

A close-up photograph of a horse's lower legs and hooves. The horse is standing on a light-colored, sandy arena floor. The legs are dark with some white markings. The hooves are dark and appear to be wearing protective boots or wraps. The background is blurred, showing more of the arena and some greenery.

GUIDE TO

ARENA MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance is crucial for keeping your arena surface in prime condition, providing a safe, consistent footing for you and your horse.

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PROJECTS

Specialists in bespoke equestrian and agricultural construction and fencing.

Tomley Tip

Remove all debris, including leaves, droppings, and other organic matter before performing any grading or levelling. This will ensure the surface doesn't become contaminated and will improve its longevity.



Introduction

Maintaining your arena surface

What is arena maintenance?

Regular maintenance of your arena surface is essential for optimal performance and longevity. A well-maintained surface not only extends its lifespan but also supports your horse's soundness, providing security in landing and stability through turns.

Effective arena maintenance involves regular grading to keep the surface level and consistent, proper water application to non-waxed surfaces to maintain ideal moisture levels, and regular removal of organic matter and debris to prevent surface contamination.

Regular, thorough arena maintenance helps ensure the right balance of cushioning and traction, creating a safe and high-performing environment for both horse and rider.

Why is it important?

EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR SURFACE

PREVENT THE SURFACE GETTING TOO COMPACTED OR TOO LOOSE

LEVEL OUT DIVOTS, RUTS, TRACKS, AND DEEP OR SHALLOW SPOTS

ELIMINATE SEPERATION OF SAND AND FIBRE

REDUCE DUST AND IMPROVE DRAINAGE

PROVIDE A SAFE FOOTING FOR YOUR HORSE, REDUCING THE RISK OF INJURY



Frequently Asked Questions

How often should a surface be graded?

The grading frequency of your arena depends on several factors:

- **Surface Type:** Waxed surfaces need less maintenance than non-waxed, which require regular grading and irrigation to prevent dust.
- **Usage Frequency:** An arena used daily by many horses will require more regular grading than one used a few times a week.
- **Activities:** Arenas used for jumping will require more frequent grading to prevent compaction and ruts.
- **Location:** An indoor arena will have different maintenance requirements to an outdoor arena.

What equipment do I need to grade my arena?

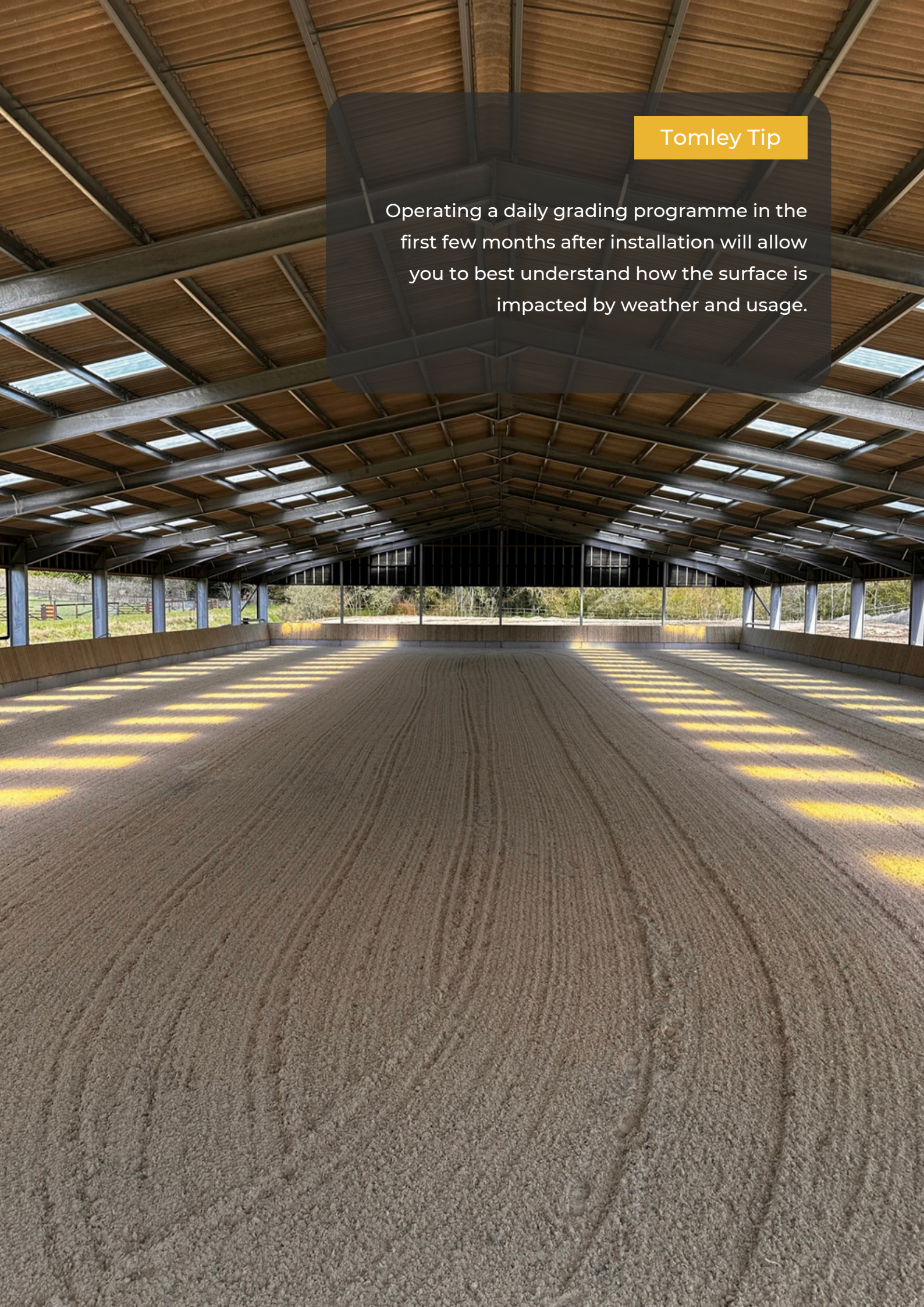
The equipment we would recommend you have to hand as a minimum is:

