

# LET'S RIDE!

## Making Horse Companions for Savage Worlds



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A feller's horse can be swift mode of transportation and a hardy beast of burden to haul wagons or perform other essential tasks. But, for many, it is a lot more than that. One's faithful horse can be an ally, a faithful companion on long treks—and sometimes a crucial lifeline in times of imminent danger.

Famous horses like Silver (*The Lone Ranger*), The Black Stallion, Artax (*The Neverending Story*), and Roach (*The Witcher* series) had personalities, unique qualities, and a relationship with the heroes that rode them.

These rules are designed for groups that would like their player characters' horses to be more than a notation in their Gear section, but a companion with personality and temperament. They work with useful Edges such as Beast Master, treating horses as allied Extras with

personalities of their own, and providing a way to measure the ever-changing connection between a horse and its rider.

While these rules are written with "Wild West" settings in mind, they can be ported effortlessly into fantasy, historical, or other settings in which the characters use horses—or perhaps even other kinds of mounts.



# DISPOSITION TABLE

The **Reaction** column describes the various states of Disposition. The **Modifier** column on the right indicates any bonus or penalty to Persuasion, Riding, and other interaction rolls with this horse based on its Disposition. Use the **2d6** column when randomly rolling to determine Disposition.

Mod.	Reaction	2d6
-4	<b>Hostile:</b> The horse wants nothing to do with people. It becomes aggressive when approached, behaving wildly. When mounted it violently attempts to throw the rider and even get in a kick or two before fleeing.	2
-2	<b>Unfriendly:</b> The horse is skittish and ornery. It tries to avoid being touched or ridden, attempts to throw its rider when agitated, and is consistently disobedient.	3
-1	<b>Uncooperative:</b> The horse is wary and stubborn. If possible it tries to move away when approached. It is known to be a bit contrary but rarely tries to throw a rider.	4 - 5
0	<b>Neutral:</b> The horse has no particular attitude toward humans as long as they aren't doing anything to frighten it.	6 - 8
+1	<b>Cooperative:</b> The horse is generally receptive to humans and easy to train.	9 - 10
+2	<b>Friendly:</b> The horse is comfortable around humans and responds well to being trained.	11
+4	<b>Helpful:</b> The horse is fond of humans—maybe even trusting them more than other horses! It quickly bonds with its rider, follows all but the most unreasonable commands, and sticks around even in the face of danger.	12

## OVERVIEW

Anyone can have a horse. You just need to pony up (heh heh) the money and write "Horse" in your Gear section. But if you want your horse (or some other type of mount, at your GM's discretion) to be a proper companion, that's where these rules come in.

Horses created using this method use the base Horse profile located in the *Savage Worlds* Bestiary. Start by writing those down on a piece of paper.

Next, you'll determine your horse's *Personality*, followed by its *Disposition*—a

measure of how comfortable it feels around humans and how it responds to commands.

Third is the horse's *Bond*. That's like a personal Disposition the horse has with you and only you. The Bond defaults to the horse's base Disposition the first time you meet, but over time you might be able to improve that through *Training*.

Lastly, you can (optionally) tinker with the horse's stat block a little by adding *Assets and Handicaps*. Horses can have Hindrances and Edges, too, just like any allied Extra! If you want to make the horse a little easier to Bond with, here's your chance to bump up its base Disposition—or make it more ornery in exchange for an Edge or Trait boost!

The final section includes roleplay guidance, plus some commands you can teach your horse companion.



## ANIMAL COMPANION EDGES

Savage Worlds has several Edges that pertain to horses. Here's how they interact with these rules.

**Beast Bond:** No change.

**Beast Master:** The horse does not count toward the loyal beasts attracted by this Edge. However, it does offer a +2 bonus on Taming attempts.

**Behold a Pale Horse...** (*Deadlands*): No change.

**Born in the Saddle** (*Deadlands*): No change.

**Mount** (*Fantasy Companion*): May be applied to a horse made using these rules.

You'll note these terms match those in the Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds*. That's because, as Extras, each horse's Disposition determines its starting Reaction Level—how it initially behaves around new people—and provides a bonus or penalty to Riding, Persuasion, and other interaction rolls with the varmint.

If you want to randomly determine your horse's base Disposition, roll 2d6 and consult the table. Otherwise it defaults to **Neutral**.

Horses with a starting Disposition of **Hostile** are not interested in being ridden by *anyone*! You'll need to "break" the ornery critter by successfully taming it up to **Unfriendly** before it will function as your horse companion (see Bond, below).

