



Tips for Shiny Horses

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It seems like people always ask me “how do you make your horse so shiny?” It’s hard to come up with one single reason - there are many! I have a couple tricks up my sleeve and some good common sense that I’m happy to share.

- 1) Curry every day! Even when I don’t have the time to do as thorough a grooming job as I would like, I always curry my horse to bring all the oils to the surface. This is important, to aggravate and activate the skin and create circulation, which in turn helps create a shiny coat.
- 2) In the summer when we seem to regularly find ourselves rinsing our horses off after a workout, coats can become very dry; but, if you spray a little white vinegar on their coat after each bath or rinse, it seems to help the coat retain moisture. Vinegar is also a great natural disinfectant, so I spray legs as much as possible to help prevent scratches. Since I have been doing that, we haven’t had any incidences of scratches at all! (knock on wood...)
- 3) In my fly spray I put a little (and I do mean little) bit of ‘Skin So Soft’ to, once again, keep moisture in the hair.
- 4) In the summer my horse wears a head to tail flysheet. He wears the ‘Rambo Protector’ fly sheet, and it has been very durable in my experience. It is a light color, which helps keep the sun from bleaching his hair, and has very supple fabric which helps prevent rubs.
- 5) In the winter I use ‘Healthy Hair Care’ spray to help keep moisture in the coat. This also works well to help prevent rubs on the horse’s sides caused by our legs from riding, or on their shoulders from wearing blankets all day every day. A great side effect is that it helps to control static in the dry climate we have.
- 6) My horse eats whole flax seeds that have been soaked first with his grain. Flax is great for a lot of things, including digestion and weight control, but it is also great for healthy shiny coats. Note that whole seeds need to be soaked and are much more nutrient rich than ground flax. Most feed stores carry whole flax seeds.
- 7) Lastly, I try to bath my horse every week. There is some debate here on whether that helps or hinders a great coat. I use ‘Orvus’ shampoo normally, and sometimes I use the ‘Gallop’ shampoo that is color-specific. I think the key to bathing is not to overdo it, and to keep them in the shade to dry. I think a regular bath helps because the dirt that stays on them will dry out their skin and coat – best to get that off.

Most of these things don’t require much thought, as they have become part of a regular routine. But if you keep a spray bottle of vinegar and ‘Healthy Hair Care’ handy and use them often, along with a bath once a week, you will be doing pretty well. For best results, you can’t beat the curry comb!

Keep in mind if your horse is unhealthy on the inside none of this will make a difference. Like people, if a horse is healthy on the inside, they will have a good coat on the outside. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian and nutritionist if your horse’s coat is dull and you have concerns.

Hope this helps. Groom on!