two to three hours, primarily trot, (work on elongating trot), work on hills, and primitive rough terrain.

## **7th & 8th Week-**

3 to 4 days riding - two hours at extended trot primarily. 3rd or 4th day try 4 hour ride. Walking & trotting only.

## **9th & 10th Week-**

2 to 4 days of riding, depending on how long you are able to ride.... balance between longer, harder rides with more rest time in-between. Don't ever increase speed and distance during the same training ride. Primarily trot, salt in an occasional canter, and walk for recovery, when needed. A working heart rate between 110 & 140 is appropriate. Horse should recover to below 70 within 1 to 3 minutes anytime it is stopped.

## **11th & 12th Week-**

2 to 3 days of riding 2 to 3 hours each time. Use your judgment and horses attitude to adjust speed, length of work, and toughness of terrain to your workouts. Listen to your horse. If he seems tired or sluggish, back off for 3 or 4 days. He will not loose that much conditioning. Try to find as many different places to train that you can. Horses actually can become dull and bored with same ole trails.

**You and your partner** should now be ready to tackle a moderately paced **25 or 30-mile race**. If your horse handles that in good shape, you're ready for 50 miles within 3 to 4 weeks. Continue at least twice weekly rides totally approximately 20 to 30 miles to keep his base conditioning. If you compete at least once a month, the **competition** will act as all the other conditioning that you need.

## **Cypress Trails Equestrian Center**

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