

Horse Breeds and Characteristics: How Do Horse Breeds Affect Riding Styles?



Horses, just like many other animals we share the Earth with, have come in many different breeds over time. Each breed is like a unique work of art, shaped by both nature and humans. They all have their own special features - some built for strength, some for speed, and some for a combination of both. From the super strong draft horses with rippling muscles to the sleek and speedy racehorses, each breed has a specific purpose and set of skills that have helped them thrive alongside humans for centuries.

Today we'll be learning all about what makes these magnificent creatures special, exploring the incredible range of breeds out there, and discovering how they've been shaping our relationship with the natural world for centuries.

Why is it important to choose the right horse breed?

Choosing the right horse breed is very important in performing specific styles of riding successfully. Different types of horses have different behavioral characteristics. Each of them is good at some specific activities. Some are better at jumping, while others are great for long rides. Similarly, each riding style requires specific horse traits, such as athleticism, endurance, and agility. Some popular horse breeds are available that make it convenient for the riders to find the perfect match based on their requirements.

What are some popular horse breeds ideal for beginners?



If you are a beginner in horse riding, characteristics of horse breeds may affect your riding condition. Experienced riders can handle any kind of horse properly, but beginners should select the horse breed based on its temperament and smoothness in riding.

Icelandic horse

This type of horse breed is a good choice for beginners as they can have long trail rides in a relaxing way. These horses are small in size but can carry riders of all sizes. They can easily handle tough terrain with their small four-beat gait.

Haflinger

If you are a beginner-level horse rider who feels nervous about riding a big horse, you can choose this Haflinger breed. These horses are smaller in size, have a soft temperament, and are easy to control. They are great at versatile activities like dressage, pulling carriages, and trail riding. They are so calm that if you make any mistakes in handling them while riding, they will not react at all.

Missouri fox trotter

These medium-sized horse breeds can do versatile activities with their smooth, four-beat gait. They are good at trail riding, ranch work, endurance riding, and [pole bending](#). Riders prefer these breeds for pleasure riding and long trips for their calm nature and smooth movement.

Morgan

Morgan horses are great choices for riders of all skill levels. They can do dressage and both English and Western pleasure riding due to having good stamina. They are perfect for trail riding as well. This type of horse has a strong body with heavy muscles and an expressive face. They are medium in size and easy to handle by beginner riders.

Tennessee walking horse

These horses are popular for their unique gait called "[running walk](#)". They are calm in nature, intelligent, and easy to control. So, it's a good choice for beginners to perform endurance and trail riding. They allow riders to travel smoothly and easily. Breeds of Tennessee walking horses are easy to maintain, attractive in appearance, and can handle different terrain.

Which breeds of horses are best suited for experienced riders?



Choosing the horse breed based on your riding ability is really important. According to the recommendation of the breeders and experienced horse owners some horse breeds are more suitable for skilled riders.

Dutch warmblood

This breed was created by mixing the [local mares with foreign stallions](#). They have strong hind legs and a well-balanced body. They are known for their versatility and great performance in dressage, jumping, and driving.

Hanoverian

This is one of the best horse breeds coming from Germany and is suitable for equestrian sports. They are great for competitive racing but previously they were used for military and agricultural work. Their muscular limbs, strong back, and excellent movement make them great for athletic activities like dressage and jumping. They became popular in the world due to their good temperament and graceful behavior.

American quarter horse

The quarter horses originated from the United States and are well known for their versatility and smartness. They have broad chests, powerful back legs, and strong body. Their sturdy physical structure makes them excellent for competitive races, rodeo events, and [working on ranches](#). Although this type of horse is one of the most popular breeds in the world, you should [avoid some bloodlines of quarter horses](#) due to their aggressive behavior.

Irish sport horse

This breed was created by mixing Irish draught and thoroughbred horses. They are great for riders of all levels due to their soft temperament, adaptability, and solid bones. They are used for performing in [international competitions](#) due to their great performance in show jumping and eventing.

