

FITNESS - **Riding: The art of keeping a horse between you and the ground!**

**W**alking, jogging and cycling are all very well but they don't afford you much in the way of time to absorb the scenery. What better way to exercise, get some fresh air and see the English countryside from a whole different angle than on horse-back? One of the most satisfying things about it is that you don't even know you are exercising, unless you get into the seriously dynamic side of things.

Horse riding is fantastic news for your core-stability, utilising balance and coordination merely to stay put! The 'correct seat', as it is called, is great for posture; by pulling your shoulders back and lifting your ribcage you are opening your lungs up ready for all of that cardiovascular work you'll be doing whilst you have a trot. Horse riding develops toned arm, thigh and calf muscles and will work your abdominals without any painful sit-ups!

If you are never going to be a gym bunny, and prefer things a little more social, then this is the sport for you. You can 'hack out' with friends and, with lessons, become more accomplished at tackling obstacles in the great outdoors. There are gates to open, streams to



cross, even hedges to clear; all of this is the equivalent of those repetitive reps and sets most of us loath in the gym.

They say that there is 'no pain, no gain' with exercise and horse riding is no exception; your first few times will result in achy thighs but you won't recall working so hard to achieve it! Give it a try. Find out why horse riding didn't die out with the invention of the car. It really is a great way to work towards a fitter, healthier you and enjoy our fantastic countryside.

**Carrie Cartwright-Owen**