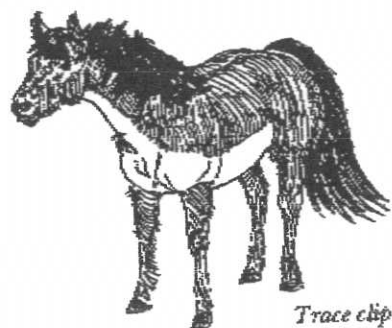
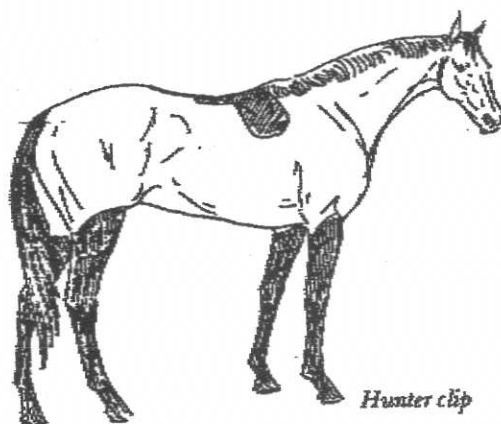


## NOTES ON CLIPPING HORSES

By Huntsman Dr. G. Marvin Beeman, DVM and Jt. MFH

The purpose for clipping horses is two-fold. For years we thought clipping was necessary to allow a horse to cool out more efficiently and prevent sweat from being retained in the long hair coat; these reasons are still very true. However, we have learned from exercise physiology studies in recent years that the more important function of clipping is to facilitate the horse's use of his thermo-regulation system. We have also observed that when horses become warmed up, especially thin-skinned warm-blooded horses, the veins in their skin will become very prominent primarily along their neck, head and upper body. This system is to allow the horse to cool down from the tremendous amount of heat that is generated by muscle activity.

Prior to the research, we observed the fact that in the fall before the horses were clipped, they would reach a fatigue point relatively quickly even though they were in good condition. Immediately after the horses were clipped, the situation dramatically improved as far as their stamina was concerned. Horses that are full body clipped perform better throughout the season and have more endurance than those that are not full body clipped.



Thermo-regulation is the main reason that the horses are clipped with hunter or full clips. With a trace clip, on the other hand, the majority of the highly vascular skin area remains covered and the thermo-regulation system is compromised. For this reason, trace clips are of little value to the fieldhunter that works hard. In a hunter clip, the legs are left with the long hair for protective purposes; however, this protection is not as critical now in our open hunting country as it was in the oak brush. Hair on the legs does influence thermo-regulation due to the large vessels along the inside of the horse's legs, but this restriction is not as important as the long hair restriction on the upper body. In addition, of course, a hunter with a full clip is much easier to groom.

Clipping methods vary with many different people; however, I think one of the most recent logical suggestions written in The Chronicle of the Horse is to give the horse a bath prior to clipping; the bath eliminates much of the dust that is generated while clipping.

In addition, fieldhunters should be clipped fairly early in the fall. The earlier you clip them, however, the more times you will have to clip throughout the season. They will need clipping for as many as three times if clipped the first part of October. This procedure is beneficial for the horses. After February 1<sup>st</sup>, horses should not be clipped because their hair coat will not grow out sufficiently for a nice, attractive, protective summer coat. After early February, horses prepare to shed their winter coats and clipping should not disturb the process.

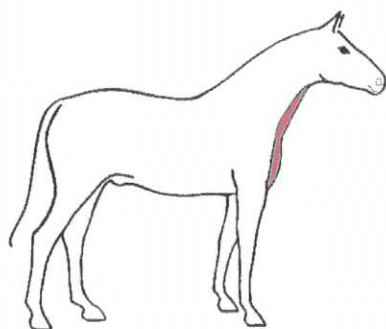
As far as style goes, horses should be clipped entirely on the upper body for the reasons stated. Leaving their legs covered with long hair is good protection, but is optional. One important matter is to leave a saddle area with the long hair because short hair underneath the saddle can create soreness and irritation problems. Traditionally, good taste dictates that the clipping design should not use any ornamental designs over the hips or elsewhere.

Blanketing of clipped horses is a matter of practicality. Most of the time, if it is cold enough for a horse to have a blanket on outside of the stable, the horse should be turned out without the blanket, exercised and put back into the stable and blanketed. I see more horses injured by getting a blanket in a mess than I see injured by getting too cold. Also, the blankets they ruin outside are expensive.

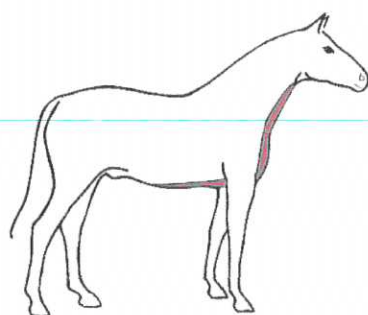
Hopefully, this advice will be of some value to Hunt members regarding the reasons for clipping horses. The bottom line is that a field of clipped hunters is very attractive and impressive. Clipping is a very practical and useful procedure to enhance a fieldhunter's appearance, health and welfare.

