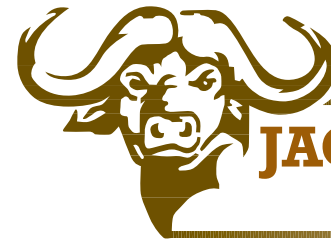


Limiting gear is a factor on pack animals. For the loads to travel correctly, baggage has to be balanced and an equal amount of gear placed on each side of the horse.

Try to limit the amount of gear you take on a horseback hunt to about 75 pounds maximum. It is better to place your gear in two duffel bags so they can be loaded easier. The size of your sleeping bag and sleeping pad are not as critical on a horseback.



**JACK ATCHESON  
& SONS, INC.**

Hunting Consultants ♦ Butte, Montana

# Horseback Hunts



Rule Number One:  
**There is a rodeo in every horse!**

**Trust** no horse or mule! If you haven't done much riding, take riding lessons before your trip. As a good rule of thumb, dismount and walk for 15 minutes out of each hour.

**Always** walk a horse down steep hills. Your knees will fare much better. In most cases, you can walk as fast or faster than a horse packing a load.

**To** reach remote hunting areas, often you will be on a horse riding two hours before daylight and a couple of hours after dark. A headlamp with an infrared filter is a handy tool when riding on a brushy, mountainous trail since horses do not come with built-in headlights. White light from your headlamp can reduce their night vision or spook them. Unlike hunters, they can see very well in the dark. Take plenty of extra flashlight batteries.

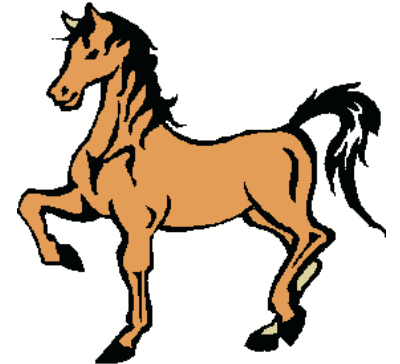
**Horses** are very dangerous. Don't be afraid to ask questions; but if it weren't for horses, most hunters would never get to the best places. Hunt as you would if you were on a hunt using aircraft to transport you in and out of the hunting area.

**While many things are new and improved these days, the use of horses hasn't changed much since man first started using this beast of burden.**



**In** some remote areas of the north, by the time the hunting season has ended, it is winter. In many cases, horse feed is very limited while in the field. It is common for outfitters to not use horses more than six or eight hours in a day to keep the animals prime enough to survive a northern winter.

**Horses** don't come with heaters or windshields. Sitting on a horse can be a frigid experience on late-season hunts. Insulated coveralls that can be worn over your hunting clothes can be handy. The bulky garment can be removed when you dismount and walk. Windy, cold temperatures make a ski mask and warm boots a good idea too.



**Most** outfitters provide scabbards, although it is not a bad idea to have your own. Rifles should be removed from the scabbard every time you stop and get off the horse. Horses love rolling in snow or dust to cool off after getting you up the mountain. Many rifle scopes and stocks have been broken by rolling horses.



**All** outfitters have different setups for riding stock. Some will have small saddle bags with space for a limited amount of gear. You can also tie a jacket onto the back of a saddle. Hunters should take a small daypack that they can tie onto the saddle horn to transport cameras, canteens, sandwiches, etc. Don't forget your rain gear!