# Track Paddocks: Combating Horse Boredom

A confinement area (or paddock) is an enclosure meant to be your horse's outdoor living quarters when keeping them off pastures. Using a confinement area protects pastures from overgrazing and soil compaction, especially during winter months when grass plants are dormant and soils are saturated. Limiting time on pastures also helps manage the horse's health and weight.

If you're familiar with confinement areas, you probably think of them as small areas that don't give horses much opportunity to move. However, an emerging trend, called **track paddocks**, may change the way you view confinement areas. Track paddocks are large, long corridors that circle the perimeter of a pasture or other area. The goal of a track paddock is to encourage horses to move about more freely and interact with each other.

Track paddocks are based on concepts brought to the forefront by author Jaime Jackson in his book *Paddock Paradise, A Guide to Natural Horse Boarding*. Jackson introduced a new way of looking at confinement areas based on his research into how horses live in the wild. Jackson's ideas draw from his observations on how the horse's natural instincts stimulate and facilitate movement which Jackson feels helps keep a horse sound, both physically and mentally. Jackson and many others who have tried this approach feel track paddocks have many benefits including fewer vices, healthier hooves and overall improved horse health.

A track paddock is generally set up so that it runs along the perimeter of a pasture or property, with permanent fencing on the outside and temporary fencing on the inside. But there are any number of creative ways to shape a track paddock, including circling around a building or arena, or weaving through a trail course. The possibilities are endless.

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