

Equestrian Accidents: Has Falling Off Your Horse Become A Bad Habit?

Recently, I came across a thread in a forum that stopped me dead in my tracks. It was about falling off. One contributor complained that she fell off regularly, sometimes even several times during a lesson. I was amazed; I couldn't quite figure it out. Was she much younger than me to be able to allow herself the luxury of falling out with such regularity and risk severe injury? Was she very good at falling, like a martial arts expert, so that she never got injured? Was each fall a real fall, or was she exaggerating the frequency and severity of her falls? I have seen "falls" that can at best accurately be described as slip-offs, where the only part of the rider that is injured is her pride. Falling off always results in injury, if not physically, then mentally. Maybe it has become a habit, for both horse and rider. Maybe it is by now even a form of communication between them. And where does the instructor come into all this, allowing it to go on? I was under the impression that a horse that dumps a rider regularly is a seriously disrespectful horse and that this sort of behavior should not be allowed to continue. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that this rider allows her horse to walk all over her, risking injury to both herself and her horse. So often, we replicate the way we behave amongst other people in the way we behave towards our horses. If we allow other people to take advantage of us, because we lack self-respect, we allow our horse to do so too. Except in the latter case, we risk serious injury; mentally and physically. Tackling this problem will not be an easy exercise. Firstly, the rider should understand that she should allow nothing but the most respectful behavior from her horse (as well as from everyone else), because she deserves it. And secondly, she should demand only the very best performance from herself. We're really good at demanding the best from others, but we often give ourselves a bit more slack. We allow excuses for our own and our horse's behavior to hold us back, and then we use those same excuses to explain why we haven't become the successful riders that we want to be. It's not surprising that we try to go a little easier on ourselves since we already feel pressured and overwhelmed by our obligations and the expectations of others. Demanding the best from ourselves is not the same as expecting perfection or never being satisfied with our riding progress. It's not about being unreasonable with ourselves or trying to push ourselves or our horses beyond our true capabilities. Demanding the best from ourselves is about being honest about our capabilities, about learning how to stretch our limits and refusing to buy into excuses that limit our potential. Today, take a look at your own accomplishments, and assess your and your horse's true strengths. Have you been pushing yourself as hard as you can? Or have you been slacking off because it seems like too much work to step out of your comfort zone? Has falling off become such a habit that it forms part of your comfort zone? If you are honest with yourself, you may realize that you have not been pushing yourself as hard as you can, and therefore you haven't accomplished as much as you are truly capable of. Changing this is as simple as demanding the best from yourself, starting right now. It all boils down to a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Riders, who have lost their riding confidence for whatever reason, should work on it pro-actively. Although there are many books available on the subject, it is difficult to increase our self-confidence all in one go. It is better to do so gradually. An equestrian self-confidence e-course, spread out over several weeks, in combination with a reputable horse training e-course, will allow both you and your horse to adapt in your own good time.

About the Author

Dr M de Clermont wrote "Ride with Supreme Self-Confidence" and edits the Equestrian Inspiration Newsletter. Subscribe at <http://www.equestrian-life-coaching.com/newsletter.html> to receive a FREE 7 day confidence-boosting e-course and more info about horse training courses.

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