



Why enrich box rest for horses?

Box rest is tough for horses – restricted movement, unable to socialise, dependent on humans for all food, lacking opportunities for making choices and boredom.

Enrichment helps to mitigate these difficulties and:

- ❖ relieve boredom
- ❖ meet the horse's ethological and psychological needs
- ❖ reduce likelihood of frustration and/or over-excitement
- ❖ reduce likelihood of developing behavioural problems
- ❖ aid healing by lowering stress levels

Not all of the following ideas will be suitable for every horse – always discuss with your vet first.



More About EBTA

EBTA aims to:

- ❖ Improve public knowledge and understanding of the physical and psychological well-being of equines
- ❖ Promote awareness of human behaviour and its impact on equine behaviour
- ❖ Bridge the gap between academic research and practical application
- ❖ Protect equine welfare whilst maintaining safety and achieving equestrian goals

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Enrichment for Horses on Box Rest



Equine Behaviour and Training Association
<http://www.ebta.co.uk>



Different Foods

- ❖ Provide ad lib forage
- ❖ Provide different feed types in different buckets, instead of mixing. See what combinations your horse prefers
- ❖ Provide root vegetables, hanging on strings or mixed in with forage
- ❖ Soak hay in different herbal teas (e.g. peppermint, chamomile)
- ❖ Provide browsing opportunities (oak, ash, poplar, willow, apple branches)
- ❖ Make a treat branch by adding polos, honey, fruit, vegetables....



Varied Environment

- ❖ Use a pen alongside or within the field, instead of a stable
- ❖ Create a pen attached to the stable so your horse can choose to be in or out
- ❖ Take your horse on in-hand walks for grazing/browsing (if safe to do so)
- ❖ Go to visit normal field-mates or have them visit your horse (if safe to do so)
- ❖ Is group-housing an option?
- ❖ Use a webbing door-guard, to provide increased ventilation, light and view
- ❖ Provide a window through to a friendly horse (but also allow space for privacy)
- ❖ Work with a behaviourist to prepare horse for re-introduction to turn-out



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Different Activities

- ❖ Hang treats from ceiling
- ❖ Provide a snack ball (as long as no frustration)
- ❖ Teach apple bobbing (initially in shallow water)
- ❖ Provide a “toy box” for supervised play. Large bucket or trug of objects with interesting textures, shapes or smells. E.g. dog toys, cut open empty fruit juice cartons. Can include handful of treats to encourage foraging
- ❖ Make time for extra grooming, scratching, attention, games etc for mental stimulation

Lots more ideas at

<http://www.ebta.co.uk/faq-enrichment.html>