

# Time to TREC

By George Gorman of [www.rstor.co.uk](http://www.rstor.co.uk)

*Have you thought about trying TREC with your horse? The discipline helps develop the skills horse and rider need while hacking, and includes orienteering, negotiating obstacles and basic flatwork. Here is an overview of this fun discipline:*

**T**REC has three main elements - orienteering on horseback (POR), control of paces (CoP) and cross-country/obstacle course (PTV).

Overseen in the UK as of October 1st by TREC GB, the sport's governing body, competitions are run at four levels, catering for beginners through to those at international level. Riders can compete individually or in pairs. TREC started in France under its French name, Technique de Randonee Equestre de Competition, and was introduced to the UK in 1998 by the British Horse Society (BHS).

TREC is an ideal family sport and is very inclusive - western and side saddle riders can compete alongside traditional English style riders, and horses may be bitted or bitless, shod or unshod. Natural horsemanship skills are encouraged.

The full TREC League runs from March to October and comprises all three elements described above, while the indoor winter series that runs from October to March includes control of paces (CoP) and a cross-country/obstacle course (PTV).

There are four levels of 'full blown' TREC competition, with Level One being the simplest, and Level Four the most challenging.

Level One is suitable for beginners. Riders can typically expect to be out for around two to three hours on the orienteering on horseback (POR) section, and the cross-country/obstacle course (PTV) course may include jumping obstacles of up to 2 feet (60cm) in height. In Level Two, the POR route is up to 20kms long - it is suitable for novices but expects more developed map reading skills than Level One; the PTV course can include obstacles up to 2'4 (70cm) in height. Level Three has a POR route up to 32kms long, and competitors can expect PTV obstacles up to 2'8 (80cm) in height. Level Four has a POR route up to 40kms long and a PTV course that includes jumps up to 3' (90cm).

Many centres also offer 'Versatile TREC' contests over the autumn and winter months, in which the orienteering on horseback (POR) phase is replaced by an obedience test, to be performed in a 20m x 40m dressage arena, and marked on accuracy and obedience of transitions. Notably, Bramble Hill Farm in Slinfold, West Sussex, holds these 'Versatile TREC' events. Visit [www.bramblehillfarm.co.uk](http://www.bramblehillfarm.co.uk)

## Equipment for TREC

- 1** Protective headwear must be worn that meets current standards, and carries the assurance stamp of Kitemark or SEI.
- 2** Personal IDs and medical armbands are a minimum requirement for all stages, as is ID on the horse.
- 3** Safe and appropriate clothing and footwear is recommended. Footwear with a tread sole worn with half chaps is often deemed more suitable than conventional riding boots, as there can be frequent dismounting and leading!
- 4** For the POR phase, fluorescent/reflective high-viz clothing is required.
- 5** For the PTV phase - a body protector is required. This is also required in competitions when fixed obstacles form part of the course. (E.g. cross country fences, steps, ditches etc).
- 6** A compass, pens for map marking, a torch, first aid equipment, a whistle for use in emergencies, a headcollar and leadrope or combination bridle, are also recommended.



**TREC GB, the riding discipline's governing body, has appointed the RS-tor rider safety aid as sponsor of its prestigious winter series of indoor TREC competitions; the RS tor Rider Safety Aid TREC GB Winter League runs nationwide from October 1st until March 31st. The RS-tor rider safety aid is ideal for TREC enthusiasts - it boosts stability in the saddle and reduces the velocity of the rider's movement if they become unseated, potentially preventing a fall, or allowing a safer or more controlled fall. It is very useful when dismounting, as the rider can help lower themselves down from the horse. Visit [www.rstor.co.uk](http://www.rstor.co.uk) for info.**

Visit <http://www.setrec.org.uk> for South East-based activities, or the governing body's website <http://www.trecgb.com> for details on the discipline.

The RS-tor gives you a handle in **any** situation



Have you ever experienced the rider's worst nightmare?

**See the RS-tor at Libby's International's stand at HOYS, from 8/10**

"He was going so well - then disaster struck..."



**RS-tor** noun, (ar-rest-or) a safety device used by horse riders to help prevent them falling or being unseated. Could allow the rider to fall in a more controlled manner. [derivation of : **arrestor**] First use: 14th century. Origin: Middle English *aresten*, from Anglo-French *arester* to stop, arrest.

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