

Blog post from ahorseslife.org:

Adopting a rescue horse: Is it right for you?

My dream is that every homeless animal would be adopted by a loving owner and allowed to live out a happy and productive life. I understand that taking in a horse simply isn't possible for everyone, but if you're one of the lucky few with the resources and experience to allow it, I urge you to consider adopting a rescue horse.

At one time, a "rescue horse" was almost guaranteed to have fairly severe mental or physical issues. That's because in a good horse economy, sane, healthy horses rarely needed to be rescued. But the situation is different now, and many good, trained horses end up in rescues simply because their owners can't or won't support them financially anymore. These horses can be a great fit for anyone with a reasonable amount of horse experience.

(Of course, there are still plenty of special needs horses out there as well. Adopting one of these horses can be incredibly rewarding, but I strongly discourage novice horse owners from doing so. These horses require a lot of patience, knowledge and skill. Starting out your horsey career with a difficult horse can break your heart and ruin your confidence. And it won't do the horse much good, either.)

If you think adoption might be right for you, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Adoption is not a way to get a free horse.** Good rescues charge a reasonable adoption fee. If you cannot afford the adoption fee, you probably cannot afford to properly care for the horse. In that case, please consider [sponsorship](#) instead.
- **Supporting GOOD rescues is the best way to help.** There are a lot of wonderful horse rescue organizations out there. There are also, sadly, a lot of bad ones. ([Here's an excellent article on how to tell the difference.](#)) Giving money to bad rescues merely encourages the bad behavior.
- **Don't let your heart overrule your head.** When visiting a rescue, it can be tempting to adopt the saddest, most pathetic-looking horse you see, because you feel sorry for him. If you just want to help save a life and make him a pet or pasture ornament, go for it! But if you have specific goals in mind (trail riding, competing in local shows, etc.), please force yourself to choose a more suitable horse. You'll still be helping to save a life, and you'll potentially avoid a LOT of frustration and disappointment.

Here's an excellent article that goes into detail about [what you need to know before adopting a rescue horse](#).

On a personal note, I've found owning a rescue horse to be incredibly rewarding. Seeing Rhona go from a scruffy, frightened, unhandled broodmare to a lovely, confident, well-mannered horse has been one of the highlights of my life. It's always nice to see an animal grow and learn, but it's even more special when that animal was once a throwaway that nobody wanted. And call me crazy, but I believe the animals know that, too. Rhona's training has had plenty of ups and downs, and we're nowhere near done, but in all my years with horses I've never known a horse that was more eager to please.