

# Sustainable Barn Schedule Reflection & Recovery Worksheet

## Part 1: Barn Load Assessment

### Current Stress Inventory

Rate each area from 1 (manageable) to 10 (completely overloaded).

| Area                              | Rating |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Physical exhaustion               | ___    |
| Emotional exhaustion              | ___    |
| Scheduling pressure               | ___    |
| Financial stress                  | ___    |
| Client/rider demands              | ___    |
| Competition stress                | ___    |
| Decision fatigue                  | ___    |
| Horse-care responsibility load    | ___    |
| Sleep/recovery                    | ___    |
| Ability to turn work off mentally | ___    |

### Reflection Questions

Which area feels most unsustainable right now?

Which area has quietly worsened over time?

What signs tell you have an overloaded nervous system?

## Part 2: Identifying Your “Always On” Pattern

When overloaded, I tend to:

- ☐ Rush constantly
- ☐ Skip meals or hydration
- ☐ Stay mentally “on” even at home
- ☐ Become emotionally reactive
- ☐ Feel numb or disconnected
- ☐ Lose patience quickly
- ☐ Struggle to focus
- ☐ Overcommit
- ☐ Avoid asking for help
- ☐ Feel guilty resting
- ☐ Push through exhaustion
- ☐ Have trouble sleeping
- ☐ Feel resentful or trapped
- ☐ Become emotionally shut down
- ☐ Start making small mistakes

My nervous system overload usually looks like:

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Emotional flooding
- ☐ Shutdown/freeze
- ☐ Crying easily
- ☐ Hypervigilance
- ☐ Mental fog
- ☐ Physical tension
- ☐ Exhaustion
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 3: Barn Culture Reflection

What Messages About Work Have You Internalized?

Circle any that feel familiar:

- “If I stop, everything falls apart”
- “Rest means weakness”
- “Good horse people push through”
- “Everyone in this industry is exhausted”
- “I should be able to handle more”
- “I don’t deserve downtime”
- “Being overwhelmed means I care”
- “I can rest after show season”
- “No one else can do it correctly”
- “If I say no, I’ll disappoint people”

Reflection

Which belief hurts you the most right now?

Where did you learn it?

Is it manageable long term?

### Part 4: Nervous System Check-In

What Happens to You Under Chronic Stress?

Physical Signs

- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Digestive issues
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Insomnia
- ☐ Racing heart
- ☐ Increased illness

- ☐ Appetite changes
- ☐ Pain flare-ups

#### Emotional Signs

- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Emotional numbness
- ☐ Increased frustration
- ☐ Feeling emotionally detached

#### Performance Signs

- ☐ Forgetfulness
- ☐ Reduced patience
- ☐ Mistakes increase
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Reduced confidence
- ☐ Difficulty making decisions

### Part 5: Sustainable Scheduling Audit

Do you currently have:

| Recovery                       | Yes                      | No                       |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| At least one true day off      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scheduled recovery after shows | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Protected meal breaks          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emotional decompression time   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clear communication boundaries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delegation/support systems     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Realistic daily scheduling     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Time that is not productivity-focused    ☐    ☐

What part of your schedule is least realistic?

What keeps you from changing it?

## Part 6: Creating a More Sustainable System

### Small Adjustments That Reduce Overload

Choose three changes that would reduce nervous-system strain:

- ☐ Build one lighter day into the week
- ☐ Stop checking messages after a set hour
- ☐ Delegate one task
- ☐ Reduce overbooking
- ☐ Add transition time between lessons/clients
- ☐ Schedule recovery after competitions
- ☐ Protect one nonwork activity weekly
- ☐ Improve sleep consistency
- ☐ Take short nervous-system reset breaks during the day
- ☐ Ask for support sooner
- ☐ Create clearer barn communication systems

The most realistic first step for me is:

What resistance do I notice around making this change?

## Part 7: Recovery Planning

### My Personal Recovery List

Activities that help me regulate:

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Riding for enjoyment
- ☐ Quiet time
- ☐ Time outside
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Social connection
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Therapy/coaching
- ☐ Breathing exercises
- ☐ Journaling
- ☐ Time away from the barn
- ☐ Creative hobbies
- ☐ Sleep/rest

What would change if you stopped treating exhaustion like proof of dedication?

What would a truly sustainable version of success look like for you?