Before You Rehome

Start with the horse

Document age, soundness, health conditions, medications, temperament, training, handling needs, and riding limitations. Be completely candid.

Explore alternatives

If the situation is temporary, consider trusted boarding, a lease, care assistance, or an appropriate retirement arrangement.

Gather records

Prepare veterinary and farrier history, diet, identification, registration papers if available, and proof of ownership.

Plan ahead

Allow time to screen homes carefully. Urgent placements may limit safe choices.

For senior or non-riding horses

Describe the horse as companion-only or retired when appropriate. Explain ongoing needs and expected costs rather than promising a low-maintenance horse.

A Safe Transfer

Put it in writing

Use a dated bill of sale or transfer agreement identifying the horse, both parties, payment if any, and agreed conditions. Seek legal advice about enforceable restrictions.

Confirm the details

Verify the receiving location, identity, transport plans, and who assumes responsibility for care.

Help the horse adjust

Provide feeding and care instructions. Discuss gradual diet changes, appropriate biosecurity, and integration with other horses.

Agree on follow-up

A planned check-in can resolve early questions, but it is not a substitute for thorough screening.

Have a backup plan

Discuss what happens if the new home can no longer keep the horse, especially for seniors and horses with special needs.

REHOMING A HORSE

Finding a safe, suitable new home

A responsible transition

Rehoming can be a caring decision when circumstances change. The goal is not simply to find a willing person, but a home equipped for this particular horse.

Every horse deserves a plan.

New York State Horse Council

www.nyshc.org

Finding a Good Match

Describe the horse accurately

Share recent photos, age, skills, temperament, physical limitations, and activities that are genuinely suitable.

Look beyond promises

Ask about experience, turnout, fencing, shelter, feed, routine care, and the long-term budget.

Request references

A veterinarian, farrier, trainer, or established equine contact may help verify experience and care practices.

Visit when practical

See the property or request a live video tour. Look for safe facilities, water, shelter, and appropriate companionship.

Take your time

The best home is the one that fits this horse, not necessarily the first one available.

Questions to Ask

Daily care

Who feeds, waters, checks, and handles the horse? What happens during vacations or illness?

Health and costs

How will routine and emergency veterinary, dental, hoof, and special-needs care be funded?

Experience and purpose

Does the person understand this horse's training, handling needs, and limitations?

Future changes

What happens if the new owner moves, becomes ill, or can no longer keep the horse?

Trial and transport

Is a supervised visit appropriate? Who arranges safe transport and when does responsibility transfer?

Older & Non-Riding Horses

Companion homes need screening

A companion-only horse still needs daily attention, safe turnout, suitable herd mates, hoof care, dentistry, and veterinary care.

Be clear about limitations

Disclose arthritis, chronic pain, metabolic conditions, medications, dietary needs, and whether riding is inappropriate.

Budget for retirement

Ask how the home will manage increasing costs, special feeding, and difficult end-of-life decisions with a veterinarian.

Check rescues and sanctuaries

Ask about space, funding, care standards, lifetime commitments, and contingency plans. Not every organization can accept another horse.

Watch for warning signs

Beware of pressure, vague plans, refusal of references, unclear destinations, or promises that sound too good to be true.

Never abandon a horse. Seek qualified help if safe placement is not immediately possible.