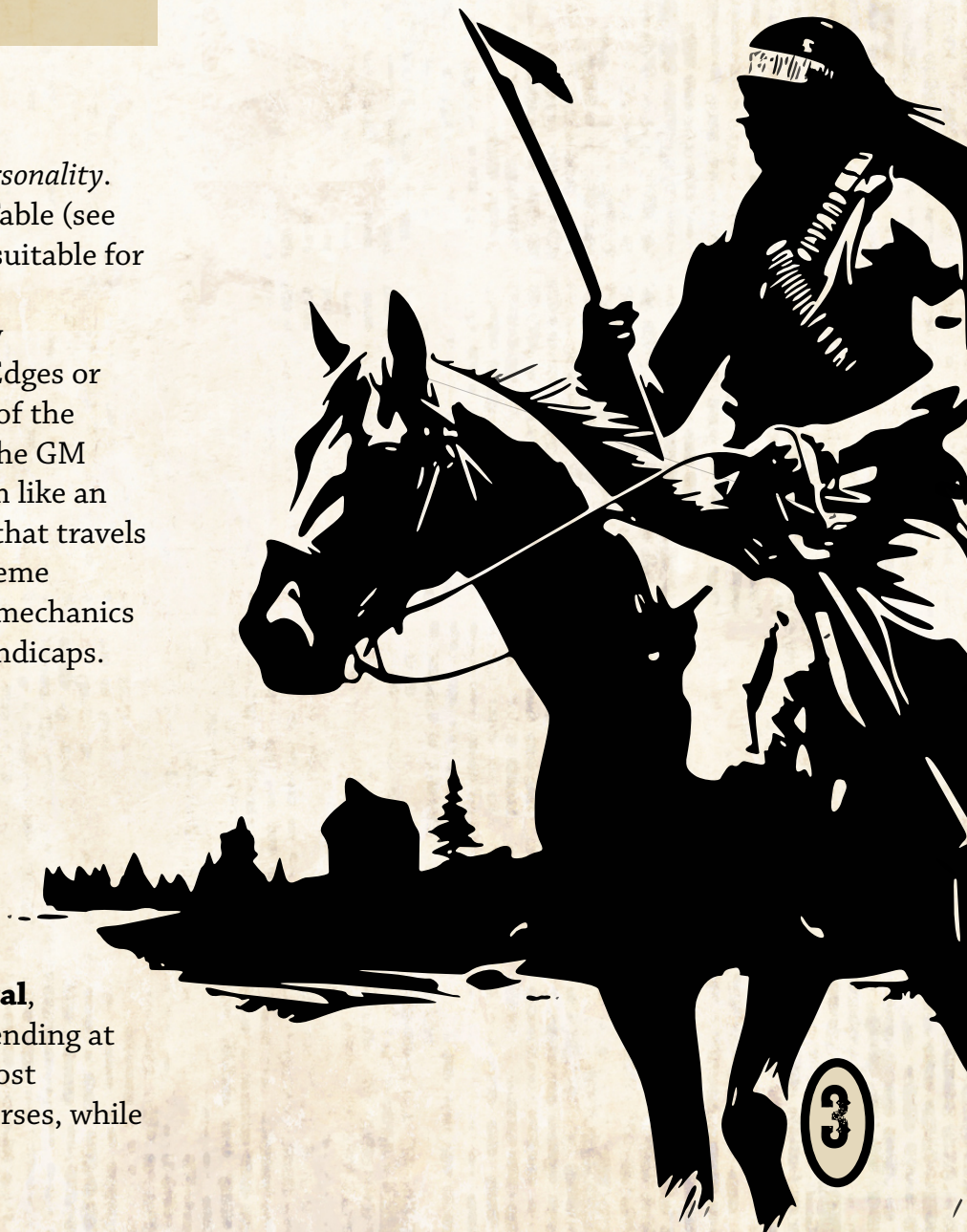
## PERSONALITY

Start by determining your horse's *Personality*. You can use the Allied Personalities Table (see *Savage Worlds*) or choose something suitable for your equine comrade.

The horse's Personality are mainly roleplaying descriptors, rather than Edges or Hindrances. Those come later. Think of the Personality as tools to help you and the GM make the horse "come alive" and seem like an actual living, thinking, feeling being that travels with you. If you like, some more extreme Personality traits might be linked to mechanics later in the section on Assets and Handicaps.

## DISPOSITION

Every horse has a *Disposition*, which measures its general reception to humans. Disposition is measured in levels, starting with **Hostile**, then **Unfriendly**, **Uncooperative**, **Neutral**, **Cooperative**, **Friendly**, and finally ending at **Helpful** (the best). **Neutral** is the most common Disposition for domestic horses, while wild horses are usually **Hostile**.



## BOND

Once established, Disposition is (usually) fixed, forever applying to anyone who interacts with the horse. However, individual riders can establish a one-on-one relationship with that horse, gradually gaining its trust and affection.

