

Leasing- The Right Choice for You?

Is it time to lease?

The only way to know is to speak with your/ your child's trainer. Leasing is largely a personal decision based upon several factors such as learning style, goals, finances, and time restraints.

Why half lease?

Half leases are a great way for riders to begin the lease/ owning process. It allows riders to bond with one horse and have a horse that they can call "their own" without the cost and commitment of owning. For those riders who are more comfortable and/or progress more quickly when they work with one horse, this guarantees that they will get to ride the same horse each ride. It also allows the rider to learn the intricacies of one horse on a greater level than they would if they rode several horses each week.

When a rider half leases, the horse either remains in the school program the four days that it is not ridden by the lessee or can be half leased out by another rider. If the horse has a double half lease, they are no longer used in the school program. Occasionally, boarders offer to half lease their horses to a school rider. This allows a school rider to ride a horse not otherwise available in the school program. In that case, the horse is ridden 3 days per week by the owner. The terms of the lease agreement are negotiated by the owner, with Tim and Sarah mediating.

Why full lease?

There are a few reasons riders/ parents opt for a full lease over a half lease. Most of the reasons apply to horse showing. Please note that, if you are planning on horse showing, we highly recommend a full lease. Below are the reasons to opt for a full lease over a half lease.

First, full leasing guarantees the lessee the ability to take their lease horse to horse shows. It also allows the lessee to attend every horse show that suits their level of competition. Horses may only be permitted to go to shows if they are half leased by two riders or full leased. This means that horses half leased by one rider are not permitted to attend shows. Please keep in mind that, if you half lease a horse and share with another half lease rider, you will need the permission of the other lessee in order to remove the horse from the property. Furthermore, if you share your lease horse with another show rider, for the most part, only one rider can attend each show. As such, riders will alternate attending shows, lessening the number of shows each rider may attend.

Second, we highly recommend that show riders lesson at least three times per week. In order to protect the health of our horses and ensure that they are not over-worked, our show horses must be full leased in order to receive three lessons per week. Full leasing also permits riders to have up to three practice rides per week, in addition to their three lessons per week. Remember, horseback riding is a sport, just like soccer or gymnastics. However, unlike soccer or gymnastics, riders can not practice at home on their own. Riders looking to compete will be competing against other riders who lesson three times per week and ride up to five times per

week. In order to remain competitive, it is suggested that riders lesson at least three times per week year round.

Third, on days in which a full lease horse is not ridden by their lease rider, the horse remains in training with Sarah and Lauren in order to ensure that the horse stays tuned up. Remember, horses are creatures of habit- they can learn bad habits just as easily as they can learn good habits. As such, keeping all other riders off of a show horse helps to ensure that the horse does not develop any bad habits and remains at their optimum level of performance. For those not competing, it guarantees the best possible lesson situation that is conducive to learning and furthering ones' skills.

Lastly, having a full lease provides for a greater sense of ownership. It allows the rider to be the sole rider of the horse and develop a greater sense of responsibility for their horse. It also serves to mimic exactly what owning your own horse is like.

The Personal Decision

Depending upon your/ your child's goals and aspirations leasing may be the right choice for you. If you/ your child is looking to develop greater skills and become a true equestrian athlete, leasing is the first step towards achieving those goals. If you/ your goal is to ride competitively, leasing is the only way to achieve that goal.

While we do highly recommend leasing as a way to further develop skills and become a well rounded horse person, we do realize that this is simply not feasible for some families, as this can be a large financial and time commitment.

In order to decide if leasing is the right choice, first outline your/ your child's goals. If those goals involve competing and/or riding at the higher levels, you should then decide whether or not you are ready to support said goals, both in terms of finances and the time commitment of a lease, keeping in mind that, if time is an issue, we do keep the horse exercised and in training on days the lessee is unavailable to ride. Of course, for those who are not ready to do so, we have a great school program available for beginner through advanced riders.