

15 CRUCIAL TIPS TO BUYING A CUTTING HORSE



CUTTING HORSE TRAINING ONLINE

*Remember to
Budget ALL Your
Expenses*



► An expensive horse isn't always the best horse, nor is the cheapest horse always the least competitive. BUT the cheaper the horse, the more problems you often acquire!



**DO NOT GET IN A HURRY,
DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON
THE HORSE'S HISTORY:**

NCHA, Equistat (will report all earnings, placings, show & rider), Owners, Trainers, etc.

► See the [CHTO budget tool](#) for a full list of monthly expenses

1. Identify and be realistic about what your goals are with the sport of cutting:

- What is my *riding ability*?
- *How much can I afford* to spend on a horse or afford to lose? Due to age sometimes you may have to sell a horse for less than you purchased it for.
- What level of competition do I want *this horse* for?

2. Sometimes purchasing the horse can be the cheapest part.

An example of **monthly** expenses include but are not limited to; (see the [CHTO budget tool](#) for a full list):

- Training approx \$1,200
- Entries approx \$1,200 (4 weekend shows)
- Transport to shows approx \$300 (@ 50c per mile)
- Vet/farrier/miscellaneous \$250

3. Ride with a trainer before you purchase so they know what level of rider you are, and what classes you should compete in so they can advise you on a horse.

► They will need to know how much you wish to spend on a horse so they know where to start looking.

4. Make the effort to try several horses.

► *They will all feel different.* The more you try, the more you will



7. Be realistic about how many times a week you are going to practice and work your horse, given your work schedule.



identify with your trainer what type of horse you get on with better. Testing a lot of horses will also help hone your gut instincts on horses that will suit you.

For example:

- You may ride a smaller horse better than a bigger horse
- You may like the feel of a horse that is more relaxed on a cow versus a hot horse
- We all like cowy horses but if you don't know how to use your feet properly yet, you may not be able to control them
- Get the horse that meets you where you are at now, **not where you want to be**, that horse will come later when you are ready.



5. Get someone to video you when you try them, so you can go home and watch it.

- Have your trainer work the horse as well because he or she needs to feel the horse and they need to watch you ride it. Trust your trainer on this.

➤ This again helps determine what mindset of horse you will need to fit into your program. For example, a hot minded horse that needs a lot of loping and attention each time you ride, may not be a practical choice for you.

6. Be aware of any soundness issues.

- Always have your vet check any horse you are interested in. Remember there are horses that may have a potential minor issue on their X-rays, however if they are managed correctly, they may never have any problems and can still take you to the winner's circle.

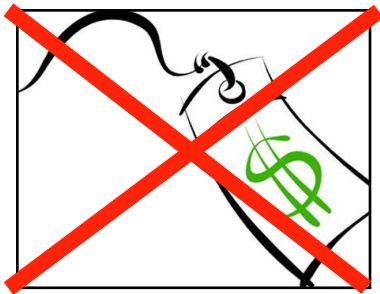


8. If you can afford it, having a practice horse, or at least access to one, is really important.

► This is a horse that you can ride on the flag at home or cattle by yourself where you can be more focused on your timing and feel and not jeopardize the training that has gone into your competition horse.



► Talk to your trainer, many times they will have a practice horse you can work. This can be hard to comprehend however it is very natural for a horse to learn how it can cheat if not worked consistently. It's a bit like when the boss is away, sometimes employees lose their edge.



9. Never buy a horse on price alone or because you think you're getting a good deal. *It could cost you more in the long run.*

► *Things that affect the value of the horse include:*

- **Bloodlines** - How closely is the horse related to proven performers? The closer it is, the higher the value.
- **Performance** - The horse's own history of competition (this is obviously for horses aged 3 and up). The more they have won, the more they can be worth. A horse is approximately worth the total of prize money it has won.
- **Age** - In cutting, a young horse with excellent breeding can often be worth more than when it is older. Once a horse moves past 6 years of age and can no longer compete in



the major aged events, its value generally goes down as there is less opportunity to recoup your purchase price through competition winnings. However, solid well trained horses can still fetch strong prices past this age.

- **Training** - The amount of training a horse has had increases its value, however a horse passed around multiple trainers may lose value.
- **Sex** - Mares and Stallions will always bring higher prices because of their breeding potential. Proven producers are even more valuable than just good bloodlines.



- **Trends** - Certain bloodlines and even training styles can gain popularity at different times which creates a high demand for particular horses, thus driving up their prices.

10. Places to find a horse. There are many ways you can search for a cutting horse:

- **Horse auctions**, such as the [NCHA Western Bloodstock](#) sales held at the major aged events in Fort Worth down to local horse sales in your area. Another auction house that holds four sales a year is [Triangle Horse Sales](#). All sales feature cutting horses which are demonstrated on either live cows or a mechanical cow.



- Study the sales book first with your trainer, look at the bloodlines, watch it move or visit it before the sale, look at the x-rays, have your vet take a look and set your price limit so you don't make an emotional decision and get carried away during bidding.
- There are different types of sales including Production, Consignment, & Dispersal. There are also online auctions such as [prohorseservices.com](#) and more.

