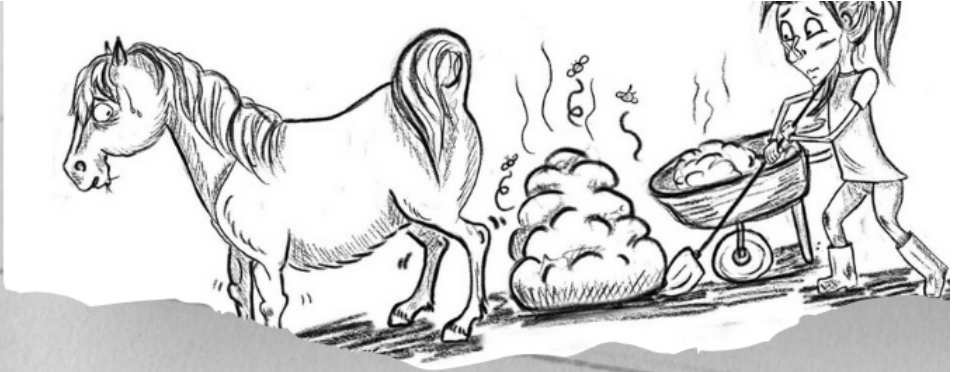
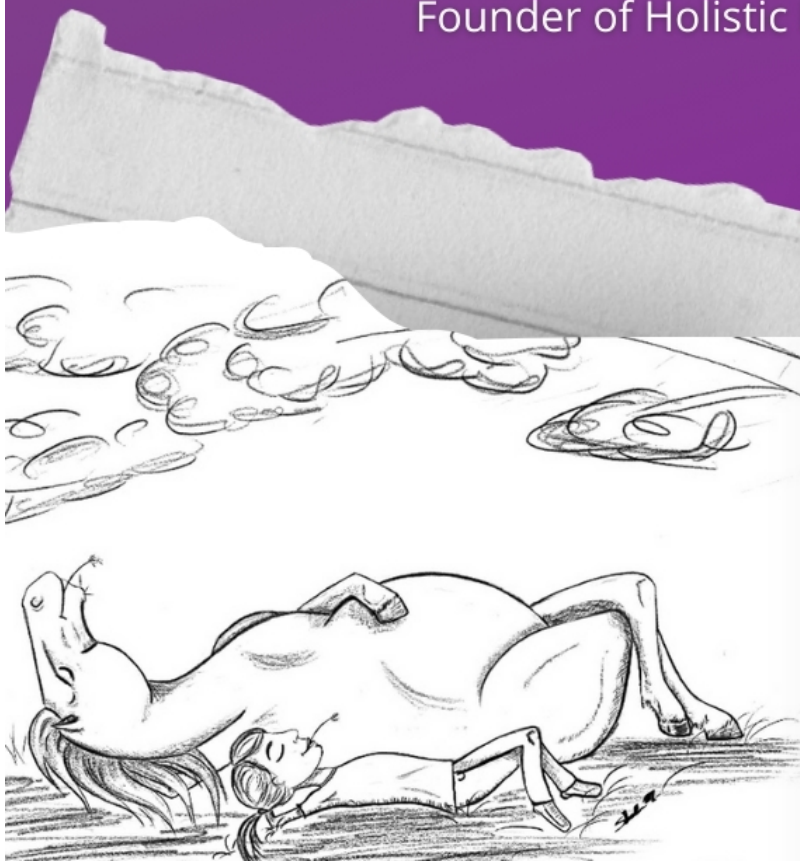




Horse 101

**Everything You Wish You
Had Known Before You Got
Your First Horse**

Written by April Love
Founder of Holistic Horseworks



HORSE 101:
EVERYTHING YOU
WISH YOU HAD
KNOWN BEFORE YOU
GOT YOUR FIRST
HORSE

*(...And Many A-Ha Moments for Experienced Horse
Owners)*

April Love

Holistic Horseworks LLC

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Horse 101:
Everything You Wish You Had Known Before You Got Your First Horse

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This book is for all the dedicated horse lovers who have felt the frustration of buying products that sounded great but didn't help their beloved horses or who've invested a fortune in horse training only to end up with a horse that wasn't any better – maybe even worse!

With a touch of humor, this little book provides insight into doing things better for your horses right from the start. Plus, it saves you money in the long run. After all, preventing an issue is way cheaper than treating one later on.

