



a rider's weight. A child's pony may be schooled in harness by an adult family member to improve its training and behavior.

Older horses trained to drive can benefit from the reduced stress driving places on the front legs and the absence of a rider's weight. Keeping the older horse in light work can be beneficial for those stiff old joints, and the driver has the advantage of working with a horse that has years of experience. With proper care, horses may be used well into their twenties and ponies into their thirties.

Driving offers the pleasure of horses to those who are not able to ride. A well-trained horse or pony can offer years of pleasurable driving to the senior equestrian who no longer feels comfortable in the saddle. Physical limitations that come with age can lead a rider to discover driving, sometimes with smaller animals than those he or she previously worked with.

Someone who experiences decreased strength, stamina, or range of motion can often handle ponies and miniature horses more easily than full-size horses. Therapeutic riding programs are adding driving to their curriculums, using vehicles modified to accept wheelchairs so those who cannot walk can drive. Friends and family members who have not learned to drive can enjoy a carriage ride behind a trustworthy horse.

The Pleasure in pleasure driving may be found in many different forms. Driving your horse enhances your

relationship, as you learn to communicate without your legs and body weight and your horse learns to understand your voice and gains a deeper trust of you. Experienced riders may find that learning a new skill and training their horses to a different discipline gives a deep sense of accomplishment. Sleighing, combined driving, and competitive trail driving bring fresh challenges to riders who thought they had done it all. For the advanced driver, driving a multiple hitch offers challenges far beyond riding the single horse.

Robyn Cuffey is co-author of *The Essential Guide to Carriage Driving*, from which the above has been excerpted with permission. The book, which shows how to start driving safely and affordably, is available from Rural Heritage. Watch for Robyn Cuffey on "Carriage Driving," among other fine programs sponsored by Rural Heritage--a bimonthly journal featuring horses, mules and oxen used for logging and farming.

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