

Why Not Try...?

The Discipline of the Month

# Vaulting

Five reasons to try vaulting:

1.

Vaulting is great for confidence, flexibility and balance

2.

You don't need a real horse to learn and practise vaulting

3.

If your horse gets used to you climbing over him, he should react less if you fall off or become unbalanced

4.

Vaulting can take you far, even to World Championships

5.

Vaulting on a horse is a great skill for mounted games



Note: Always wear a helmet.

# Vaulting - where to start

## What is Vaulting?

Equestrian vaulting is best described as 'gymnastics and dance on horseback' and originates from Roman times. In competitive vaulting, vaulters may compete as individuals, pairs (pas-de-deux) and teams. Vaulting improves a rider's seat, balance, rhythm and coordination as well as their confidence on the horse.

Beginners compete in walk while more experienced vaulters compete in canter. The horse is controlled by the lungeur who stands in the middle of a 15 metre (minimum) diameter circle.

The competition arena must be a circle of at least 18m diameter and must have a soft and springy footing for the horses and vaulters.

Most competitions are held indoors to minimise outside distractions for the horse.



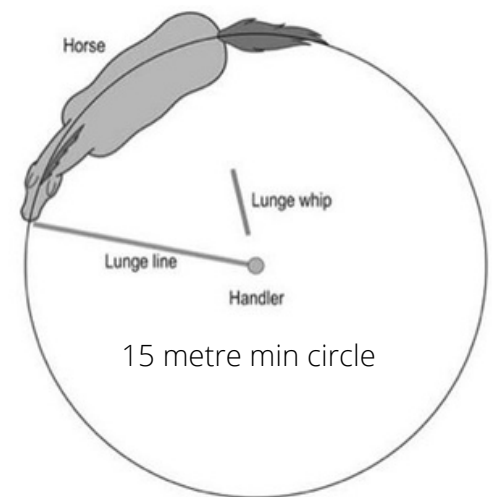
## What sort of horse do you need?

All sorts of horses make great vaulting horses, no matter the breed, age or height. Horses are generally chosen for their temperament as they must be able to walk and canter on the lunge while the vaulter is moving around on their back.

Horses will typically receive 6 to 12 months of training before entering a competition with vaulters and will get balanced training of both dressage and vaulting.

The competition horse is usually 16hh and higher, with the ideal horse being over 17hh, however smaller horses can be used if a club has very small members who cannot safely vault on a bigger horse.

A team horse should be bigger, stronger and more balanced as it must carry up to three people at one time.



## How do I get started?

The best way to get started in vaulting is to contact a vaulting club in your local area (see Page 4) who will have all the equipment required and have knowledge and experience for a strong introduction to the sport.

If joining a club is not possible, it is good to start training exercises on a barrel which is typically a metal barrel covered in padding and a vinyl cover 130cm long, 120cm high with a 60cm diameter.

If a barrel roller is not used, the handles must be 20cm apart at the base and located 30cm from the front of the barrel and must be safe and secure. The legs of the barrel must not protrude outside the width of the barrel and tubular metals are ideal so as not to cause injury.

The best exercises to begin with are the Preliminary compulsories as pictured on Page 3. [The Equestrian Vaulting Australia rules are the best place to look for the competition rules and scoring.](#)





Mount:



Basic Seat:



Flag:



Kneeling; a preliminary move



Plank:



Inside and Outside Seat:



Kneel:

