

Lucky Braids Cleans Up White Horses

The Shampoo and the Whitener Spray from Lucky Braids is the right combination for making gray and white horses shine.

Talk with any owner of a white or gray horse—or even one with just a lot of chrome—and you'll quickly learn that they're obsessed with finding good stain removers. It seems like the DNA that causes a horse to have white hair also makes the horse seek out whatever mud or manure is in the vicinity. And, when it comes to stains, manure and urine are generally the most challenging.

Old-time stain-removing tricks include using bluing, vinegar, witch hazel, alcohol, liniments and even glycerine on the soiled areas. Today, however, there are a number of commercial products that keep the horse's skin and hair in mind, using a gentler formula with skin conditioners, aloe, vitamins and moisturizing ingredients.

STAINS

When it comes to whitening and stain removal, the gold standard is bluing. However, it comes at a cost. Bluing can be drying to the skin and hair, sometimes causing skin irritation. Most equine products that utilize bluing will also include aloe or



Love 'em or hate 'em, white horses are eye-catching.

vitamin E to put moisture back into the coat and counteract the dryness of the bluing. Beware, too, that if you overdo it with bluing, you may end up with bluish-purple hair.

Modern science has brought us other whitening ingredients, like stain-lifting enzymes, herbal stain solvers, bleaches and oxygen-based products, such as the Wow! Whitener spray. Some of the oxygen-based cleaners utilize a form of peroxide, which can be drying to the horse's hair.

For sensitive-skinned horses, both Lucky Braids Shampoo and Absorbine's Special Care Ultra Gentle work well and don't irritate the skin. Use Lucky Braids Whitener for spot treatments on these horses.

Note: A lot of horse owners like to use human shampoos and dishwash-

ing liquids to bathe their horses. Most horses survive this just fine, but a real horse shampoo will improve your horse's coat condition and provide him with healthier skin. Equine products are not that expensive to use, and they are formulated for a horse's natural skin pH and to enhance the coat. We think you'll find a shinier, sleeker coat.

OUR TRIAL

We gathered a group of shampoos and sprays that were intended to lift stains easily from our horses' coats and whiten white coats. We used the products on a variety of horses, from gray to white to darker horses with white markings. If the shampoo was not meant to be explicitly whitening, we also tested it on horses of a variety of colors to judge its overall stain-lifting ability.

We followed all manufacturer label directions for at least one of the washes. We also did two additional washes—one giving the products even longer to sit on set-in stains than recommended and one quick wash where the product was scrubbed in and immediately rinsed out.

BOTTOM LINE

Our top choice is the Lucky Braids Shampoo from Top Turnout Inc. It produced great lather, mild scent, and we found it solved many skin problems. Mild fungus, itchy skin, stains, and dry skin all improved when we used this shampoo.



The Lucky Braids system was tops for bathing and stain removing.

Consider This . . .

- Bluing can be drying to the horse's skin and turn him a bluish purple.
- Equine shampoos are formulated for a horse's natural pH.
- A gentle shampoo is the best for daily baths.