- **Arena Grader:** A specialised grader will level the surface and break up compacted areas.
- **Tractor, Quad or Similar:** A suitable vehicle to tow the grader with.
- **Rakes and Shovels:** Useful to level hard to reach areas such as corners and edges, and can also be used to remove debris.
- **Depth Checker:** A garden fork or dibber, taped at the correct compacted depth. This allows you to assess the depth of the surface, ensuring consistency.



Our Recommendations

- Daily grading is essential for heavily used arenas; more lightly used arenas can be graded less, but 2-3 times a week as a minimum.
- Heavily used arenas should have additional weekly maintenance to address specific compaction, and areas such as corners and edges.
- Jumps should be moved regularly to avoid compaction, and take off and landing spots should be thoroughly graded.



Tomley Tip

Operating a daily grading programme in the first few months after installation will allow you to best understand how the surface is impacted by weather and usage.

Step-by-Step Guide

1

Clear any jumps, mounting blocks or other equipment from the arena.

2

Clear any debris and droppings for a clean surface to prevent contamination.

3

Hand-rake perimeter riding track, edges, corners and any particularly uneven areas.

4

If required, irrigate the surface with water. This step is important for non-waxed surfaces, to bind the materials, reduce dust, and prevent damage.

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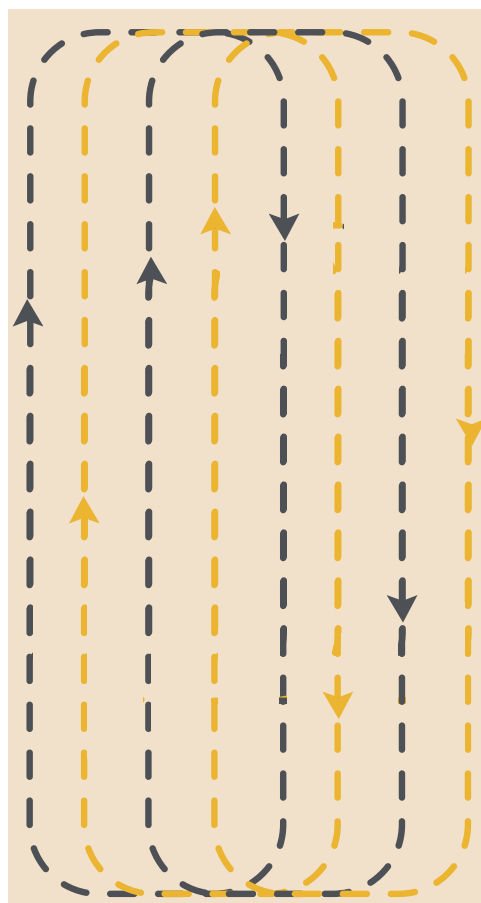
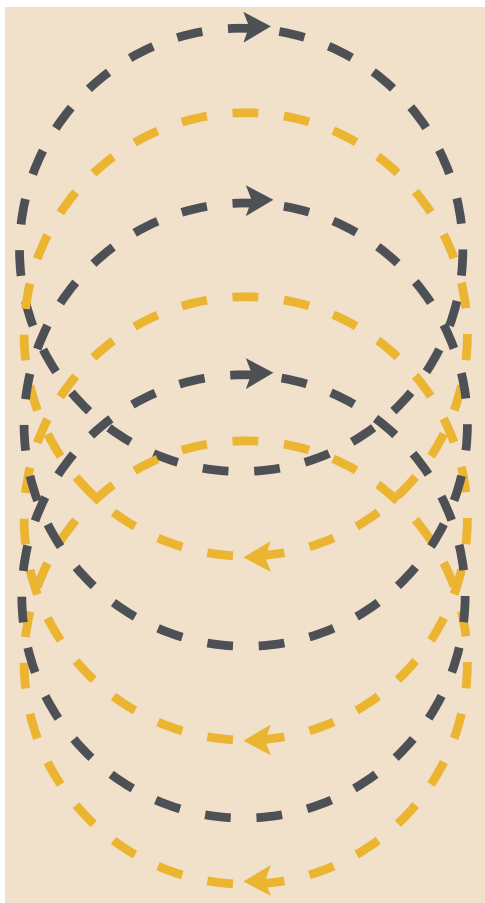
Grade the surface. Always change starting points, use various patterns, and maintain a consistent speed - a brisk walking pace is sufficient.

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The going is altered by adjusting the height of the tines. To increase or decrease it, do so 1cm at a time over multiple passes.

Arena Grading Patterns

You should aim to follow a different pattern each time you grade your arena, to ensure the sand and fibres are regularly turned over whilst also helping you work out any spots where the surface tends to become more compacted. Rectangular and spiral patterns are popular, but providing all of the surface is covered each time you can use any pattern you like.



Final tips

Check and record the surface depth every few months using a depth checker, dibber, or garden fork, taped at the correct depth. Take readings at consistent locations: marked points on the perimeter, quarter line, center line, three-quarter line, and additional random points. Document these readings on a plan to identify any undulations in the arena.

Occasionally, a surface may need re-levelling with more extensive machinery and to reblend the surface that has become separated. In this instance, please contact us for further advice and support.



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