

# Step Up Stirrup, Ride Safer and Longer

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO, UNITED STATES, March 2, 2015

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The value of horseback riding as therapy and recreation, as well as a sport, has long been known. But what happens when competent riders who are short, moderately disabled, or have a very tall horse have to dismount when they are away from the barn or corral? Whether riding using an English saddle or Western, riders need stirrups with straps adjusted to fit the correct position of their feet when mounted. Youngsters riding a full-sized horse, adult riders who are relatively short, and anyone whose physical strength is diminished can have a hard time getting back on a horse after a dismount in the field.

Louise Ford has designed the Step-up Stirrup to [solve the problem](#) of mounting in the field. It attaches to the saddle just like a regular stirrup, but it has a folding “step” that folds down to elongate it – putting the stirrup within reach of a rider who would otherwise have to jump on the horse’s back or find something to stand on in order to mount. Once the rider is mounted, the stirrup can be folded back up so that it is out of the way, and will not inconvenience or harm the horse or rider. The stirrup has an upper step that is pre-positioned at the regular height.

Louise has been riding horses since she was a child. She has been aware of the problem since she was eight years old, and had a Connemara pony – which is nearly as big as regular horse. As an adult, she is only 5’4” tall. She notes that when you are vertically challenged, and you love the gate and temperament of certain breeds of tall horses, this can turn into a problem. She notes that a healthy, agile adult can solve the problem with a bit of a jump and a climb into the saddle.

However, she has had two bouts of chemotherapy in the last thirteen years. As you might imagine, this leaves you a bit shaky and quite a bit weaker than your normal self. She sometimes had to give up riding because she could not get herself into the saddle safely. She notes that you can sometimes stand on the side of a fence, on a stump or on a rock, but that none of these things are as safe as putting your foot into the stirrup and swinging yourself on up.



She and a friend worked in his engineering workshop to [develop a solution](#). The Step Up Stirrup, when unfolded, adds six inches to the length of the stirrup. She says this can make a big difference – and that using it is a lot safer than taking a chance on finding some way to remount after dismounting to open a gate or even after falling off the horse. It eliminates the chance that your horse might move away from improvised mounting blocks or that it might even inadvertently crush you between it and a fence or wall.

She has listened to friends who have had to sell their tall horses, as they have grown older, and purchase shorter horses with less comfortable gaits – just because they could no longer reach the stirrup to get on. She hopes that her invention will help riders to stay with their favorite mounts longer. Louise has a [Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign](#) in session to produce a run of stirrups suitable for an adult English saddle. If the campaign is successful, they will add a child's stirrup and models for Western and Australian saddles. A pledge of \$220 will reserve for you one Step-up Stirrup; for \$285 you will receive a matched pair of two stirrups. If you like the idea of this invention, but don't have that kind of money to pledge, you can still support the campaign, and receive a t-shirt or hat as a token of your donation.

At the upper donation levels, rewards such as a ticket to the Camargo Hunt Ball, or dinner at Geronimo's – a five-star restaurant -- are available. If you are unable to attend the ball, \$300 will be donated to Listening Horse Therapeutic Riding instead.

When you support this campaign, you are not only supporting an ingenious invention, you are also supporting the many riders who can use these stirrups to continue to have the freedom to ride. They will not have to depend on having someone to help them get back on their horse in the event of a dismount in the field. You are helping a child to be able to mount safely; or an older person to be able to ride their favorite equine friend a little bit longer. If you love horses and riding, or even if having a horse to ride has been a dream, this is a way that you can help make horseback riding easier and safer.

About: Louise Ford lived in Rochester, NY until age 15, when her mother passed away. She and her father then moved to Palm Beach, Florida. Since then she has worked and lived in a variety of places – ranging from Santa Fe to London. She even spent some time volunteering at the Juba Orphanage in Sudan. She has now started her own company, Step Up Stirrup, LLC.

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