

The five freedoms...

At Redwings equine welfare is at the forefront of everything we do. We carry out rescues when a horse or pony is in trouble, we offer advice to horse owners when they need it and we try to educate people so they have the best possible knowledge to help them care for their horses properly. We hope that by doing these things we can improve the lives of horses everywhere so that one day the need for a sanctuary like ours will no longer exist because horses and ponies will be free from the fear of being neglected or hurt. Until that day comes we will continue to do what ever we can.

1. Freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition

Every living creature requires food and water to survive. Many of the ponies we rescue come from an environment where they have not had enough food or water and as a result are very ill.

Food is used to provide energy, to keep them warm, to build muscle tone and to help fight illness.

Food must be the right sort and given in the right quantities. Diet needs to be carefully worked out depending on breed, age, health and the amount of work they do.

Water is essential, without it a horse will die within 2 – 3 days. Every part of their body needs water to function including their brain, heart, liver, muscles and their nervous system.



2. Freedom from pain, injury and disease.

Most animals will suffer from illness at some point in their lives, just like people do. Even those that are well cared for can become unwell.

Owners still have an important duty to help their horse stay fit and healthy by taking preventative measures and getting veterinary help when necessary.

We can help in many ways to prevent illness in our horses. Regular worming, vaccinating, keeping fields and stables safe and clean, providing the right amount of food and exercise will all help to keep your horse healthy.

Anyone thinking of taking on any animal should know exactly what they need to do to keep that animal healthy.

3. Freedom from discomfort

Different things can cause discomfort. Being too hot or too cold, not having a suitable living environment or wearing rugs or tack that don't fit properly can all cause discomfort. Long-term discomfort can lead to pain or injury.

Horses are outside animals and most are fairly hardy but they still need some kind of shelter to protect them from the elements. Some horses can be much more susceptible to the cold than others. Each should have their needs assessed on an individual basis.

Anything that a horse wears, be it a rug, headcollar, bridle or saddle, needs to fit correctly and be cleaned regularly.

Horses that are in work should only be asked to do what they are capable of and what they enjoy doing.



4. Freedom from fear and distress

It is very important to care for your horse's mental health as well as his physical wellbeing. Horses are naturally nervous creatures and become anxious about life very easily. Something as simple as a plastic bag caught in a hedge can be very frightening to a horse as while we know it is harmless they have no idea what it is and think it might be a monster about to jump out and eat them!

They are very sensitive to how they are handled and treated. You will rarely get a positive response from hitting or shouting at your horse, it will only make them more scared and not want to be near you. Winning your horse's trust is the best way to gain its co-operation so you can begin to enjoy each other's company.

5. Freedom to express natural behaviour

Horses can't speak so they need to be able to freely act out how they are feeling. Their natural instincts are to be free and run away from what scares them.

It is nearly impossible to provide this kind of lifestyle for a domestic horse. We can however make it as natural as possible for them by ensuring they have at least one friend to interact with and a field to run around in for at least some of the day. Doing those things will help your horse to be able to express his natural behaviour and keep him happy and healthy.



For more information on equine welfare please visit our website www.redwings.co.uk and click on our welfare pages. We have lots of info available to download for free!