

# RT<sup>3</sup> Test

## Part 1: Your RT<sup>3</sup> Evaluation

This part of The RT<sup>3</sup> Test explores how you feel about your appearance in general, with a particular focus on how you *think* you look when you ride. It also factors in how much you think this image is affecting your ability to ride freely and well. Consider each of the following characteristics:

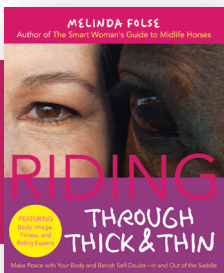
- Overall Shape/Body Type \_\_\_\_\_
- Height \_\_\_\_\_
- Weight \_\_\_\_\_
- Weight Distribution \_\_\_\_\_
- Upper Body \_\_\_\_\_
- Lower Body \_\_\_\_\_
- Leg Thickness \_\_\_\_\_
- Leg Length \_\_\_\_\_

Now beside each one, write *Very Dissatisfied*, *Mostly Dissatisfied*, *Mostly Satisfied*, or *Very Satisfied* when you consider the characteristic in conjunction with your own body, and in particular with your body as that of a horsewoman. Your answers here indicate the areas or aspects of your appearance that you like or dislike when it comes to how you look, especially as you ride or work with horses.

## Part 2: How Do You Think You Look When You Ride?

The second part of our test is designed to help you isolate and identify some of the thoughts that run through your head while you're horseback, and specifically how you think your body *causes* you to ride, how you think you *look* when you ride, and how you *feel* about your own body as you ride. Don't take the wording in this part of the test too literally: if a thought or sentiment hits anywhere close to home, make note. Just as you did with Part 1 of this test, consider the following prompts:

- I don't look very good when I ride. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a lousy rider because of how I'm built and the way my body works. \_\_\_\_\_
- Judges and other riders ignore me because of how I look. \_\_\_\_\_
- Everyone else at the barn looks better around and on horses than I do. \_\_\_\_\_
- There's no way I can win any sort of show because of how I look. \_\_\_\_\_
- I wish I looked like the other women I ride with and compete against. \_\_\_\_\_
- People at the barn don't like me because of how I look. \_\_\_\_\_



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- Everyone thinks I'm too fat to ride. \_\_\_\_\_
- My riding clothes look terrible on me. \_\_\_\_\_
- I can't participate in the clinic/parade/show because of how I look. \_\_\_\_\_

After each one, note how often thoughts like these cross your mind: *Never, Sometimes, or Often*. Once we get caught in our own web of body-critical thoughts, it's hard to escape them (we help you find some scissors in my book). This part of the test reveals just *how* badly you beat yourself up about how you think you look—and how you think you look when you work with your horse. If you're somewhat oblivious to your best physical features, if you don't believe there *is* anything good about your body to think about, or if you tend to brush off and dismiss any compliment, it's time to create a different reality.

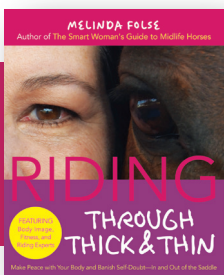
### Part 3: What's Distressing Your Ride?

Negative body image emotions crop up in different situations and at different times for different people. This part of the RT<sup>3</sup> Test helps us determine to what degree this type of distress rides with us. In other words, *how often* do these thoughts plague our time with our horses? As with Parts 1 and 2, consider the thought:

*I feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or self-conscious about my body . . .*

Now follow it with each one of the statements below.

