



Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center Lesson Program



What are the prerequisites? All participants must have taken Horsemanship (aka Horse Shoe) 1 and 2 or beginner camp before being eligible to join the lesson program. If the participant already has extensive horse experience, the first lesson will be a skills assessment with review of standard equine facility safety policies and procedures. Riders should be able to safely catch, halter, lead, tie, groom, saddle, bridle, mount/dismount and have knowledge and control when riding at the walk and jog/trot.

Items Needed? Water bottle, appropriately signed liability waiver and payment method.

What to wear? Jeans, riding breeches or leggings with Western cowboy boots or English style paddock boots. Weather appropriate outer gear. Most rides are conducted in the indoor arena, but students are exposed to the weather going between indoor and barn. The barn and Indoor are insulated but not temperature controlled.



Where do I go? For the first lesson, students can meet the instructor just inside the indoor arena by the bleacher area. After the first lesson, students will be expected to come 15 minutes early to safely catch, groom and saddle their horse, followed by a 45 minute riding lesson. The last 15 minutes will be spent on un-tacking, grooming and turning the horse back out. The more time and assistance students need in grooming, saddling and putting on the bridle reduces ride time accordingly.

How quickly will they learn to go fast? In order to speed up, students must show that they have good rider positioning, control and understanding of the aids at the slower gaits. There are learning devices to help students learn naughty horse behavior before escalating in speed, gaits and quickness. Lessons proceed at the comfort level of participant, instructor and horse. This doesn't always meet expectations but generally is just right for the safety of the student.

What's required? Helmets are provided and **required** to be worn by **all** students in the participant areas - barn, pastures and arena areas, mounted and unmounted. Riding boots need to have a **normal to slick sole** (makes boot easier to come out of the stirrup in case they fall) and a **slight heel** on it (prevents the foot from going all the way through the stirrup). Riders may use their own ASTM equestrian riding helmet. Hiking boots/lug soles are not appropriate.

What happens in bad weather? Weather can play a part in our ability to safely conduct lessons. VWMP-EC is situated in the middle of a hill and attracts lightning. Although the indoor arena is lightning protected, we follow United States Equestrian Federation guidelines for cancelling activities 30 minutes after last known lightning strike within a 5 mile radius. Wet horses with metal shoes standing on moist sand in a metal building in a known lightning strike area means that lessons can get cancelled at a moment's notice. Instructors are proactive to contact students/parents to keep them informed of the weather conditions.

How does scheduling work? Call the office to schedule a reoccurring lesson time either biweekly, weekly or bimonthly. Lessons are sold in multiples at the beginning of each month. Attendance is tracked and instructors will let you know when you need to purchase more lessons. Credits for cancellations will be issued if you contact the instructor or the office at least 24 hours prior to your cancelled ride. If you do not show and do not call, your payment will be forfeited for that lesson. After 2 consecutive no show/no call lessons, you will be automatically taken off the riding schedule and your time slot is no longer guaranteed. In case of inclement weather, either party (VWMP-EC or you) may cancel and will be credited for that week's lesson. Payment may be made with credit card, cash or check. Refunds are processed through the City of Springfield and may take up to 3-4 weeks, and a \$10 processing fee is charged to your account.

Lesson Program

Private—\$45 hour

Semi-Pvt—\$40 hour

Group—\$35 hour



Western & English Riding



4007 N. Farm Road
171 Springfield, MO,
65803

(417) 833-3291



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Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center

Lesson Program

Facility information: Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center is owned by the City of Springfield and operated by the Park Board. The Springfield-Greene County Park Board strives to provide the very best in parks and recreation facilities, programs, events and services to our community. It is our goal to teach safe horsemanship so students can become independent horsemen while building an understanding of interspecies communication.

Are lessons safe? Equine activities are a high-risk sport such as downhill skiing and motorcycle riding. Safety of the participants and horses are our top concerns. Risks may be mitigated but never eliminated. Students may be asked to leave if they are not following instructions and barn safety procedures. Any deliberate misuse or abuse of the animals may cause immediate dismissal without refund.

The safety of the student is our top priority followed by the safety of the horse and the happiness of the horse as our third priority. The happiness of the horse ties directly back to the safety of the student as lesson horses often teach multiple students during the day.

Lesson horses are carefully selected, but no horse is bomb proof 100% of the time. They are a 900-1200 lbs. flight animal with a mind of their own. Learning to ride is more difficult than learning to ride a bike, motorcycle or car. Lessons horses are chosen for their calm demeanor but are still a flight or fight animal given the severity of a perceived threat.

Why is my child not progressing quicker? Please remember that these lessons are the student's journey into the wonderful world of horses. We teach at the student's pace within their ability to follow directions, exhibit necessary motor skills, strength and emotional maturity. These lessons are about the student's journey discovering horses. Instructors will pace the lesson to the confidence and comfort of the student. Going at this pace doesn't always fit with other plans or goals but is just right for the safety of the student. To advance, students must show mastery at the walk and trot not only with a schoolmaster horse but also with a more challenging mount before advancing to higher gaits. It's not about the act of going fast but having the strength, skills and emotional maturity to safely handle something going awry at higher speeds and activities.

What are the instructor qualifications? Instructors teaching advanced lessons are chosen for their years of competition experience within their riding discipline and/or certification through Certified Horsemanship Association. Current instructors are national, regional, state or local champions in team roping, dressage, western pleasure, barrel racing, hunter/jumper, showmanship, English pleasure, 4-H and endurance. Instructors teaching beginner lessons or assisting in group lessons have shown the necessary experience and understanding to teach walk/trot lessons. Instructors have regular weekly continuing education opportunities as well as formal CHA style instructor training twice a year.

What is the barn environment like? VWMP-EC is a learning barn—where good riding is good riding no matter the style of the saddle or accoutrements. We endeavor to produce independent riders at walk, jog/trot, and lope/canter in the discipline of their choosing. When students wish to push their skills either in serious competition or in horse ownership, other local barns are available to fill that niche. Naughty behavior in horses, staff, students or others is not tolerated and will be addressed immediately. A positive, caring, and nurturing environment is best for new skill learning.

