

# Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

## *Rider Manual*

*January 2008*



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[www.horsethatheal.org](http://www.horsethatheal.org)



## Receipt of Rider Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc. operates under guidelines established by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association. These guidelines allow us to provide quality riding experiences while ensuring safety for all participants. Please read this manual thoroughly and sign and return the lower portion of this page acknowledging your receipt. Please contact us at (410) 923-1187 if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

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Rider's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

I have read and understand Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.'s Rider Manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Rider, Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Program Descriptions**

MTR offers two different types of programs as outlined below.

### **Therapeutic Riding**

The Therapeutic Riding program is designed to teach individuals with physical and/or mental challenges the skills necessary to ride a horse, as well as the skills necessary to appropriately groom and tack a horse in preparation for riding. Skills taught will vary depending on the rider. Therapeutic Riding lessons are offered during all sessions and are taught by NARHA Certified therapeutic riding instructors.

Although Maryland Therapeutic Riding strives to provide all clients with individual, 45 minute lessons, limited scheduling may require that MTR schedules group lessons on certain days and times. In the event a group lesson is necessary, the lesson time will be extended from 45 minutes to 1 hour. These lessons will be organized to group riders according to age, type of disability and level of riding skill. The maximum class size is three riders.

### **Hippotherapy**

The Hippotherapy Program offers private occupational, physical, and speech therapy sessions with trained and licensed therapists. In this unique form of rehabilitation, therapists utilize the horse and the horse's movement in conjunction with traditional therapy techniques to improve functional outcomes. The horse is a wonderful motivator, and clients are usually very responsive in this type of treatment setting.

Occupational Therapy is designed for:

- individuals who wish to improve motor control, balance, attention to task, problem solving skills, cognition, and sensory processing.

Physical Therapy is designed for:

- Individuals who wish to increase their balance, strength, endurance, and flexibility, and improve their gross motor and mobility skills.

Speech Therapy is designed for:

- Individuals who wish to improve speech and language communication through augmentative communication, sign language and verbal modalities.

# Program Policies and Procedures

## Age and Weight Requirements

Individuals must be at least 2 years old before they can participate in any programs. There is no maximum age limit. Participants involved in mounted activities may not exceed 180 lbs. as we do not currently have horses that can safely carry more than that.

## Safety Requirements

Individuals may not be allowed to participate in the program if any of the following situations occur:

- Participant's condition is in any way exacerbated by riding
- An appropriate horse is no longer available for the participant
- The participant's behavior poses safety concerns (at the discretion of instructor)
- The available staff does not feel capable to safely conduct a lesson or session with the participant
- Any other situation that may have a negative impact on the program in general (at the discretion of the instructor and/or program director)

## Annual Update of Paperwork

The following forms must be completed on an **annual basis** and submitted to the MTR office **by the stated deadline** in order for individuals to participate in our programs.

- Participant's Application and Health History
- Participant's Medical History and Physician's Statement
- Participant's Consent for Release of Information
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Release of Liability
- Receipt of Rider Manual

Submission of other paperwork such as IEPs and therapy evaluations is encouraged, as these assessments are a beneficial part of lesson planning. Riders with outdated forms will not be allowed to participate.

## Scholarships

MTR offers scholarships based on financial need to eligible participants in the therapeutic riding program. Please call the barn office at 410-923-1187 for an application.

## Scheduling Policy and Fees

Registration and session dates are available on the annual session calendar attached to this packet. The current fee schedule is also attached. Registration forms for each session can be downloaded from our website at [www.HorsesThatHeal.org](http://www.HorsesThatHeal.org). We will no longer routinely send session letters in the mail to remind you of registration and session dates. If you have any difficulty downloading the forms from the website, please contact the barn office at 410-923-1187. Registrations will not be considered if the annual paperwork and annual fee have not been received. Riders who receive payment for lessons through a community agency must

secure that payment as part of the registration process. Riding days and times will be confirmed by phone and/or e-mail. If paperwork is received after the stated deadline you will be placed on a waiting list.

### Attire

All riders must wear ASTM-SEI approved headgear while mounted. Helmets are available at the barn. Long pants are preferred; shorts are permitted, but not recommended, in warm weather. Nylon pants (such as warm-up pants or ski pants) are not permitted because they are too slippery against the saddle or pad. Hard soled shoes or boots with a heel are ideal for riding, but sneakers are acceptable. Sneakers are preferred for hippotherapy. Sandals or open toed shoes are not permitted. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum.

Riders should dress appropriately for the weather conditions so they can be comfortable during lessons. Remember to layer clothing during cold weather and to wear warm coats, heavy socks, long underwear or tights, gloves, and ear protection that will fit under the riding helmet.

In warm weather, please remember to wear light-colored clothing and apply sunscreen before riding. Riders may also want to bring their own water bottles.

