

## Six Summer Trail Riding Tips

**Choosing the right trails is important during the hot summer months.**

*By Jennifer Nice*

Choosing the right trails is important during the hot summer months. Here are several rules you should follow:

1. Never go “exploring” on a hot day; choose a familiar route instead, so you know exactly how long you will be out.
2. Select a route that offers ample shade and access to water. You want to give your horse every opportunity to drink during a ride. Carry a collapsible water bucket or sponge and douse your horse to help him cool down. Putting cool water on his neck, chest and legs will enhance his own cooling system. Never put cold water on his hindquarters, as it might cause cramping.
3. Avoid steep or difficult trails that will require your horse to exert himself unnecessarily.
4. Save the cantering and galloping for a cooler day.
5. If your horse has a thick coat, consider giving him a full-body clip or clipping the hair on his neck and chest. This will also enhance his cooling capabilities.
6. If your horse does show signs of overheating get him to a water source immediately. Remove your saddle, and sponge or douse your horse’s neck and shoulders with cold water. Walk him slowly, preferably in the shade, monitoring his temperature and pulse/respiration. Continue to apply water until your horse’s vital signs return to normal.