## Arapahoe Hunt Pony Club – Clipping 101

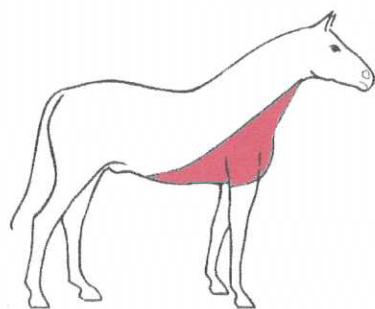
There are many types of clip to consider for your horse. When in doubt, always clip less... it is always easy to increase your clip size later should your horse need it, but you can't put that hair back on!



**Bib Clip** – Good for a child's pony or adult third flight horse, as it permits a horse to be turned out in a field (with or without a light blanket) but also helps the horse from getting quite as hot during work.

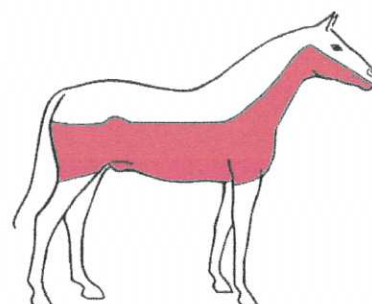
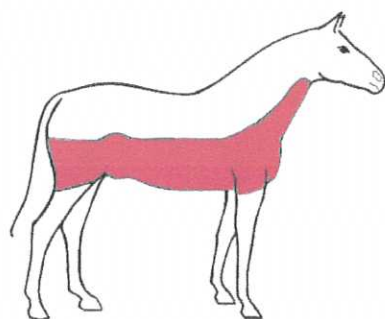
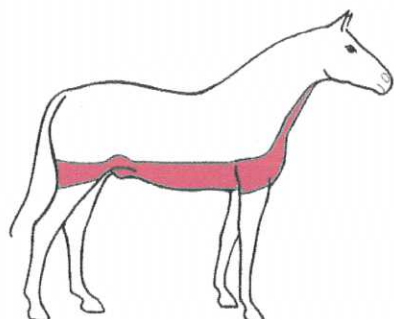


**Strip Clip** – Also called Pony Clip or Belly Clip. Hair is removed from under the chin, down the under part of the neck, between the front legs and along the length of the underside of the barrel. Minimal hair removal makes this great for horses and ponies in light work.

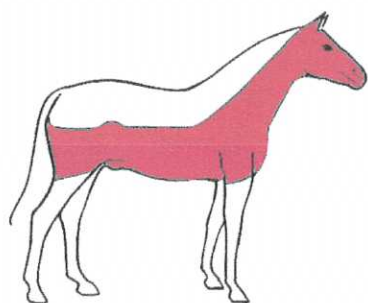


**Irish Clip** – Similar to a strip clip, but more hair is removed on the chest, belly, and shoulders. Sometimes includes hair removal on the jowl too.

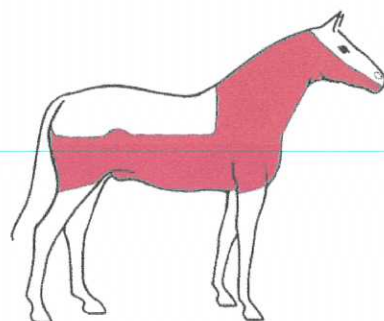
**Trace Clip** – Can be classified as "low", "medium", or "high," depending on how much hair is removed. Typically, a wide band of hair is clipped from under the chin, along the neck, down the barrel and on to the flank. The entire belly is clipped bare, as is a generous area around the flank. The back, legs and face remain unclipped. This clip is ideal for horses in light to moderate work, and those who need more coverage as a result of lots of time spent outdoors.



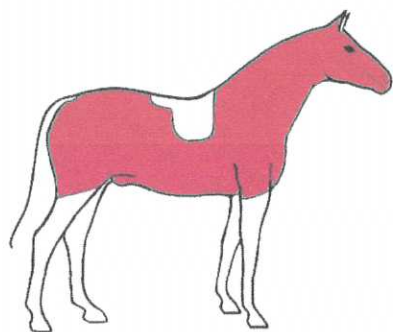
## Arapahoe Hunt Pony Club – Clipping 101



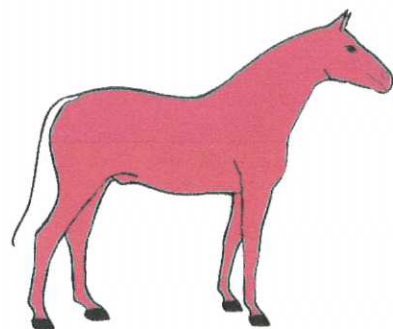
**Chaser Clip** – Named for the steeplechasers. Similar to a high trace clip, but with most of the head hair removed. Not recommended for horses on regular winter turnout since the ears are clipped.