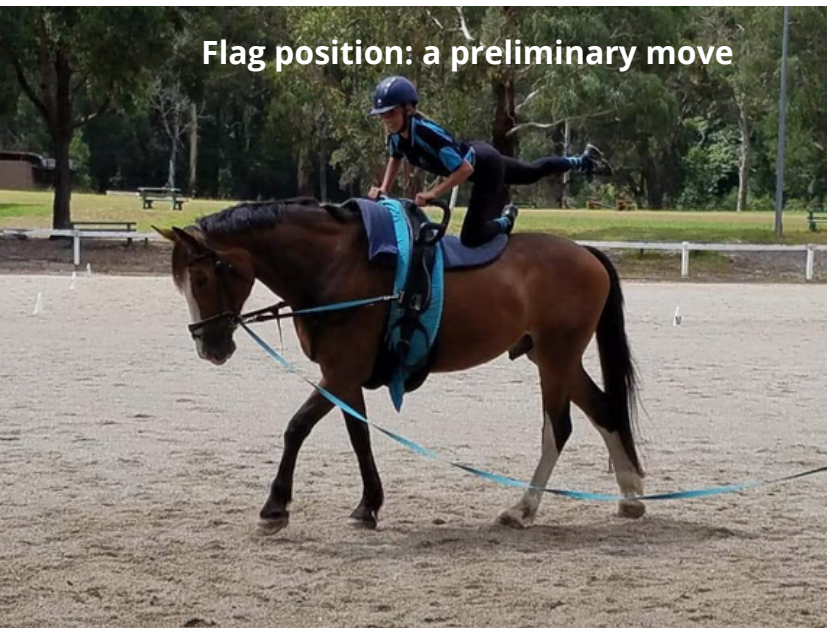


**Preliminary level compulsory vaulting moves for beginners**

Getting the feel and feeling the fun!



Flag position: a preliminary move



# Beginners Guide to Vaulting

This short video clip shows a basic first lesson on how to vault on and get off. [You can watch some basic vaulting moves here.](#)

(Lesson starts about 60 secs in)  
*Note: Always wear a helmet.*



# How are vaulting competitions judged?

The horse and vaulter are judged on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest score. Competitions consist of compulsory exercises that change slightly between levels and choreographed freestyle exercises that are performed to music.

There are six levels of competition, starting from the lowest or beginner level.

- Preliminary (all at walk),
- Pre-Novice (Canter and walk with preliminary compulsories),
- Novice (Canter and walk with harder compulsories)
- Intermediate (all at canter with no degree of difficulty in the freestyle),
- Advanced (all at canter with a degree of difficulty in the freestyle) and
- Open (all at canter with the additional technical test which is a freestyle with five compulsory moves).

In the compulsories, each exercise is given a score out of 10. In Preliminary they are:

- **Vault on,**
- **Flag,**
- **Inside Seat,**
- **Kneel and Dismount - see diagrams Page 3),**
- **Basic Seat,**
- **Plank,**
- **Outside Seat,**

The scores are based on technique and harmony with the horse.

The freestyle consists of approximately 10 moves which each start with a score of 10 and deductions will be taken if the move is not performed perfectly.



In Advanced and Open the freestyle moves are also given a degree of difficulty; easy, medium, difficult and risk.

The freestyle is also given scores on performance (mechanics, essence, form, scope, degree of difficulty of execution, security and balance, consideration for the horse and harmony with the movement of the horse) and artistic (The choreography of moves and the way the music is used and interpreted).

## Looking for a coach to visit your Club?

[Equestrian Vaulting Australia has a list of Clubs in each State](#)

### EQUESTRIAN VAULTING AUSTRALIA

HEALTH FITNESS STRENGTH & BALANCE



[Home](#) | [Information](#) | [Resources](#) | [Find A Club](#) | [Events](#) | [Gallery](#) | [News](#) | [Contact Us](#)

#### Find a Club - Australia

Vaulting Clubs, Groups and Teams in Australia.

<https://www.equestrianvaultingaustralia.com.au>



# Is Vaulting an Olympic Sport?



Vaulting has only been contested in one Olympics - the 1920 Antwerp Games. It was during the era when all equestrian sports in the Olympics had a military dominance.

It has since been an artistic demonstration at the Los Angeles Games in 1984 and the Atlanta Games of 1996. Who knows? It could make a return one day.

[Vaulting does have, however, have World Championships.](#)

(Watch the vaulting team trot in on foot!)