Products With Stain-Removing Properties

✓ Horse Journal Editor's Choice
\$ Horse Journal Best Buy

Shampoo	Price	Comments
Animal Legends Silks Blue Shampoo Miracle Corp 800-635-2044 www.miraclecorp.com	\$10.95/32 oz.	Formulated for white horses. Bluing based. pH balanced. Produced a great shine but wasn't a great stain remover.
Arctic White Shampoo Espree 800-328-1317 www.espree.com	\$10.95/32 oz.	A whitening and color-enhancing shampoo without bleach or bleaching chemicals. Optical brighteners. Concentrated formula. This shampoo put a gorgeous shine on the horse's coats, even the white and silver ones, but was not as effective at stain removal as some others.
Blue Frost Whitening Shampoo Fiebing Company 800-558-1033 www.fiebing.com	\$7.99/16 oz.	Concentrated aloe-based formula with conditioning agents and residue removers. Leaves a nice finish that leaves the hair soft and silky. It does whiten and remove stains, but you need to allow the lather to sit for 60 seconds.
Country Green Shampoo Uckele Equine Nutrition 800-248-0330 www.uckele.com	\$10.95/32 oz.	Mainly natural-ingredient cleanser. Concentrated and pH balanced. A nice herbal mixture and a good general-purpose shampoo, but you can get better results if you're looking for a stain remover.
Dazzle Shampoo Aloe Advantage 877-624-9693 www.aloeadvantage.com	\$9.99/16 oz.	Blend of herbal ingredients and cleansers magnifies coats, bluing formula to eliminate yellowing and pulls stains out of light- and dark-coat colors. A good, gentle, economical shampoo for frequent use. Helps with whitening, but we couldn't easily remove deep-set or dark stains or yellow stains.
Easy Out Shapley's 800-982-2017 www.shapleys.com	\$10.95/32 oz.	No-rinse shampoo for spot cleans or an entire waterless bath. Has optical brighteners that work upon shaking the product. No residue. This product worked well removing stains and for the times you can't give a full bath.
EquiTone Shampoo Shapley's 800-982-2017 www.shapleys.com	\$13.95/16 oz.	Cleans and conditions in one step. Color-enhancing (the company's red, black and gold products topped our December 2006 trial of color-enhancing products). We used this product on white and gray horses. It worked well as a shampoo for a bath and brightened coats, but for stain removal we prefer other products.
✓ Lucky Braids Shampoo Top Turnout Inc. 781-665-5988 www.luckybraids.com	\$16/32 oz.	Medical-grade tea tree oil with aloe vera and vitamin E. No salt or petroleum. Great all-around shampoo. Whitens well and improves skin condition considerably with continued use. It isn't overly slick or slippery, so we found it can be used immediately prior to braiding.
✓ Lucky Braids Whitener Top Turnout Inc. 781-665-5988 www.luckybraids.com	\$14.50/16 oz.	Enzymatic formula. The best whitening spray as we've found. Leave in overnight for tougher stains.
Miracle Corp Brightening Shampoo Miracle Corp 800-635-2044 www.miraclecorp.com	\$7.49/16 oz.	All-natural product that enhances shine and manageability. pH balanced for horses. A surprisingly strong whitener, but it requires a lot of setting time.
Miracle Corp Waterless Shampoo Miracle Corp 800-635-2044 www.miraclecorp.com	\$10.95/32 oz.	Waterless shampoo. Best used as for quick touch-ups or when bathing is impossible. Useful in a pinch but, like most of these products, the results would never be confused with what you get from a real bath.
Quik Clenz Healing Tree Products 800-421-6223 www.healing-tree.com	\$13.99/32 oz.	Foaming shampoo delivered through garden-hose attachment. Returns skin to normal pH to help prevent fungal and bacterial problems, which we appreciate. Good for a quick bath or a finishing touch-up. Cleaned well, but not a top pick for specifically targeting heavy stains.
Santa Fe Shampoo Absorbine 800-628-9653 www.absorbine.com	\$14.95/64 oz.	Vitamin E-based formula. Clarifying shampoo, making it good for removing buildups. Leaves hair soft and shiny, but it's not a strong stain remover. Very economical, especially good for daily use.

