



Picking the Right Blanket

Blanketing Considerations—Self Assessment

[The Equine Guelph Horse Blanketing Tool](#) reviewed turn-out environment and duration, health, activity level, haircoat, breed, health and destruction potential including your own horse and his herd mates. If you finished the [Why/When to Blanket section](#) and decided that blanketing is definitely for you, here are a few additional considerations.

Pasture Personality – Is my horse a hooligan in the paddock or happy grazing the day away? Movement causes heat and some horses will generate more than others. Reach under your blanket up by the horse's shoulder to see if they are a comfortable temperature under their rug.



Flurry Factors: Rainy, windy and damp but above freezing may mean a waterproof light sheet may be your top priority to defend against conditions that could cause equine hypothermia. When it drops below freezing, extra fill/insulation should be considered in the “terrible triad” of wind, wet and cold.

Was my horse rugged in late fall show season? – This reduces loft in the coat. There is research that the extended use of lights may discourage autumn hair growth. You will more than likely need to provide blanketing all winter. Once you begin blanketing, you are committed, if your horse does not have an adequate coat.

Management/Turn Out procedures/cost: If your horse is stabled you will need to take into account the temperature in the barn vs. the temperature outside. You will also consider the length of time spent in each environment and what services are provided. Layering is one practice where horses will wear stable blankets in the barn and simply have a waterproof turnout rug fitted on top for turn out.

Having one rug for indoor/outdoor use will run the risk of the horse over-heating indoors unless you live in a very temperate climate. Stable rugs are also usually less expensive than waterproof turnout rugs so less use of the t/o rug will extend its life.

Remember, all the factors you reviewed in the Why/When to Blanket section come into play. A damp windy, cloudy day will feel colder than a dry calm sunny day of the same temperature. The actual range depends will vary tremendously depending on influences such as: sunshine, wind, humidity, shelter, body condition score, thickness of skin and hair coat, age, mobility or activity level in pasture, length of turn out time and general health. Also keep in mind the horse's thermoneutral zone is between 5-20°C (41 – 68 F).