



ENRICHMENT for *Horses*

Enrichment is often viewed as something we offer as a remedy for behavioural issues, to combat boredom, when on box rest or a treat.

But it's an efficient way of replicating your horses environment to their natural habitat. This can be achieved by analysing their current needs and providing offerings that will encourage them to express their natural behaviours.

Such as constant moving and grazing, social contact with other horses and variation in forages.

Frustration should be avoided in all scenarios and to accommodate this forage should be on constant supply, treats low value and clean drinking always available.



Assess your horses needs & their environment to tailor accordingly between

Edible

Non-Edible

Sensory

Cognitive



Introduce gradually with one thing at a time & supervise initially



Build up exposure & complexity



Consider the 3 F's & always have forage & clean drinking water available



Hayball - hanging from ceiling/on the floor
Jollyball covered in molasses/banana

Group Turnout

Straw as bedding

Stable Mirror

Social Contact

In-hand exercise

Being groomed (by person)

Hedgerow Haynet

Forage Boxes

Flavoured Tea Bags in Hay water

Herbal Tea sprayed on bedding

Vegetable Kebabs

Multiple feeding stations

Treatballs/Carrot balls

Stable Toys

Water Buffet

Liki Mat/Board

Apple Bobbing

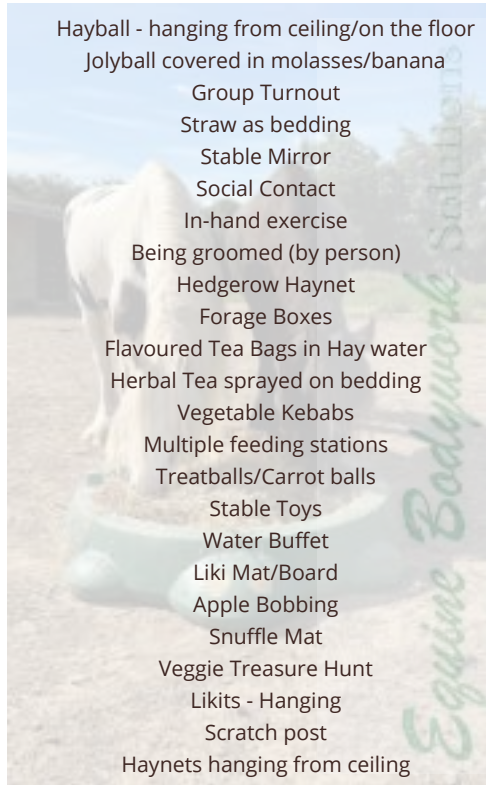
Snuffle Mat

Veggie Treasure Hunt

Likits - Hanging

Scratch post

Haynets hanging from ceiling



Equine Bodywork Solutions

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Frustration

Monitoring your horse during the introduction of enrichment is not only beneficial for maintaining safety but also for observing body language and facial expressions to ensure that your horse isn't experiencing frustration with the new challenge.

Facial expressions of frustration

- Eye white increase
- Ear rotation
- Biting and/or the feeder
- Increased blink rate
- Nostril lift
- Showing the tongue
- Chewing

All horses are individual

Some will show their signs of frustration more openly

Consider your horses yard mates!

Is their enrichment noisy & disturbing rest, causing stress for other horses??

Maximise forage choice:

- Hay
- Haylage
- Straw
- Chaff
- Beet
- Ready Grass
- Nut

Straw - always introduce gradually

- Can make up to 50% of all horses forage rotation
- May prolong feed time if mixed with other forages
- Can promote weight loss

Good
Dental
Health 

Forage

Horses are natural grazers and to maintain a healthy gut must do so for 18 hours a day.

Offering a variety of forage will encourage your horse to forage more frequently and for longer, the result, over time, being improved natural foraging behaviour.

It can also help to improve the diets of picky eaters who will consume more.

Straw as bedding

Encourages natural foraging behaviour
Impacts how your horse will approach other feeds i.e. more chew time on evening meals

- Keeps horses occupied for longer
- Spend less time without forage

Horses are shown to spend more time resting

Presentation

Multiple feeding stations will increase feeding time – always have an option of hay on the floor.

Alternate fixed-point stations e.g. hay bars/rings. Research has shown significant muscle asymmetry in horses who spent prolonged periods of time at the same feeding station.

Serving hard feeds in multiple buckets of different sizes or larger based buckets will vary chew time.

Haynets with a holesize less than 50mm can increase frustration, and this could be greater on a horse with a larger muzzle.