

You Tell Us: Helmets

In the April 2007 issue of Horse Illustrated, we asked you to share why you do or do not wear a safety helmet when you ride. We got a lot of great responses, some of which are featured in the July issue. Here are some more of your answers:

When I started riding at age 11, (I'm 52 now), I did not wear a helmet. I stopped riding to go to college. After 20 years, I started training a horse for a friend and never gave helmets a thought. As it turned out, the horse tossed me off.

My head injuries were very serious ... some things will never be right again. Now, every time I mount up I have a helmet on my head. Anyone riding on our property must wear a helmet. So many parents let their children ride without protection; it's scary how quickly an accident can happen. Gail Phares, Ohio

On the April 26, 2005, I had a riding accident that changed my life. Luckily I was wearing a helmet.

I had taken a trail ride on a Thoroughbred named Arion; I was planning on buying her. She was awesome in the ring, but I soon found out how she was on the trails. She reared the entire way out to the trail, but once I got her there she was fine. On the way back, she repeatedly reared again. I was so used to naughty horses; I didn't take it as much of a threat. When we were about 25 feet from the barn, Arion had enough. She stopped and sprung all her weight up and back. She crushed me between her body and the ground.

I spent a month in ICU with two fractured thoracic vertebrae, fractured ribs, a deflated lung and a ruptured spleen. I am able to walk and ride, but I still have spine problems. If I wasn't wearing a helmet, it would have been another reason for me not to be alive. I still wonder if wearing a safety vest would have saved my spleen, ribs and lungs. My doctors and surgeons said I shouldn't have lived through that accident; I should have bled out internally. One thing that I will always remember is safety first! Wear a helmet, it's horse sense! Chellsey Camasso, New Hampshire

I always wear a helmet and always will! Why? Because they have saved my life. About four years ago I was riding a young horse out on a trail ride, something spooked the horse and I got ejected--straight into a tree. I put a 4-inch long crack in my helmet. I also got a concussion, split my collar bone into three separate pieces, dislocated my shoulder and tore a bunch of tendons and ligaments. If I was not wearing a helmet, I probably wouldn't be alive right now. I truly believe there is no reason not to wear approved headgear. With all the helmet designs available, there is something for everyone. Also, as someone who has done some instruction, it only sends positive messages to wear helmets. If children see adults and their instructors riding without helmets, how can we tell them they must? I have no respect for those who think they do not need helmets, especially around kids. Be safe, wear a helmet and set an example. You never know what might happen! Kaitlyn, Internet

Have your own reason to share? Click "[Submit a comment](#)" and let us know.