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Alternatives to owning a horse

If you're a horse enthusiast who has always dreamed of owning a horse but aren't sure it's right for you, there are alternatives to give you a taste of horse ownership without the long-term commitment.

In a part-board arrangement, a rider typically enters into agreement with the horse owner to share the use of the horse for a specified time period each week. For instance, the rider may be entitled to ride the horse three days each week.

Another arrangement that more closely resembles horse ownership is leasing. Some horse owners will lease horses for a specified period of time, such as a year. During that time, the lessee will be responsible for the care and upkeep of that horse. While every lease agreement is different, that typically includes housing the horse, paying for its food and paying any associated veterinary costs.

If you think part-boarding or leasing is right for you, or if you think you are ready to own your own horse, it's important to first consult with your riding instructor or coach. They will be able to assess your abilities to determine if they think you are ready to take your riding to the next level.

Having a knowledgeable horse person you can trust is essential. They will ensure you are matched with a horse that fits your skills, goals and personality. They will also help you determine whether the horse is healthy and capable of what you will be asking it to do. They will also be able to serve as a mentor as you learn more about caring for a horse.

It's important to remember, however, that owning your own horse isn't necessary to be a good rider. Riding a variety of different horses will enable you to develop your skills and make you more adaptable. It will also give you an opportunity to meet different horses and discover what your ideal horse looks like.