

# Rider Weight

Riding a horse that you are too big or small for can cause welfare issues, so whether you're a horse owner, looking for a horse, or rider at your local centre, it is helpful to know how your size and shape can influence the type of horse that can carry you comfortably.

Weight can be a sensitive subject, but it is crucial that, as a rider, you consider the weight your horse can carry. This includes the weight of the tack and equipment, as well as the rider.

Most BHS Approved Riding Centres will have rider weight and potentially height limits in place for each of their ponies and horses to help protect their welfare. You'll be matched to a horse based on your size and riding ability, so it's important that you give the centre accurate information so that they can choose the most suitable horse for you.



A horse carrying a load that is too heavy for them will start showing signs of stress and pain due to the extra strain placed on their back. This may cause:

- Tension through the neck and back
- Reluctance to move forwards
- Reduced performance
- Intermittent lameness
- Stumbling
- Increased breathing
- Tiring quickly

These signs may disappear as soon as the rider dismounts, but if the horse is repeatedly placed under excess strain, it may cause permanent damage and affect their long-term soundness.



To fulfil both our statutory obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and to ensure the welfare of our horse and ponies following British Horse Society guidance upon horse weight allocations, we have rider weight limitations for each of our horses and ponies. For this reason, we reserve the right to ask acceptance of our need to ascertain rider weight to enable us, where possible, to match our clients appropriately to one of our horses or ponies. This may involve us asking you to step onto our measurement scales. Please understand that any information gained will remain confidential and we will continue to operate under our privacy policy. We apologise in advance if we are unable to achieve a compatibility match. For further information regarding the many variables involved in such decisions, please visit the BHS website for further advice.

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/stable-mates/rider-size/>