

# What Goes On Behind The Scenes Before And After A Race

Caring for your horse means they have a set routine, and you provide them with everything they could need for their day. From purchasing the best [horse turnout rugs](#) to feeding them top-quality hay, their well-being is at the forefront of your mind. There are some horses who will lead quite different lives to your equine friend, and they are racehorses. People flock to their races to watch them speeding through the racecourse as excitement buzzes through the crowd. However, do you know what happens before and after they cross that finish line? Let's explore behind the scenes and into the life of a racehorse.



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**Travel**

Although horses can be used for transportation, on this occasion they're given a break from doing so. Instead, they're held in trailers that are attached to the back of a vehicle and driven to the race. This allows them to conserve energy too so they can give their all for the competition itself.

## **Feeding**

Most horses will be fed before they travel and are given a little more when they arrive at the event. However, they're stopped being fed around an hour before the race so that they aren't trying to run on a very full stomach as this can hinder their performance.

## **Stables**

Before and after the race, horses are kept in the stables and a vet comes to assess them for any injuries or ill health. This area is kept away from onlookers and allows the horse some respite away from the action.

## **Pre-Parade And The Parade Ring**

Once a horse arrives at the venue, they're placed into the pre-parade ring. Their groom then walks them around the area to get their body warmed up and prepped for the race. Horses can become agitated if they're pushed to do too much too soon, so the grooms help to ensure they are calm, yet ready to go.

Once the horse has been fitted with their saddle, they're then moved into the parade ring. Racegoers will often gather around this area to get a look at the horses before the race begins. The onlookers will start to assess the horses they can see to make sure they're in good condition and worth betting on to win. This is also where jockeys will gather to discuss their strategies for the main event, so this can draw even more crowds in.

## **Loading Up And Dope Box**

As the time for the race draws nearer, the horses are moved into the loading stalls. This can be a critical moment for the horse as they can easily become anxious and unable to race. As soon as the race is over, the winner is typically taken away to be checked for any illegal doping substances via a urine sample. Once the all-clear is given, they can be confirmed as the true winner. Sometimes all horses may be checked before the race as well to ensure that it's a fair competition.

## **Cooling Off**

Upon finishing a race, horses will have tons of adrenaline coursing through their body, so it's important that they're given time to properly cool down. This means they don't immediately stop running, but instead are walked around in hand until their breathing returns to normal. This also allows their heart rate to decrease naturally after the exertion. Skipping this step can cause detriment to the horse and make them difficult to manage. Most of the time the horses will be hosed down with cold water to help their body temperature reduce back down to normal levels, and it also removes the sweat and debris that's stuck to them during the race. They're also given plenty of drinking water too so that they can rehydrate, but food is avoided for a little while as their body hasn't yet fully relaxed. If they try to eat too soon after the race, they could potentially choke.

## **Breaks**

When a horse competes in a race, they use up a lot of energy, so they're normally given a few days off to allow them to recover. Without time to recuperate, their bodies won't be able to restore themselves and it can cause injury.

Horse racing draws in thousands of people every year, but the crowds only see half of it. The amount of training that goes in beforehand alone can take years to perfect and produce a great racehorse. You might think that horses are naturally

fast, so racing doesn't take much out of them, but in reality, it uses up so much of their energy that they need a respite period to recover properly. With horse racing, there's a lot more than meets the eye and it takes a combined effort of all those involved to not only get the horse onto the track but also ensure the horses are well cared for.