- **Breeders.** Contact breeders and ask them if they have any horses of the age, size, temperament and price range you are looking for. This is often more appropriate for intermediate and advanced riders as breeders will generally be selling younger horses. It is a great way however to build your knowledge of bloodlines by talking with breeders about the horses and traits and what their horses have won etc.
- **Owners.** The owner can provide the horse's performance history and also may give helpful information regarding training and habits. Horsealley.com has a list of cutting horse ranches as does cuttinghorsecentral.com/ranches



- **Trainers.** If trainers don't personally own or have a client that is selling a horse, they are always connected to a wider cutting network to find a horse for you. This makes them an agent and as such they will charge a commission (generally 5%-10% of purchase price) for the service. Remember, this is money well-spent as they will generally find you the best horse to suit your needs. This avenue is probably one of, if not the most common way, people buy their cutting horses.
 - ▶ If you buy through a trainer, consider keeping the horse with the same trainer as changing the horse's program may introduce problems. Consistency is important.
- **Classifieds,** both print and online. Make sure you see a video of the horse if you can't visit the horse yourself. Ride it there and ask if you can take it home to try it or even compete on it at your local show before purchasing.

11. The AQHA has some great info on its site about *questions to ask the seller*, such as:



- How much has the horse been ridden the past year?
- Who has ridden the horse the most – trainer, amateur, youth?
- How easy is the horse to handle after being turned out for a while and not ridden? What kind of equipment has been used? (bit, special equipment, i.e. martingale tie-down)

Some good sources for cutting horses include:



cuttinghorsesforsale.com



ranchworldads.com



aqha.equine.com



cuttinghorsecentral.com

DREAMHORSE.COM



dreamhorse.com

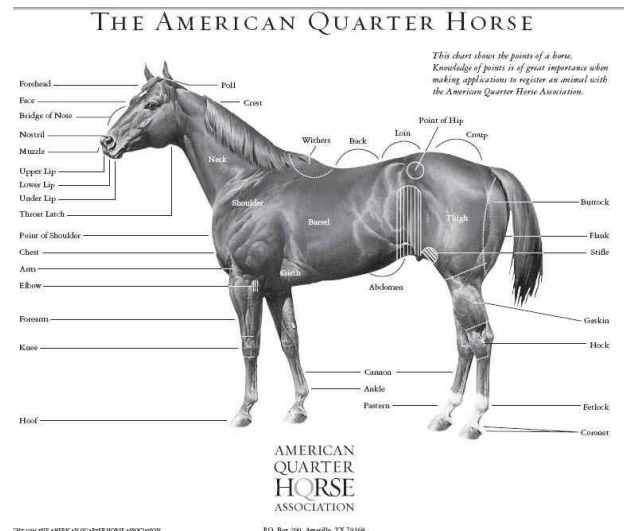


www.horsealley.com/

- How much training has the horse received and in what areas?
- Where has the horse been stalled?
- What type of feed and roughage does the horse eat and what is the feeding schedule?
- What kind of health (good,bad) has the horse had during the past year?
- Has the horse ever had any colic episodes?
- How often is the horse dewormed or shod?
- Does the horse have any vices (i.e., cribbing, biting, trailer shyness, kicking, pawing, pacing)?
- How often has the horse been away from home, and what is his behavior in different surroundings?
- How does the horse react when being shod, clipped or dewormed?
- Has the horse been vaccinated, have a coggins, etc.?
- Has the horse had any medication today?
- **And the best question – Why is the horse for sale?**

12. Evaluating a horse. Besides your riding ability, your goals and your budget, there are 3 main things to consider when looking at a horse to buy. They are conformation, movement and disposition.

- **Conformation** is all about how the horse is put together, from bone structure to proportions



and muscling.

While conformation is very important as horses with good conformation for cutting will tend to break down less, there are always exceptions to the rule.



► CHTO has a brilliant video on this with world renowned expert Dr Jim Heird.
[Click HERE to watch.](#)



- **Movement** looks at how easily a horse can walk, trot, lope, and gallop, turn, change leads and much more. A horse that is athletic will generally have great natural balance (like a human athlete) and display grace in their movements. They will often show a preference for loping on a left or right lead, but should ideally be able to effortlessly change the lead make transitions when asked.



- **Disposition** or temperament of a horse can be obvious or subtle depending on the horse. Such traits include, nervousness, calmness, willingness to learn, laziness, cowness, rudeness, resistant, hot-headedness, etc. Another thing to consider is whether or not you have any chemistry together. Don't make the mistake of buying an athletic, well bred horse, only to not get along with it and have it sour your cutting experience or lose your confidence.



13. Always be sure a horse has a negative Coggins test before you purchase.

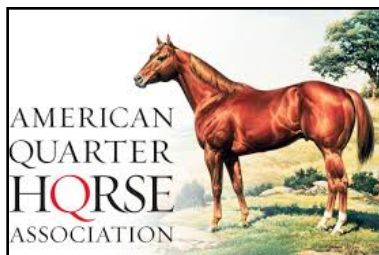
THE COGGINS TEST

- The only way to accurately determine whether a horse is infected with the EIA virus is by a serum test.
- The most commonly used method is the Coggins test, also known as the agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID) test.
- Each year more than a million horses are screened for EIA by this test.

► Ask to see the certificate of the blood test. Check its vaccination history.

14. Make sure you get the AQHA registration papers for the horse once you have purchased and make sure the seller notifies the AQHA of the transfer of ownership before you plan to compete.

► If the horse is unregistered, then this is unnecessary, however you will still be required to prove ownership to the NCHA before competing.



15. For a more in-depth document about purchasing a quarter horse - [click through to the AQHA's guide here.](#)

► Last of all, again, be realistic about your budget, time, and level of riding ability. This is a great sport on an amazing animal however it feels very demanding if you are not having fun and extremely stressful if you have overstretched your budget.