Oldenburg

Horses of this breed have powerful hind legs, wide chests, strong back, and athletic nature. They are famous for their huge body structure and versatile coat colors. They can move expressively in an athletic style and are great in dressage and show jumping.

How can you choose a horse breed for farming and pulling heavy loads?



Horse breeds with cold blood are preferred in such activities as they are big in size. Plus they have calmness and strength in their body.

Friesian

These horses originated from the Netherlands. They have a strong body with a high head and they are about fifteen hands tall. They always have a black and small mark on their forehead. Friesian horses are very popular because they are used for light agricultural work and [pulling carts](#). They have long hair on their legs, mane, and tail. Due to their sturdy body structure, they are also used for various competitions.

Percherons

Percherons are big horses, gentle in nature, but they are not slow and boring at all. They are sixteen to eighteen hands tall, with heavy muscles, big eyes, a wider nose, and gray or black in color. As they are more energetic than other horses, they are proudly used to pull heavy loads.

Ardennes

These horses are known for their calm temperament. Despite being the shortest type of draft breed, they are comparatively heavier than other horses of the same height. They are energetic but they can not move so fast like other horses. However, these horse breeds have a great pulling capacity due to having heavy and big muscles in their body.

Shires

Shire horses are more than twenty-one hands tall and they are mainly known for their body structure and strength. They have a long history of doing agricultural work and pulling heavy plows and carts. So, they are great for pulling competitions and for pleasure riding.

Suffolk punches

These horses are good for all kinds of work due to their personality and physical structure. They are great for pulling horse-drawn vehicles over long distances to carry passengers and goods. Besides that, these horses are also used for recreational driving.

What should you consider when choosing a horse?



The most important thing for choosing a horse depends on the riding goals and your skill level. Plus knowing about the characteristics of horse breeds is very important here. At the same time, you have to determine whether your weight is compatible with the horse or not. So, before choosing a horse breed you have to determine certain factors properly.

- ⇒ A horse can usually carry up to 20% of its weight without feeling tired. [If you are much heavier than the horse](#), it can not carry you comfortably. In such cases, you can choose those breeds that are sturdy and strong enough to carry your weight.
- ⇒ If you are a [beginner in horse riding](#), you can choose horses that are calm in nature, older in age, intelligent, and easy to control. On the flip side, experienced riders prefer warm-blood horses who have great speed and agility. If your child wants to handle a horse rather than ride, miniature horses might be a good option.

- ⇒ You must understand which riding style you are going to perform with the particular horse and what type of [saddle design](#) is suitable for that particular riding activity. At the same time, you must know the ways of guiding the horse with that riding style.
- ⇒ In English riding, the saddle needs to be smaller and the rider can use mouth rein to control the horse. So, this style is great for dressage and show jumping activities. On the other hand, western riding requires a bigger and deeper saddle, in which riders use neck reins to guide their horse. Suitable activities for this style are barrel racing and cutting. So, you have to select the horse breeds that are really good at those riding activities.
- ⇒ Arabian and thoroughbred horses have endurance, heavy energy, speed, and intense temperament. They are considered as hot blood horse breeds. So, they are suitable for trail riding and racing. Similarly, Quarter horses are better for Western pleasure riding due to their smooth gait and calm nature. Additionally, there are some horses who are good at multiple disciplines just like Hanoverians, who are great for eventing and dressage.

So, you can choose a horse according to your riding goal and skill level. However, older horses usually perform in more expected ways than young ones. Still, if you spend time with it, you can understand better whether it is right for you or not.

In conclusion

The characteristics of horse breeds, their size, and adequate training, all play a great role in how well the horse can perform in various riding styles. Most horse riders get confused about choosing the horse breed that they need to fulfill their riding requirements. If you are one of them and wondering what type of horse you need, we hope our small discussion can give you some helpful tips.

If you find this information useful, please leave a comment. And share this conversation with your community to spread the informative discussion among other horse enthusiasts, so they learn about the most popular horse breeds suitable for different riding styles.

Meta Heading

Curious about different horse breeds and their characteristics? Find out what makes each horse breed special!