

MAINTENANCE OF YOUR OUTDOOR RUG

Rugs should be removed and both rug and horse checked daily. They should never be put on a wet horse. When you buy a new rug do not throw away your old one!

There will come a time when exceptionally rough weather or accidental damage will mean that you need a replacement for a few days while your main rug is dried or repaired.

Do not wait until things go wrong before having a **Contingency Plan**. You should not expect to go through the whole winter with just one rug.

Straps, fittings and stitching should be checked and cleaned regularly. Rugs need reproofing from time to time to maintain their weather resistance.

Ask your retailer to recommend a suitable proofer and/or sealer for the rug you have chosen or take your rug to a reputable rug care company.

At the end of the season a rug should be thoroughly dried and cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions. You may also need to have any damage repaired before the next season.

If you decide to wash your horse's rug at home remove excess dirt and hand or machine wash following the manufacturer's washing instructions.

Use only cool wash temperatures (Max 30°C, 85F) and a mild, non biological soap – anything else may compromise the waterproof properties of turnout rugs. Drip or line dry, not tumble dry. Do not dry clean.

Please note: Hand washing will help prolong the life of your rug's waterproof/breathable coating.

Rugs should be kept in a dry airy place until ready for use. Many rugs now come with their own strong plastic carry bag, ideal for storage.



WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A PROBLEM

Although all BETA manufacturers do their best to maintain the highest standards of quality materials and production, it is possible that the odd manufacturing or material fault can slip through.

Always keep the till receipt of major purchases such as rugs. A retailer will need proof of purchase before accepting your query. Remember, you do not have an automatic right of replacement and please accept that the rug may have to be left with the retailer so that he may either effect repairs or refer the problem back to

the manufacturer (see contingency plan). A manufacturer does not have to rectify a 'faulty' rug until he has inspected it and is satisfied that either the materials or the production were at 'fault'.

Please remember that when returning your rug for repair or replacement it should be clean and dry. It is not only extremely unpleasant for someone to have to handle a manure stained muddy rug but it also contravenes the Health and Safety at Work Act. You may see the sign below displayed in store.

REPAIRS & RETURNS

DUE TO THE HEALTH HAZARD AND HYGIENIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED WITH THE REPAIRING OF HORSE CLOTHING AND ALLIED PRODUCTS IT IS REGRETTED THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO SERVICE ANY EQUIPMENT UNLESS IT IS CLEAN AND DRY
HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1972

BETA manufacturers and retailers supply rugs that are made from the best quality materials commensurate with the competitive price and the job they are to perform. In the event of a genuine complaint they can be relied upon to act responsibly. If however, you are not satisfied you have the following course of action available to you: -

- 1) Your contract is with the retailer who supplied the rug. The retailer is your first point of contact.
- 2) If you are not satisfied write direct to the manufacturer but be aware that they may refer you back to the retailer with whom you have the contract.
- 3) Take the case to BETA who will attempt to mediate (BETA's address is at the back of this leaflet).
- 4) Take the case to the Trading Standards Office.
- 5) Take the case to Court.

THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES ARE MEMBERS OF BETA AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS LEAFLET FOR YOUR BENEFIT.



GUIDE TO PURCHASING YOUR OUTDOOR RUG



The British Equestrian Trade Association represents most of the UK's equestrian manufacturers, distributors and a great many of its retailers, over 800 companies in all. BETA aims to raise standards of supply, retail and safety. This leaflet is one example of the way BETA serves the riding and horseowning public.

British Equestrian Trade Association
East Wing, Stockeld Park, Wetherby, LS22 4AW
Tel: 01937 587062 www.beta-uk.org email: info@beta-uk.org

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OUTDOOR RUG

There are many different types of rug on the market manufactured to suit a variety of purposes. You should be quite clear that you are buying a rug suitable for your purposes. The following glossary of terms will give you an indication of what particular purpose a rug was intended for: -

BREATHABLE – this refers to the capability of the rug to allow sweat and moisture to pass from the horse's skin to the outside. This is achieved by a membrane or coating (hydrophilic layer) allowing tiny water molecules or vapour to be drawn away from the horse's skin and through to the outer material.

CHEST OR BREAST STRAPS – self-explanatory – nearly every rug has either one or two of these fastening across the chest of the horse.

CROSS SURCINGLES – straps that cross underneath the belly of the horse and physically hold the rug in position. Rugs using this system do not normally need to be so deep.

DENIER – Denier is the weight of yarn in a given area of fabric. The higher the denier, the heavier and tougher the fabric. A 1200 + denier is super strong whilst 600 is everyday strength.

EXTRA DEEP – a rug that extends further down the horse to give more protection to the belly and the legs.

FILLET STRINGS/STRAPS – A fitting attached to D-rings either side of the rug's rear edge that goes loosely under the horse's tail to help prevent the rug blowing up and forward, particularly in windy conditions. Some fillet strings/straps are usefully detachable with clips for washing.

LEG STRAPS – straps that are anchored both on the rear edge of the rug on the quarters and the main body of the rug sits just beyond the stifle. They also help keep the rug in position.

