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Riding is good for your health!

Research commissioned by The British Horse Society (BHS) has proved that regular participation in horse riding is good for your health.

The research, carried out by the University of Brighton in partnership with Plumpton College looked into the health and well being benefits of horse-based sport and leisure. The findings proved that horse riding and activities associated with horse riding, such as mucking out, expend sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise – *the level of activity recommended by the Government/NHS that when achieved for 150 minutes per week will help to keep you healthy.*

Other key findings include:

- Trot on! Evidence shows that regular periods of trot work in a riding session may enhance the energy expended and the associated health benefits.
- It's good for the girls – horse riding is especially well placed to encourage physical activity among women of all ages. Evidence indicates that the vast majority of riders are female, and more than a third (37 percent) of riders who took part in the survey were above 45 years of age.
- Riders are a happy bunch! It was found that horse riding stimulates mainly positive psychological feelings.
- It takes two – horse riders are strongly motivated to take part in riding by the sense of well-being they gain from interacting with horses. This important positive psychological interaction with an animal occurs in a very few sports.

BHS Director of Access, Safety and Welfare, Mark Weston, said: "While there was anecdotal evidence available on the physical and psychological well-being and health benefits of horse-based sport and leisure, there was a lack of empirical evidence to support, or challenge, these claims. The results of the survey will provide this empirical evidence."

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The full report is available on the BHS website, www.bhs.org.uk

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