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YOUR FIRST HORSE

Chapter 1

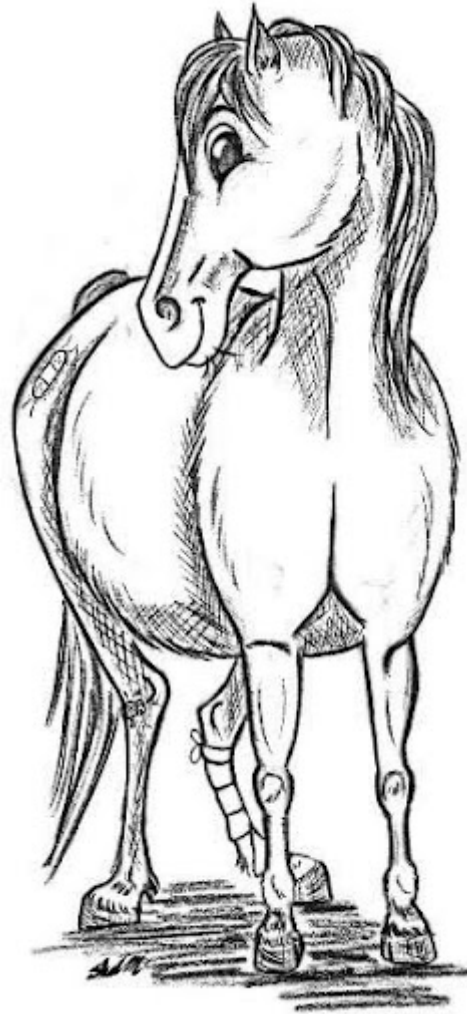


Have you ever been so mesmerized by a horse that you felt an incredible pull to make them a part of your life? Maybe it was love at first sight, and you couldn't resist those big, brown, soft eyes gazing at you adoringly. Maybe your first horse came into your life unexpectedly, or maybe you were compelled to save a four-legged friend. Whatever the case, your journey into horse ownership has begun.

Horses, with their majestic presence, don't understand the concept of being "owned." Moving to a new home can be challenging

for them— a shift in haven, a departure from herd buddies, and the need to forge new friendships can stir up emotions and upset their digestion, a common issue that arises with rehoming. Why is digestion important, you ask? Horses cannot regurgitate, so a stressed tummy can lead to colic, a potentially painful and expensive veterinary issue.

About 25 years ago, I fell in love with a beautiful 5-year-old gray Arabian mare named Jerusha before I knew a lot about taking care of horses. I spotted her at a barn where I volunteered and fell in love. I couldn't stop thinking about her.



I started riding when I was 10 and kept at it until I was 17, mostly without a saddle, just having fun. Fast forward to when I turned 30, and I found myself drawn back to horses because I felt something was missing in my life. Maybe you can relate: the kids are all grown up, and as we get older, the desire to have a horse in our lives gets stronger. They love you no matter what, never complain, and are always happy to see you, especially if you have a treat.

Jerusha made me feel complete. She'd nicker at me when I visited, knowing I always brought carrots, something her old owners didn't do. I didn't know she wasn't what people call a "broken" horse. I

didn't want a "broken" horse; I wanted a "fixed" one, or so I thought. Looking back, it still makes me laugh.

She reared up on her hind legs the first time I hopped on her back without a saddle. I thought it was fun! Ah, the enthusiasm of youth. Luckily, she already loved me, so neither of us got hurt. Horses are amazing. They give so much love to those lucky enough to be loved by them.

After I finished paying her high price tag— especially for an unbroken horse— I found Jerusha a place closer to home. Little did I know she had never been in a horse trailer or away from where she was born.

When I moved her to the new place and changed her feed, she got nervous and colicked that night. This was 25 years ago, with no smartphones or Google to help. I had to use a phone booth to call the person I bought her from and do lots of hand walking to keep her moving.



Someone suggested giving her Coca-Cola to help with her colic. I was willing to try anything. Very challenging to pour the soda into her mouth without making a mess. I probably spilled more than she swallowed, but we formed a special bond that night.

Now that I know better making a wet mash with

soaked bran or beet pulp is a good idea before and after moving horses, especially for the first few days. Toss in a teaspoon of iodized salt, preferably a natural one. Epsom salt can also help their gut adjust to new feed.

Horses should be pooping at least five to ten times a day, if not more. If there's no poop after you move them in, that's the cue to call the vet. I have a YouTube video on what to do while waiting for the vet, including some yoga moves to help the horse expel gas. Just a tip: don't stand directly behind the horse when doing these moves!

Grabbing half to a whole bale of hay from the previous owner, the kind the horse is used to, is a smart move while transitioning to a new place.

Treat them with kindness, love, and treats; they might decide they own you!

Now, let's talk about some essentials for a safe riding buddy who stays rideable longer with fewer accidents, lameness issues, saddle fitting problems, and vet bills. Interested?

Where to begin? Nose to tail? Temperament? Saddle fit? Nutrition? Hooves? The Internet is packed with advice on these topics. You could spend months checking websites, YouTube, and Facebook for guidance.



Keep in mind that everyone at the barn has their opinions. Watch out for "barn politics"—some folks get touchy about advice or if you

don't follow theirs. No matter how hard you try, someone might say you're doing it wrong. Trust your intuition and judgment.

Since you're here with me now, here's my quick guide to get you started...