Adaptive riding provides benefits in the areas of health, education, sport and recreation and leisure. Throughout the world, there are thousands of individuals with disabilities who experience the rewarding benefits of riding a horse.

Riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength, because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait. In addition to these therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides outdoor recreational and social opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Our adaptive riding program is offered to participants age 5 and up.

Professional staff and volunteers work closely with participants to ensure safe riding sessions. A new rider is typically assisted by two sidewalkers who walk alongside the horse, as well as a horse leader. All classes are taught by PATH Intl. certified riding instructors who have a strong equine background, as well as an understanding of various disabilities.

Adaptive riding is recognized as one of the more progressive forms of therapy.
Adaptive Riding Benefits:

For individuals with Down Syndrome
Individuals with Down Syndrome experience improvement in their overall motor coordination through adaptive riding. Postural challenges induced by riding a horse can improve fine and gross motor skills, balance, and core strength.

For individuals with cerebral palsy
Adaptive riding is beneficial for people with cerebral palsy because the rhythmic movement of the horse can help activate the part of the brain that controls movement; allowing for improvements in balance and muscle control. It can also benefit overall muscle balance, which improves standing and walking, and provides positive emotional benefits.

For individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI)
Adaptive riding can be very beneficial in the recovery of people who have suffered a TBI and are psychologically and physically impaired. The activity of riding can provide a consistent multi-sensory input that can help the individual’s brain function; improving cognitive aptitude and/or physical abilities.

For individuals with Multiple Sclerosis
Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis can benefit from adaptive riding within their limits of strength and energy; helping them stay limber and active. Improvements can be seen in balance and core strength.

For individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
Adaptive riding is beneficial for people with ASD to reduce irritability and improve word fluency and communication. Additional benefits include improved sensory integration and directed attention. Horses can calm riders with autism, allowing them to focus, think and accept instruction. The desire to ride also allows us to encourage positive behaviors and gently discourage negative behaviors.

For individuals with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
Horses are able to promote physical, psychological and occupational healing for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder. Equine assisted activities are found to decrease anxiety and stress, improve moods, and create a sense of peace and contentment. Adaptive riding and our PATH Intl. Equine Services for Heroes Program for veterans with PTSD focus on improving communication, trust, and self-awareness.

For individuals with intellectual and learning disabilities
Adaptive Riding is beneficial to individuals with intellectual and learning disabilities because participants are motivated by the interaction with their horses to become more focused and develop patience and discipline. Riding horses and learning to care for horses improves organization, as well as executive functioning.

For more information, visit our website www.southernreins.org

Changing lives... one ride at a time