Welcome to Endurance GB

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Welcome to Endurance GB

You’ve taken the first step on the most satisfying, most fulfilling and most enjoyable journey. Endurance riding is one of the fastest growing equestrian sports worldwide, and in Great Britain, riders can experience the thrill of this ride from 16km up to 160km in the friendliest of atmospheres.

For Endurance GB, the welfare of the horse is paramount and you will find veterinary supervision and assistance at all National and International Rides.

Each ride is run by a team of volunteers, who are all there to help you set out on your endurance journey.

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Endurance GB is divided into Groups. You will have been assigned one of these when you joined Endurance GB. The Groups run fun and exciting events through the year and each group has its own website and Facebook page with lots of information.

Please see the Endurance GB website for updated information on the contact information for your group. If you wish to swap groups, just contact the Endurance GB office.

Kerry Dawson
The Rides: Explained

**Pleasure Ride** - It’s exactly what the name suggests, a non-competitive ride for riders and horses from all levels. Where the pleasure ride is being run alongside competitive classes then there is a simple vetting, involving a trot-up, before you start and after you finish. Horses must be 4YO or over. The optimum minimum speed for this ride is 8kmph. The maximum speed is 12kmph.

**Graded Endurance Ride** - You’ll start these at Novice Level. There is a vetting involving a more thorough check of the horse, including a trot-up and the taking of heart-rate. You can start the ride within 30 minutes of passing the initial vetting and, once you cross the line at the end, you have 30 minutes to do your final vetting. Once you have passed this vetting, your Grade will be calculated, based on heart rate and speed. You can then pick up your rosette! For novices, the minimum speed is 8kmph and the maximum speed 15kmph.

**Competitive Endurance Ride** - This is a ride for Advanced horses and riders. It is usual for everyone to start together. The first horse to cross the finish line is the winner, provided that they have passed the final vetting. Minimum speed 10kmph, no maximum speed.

**FEI Ride** - This is an International Ride for Advanced horses and riders, run according to FEI rules. Please see the website for details.

### Minimum Qualification

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<th>The Rides</th>
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<td>4 years old</td>
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<td>Novice, Open, Advanced</td>
<td>30km – 50km 30km – 80km 30km – 160km</td>
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Kerry Dawson
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Choose your first graded or pleasure ride by looking through the Endurance GB handbook or by visiting the Endurance GB website and viewing the list of rides online. There is a really handy map of the rides available, too. You can soon pinpoint the ones which are closest to you or the ones with the easiest journey.

Most rides can be entered online. You will need to log in to the website before entering, so before you start the entry process, it’s always useful to have your horse’s registration number and your own member’s registration number to hand. You will have received those in your Welcome Pack, together with your log book. Your log book is the A5 folder, where you will store your Mastercard and all of your vet sheets from the rides you attend.

If you have entered and paid for your ride online, you will receive an e-mail confirming your entry. About a week before your ride, your ride details will either arrive in the post, be e-mailed to you, or be made available on the ride website so that you can plan your journey and your ride.

Your ride details should include a map, with routes marked on it, and some ride information. It’s always worth reading through this ride information as there are often useful tips about the best route to the venue for trailers, things you might need to be aware of in the area, etc. The map might have different coloured loops (routes) on it and your ride instructions will tell you which colour relates to the distance you’re riding. Have a look at the map when you’re planning your ride; look for points of interest, like woods, buildings, etc. This will help you when you’re on the ride.

You will also see the Checkpoints marked on your map. Again, your ride instructions will tell you which of these you need to go through on your route.

There might also be a talkround included, which is text guiding you around the ride, to be used in conjunction with your map.

Most rides send out a vet sheet together with the ride information. This is the sheet which has on it your details and your horse’s details and will then be completed on the day when your horse is vetted. Filling your bit of this out ahead of time is a great help to you on ride day, because it’s one less thing to think about. Again, you just need to have your horse’s details, including Endurance GB registration number and your details to hand. If no vet sheet is included, there will be a supply of them to pick up when you book in at the ride.

Some people will have crew to help them and to meet them en route. This is not obligatory or essential but can be a great help. An extra pair of hands is always useful. Please see the handbook or Endurance GB website for details on the crewing vehicles allowed. Some rides have specific instructions regarding crewing; these will be in your ride instruction.
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What to Do on the Day

It’s always a good idea to plan to arrive early – at least 30-40 minutes before your vetting time.

Checking in - Once you’ve arrived and checked that your horse is ok, take your log book to the Ride Secretary and book in for your ride. You should have been allocated a rider number with your ride information. Pick up the bib with your number on it. You will also receive 2 emergency labels, one to be put on the horse (usually on the saddle), and one to be put on your person (maybe on your hat?). These have the emergency telephone numbers on should you or anyone else need to call the ride organiser during your ride. Before you leave the secretary’s tent, have a check on the board which is in there, just in case there are any last minute changes to the route or specific instructions. If there are any, these will only be minor.

Before the ride - Remove all travel bandages or boots. Pick out your horse’s feet. Put out water buckets and sponges for when you return.

Vetting - You can take your horse to the vet in a rug, if you think he/she needs it on. Take your vet sheet and then, the first thing to do is go to the farrier to have your feet checked. He/she will sign your vet sheet. Then calmly head towards the vet area. There will be a vet steward who will tell you when you can take your horse forward to the vet. Sometimes there is a queue and it’s good, if possible, to keep your horse moving, particularly if it’s a cold day.