- When I go on a trail ride or to a clinic or barn with new people. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I catch my reflection in arena or tack room mirrors. \_\_\_\_\_
- When people see me in my "barn attire." \_\_\_\_\_
- When I am with a group of women who are "pretty riders." \_\_\_\_\_
- When I am riding with a group that contains male riders. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I try on riding jeans/breeches. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I watch videos or read articles or catalogs filled with "pretty riders." \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm having trouble with my horse or my riding. \_\_\_\_\_
- When the topic of weight comes up in conversation with my riding friends. \_\_\_\_\_
- When someone comments on my appearance on horseback. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I see myself on my horse in photos or videos. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I am with riders who are in great physical shape. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I am with riders who are overweight and out of shape. \_\_\_\_\_
- During challenging riding situations. \_\_\_\_\_



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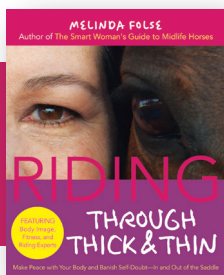
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Then go down this list of statements and mark each one as *Never*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*. When we encounter situations such as these that trigger anxiety, disgust, despondency, anger, frustration, envy, shame, or self-consciousness directed at our bodies or how we think we look, it is essential to have tools on hand to hammer them into a more useful form.

## Part 4: Keeping Up Appearances

How much is your physical appearance defining and determining your self-worth, on and off your horse, in and out of the barn? Consider the following statements:

- When I am at the barn with “pretty riders,” I am self-conscious about my looks. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I get a compliment or see a reflection or video of myself riding that looks pretty good, I tend to dwell on it. \_\_\_\_\_
- If I feel good about how I look, I enjoy my riding time and things seem easier. \_\_\_\_\_
- When I meet or ride with new people, I wonder if they think I’m too big to ride. \_\_\_\_\_
- I fantasize about what it would be like to be one of those “pretty riders.” \_\_\_\_\_
- If I could get control of my weight I’d have more riding friends and get invited to go on more organized rides and go to more horse-related events. \_\_\_\_\_
- My body type affects my ability to ride or compete my horse. \_\_\_\_\_
- I often compare my appearance to that of other horse people. \_\_\_\_\_
- If another rider or someone at the barn makes a negative comment about my appearance, weight, or shape, I tend to dwell on it. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel bad for my horse; I think I might be hurting him when I ride. \_\_\_\_\_
- I wear barn and riding clothes that cover up what troubles me about my body. \_\_\_\_\_
- I fantasize about looking different in my riding clothes and in the saddle. \_\_\_\_\_
- I ask my barnmates and riding friends for reassurance about my appearance. \_\_\_\_\_
- I avoid other people at the barn and don’t like to ride when others are schooling. \_\_\_\_\_
- My interactions with other women at the barn, in lessons or clinics, or in the show ring are friendly and supportive. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am confident and at ease when interacting with men at the barn, in lessons or clinics, or in the show ring. \_\_\_\_\_



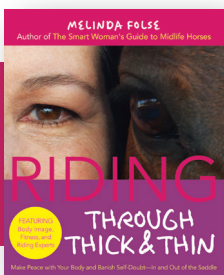
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- I am confident/at ease when meeting and riding or competing with new people. \_\_\_\_\_
- My experiences with people outside the barn or show ring are usually pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_
- My relationships with my riding friends are consistently honest and supportive. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am in control of my day-to-day emotions related to my horse and to riding. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel accepted by the other horse people and riders at my barn. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am happy when I ride and spend time with my horse. \_\_\_\_\_

Now go back and label each one as *True* or *False*. It's no secret that how we experience our bodies in many ways dictates how we experience life. And, when we work with and ride horses, we take that truth to a whole new level. Horses are the ultimate “mirrors” of all our thoughts, feelings, emotions—as well as our physical strengths and weaknesses.

Whether you actually “took” our self-test or just skimmed the prompts and answered them in your head, you can probably now see whether or not you have body image issues and where they may be lurking. The RT<sup>3</sup> Test may have rung some new, key bells in your awareness. Many (if not most) of us tend to leave it at that. We may have the best of intentions, but for some reason, our follow-through never gets out of the gate. However, if *this time* you're really ready to *ride on*, let's put our self-discovery to work and begin to make lasting changes to our body image—for the better.



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