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I am at a loss and struggle to understand why so many people are hell bent on buying young horses. I have watched so many riders be hurt, loose their confidence and even give up riding because ultimately they have made a bad decision in getting a horse so young.

When talking to a friend recently who is looking to buy a horse for herself to do a little bit of everything, she made it very clear that any horse over the age of 10 was just too old for her. Some breeds of horse don’t even fully mature until they are 8, how can 10 be too old?!

Veterans are so very under rated. They have experience and plenty of life left to give a loving owner. Without a lot of the trappings and stresses a younger horse may have.

I have owned two horses in my life, both veterans when I took them on and both were and are an absolute joy to own. All horses have their ups and downs and I have to say I see a lot of people around me having more problems with their younger horses and their health than I do with my veteran.

I feed my horse appropriately and he has a couple of supplements, but bearing in mind he came to me for less than £300 with his tack and a wardrobe of rugs the expenses are really nothing in comparison to the cost of buying and clothing a younger horse. A happy home was more important than the price he was sold for, which is more often the case with an older horse.

Younger horses, they grow! Destroy rugs, break tack; saddle fitting can be an absolute nightmare for an ever changing back. An older horse has the wisdom to know the rug is actually handy on their back when it’s teaming with rain or snow. Yes they may break things occasionally but then who doesn’t?! Certainly not to the degree of a youngster going through rugs and other expensive items at the same rate as a packet of polo’s!

Veterans seem to be discarded at after giving years of pleasure to owners, competing, showing or whatever their chosen discipline. A few adjustments and there really isn’t any reason why a veteran can’t keep on going. Although it may not always be possible to keep every horse if more people were willing to buy a veteran this could very well have a knock on effect with the need to breed.

There are activities and classes for all ages of horse and riders, and who doesn’t enjoy endless hacking? The majority of which is stress free! Horses take a lot of time in general and young ones take up a lot more time and energy than a lot of people think. Go for the oldies! They ROCK!