

Post-Claim Checklist for Racehorse Owners

Follow this checklist to ensure a smooth transition for a newly claimed racehorse, based on industry best practices. Download at <https://horseracingsense.com/post-claim-checklist.pdf>.

1. Immediate Veterinary Examination

- **Schedule within 24 hours:** Evaluate for conditions like polysaccharide storage myopathy (PSSM), equine metabolic syndrome (EMS), equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM), or laminitis. Look for tight muscles, twitching withers, reluctance to stretch hind legs, or neurological signs (<https://www.vet.cornell.edu/>).
- **Diagnostic tests:** Use a muscle biopsy for PSSM, Oral Sugar Test for EMS, neurological exam and CSF tap for EPM, or hoof X-rays for laminitis to confirm issues (<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/>).
- **Consult specialists:** Engage veterinarians or chiropractors to develop a tailored health plan, including treatments like acepromazine for muscle cramping if needed.

2. Nutrition and Feed Adjustment

- **Low-NSC diet:** Provide 1.5% of body weight in low-nonstructural-carbohydrate forage for horses with PSSM or EMS to support recovery (<https://ker.com/>).
- **Monitor intake:** Adjust feed based on workload and health needs to maintain optimal condition.

3. Barn Acclimation

- **Allow 2–4 weeks:** Give the horse time to adjust to new surroundings, handlers, and training routines to reduce stress.
- **Gradual training:** Start with light exercise, especially for horses showing health concerns, to ensure a safe transition.

4. Strategic Racing Plan

- **Assess condition:** Race immediately if sound or allow recovery time if health issues are present, based on veterinary and workout data.
- **Select appropriate class:** Choose claiming levels carefully to maximize earnings and minimize risk of losing the horse to a claim (<https://www.equibase.com/>).

5. Aftercare Planning

- **Plan for retirement:** Partner with accredited organizations to ensure a sustainable post-racing career (<https://www.thoroughbredaftercare.org/>).
- **Monitor welfare:** Conduct regular health checks to prevent over-racing and support long-term soundness.

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