<p>Show Clean Absorbine 800-628-9653 www.absorbine.com</p>	<p>\$12.99/32 oz.</p>	<p>Spot-cleaning product for use with another shampoo. Contains citric acid for pH balancing. UV brighteners and conditioners. No bleaches or peroxide. Anti-static properties. Combine 8 oz. of Show Clean with one quart of water and saturate the areas. Let sit for five minutes to remove deep stains. It's fine, and it did seem to have anti-static properties that might be helpful during cold winter months or in very dry climates, but there are easier products to use for removing stains.</p>
<p>✓ Special Care Ultra Gentle Shampoo Absorbine 800-628-9653 www.absorbine.com</p>	<p>\$ 9.99/16 oz.</p>	<p>Water-based formula removes dirt without stripping natural oils. Formulated to protect spot-applied fly, flea and tick control treatments from washing away. Mild, pH-balanced formula for sensitive skin. Super concentrate makes 25 gallons. This shampoo worked brilliantly on a very sensitive horse who tends to break out in hives at the drop of a hat. This is an excellent choice for sensitive horses, but other products had better stain-removing power.</p>
<p>✓\$ SuperPoo Shampoo Absorbine 800-628-9653 www.absorbine.com</p>	<p>\$12.55/32 oz.</p>	<p>A non-irritating, pH balanced shampoo that rinses out easily. Highly concentrated and economical, with a fresh apple scent. A great all-around shampoo. Good lather, pleasant scent, good for frequent use. This was the only shampoo in our trial that removed sticky tarweed residue.</p>
<p>Vermont Specialties Organic Horse Shampoo Vermont Soap Company 866-762-7482 www.vermontsoap.com</p>	<p>\$17.99/38 oz.</p>	<p>Formulated from certified organic vegetable oils and plant botanicals. Natural essential oils, including tea-tree and citriodora, are added to repel insects and fungus infections. The sharp odor of this shampoo created a strong reaction in our testers, they either loved it or hated it. Its cleaning properties were average.</p>
<p>White N Brite Shampoo Farnam Companies 800-234-2269 www.farnamhorse.com</p>	<p>\$13.99/32 oz.</p>	<p>Concentrated. Contains coconut oil derivatives and optical brighteners. Smells great, and feels even better, making it a terrific shampoo, but you have to leave it on 5 minutes for stain removing and its whitening properties were average.</p>
<p>✓ Wow! Whitener Healing Tree Products 800-421-6223 www.healing-tree.com</p>	<p>\$14.95/32 oz.</p>	<p>Spray-on treatment that breaks the bond between hair and the protein of dirt, grime, urine, feces, and other stains. May be rinsed out or left in for sustained action. No bleach, dye, or bluing. This is great to have on hand for emergency stains. A good-smelling product with an easy application, it was terrific for removing dirt and that heavy summer "dust" that comes from sweat, dust and fly sprays.</p>
<p>✓ Xtreme Showwhite Shampoo Xtreme Design 866-811-5575 www.xtremedesignproducts.com</p>	<p>\$14.50/22 oz.</p>	<p>Concentrated formula. Excellent whitening shampoo. It put a lovely silver sheen on dark gray and whitened socks and light coats brilliantly. Didn't dry out the skin and didn't have to sit on for too long to get excellent results.</p>



Xtreme Showwhite was excellent at removing stains and whitening coats.

It has mild whitening properties, putting a good show glow on a horse's coat, but it didn't whiten enough to remove heavy stains. As an added bonus, though, its clean,

non-slick finish, allowed us to scrub a horse's mane and braid it while still wet without our hands slipping all over the place.

Absorbine's SuperPoo earned Best Buy. It effectively cleaned away even the toughest stains, including the sticky muddy-colored sap produced by a plant called tarweed. In fact, SuperPoo was the only shampoo that removed this sap.

For best whitening shampoo, we like Xtreme Showwhite Shampoo. It

did a good job whitening coats and socks, and it put a lovely sheen on the darker gray horses. We found it didn't dry the coats and the skin was in good condition, even with frequent use.

If you need a spray-on product, we'll go with Lucky Braids Whitener. It handled minor stains well and could be used an easy touch-

SuperPoo impressed us with its ability to remove tarweed, a sticky plant.



up right before a horse went in the ring. It worked as well on dark horses as lighter ones. Wow! was a close runner-up here. ☐

Removing Stains

- Start with a real bath. If the horse is prone to skin problems, use a skin-friendly formula like the Lucky Braids Shampoo. After you finish, check for areas that might need a stain-removing product.
- Let the stain remover sit the recommended amount of time.
- Leave legs till last. Once they're clean, stay prepared for touchups during a competition with Wow!

