



If you're thinking about using carpets or rubber as an equestrian surface you should read this first.

Because carpet and autofibres are being diverted from landfill, the industry is looking for ways to re-use them. So, worn out carpets have the backing taken off and are shredded up and sold as equestrian surfaces. To see carpet recycling processes [click here](#)



This picture shows recycled carpet and the resulting tiny strands of microplastics. (97% of all carpets sold in the UK are made from man-made fibres (polyester, polypropylene, nylon and acrylic) and at the last count can contain over 59 toxic chemicals. Do your own research into the chemicals contained in carpet and if microplastic dust reaches the lungs.)

With no backing to anchor them after shredding they separate and are kicked up during riding or turnout - to be breathed in by the horse and rider. The penny coin gives you some sense of scale. This dust will get worse over time as the horses hooves shear the fibres. It also worsens in dry weather.

Of course, as well as being breathed in, these microplastics are going into the waterways through the drainage underneath the riding surfaces, which is bad news, not only for aquatic life, but everyone.

Rubber crumb is no better than recycled carpet. It is simply chopped up tyres, banned from landfill so impossible to dispose of when it perishes and disintegrates. The landfill issue is simply being passed to you.

Tyre rubber is full of toxic chemicals such as carbon black which gives the rubber its black colouration. Carbon black is a residue from burning petroleum and is known to cause respiratory illnesses. Natural rubber sets hard so many more toxic chemicals like zinc and cadmium, hydrocarbons, latex and sulphur-containing compounds are added as softeners before it can be moulded into rubber products such as tyres. Many of these chemicals are known carcinogens.

When a waste product such as carpet or rubber, is recycled it is deemed to become a new product and is no longer considered waste. Therefore, following recycling, providers of synthetic recycled products do not have access to information as basic as the chemical composition of the original carpet or rubber or any associated health risks. We therefore strongly urge you to do your own research into the health issues surrounding the inhalation of carpet microplastics and rubber dust and the repercussions of carpet microplastics washing through the drainage into waterways, which all ultimately lead to our oceans.

There isn't space here to flag up all the potential problems associated with using recycled materials for you and your horses. This link [toxic carpet in the European Union](#) might be helpful for further research and also this research link to [rubber toxicity](#). In a nutshell, there is massive concern about the lack of safety information available for recycled products

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