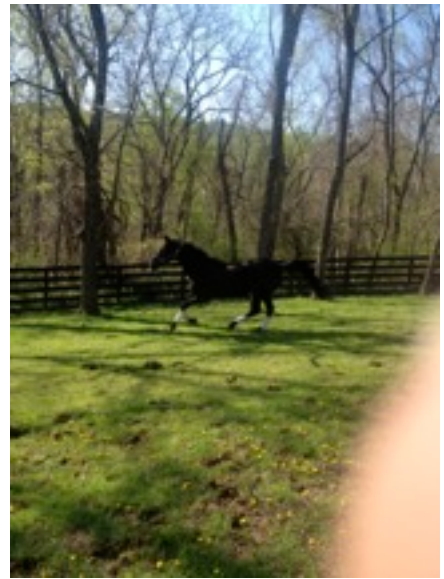
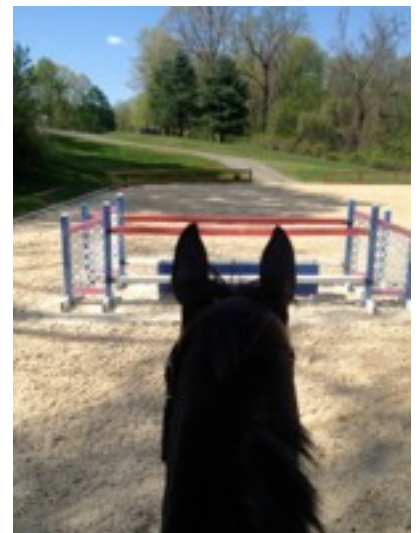


This is Ron having way too much fun in his turnout. Clearly, he believes it is NOT time to come in yet for a ride. "I like my paddock and you can't catch me." It's a good thing I'm not on much of a time schedule, so I was able to patiently wait until he decided he could be caught after all. Silly Won Ton.

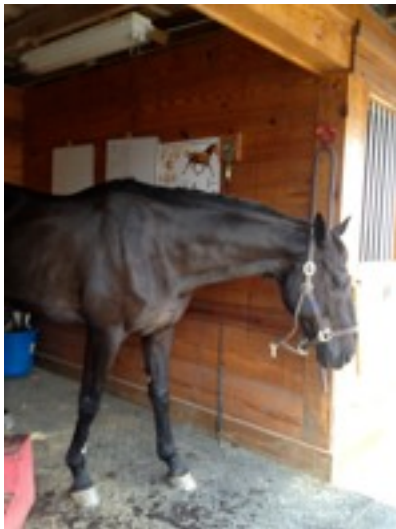


Today I have another jump lesson scheduled with David. Just recently this spring, we had a couple of rough show jumping rounds, so this has been the phase that I am most concerned about at the moment. I had some great help from Will Simpson when we were at Thermal, ironing out a few things and Ron was jumping out of his skin. So it has been a process trying to figure out what changed. It would be so much easier if horses could talk!

We finally narrowed it down to some soreness in the SI area and have treated it aggressively the last couple of weeks with acupuncture, shockwave and chiropractic, along with a few doses of Legend and my trusty Revitavet. David had worked with us the week before Galway and he felt that Ron was showing improvement and jumping straighter and in much better form. Good to know that we are on the right track. The jump ring is situated partially down the hill from the barn, so is well sheltered from the wind, nestled up against the woods, so another lovely setting. David's courses set in the ring remind me of the courses we set at home, with several related lines and bending lines, some of them on the magic "seven" strides. Just enough time to lose your focus and rhythm. I hope everyone at home is working on those too! We worked a lot on slow approaches, halting on the other side to get Ron to think about slowing his jump down and taking more time in the air. Similar to what Will was having us work on at Thermal, just through a slightly different exercise.



The afternoon brought several riders shipping in for lessons and I put off my next big project for the day, body clipping, by spending some time auditing. One of the great things about this trip is the opportunity to soak in some more education. I have always loved listening to other instructors teach and the opportunity to listen to David is a great one. I pick up new ideas, new ways of thinking about riding and also new ways to explain things to students. Learning and improving is a big part of the journey for me and the part that I find the most rewarding.



Finally, I had to get down to the business of body clipping. Not exactly my favorite job. I actually don't think I have body clipped since I clipped McKinlaigh at the Olympics. The good news is that it isn't something you forget how to do. The bad news is that it was just as hairy and dirty as I remember it being. Although, shaving off a summer coat is a lot less hairy than shaving off a winter one. Even though Ron's hair wasn't very long, we will be running a 10 minute course at Jersey and I want him to have every cooling advantage possible. The hair works as an insulator, so by getting that hair off, the air can wick the sweat away faster, taking the heat away with it. Ron is so stoic and well behaved through the whole process. I have to think if he was a person, he would be a "salt of the earth, blue collar" kinda guy. As loyal and kind and patient as the day is long. Love this guy!

All that hard work for such a small pile of hair!