## From Pony Club to Vaulting Star

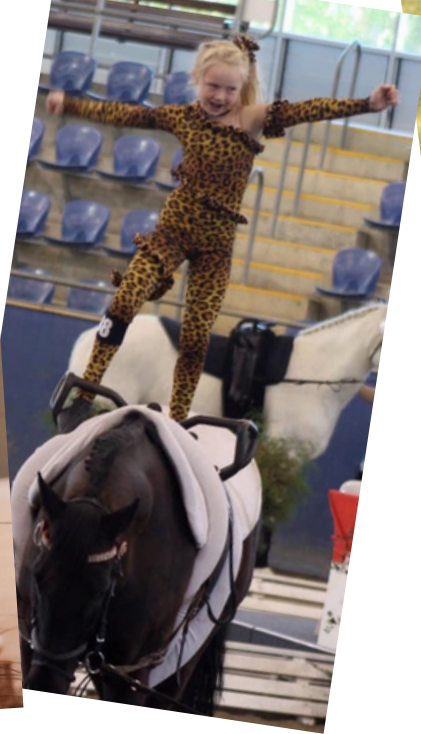
Around 2004, Clare from Kilmore and District Pony Club (below) purchased a 16.3hh grey Percheron/TB cross as a potential eventer. Cricket was a quiet, comfortable horse to ride but when it was found he just didn't have a top gear for eventing, she sold him on for a slower pursuit.

Cricket became a star vaulting horse for Alix Bell of Two Wells SA, winning the EA Vaulting Participant horse of the year in 2017, 2018 and 2019! Alix Bell, 23, has been involved in vaulting for 18 years. She is currently a member of PHEVA Vaulting where her mother is the lunger and she is the coach. PHEVA is a small club with members aged from 9 to 24 years old at all different levels.

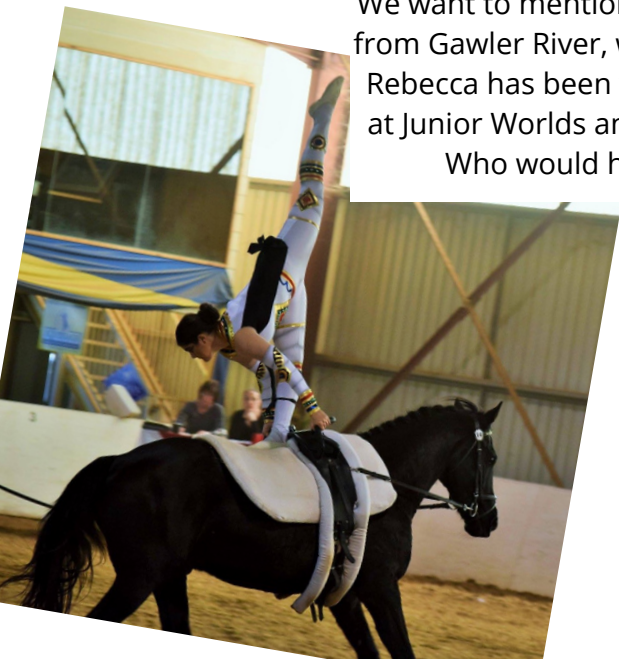
You can find PHEVA on [Facebook at PHEVA Heights Equestrian Vaulting.](#) Alix has contributed a lot of this vaulting information, for which we thank her.







We want to mention talented sisters Rebecca and her younger Isabelle from Gawler River, who show the grace and elegance of this discipline. Rebecca has been vaulting for 13 years and has represented Australia at Junior Worlds and has also competed in Europe as a CVI3\* vaulter. Who would have thought you could do all this on a horse!





# Vaulting on for Mounted Games

We've seen how easy the experts make vaulting onto a horse appear. Anyone who does mounted games at Pony Club learns, or wishes they could learn, how to vault on.



Above: Getting the feel of vaulting on using a mini trampoline - and it's great fun!  
Note: Always wear a helmet.



## Watch the experts



[Vaulting on at the canter - the experts](#)



[Vaulting on at the gallop Pony Club experts show how. Note the footwork.](#)

## With thanks to:

Alix Bell, PHEVA Heights Equestrian Vaulting and Two Wells PC SA,  
Kerstin Schoen, Wooroloo Pony Club, WA; Helen Paxton,  
Linda Vandeppear Gawler River PC; and the NT State Office.