NECK COVER – Useful for extra protection from severe weather, these have the added benefit of keeping the mane clean and laid flat. Available either as integral, attached permanently to the rug, or as optional, the latter usually have zipped or Velcro fastenings with which to attach them to the rug.

NECK COVERAGE – many rugs now come with higher neck options often described as half or high necks. This gives added protection without the degree of warmth offered by a full neck cover and without the added weight over the withers.

NEW ZEALAND RUG – New Zealand is an older term usually referring to a canvas rug suitable for horses turned out in the field.

RIPSTOP – refers to the material and describes a way of modifying the wrap and weft of a fabric to enable it to contain rips and tears. Usually a man-made toughened fabric, this does not mean that it is impossible to rip. It will not stop barbed wire tears.

TAPED SEAMS – this refers to a taping method used to cover seams on the inside of the rug to provide a physical barrier to prevent water leaking through. This can only be done with the rug fabric and not with any fittings or badges stitched onto the rug.

TEARPROOFING – although BETA manufacturers use materials and fittings suitable for a horse's strength, everything used must have a breaking point for your



horse's safety. It would be dangerous to the horse to make a rug so strong that it would not give way when the horse gets caught up or trapped in an obstacle. To protect your horse and its rug you should ensure that it cannot come into contact with barbed wire or sharp projections.

TURNOUT RUG – a generic term that can encompass both New Zealands and/or Paddock Rugs. Check with your retailer if you are not sure.

WATERPROOF/WATER RESISTANT – this refers to the outer fabric of the rug, which will not allow water to pass from the outside through to the horse's skin. Any rug advertised as waterproof is referring to the fabric used for the rug, rather than the whole product. This is because rugs contain stitching and fastenings that cannot be tape seamed to prevent water penetration, especially around tail flaps or

surcingles. Although threads swell to fill stitching holes, movement is just as likely to stretch the seams. Ideally you should always be prepared to change a rug that has been subjected to hours of heavy rain for a spare dry one and dry off the original.

WEIGHT/WARMTH – the warmth of a rug is usually indicated by the weight of insulation (Polyfill) that is measured in grams – the higher the grams the more insulating filling there is per square metre. A 250gm + model, generally known as heavyweight, will be extremely warm. 160 – 250gm fill is considered medium weight, suitable for chilly Spring and Autumn nights, while up to 150gm is lightweight for summer use or as an under rug for extra layering. Some ultra light weight rugs have just 40gm of insulating filling, making them more valuable as a means of keeping the horse dry rather than warm.

HOW TO BUY THE RIGHT SIZE

It is necessary when buying and using your outdoor rugs to bear the following points in mind.

Fit is all important. Rugs are usually sized in three inch increments. The measurement refers to the distance from the centre of the chest of the horse around the body of the horse to the rear of the quarters where you expect the rug to finish. As horses of any given size vary so much in girth and build, it is essential to take these measurements before purchasing your rug. Do though check the sizing and fitting instructions when buying a new brand of rug – as with your own clothing, various brands may fit differently.

Once you have the right size, it is important to fit and fasten the rug correctly.

A rug will not stay in place unless it fits properly. A badly fitting rug will slip and be strained to breaking point. If too big, a rug is more likely to cause rubs than one that is too small.

It is essential that a rug should fit well on the withers and shoulders so that the horse can move freely underneath the fabric without the rug slipping back. If this happens the rug is put under strain and can cause sore areas.

Once you have ascertained that the rug fits well around the neck, pull the rug into position along the horse's back so that the coat lies flat. If the seam between the tail flap and the rug sits below the top of the tail, the rug may be too big.

With rugs using leg straps – take the left leg strap, pass between the hind legs and fasten it on the left hand side. Take the right leg strap, pass it between the hind legs and through the loop made by the left strap and fasten to the right hand side (See B).

Adjust the leg straps equally until there is room for the width of one hand (4-5") between the leg straps and the horse's thigh. This is to allow freedom of movement. The leg straps are linked to prevent rubbing and act with each other to pull the rug into place. (See C). When the horse is grazing, the leg straps should be close to its thighs to keep the rug in position.

If you fit the rug as we have described here it will displace very little through movement and rolling. If the leg straps are too loose, the rug will slip.

When fitting a rug with cross surcingles care should be taken to ensure that the straps of the cross surcingle cross in the centre of the horse's belly – well forward of the horse's stifle. i.e. so that the crossed straps are on the roundest part of his body. Again, there should be a hand's breadth between the straps and the horse's body.

Horses come in a variety of shapes and sizes. If a horse is exceptionally broad you may require a chest extender accessory, rather than upsizing to a larger fit. Alternatively, it may be necessary to look at several different makes or styles. As in human clothing some styles or makes fit better than others. When purchasing your rug check with your retailer that in event of that particular model not fitting your horse, he will exchange it.



Illustration A
Your rug should fit well up on the neck above the withers.



Illustration B
The preferred method of fastening leg straps.



Illustration C
Approx. 1 hand's width between the leg straps and the horse's thigh.