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What you need to consider before buying a horse

Many horse enthusiasts dream of one day owning their own horse. Getting your own horse can be an exciting time filled with possibility and promise, but it requires commitment and isn't without its challenges. Before you buy, ask yourself if you're prepared to care for a horse?

A few things to consider...

Are you ready to commit?

While every horse enthusiast dreams of one day owning their own horse, it's not a commitment to be taken lightly or a decision to be hurried into. Horses are a lot of work and require considerable time and financial commitment. Know what you're getting into before you decide horse ownership is right for you!

Horsemanship

Even if you are ready to invest the time and money into owning your own horse, you must also have the necessary skills and knowledge to safely handle and properly care for it. While you might be an avid rider, horse ownership demands horse care knowledge and skills. Do you have an experienced horse person who can mentor you? If you don't have the knowledge or skills necessary to own a horse, there are alternatives to horse ownership, including leasing and part-boarding.

Housing your horse

Where will you keep your new horse? If you have the acreage to keep your horse on your own property, do your local bylaws and zoning permit it and do you have adequate fencing and shelter to meet a horse's needs? While keeping a horse at home can help cut down on costs, it also means you are responsible for its day-to-day care and upkeep. If that's not an option you will have to find a boarding stable in your area that can meet the needs of both you and your horse. It's always a good idea to meet the barn owners and visit their facilities so you can judge for yourself if it's right for you.

Calculate your costs

What will you need for your new horse? What you use your horse for and where it lives will determine what other items you will need to factor into your budgeting. For instance, if you are caring for the horse on your own property you will be responsible for fencing and shelter (barn, run-in shed, etc.) as well as hay, bedding, feed, pails, riding equipment and much more.

While most boarding stables provide most of the essential items your horse will need, such as pails and feed, you will still need to budget for the cost of regular veterinary care, as well as potential emergencies. Regular farrier care to keep your horse's hooves healthy is also an essential part of horse ownership that must be factored into your decisions.

While the following list can vary depending on your situation, you should expect the following costs:

- Farrier care (every 6-8 weeks)



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- Veterinary care
- Salts/minerals/supplements
- Riding equipment
- Riding lessons/training
- Insurance
- Transportation (truck/trailer), when needed

What you intend to use your horse for can also affect your costs. If you will be travelling off-site for shows or trail rides, those expenses need to be calculated into the cost of horse ownership.

Still want to saddle up?

If you have considered the time and financial commitment of owning a horse and still think you're ready to become a horse owner, the next step is finding a horse that's right for you!