

Your Guide to Owning a Miniature Horse

Miniatures should be treated like full size horses, but everything is reduced in size and amounts.

Feeding:

If kept in stall and “no grass”, feed coffee cup size of horse feed, example, “Strategy” twice a day.

Feed good “horse hay”, and make sure it is not dusty and/or moldy. Horse hay should never have been wet when they are making it. They have a sensitive stomach, so make sure the hay is for horses. Cows can eat about anything.

Hay can be fed throughout the day/night for them to munch on.

If you feed Alfalfa hay, it is very rich, so therefore, you don't need as much grain/feed.

If you have a pasture for them to stay in with unlimited grass, then feeding grain once a day should be fine. Choose either mornings or evenings. Just make sure you try to have a regular feeding time.

Hay can also be fed too. If you have tall grass or really lush grass in early spring, limit them to just an hour or two until later on when the grass gets “tougher”. You don't want your mini to colic on over eating. Horses, especially minis and ponies are more prone to “foundering” by overeating. Lush (early spring grass) is usually a culprit.

Water:

Make sure they have clean fresh water daily. It is better to have small amounts, rather than a large tub that doesn't get cleaned. Watch their water intake too. Make sure they are drinking throughout the day.

Salt:

Provide a salt block either regular or a mineral salt where they can have access to it on a regular basis. We just put ours in their feed trough where they can lick on it when they want.

Worming:

You can worm your mini with a paste tube wormer. The tube is large enough for a full size horse, so make sure you only give them enough for

approximately their size such as 250 lbs to be safe. Use 2 or 3 types of wormer to make sure you cover all worms that could cause problems. 2 tubes would be enough for the entire year.

Trimming Feet:

About every 2 to 3 months check their feet to see if they need trimming. Since minis don't wear shoes, they sometimes keep them trimmed by wearing them off naturally, but have a farrier or someone that can use a rasp, trim their feet if you notice them getting too long.

Safety:

Make sure your pasture, stall or corral is free of anything that can cause injury or harm to your mini. Anything sharp or loose could cause them to get cut. Make sure you don't have any holes in the pasture for them to hurt their legs. Move all objects or debris from their living quarters. Horses can always find a way to get into trouble.

Other Horses or Animals:

If you have full size horses, I would keep the minis separated, at least till you see how they get along. Definitely keep them separated if you have a stallion and mares. You can keep the mini stallion and mini mares together with no issues, but having a full size stallion or full size mare, may be a problem during the breeding season especially. Sheep, goats, cows, etc. are all fine to have with your mini.

Observation:

Watch your mini everyday and get to know their habits. Horses usually eat ALL the time; they graze all day if there is food/grass available. If you see your horse just standing and not acting just right, then pay close attention. If your horse seems to be uncomfortable, such as wanting to lay down, roll, and get up and down, looking at their side, then that usually means they are colicking. You need to contact your veterinarian right away. They can usually give them a sedative to relax them and it most of the time will help them get through this. But there are many times, nothing will help, if it is advanced or too severe. Horses will lie and "sun themselves on cool days so that is quite natural. They act agitated if they don't feel good and restless, so you will know their behavior, after you get used to them.

Training:

These minis have been used to living with other minis as a herd. Take your time teaching your mini to be touched and groomed and learning to lead. Once they get used to you, it won't be long where they trust you and look forward to you. That is why if you feed them on a regular time schedule, they will get used to that and you. Just be patient and earn their trust. I would leave their halters on so you can catch them easy the first month or so. Tie them up to a fence post or hitch to teach them to stand and start brushing and grooming them, picking up their feet, etc.

One of my tricks in teaching them to lead, is wrap the lead rope around their hind legs and tail and pull on the end with the other hand. That way it is pulling them forward without yanking on their head and they are standing firm not wanting to budge period. They will learn to lead, so don't give up.

Sometimes squatting down and letting them come to you on their own is good to do. Offering them a small handful of hay to get them to trust you. Getting down on their level doesn't overwhelm them as much as us towering over them at first. Just have patience and they will warm up to you eventually. Giving horses treats or snacks is actually not a good thing. It makes them want to bite and be mean. I'd only give them their normal feed at feeding time. But giving them hay or a handful of grass out of your hand is fine. My grandfather always said that giving a horse treats will make him mean and start biting. He was a smart man when it came to horses.

Foaling:

There is a possibility your mare is in foal. It takes 11 months, 11 days approximately for a foal to be born. All of my mares are with the stallion year round, so I don't know when they are due. My babies normally start coming in April. However, don't be surprised to get a baby any month of the year.

A mare getting near her foaling date will stand around a lot. She will turn and look at her side when time is near. (this is different than when a horse is having colic.) She should get a slight bag and you may be able to get some milk out.

Once she foals, make sure the baby is coming nose and front feet first. The bag needs to get off the foal's nose so they can breathe. Otherwise leave the mare and foal alone to bond. Make sure they have a clean place to stay. Such as a clean stall and fresh shavings, or out in the pasture is fine. If it is cold, wet, muddy, then I'd try to get the mare and foal to a clean dry place to stay the first week. Within the first day, put some iodine on the baby's navel. Do this a few times at first. That is where bacteria can enter inside and get the foal sick. Make sure the foal is nursing. The first milk, called colostrum is very very important. It contains all the "good" stuff that every foal needs. Without it, they can die. It will be clear and not the normal milk that comes in soon.

Most of all, I hope you enjoy your new miniature horse. They are all my babies and I am happy they are getting a new loving home. I hope they bring you many years of happiness.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email.