*Bond* measures that individual connection. It starts out at the same level as the horse's base Disposition. Each horse can have a unique Bond with any number of humans, though in most cases it's only important to track the Bond for those who regularly ride the horse.

## ASSETS AND HANDICAPS

All horses have a personality, but some have *Assets and Handicaps* that set them apart from others.

For this (optional) step, select up to four points of Hindrances, then spend those points to increase a Trait or purchase a suitable Edge for your horse using the standard Advancement

rules. Just like everyone else, a horse has to meet the requirements for certain Edges. Extras don't have "Ranks," so your horse can only qualify for Novice Edges or those approved by your Game Master.

In some cases, it makes more sense if an Edge is conferred to the *rider* instead of the horse itself. Work with your GM to determine when and how an Edge might be applicable.

A horse can be converted from an Extra to a Wild Card at the cost of four points. It has a single Benny of its own. Remember, you can't spend your Bennies for your horse unless you have the Beast Bond Edge!

Need points? You can earn points (or spend 'em!) by adjusting a horse's base Disposition:

**Hostile:** Gain 4 points

**Unfriendly:** Gain 2 points

**Uncooperative:** Gain 1 point

**Cooperative:** Costs 1 point

**Friendly:** Costs 2 points

**Helpful:** Costs 4 points

## TAMING

Over time, a horse and its rider can grow close, learning one another's ways and fostering deep trust. This takes time, practice—and lots of patience! During Downtime, long campaign breaks (GM's call), or when the rider gains an Advance, he may spend time formally *Training* his steed. This is a Persuasion roll, modified by the current Bond level. Food or other suitable training aids can add +1 to the roll (GM's call), as can Support from other heroes.

Success raises the Bond by one level, or two with a raise. Failure reduces it by one level, while a Critical Failure reduces it by two!

**Coercion:** Not-so-nice desperados can use Intimidation instead (along with lassos, prods, and other measures), but the first time something causes the relationship to regress (see below), the Bond automatically drops *two* steps!



# REGRESSING

Just like any relationship, it's possible for the one between a rider and his horse to go astray. Horses are living, thinking beings that crave kindness, to be cared for, and have their trust returned. Mistreatment gradually erodes the relationship. It's much faster to lose ground than it is to gain it, too—violating a horse's trust can cause the Bond to immediately decrease one step without a roll!

It's up to the Game Master to determine if something might harm the Bond between a rider and her horse, but some examples include:

- Cruelty, excessive use of spurs or whips
- Long-term neglect or boredom
- Riding it to near exhaustion
- Forcing the horse to perform a highly dangerous and unnatural act, such as leaping from a high bridge into a river
- Mistreating or interfering with its young

Note that the Bond level can even drop lower than the horse's base Disposition! It pays to be kind, partner.

# COMMANDS

Horses made with these rules can recognize and respond to a few very basic commands beyond those given while Riding. These are usually a mix of tongue clicks, whistles, gestures, and words.

You may teach a horse a number of commands from the list below equal to its Smarts Die Type. If you aren't sure, we recommend starting with the starred (★) commands.

Issuing a command requires a Persuasion roll, modified by the horse's Bond (cowpokes with the Beast Master Edge don't have to roll). All commands require the horse to be within visual or auditory range.

**Attack:** The horse attacks an indicated target, or the nearest obvious enemy. It will continue to do so until Shaken or Intimidated.

★ **Calm:** Coax your horse to stay calm when facing common hazards (like snakes or a cliff edge), or Support a horse's Fear Check.

★ **Come/Go:** The horse takes the safest and most direct route to you or to a location you can both see, or follows as you walk.

**Defend:** The horse takes the Defend action.

**Distract:** The horse starts kicking up a ruckus, possibly causing curious onlookers to investigate and letting you act unnoticed!

★ **Fetch:** Horses aren't dogs, but they can bring small objects to their rider. The object must be small enough to grip with its teeth.

**Flee:** The horse attempts to evade a threat or escape captivity, then move to a safe location nearby to await the rider.

**Help:** The horse gallops off to seek aid. If it saw people or civilization recently, it goes there. Otherwise it searches in a random direction for a day or two before returning.