### Cancellation Policy and Make-ups

**Every attempt will be made to avoid cancellations. However, there are situations that are unavoidable at times, such as, equine health related issues, dangerous weather, and staffing. We appreciate your understanding and support regarding our cancellation policy.**

1. **Cancellations by Therapeutic Riders:** Therapeutic riders are eligible for one (1) **make-up lesson per session**. Additional cancellations by the rider will not be eligible for make-ups. Make-up lessons will be scheduled at the rider's regular time slot during the make-up week(s). If you cannot attend your make-up class, the lesson will be forfeited.
2. **Cancellations by MTR:** You will be notified by phone at the number(s) provided on your registration form if lessons are cancelled. Non-mounted lessons may be provided during inclement weather, so please do not assume that lessons will be cancelled unless you have been notified by the MTR office. Every attempt will be made to reschedule lessons cancelled by MTR during the make-up week at the rider's regular time slot. If you cannot attend your make-up class, the lesson will be forfeited. Credits or refunds will be given to therapeutic riders for lessons cancelled by MTR that are not able to be made-up.
3. **Cancellations by Hippotherapy Clients:** Cancellations must be made by 7:00 a.m. for morning sessions or by 12 noon for afternoon/evening sessions or a \$50.00 fee will be assessed.

### Late Arrivals

Participants who arrive **up to 15 minutes** late may have their lesson, but must understand that their lesson will still end at the regularly scheduled time. Hippotherapy clients who are late will still be charged from the scheduled start time of their session.

After the fifteen (15) **minute** waiting period has passed, the volunteers will be instructed to return the horse to the barn and the lesson will be forfeited. Hippotherapy clients will be assessed a \$50 cancellation fee.

### Parking

Dedicated rider parking is marked with signs and is available near the arenas and in the upper parking lot adjacent to the 2 small barns. Please note that the speed limit on the farm is 10 m.p.h. The Herald Harbor Road entrance is now closed. Access to the farm may now be obtained by using the Sunrise Beach Road entrance.

### **Designated Waiting Area and Observation Area**

Upon arrival for lessons, riders and family members/caregivers should gather outside their assigned mounting area. Instructors will meet riders at this location to select helmets and prepare for the lesson. Family members/caregivers and guests should use the observation areas outside the arenas for observation of lessons. Children must be under the supervision of a parent/adult at all times.

**The barn is a busy place during lesson times. For your safety and the safety of others, please do not congregate in the barn, in front of the barn, or in the pathway leading from the barn to the mounting area. This area needs to remain clear for the horses. Only staff and volunteers are permitted in the barn, paddocks, and arenas.**

## **General Barn and Farm Rules**

1. **Treats must not be offered to the horses by anyone at any time.** If you wish to donate carrots or apples, please bring them to the main office. No other types of treats will be accepted. It is important for the horse's health that these guidelines are followed. ***Volunteers, however, are allowed all forms of treats such as cookies, chips, etc. Donations of treats for our hardworking volunteers are always welcome and appreciated and may also be delivered to the main office.***
2. For safety reasons, several areas around the farm are posted "Authorized Personnel Only". Please observe these signs during your visits. **Only staff and volunteers are permitted in the barn.**
3. There is no smoking allowed on the property.
4. The speed limit on the farm is 10 m.p.h. Please drive carefully.
5. Dogs are not permitted on the property.
6. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must remain on the premises during lessons if:
  - the participant is under the age of 16, or;
  - The participant is in the care of or under the supervision of a parent, guardian or caregiver.
7. **Please supervise children at all times to ensure that they do not enter any restricted areas.** No running or fence climbing is allowed. Please encourage quiet play in the designated waiting and observation areas. This is for the safety of the children and to ensure that no horses are startled during lessons.

8. Photography is permitted as long as it is not interfering with the lesson in any way or startling the horses.

## 2008 Fee Schedule

<b><i>Item</i></b>	<b><i>Fee</i></b>	<b><i>Payment Schedule</i></b>
<b>Annual Registration Fee</b>	<b>\$50 per family</b>	<b>due prior to first lessons/sessions in 2008</b>
<b>Individual Therapeutic Riding</b> (class length 45 minutes)	<b>\$60 per class; total fee varies based on number of weeks in the session</b>	<b>total fee due with registration (registration will not be processed without receipt of total fee)</b>
<b>Hippotherapy: Individual Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy Sessions</b>	<b>as recommended by therapist: \$62.50 for 30 min. \$93.75 for 45 min. \$125 for 60 min.</b>	<b>due at the completion of each treatment</b>

Payment may be made via check or credit card. Scholarship applications (based on financial need) are available for those participating in therapeutic riding. Scholarship applications must be updated on an annual basis.

MTR maintains a listing of community resources that may assist with full or partial payment for riding or hippotherapy. A good starting place for accessing resources is to submit an application to the Developmental Disabilities Administration. To obtain more information, contact the regional office for your county listed on their web page at [www.ddamaryland.org](http://www.ddamaryland.org).

Many clients in our hippotherapy program are receiving reimbursement from their insurance companies for occupational, physical, and speech therapy sessions. The therapists will provide you with any paperwork necessary to facilitate the reimbursement process.