

Do you have the time & money to care for a pony?

courtesy of Animal Info Publications

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Expenses (Based on current costs in Australia)

These expenses are general and average prices and you may find that your own pony could cost more, or less to purchase and maintain. Purchasing a pony is the very cheapest part of pony ownership.

Purchasing your pony:

- Purchasing a well schooled pony with a good temperament for riding/Pony Club from around \$3,000
- Purchasing a well schooled winning show pony, or top level competition pony up to \$20,000



Routine care:

"For humane and correct care, EVERY equine needs these things even if they are not ridden."

- Feed & supplements Per week for SMALL PONY BREEDS \$15
- Feed & supplements Per week for GOOD DOER HORSE BREEDS (eg Arabs) \$30
- Feed & supplements Per week for POOR DOER HORSE BREEDS (eg Thoroughbreds) \$60
- Hoof care (trimming only) Every 4 - 6 weeks \$45
- Hoof care (full set of shoes) Every 4 - 6 weeks \$110
- Worming Every 6 weeks \$20
- Dental work Every year for mature equine, or every 6 months for older equine \$120
- Vaccinations Every year \$40

Agistment/Boarding

(if you do not have your own property - these are average prices)

- Do It Yourself Board Weekly \$40
- Part Board Weekly \$65
- Full Board Weekly \$150

Other Expenses

- Saddle Fitting Prior to purchase of saddle & check up if problems arise \$150
- Chiropractic work Should the equine show signs of stiffness/soreness \$90
- Bowen/message therapy Should the equine show signs of stiffness/soreness \$60

Lessons:

- Private lessons - hourly - instructor comes to you \$90

- Private lessons - hourly - at riding school on school pony \$75
- Group lessons - hourly - at riding school on school pony \$60

Vet Bills:

Rough estimates ONLY

- Treating a mild colic \$400
- Treating a major colic including surgery \$10,000
- Treating minor wound, cold, lameness etc \$250
- Treating a major wound or illness \$2,000
- Pre purchase Vet checks depending on thoroughness start from around \$300

You can insure your pony which will greatly help reduce these Veterinary expenses. Insurance is recommended to any pony owners. You can buy and maintain a pony cheaper than this, this often depends on many variable factors such as breed, health care needs, conformation, temperament and what facilities are available to you. Ponies are expensive to keep and time consuming to train hence why a good, safe and reliable pony is worth so much. It is highly recommended that a first pony is well trained and is experienced to give your child the safest and most fun introduction to the joys of pony ownership.

Often very cheap instructors and cheap dentists, cheap Farriers etc do not have the training and experience behind them to do a good job. As there is so much to know, it is too easy for something to go wrong or a mistake to be made by poorly trained or inexperienced 'professionals' in the horse industry. So please remember, often when paying the higher prices you are paying for your pony's well-being and therefore your child's safety and confidence. In the horse industry, you get what you pay for. Time One of the biggest factors of pony ownership is the time involved. Many people are unaware of just how many hours are required to keep a pony happy and healthy. And of course the more ponies there are, the more time it takes!

Day to day care:

- Mucking out a stable Approx 15min
- Making up a 2 feeds Approx 15 min
- Feeding the pony (twice daily) Approx 10 min
- Cleaning out and refilling water trough Approx 10 min
- Filling a haynet or haybag Approx 5 min
- Thoroughly grooming a pony Approx 15 min
- Catching and bringing pony in from paddock Approx 5 - 10 min depending on distance of the paddock, longer if the pony decides not to be caught easily that day!
- Rugging or unrugging a pony Approx 5 min
- Practicing training or ground work with your pony to ensure he keeps his good manners Approx 5 - 10 min

That is at least an hour or more of work every single day before you even get in the saddle!

Other time factors to consider:

- Visit from the vet Anywhere from 20min to a couple of hours
- Visit from the Farrier Anywhere from 20 min to 1 hour
- Visit from the Dentist Anywhere from 45 min to 1 hour
- Treating a wound Approx 20 - 30 minutes
- Cleaning saddle, bridle and equipment Anywhere from 20min to an hour
- Preparing for a Show or Pony Club Rally Approx 3 hours

Riding can take any amount of time from 20 minutes to 2 hours, and if you're planning to compete or do Pony Club, or even go on long trail rides you will need to ride and train with your pony at least four times a week, many serious riders exercise their horses 6 days a week! Pony Club rallies and shows usually go all day with very early starts. Expect to get out of bed before dawn if you choose to give competition a try! Holidays Ponies need feeding and care every single day of the year no matter how ill you may be or how awful the weather is. If you want to go on a holiday or have some time off you will very likely need to pay for a professional to take care of your pony while you are away.

Friends and family who are not familiar with ponies do not make suitable pony sitters as so much can go wrong without a solid foundation of knowledge to keep them and your pony safe. Saving Time You can save time by having your pony on Full Board agistment, where the owner of the property where the pony lives does most of the day to day work, but this is more expensive. You can save costs by having your pony on Part Board where you do more of the work and the 'rent' is cheaper.

Housing

- To safely house your pony you need to ensure that the facilities are suitable, safe and provide the pony with its needs. If you are setting up your home paddock or are going to agist/board elsewhere these are the things you need to provide and look out for: Fencing needs to be well maintained, safe and secure. Ponies are often escape artists especially if they're lonely or on a diet.
- Help protect your pony from injury or losing your pony altogether by providing safe fencing.
- Water source needs to be available 24/7 and kept clean and fresh at all times. A dehydrated pony can get very sick, very fast.
- Shelter must be provided for ponies so they have shelter from the elements throughout the seasons. You may choose to have a stable, paddock shelter or ensure there are plenty of trees and bushes in your paddock.
- Shelters must be kept well maintained and clean to avoid injuries on loose nails or tin, and to prevent damage to the pony's hooves which can be caused by standing around in manure and urine.
- Stables need to be well ventilated.
- Paddocks need to be kept clear of rubbish and excess manure as a greedy pony could easily swallow rubbish which would make it very ill or re-infect itself with worms if there is too much manure around.
- Hazards such as boggy ground, animal burrows, pits, loose wire and uncovered star-pickets need to be removed or fenced off to prevent serious injury to your pony.