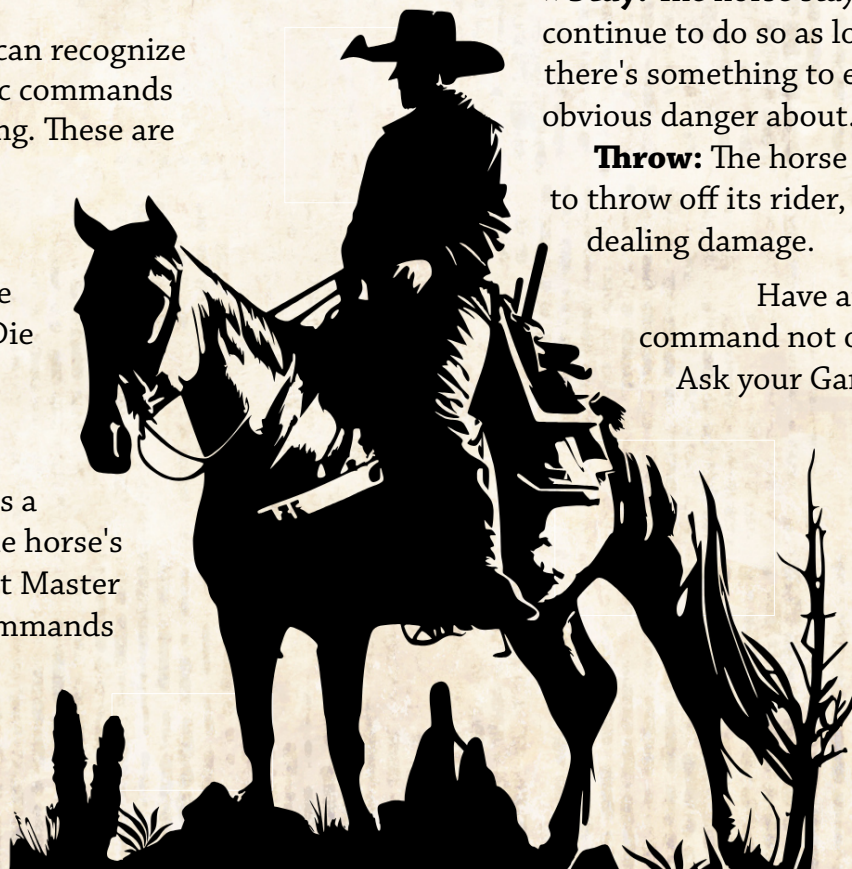
**Quiet:** The horse moves with Stealth.

**Kneel:** The horse spends its action helping a rider climb into the saddle, letting that person spend her action doing something else.

★ **Stay:** The horse stays put. It'll continue to do so as long as there's something to eat and no obvious danger about.

**Throw:** The horse attempts to throw off its rider, potentially dealing damage.

Have an idea for a command not on this list?  
Ask your Game Master!



## EXAMPLES

Below are several examples of horses made with these rules. Mine them for ideas—or just adapt them directly into your own campaign.

### FRISCO

**Personality:** Lazy

**Disposition:** Friendly

**Assets & Handicaps:** Phobia (Major: Snakes)

### MYSTERE

**Personality:** Mysterious

**Disposition:** Uncooperative

**Assets & Handicaps:** Trouble Magnet (Minor), Luck

### PALADIN

**Personality:** Fearless

**Disposition:** Uncooperative

**Assets & Handicaps:** Stubborn (Minor), Steady Hands (Applies to Rider)

### OL' PIP

**Personality:** Happy

**Disposition:** Friendly

**Assets & Handicaps:** Elderly (Major)

### CHEYENNE

**Personality:** Agile

**Disposition:** Neutral

**Assets & Handicaps:** Can't Swim (Minor), Loyal (Minor), Free Runner

### ODDFELLOW

**Personality:**

Sneaky

**Disposition:**

Neutral

**Assets &**

**Handicaps:** Anemic (Minor), Spirit d6

## RULES SUMMARY

- Use the Allied Personality Table (*Savage Worlds*) for the horse's *Personality* or come up with it yourself.
- *Disposition* is based on the Reaction Table (*Savage Worlds*) and confers modifiers to Riding and Persuasion rolls (possibly more) pertaining to that horse. Roll random *Disposition*, or assume horse is Neutral.
- Decide if your horse has any *assets and handicaps* and adjust its Traits, Hindrances, and Edges accordingly.
- Each rider has a *Bond* level with a horse. It works like *Disposition* but can be improved by taming, and harmed by mistreatment.
- When riders gain an Advance, they may attempt a Persuasion roll (plus the current Bond bonus or penalty) to permanently improve the Bond. Failure causes the Bond to decrease.
- Every horse knows some basic commands and instructions. Smarter horses can learn more.

### EL DIABLA

**Personality:** Treacherous

**Disposition:** Hostile

**Assets & Handicaps:** Mean (Minor—Applies to Training rolls), Fighting d6, Wild Card

### INVIERNO

**Personality:** Bright

**Disposition:** Neutral

**Assets & Handicaps:** Habit (Major—Needs Open Spaces), Alertness

### ANNABELLE

**Personality:** Cowardly

**Disposition:** Friendly

**Assets & Handicaps:** Timid (Major)

