

The Four Pillars of Readiness

Chapter 3

Answer these honestly. Hopeful answers will not be useful here.

Some of your pillars will be solid and some will need work. That is normal and expected. Finding the gaps now, before a horse depends on you, is the entire point.

PILLAR ONE — TIME

Not the best-case version of your schedule. The actual one.

How many days a week can you realistically get to the barn, and what can those days actually look like?

What happens to your horse's care if your job changes, if you travel, or if you have a health issue?

PILLAR TWO — MONEY

Real numbers from your own area, not national averages.

Do you know every line item in the monthly cost at the facility you are considering, including everything not covered in base board?

What is the maximum unexpected expense you could absorb before financial stress starts influencing decisions about your horse's care?

PILLAR THREE — EXPERIENCE

Not how many years you have ridden. What you can do independently when things do not go to plan.

What is the most challenging riding situation you have navigated on your own, without your instructor stepping in?

Is the horse you are considering matched to where you actually are, or to the rider you are hoping to become?

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PILLAR FOUR — SUPPORT SYSTEM

The relationships that cannot be built in an emergency.

Do you have, or are you actively building, a relationship with a veterinarian who will know your horse before something goes wrong?

Do you have a trainer who tells you the difficult truths alongside the encouraging ones?

WHERE I ACTUALLY STAND

Pillar	Solid	Needs work	What I will do about it, and by when
Time			
Money			
Experience			
Support system			

The people who succeed with horses are not the ones who had everything perfectly lined up before they started. They are the ones who knew where they were strong, where they needed to grow, and moved forward with preparation rather than hope.