**Blanket Clip** – Named for the fact that it looks like the horse is wearing a blanket (or, more precisely, a quarter sheet), this clip takes the hair down all through the neck, shoulder, belly and flank, like the Trace Clip, with additional hair removed all the way up through and over the withers. Legs and face are usually left with full hair growth. Believed to help sore-backed horses' back muscles stay warmer and looser.



**Hunter Clip** – Named for field hunters, this clip takes down all the hair except for the legs and an area on the back in the shape of an all-purpose English saddle. The long leg hair was designed to protect field hunter's legs, while the extensive clip job helped the keep cool, even on long gallops. These horses need warm blankets. Care should be taken if/when turned out if the ears are clipped. You may require a quarter sheet when warming the horse up on particularly cold days.



**Full Body Clip** – All the hair is clipped, from the coronet band up to the withers, and from the nose back to the tail. Ideal for horses in very hard work all winter, and those that will be traveling to warmer climates for winter competitions.

# Arapahoe Hunt Pony Club – Clipping 101

## Clippers

Choose a clipper model that is designed to run for long periods of time and can ideally use wide blades. Don't try to use a clipper designed for touchups to body clip your horse.



## Clipping Blades

The size number on the blade pertains to the length of the hair left after the cut. The higher the number on the blade, the shorter the hair will be. Your choice of blade will depend on what you want to accomplish with your clipping job. Sizes are fairly standard across all manufacturers.

### #10 — Course Cut

This size blade leaves the hair the longest. Many people use this size for body clipping, and many clippers provide a free #10 blade with the original purchase. It is a wise choice of blade to use on the horse's legs to leave just a long enough length of hair to provide some protection. It is also a great choice if you're just perfecting your clipping techniques. Finishing mistakes are easier to correct with this blade as you have a little length of hair left to work with. Number 10 blades are available in regular and wide sizes, with the wider size most appropriate for body clipping as it removes more hair per swipe.

### #15 — Medium Cut

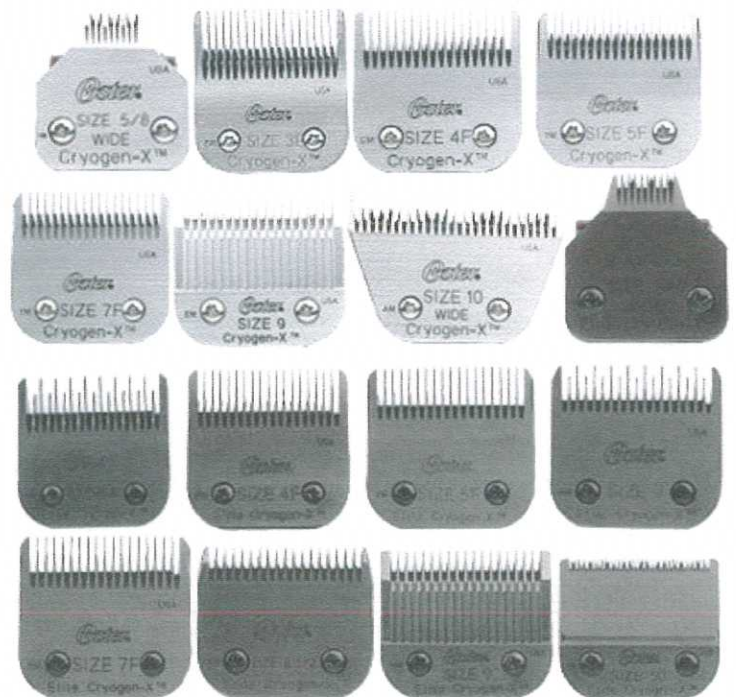
This size blade cuts the hair a bit shorter than the #10 blade, making it the choice for many people when clipping hair on a horse's head.

### #30 — Medium/Fine Cut

This size blade is finer still than the #15 blade. For showing disciplines where the standard is to remove hair from the horse's face, insides of horses' ears, around the eyes and nose, the #30 is often used.

### #40 — Fine or Surgical Cut

This blade cuts the hair extremely close to the skin. The cut is so close that if the skin is looked at under a magnifying glass, you can see tiny nicks in the skin.



## Arapahoe Hunt Pony Club – Clipping 101

### Clipping Tips

- Be sure your horse is CLEAN – this will make the job much easier, and make your blades last longer. Try a product like Show Sheen or waterless shampoos to get the gunk out.
- Some folks prefer to clip their horses wet, if weather allows.
- Use crayon, chalk, or marker to draw your clip lines.
- Clean your blades regularly during the clipping process
- Use clipper oil often and generously
- Wear slippery clothing (no fleece)
- Take breaks – your horse will thank you!
- Clip against the grain of the hair
- Use a smooth motion, keep the angle of the clippers consistent
- Makes sure your blades are SHARP. Dull blades will leave clipper tracks and make your job look messy.
- Have several sets of extra blades handy and have them sharpened when you are done.
- Horses in hard work should be clipped early in the fall (October) and may need to be clipped up to three times during hunting season.
- Never clip after February 1 as it can interfere with the summer coat growth.

Can you name these clips?

