

How to Body Clip a Horse

With just a little bit of preparation, the process of clipping your horse will go smoothly and provide an attractive result.

Before you begin

Preferably bathe or thoroughly groom your horse before you start clipping. Scurf, grease and dirt in the coat will make your blades dull very rapidly. If you bathe your horse, be sure he is completely dry before you begin to clip. Wet hair does not cut well, will make your blades dull, and the end result of trying to cut wet hair will appear unsightly. Ideally, you can bathe your horse one day, stable it overnight in a lightweight sheet, and then clip the following day.



You should also thoroughly oil your blades before you begin clipping. With the clippers turned on and the blades pointed downward so that oil doesn't run into the motor, apply a few drops of oil between the upper and lower blades. Let the clippers run for a few moments to distribute the oil, then turn them off and wipe away any excess oil before putting the blades against the horse.

It will be most convenient for you to have on hand an extra blade or two (in the same size you're using), a rag and a small brush to clean your clipper blades.

To achieve a clean end result

To avoid leaving tracks of hair and uneven patches, clip against the growth of the horse's hair while stretching the skin slightly with

your free hand. Hold the blade so that it runs flat against the horse, rather than angling the tips of the blade into the hair. Overlap your clipping strokes for a clean finish. When you encounter whorls in the hair, such as on a horse's flank, be sure to move your clippers such that you continue to work against the direction of the hair.

If the blade has stopped cutting

If your blades are moving but they won't cut hair, feel them. If they're hot, the metal may have expanded slightly. Let them cool down completely. Once cool, clean and oil the blades before trying them again. If they won't cut after cooling and oiling, they have probably become dull.

Some clippers will become less effective in cutting, leave lines in the hair, or begin to make noise if the clipper blade drive needs to be replaced. Refer to the instructions that accompany your clipper model for help changing the blade drive.

Dull clipper blades with intact teeth can be sharpened by a professional service provider. The number of times a blade can be sharpened will depend on the type of blade, the metal from which it is made and the skill level of your professional sharpener. Usually, a set of clipper blades can be sharpened successfully about three times. After that, there will not be enough metal to re-sharpen.

Lubricate While Clipping!

The most important aspect going forward is keeping your clipper blades cleaned and oiled. Clipper blades are composed of an upper and lower set of teeth that rub rapidly against each other to cut hair. Metal rubbing on metal creates friction that produces heat.

To prevent friction from dulling the blades prematurely, and to prevent the heat from burning the horse's skin, use oil or a cooling spray frequently – every 3 to 4 minutes – to keep the blades lubricated. Always brush hair from the blades before lubricating.

Spray lubricants should not completely replace the use of oil. Some professional groomers stand by the process of using only oil on their blades. They use several of the same size blades for large clipping jobs, swapping them out and re-oiling them frequently to allow them to cool.



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When You are Finished Clipping for the Day



After body clipping your horse, it is ideal if you can give him a bath. However, if you clip in cold temperatures and cannot bathe your horse, go over him with a soft brush to remove all the fine hairs left from clipping and to smooth out the coat. A good currying and a thorough brushing are then particularly important if you are going to put a clean blanket or sheet on your horse, as the fine hair and grease that has been exposed on the skin will soil the blanket. Some people like to follow this grooming with a coat conditioner such as Marigold Rehydrant Spray or Healthy Haircare Moisturizer to put a shine on the freshly clipped hair.

Next, use a small soft brush to clear hair and debris from your clipper blades. You may want to use Oster Blade Wash or the Andis Blade Care Jar for thorough cleansing. Blade cleaning products remove oil, so be sure to re-oil your blades thoroughly after using them. Store your clippers in a box or clipper bag for protection from dust and being dropped.

Completing this extra step at the end of the day will make your next clipping session start off smoother and extend the life of your clippers.