Once you are called forward, take your horse to the vet and hand your vet sheet to the vet writer, who will be standing with the vet. The vet will usually begin by taking your horse’s heart rate. They will then check the horse over. They will ask you to take the rug off and trot your horse. It’s usually very clear how far you have to trot – there will be a cone or something like that to mark the end of your trot up. Trot to the cone, walk around the cone and trot back. Try to keep your trot up as straight as possible, so that the vet can clearly see. It’s just like trotting your horse up at home for the vet.

Once you have passed the vet, return to your trailer/box and get your horse tacked up and ready for the ride. Remember to take your map!

Setting off - Head to the timekeeper, who will very often be in a trailer. There should be a Start sign very close to them! They will tell you when you can set off and give you the exact time you’ve started. Make a note of the time, just so that you can be aware of your maximum and minimum return time. Head off and enjoy! You must cross the start and finish lines mounted but should you choose to get off en route, you may do so.

The routes are marked, with markers sprayed on the ground or ribbon tied in trees. They will take you to the various checkpoints, which you will have seen indicated on your map. Using the combination of your map, the markers and the talkround (if provided) will get you around the route just fine.

Be sure that you call out your number to the Checkpoint stewards, whenever you see them. If there are a lot of horses going through a checkpoint together, wait and make sure that your number has been noted down.

At the end of the ride - You will come back to the timekeeper as you finish the ride and they will tell you what time you finished. You have 30 minutes then to vet.

Return to your trailer/box, untack, give your horse a drink if he/she wants it, pick out your horse’s feet.

Check your horse’s heart rate – it needs to be 64 beats per minute or below to pass the vet. Often your horse will need cooling after the ride. Use the water which you’ve put out to apply as much water as is needed to get your horse cool. On cooler days, you might well need only a little water, if any. If your horse is very hot the cooling of your horse’s temperature will help lower the heart rate.

Another way to lower the heart rate is very gently to walk them around.

Once you are happy that their heart rate is as low as you would like it, head over to the vet.

The final vetting is just like the first one. The vet will tell you whether you’ve passed or not and you can return to your box.

It usually takes about 30 minutes for results to be processed but can be longer at big busy rides. Return your bib to where you picked it up from and pick up your results.

You can then head home. Well done!
The great news is that you don’t need any special endurance-specific gear to start off in endurance. The must-haves are saddle, bridle (bitted or bitless) and hat. For full details of the regulations covering these, please see either the Members’ Handbook or the Endurance GB website.

Your horse can wear any leg protection which you would normally ride in. Just remember that these need to be removed for vetting.

The Gear: Explained

If you have any specific medical needs, it is a good idea to get yourself a medical armband, as for other equestrian disciplines.

Please see the handbook or website for regulations about the length of whip which is permitted.

Spurs and hatcams are strictly forbidden.

It’s a very good idea to get yourself a map case – this will help protect the map from the ravages of the British weather and is much easier than trying to fish a tiny, damp, folded up piece of paper from the depths of your pocket while riding.

A suitable phone carrier is really handy, too. It’s important to have your mobile phone with you on the ride, just in case of emergency.

A small First Aid kit is also very useful, containing essential items for both horse and rider. Ready made kits which attach to your saddle are great.

You are permitted to take a drink for yourself and a snack – really useful, especially on hot days.

Tail ribbons are used as in other disciplines:
- Green for novice – this is a great idea when you’re first setting out in endurance.
- Red for a horse which is likely to kick.
- Blue for a stallion.

Stallions must also wear a bridle disk, available from the Endurance GB office.
As with any discipline, different horses and riders have different needs and wants with regard to training.

If you would like advice on training your horse for endurance, whatever distance you are doing, there are many training events run nationally, by groups and by UKCC accredited coaches. From these sources, you can find help with how to get your horse and yourself fit, how to plan your ride, what feed might be good...the list goes on! The coaches are all also very happy to do individual assessments and training sessions.

Please see the Endurance GB website for updated training events and coach details: www.endurancegb.co.uk

Kevin Sparrow

Katie Bedwin
The Terms: Explained

**Mastercard** - The card you were issued when you registered your horse. For the first season, this will be green. All of your horse’s rides and results are noted on this card. At the end of your first season you will need to return your green mastercard to the Endurance GB office and it will be replaced with a yellow mastercard.

**Log Book** - This is the blue A5 folder which you will have been issued when you became a member. You keep all of the vetsheets and your Mastercard in this folder.

**Vet Sheet** - This is the sheet on which is written all the information from the vet checks at your rides. You will receive a copy of these to keep at the end of each ride.

**Talkround** - This is a printout of information guiding you around the ride. This is only available for some rides and will be sent out or downloaded with the ride information.

**Loop** - This is the term used for the route you will take around your ride. Each of the different distances offered at the ride usually have a designated colour on the map.

**Timekeeper** - This is the ride official to whom you will present yourself at the start and finish of your ride. They will note down your start and finish times.

**Checkpoints** - These are the points on the map which you will go through and it is how the ride officials can check that you have covered the entire route. These points are also for your safety, so that your last location is verified frequently.

**Crew** - These are the helpers you take with you on ride day, who might or might not meet you en route at the crewpoints. Not all rides have designated crewpoints and on those which do not, your crew are just advised to exercise common sense and follow the Countryside Code.

**Vetgate** - Longer rides (56km+) have at least one additional vet check mid ride, to ensure that the horses remain in good health. These additional checks are called vetgates, and once the horse has passed the vet it will be held for around 20 – 40 minutes to enable it to rest, eat and drink before heading out onto the course again.
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