

HORSE SHOW ETIQUETTE & CHECKLIST

Good Etiquette for Horse Shows for Rider and Parent

As a parent or supporter of a rider, you only want what's best for your child. After a great deal of practice and preparation, your rider is ready to show his or her skills in the competition arena. And there are things you can do to help. By following a few "etiquette" suggestions, you can make sure that your rider's horse show is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

During Show Preparations

The coach or trainer's job is to help the rider perform her best. So, don't interfere when she/he is giving instructions before your child or rider goes into the show arena (unless it is absolutely 100 percent necessary, and if you do choose to do so, be sure to do it in a tactful way). You have hired a coach or trainer for a reason. Stand back and let him do his job. You'll be impressed.

If the competition requires some sort of pattern or sequence of events, ask the rider to repeat the pattern back to you once. Have the pattern on a piece of paper handy in case the rider suddenly draws a blank. If this happens (not uncommon!), you will be a "super-parent or supporter of the show"! Do not drill the rider over and over again until you agitate them to the point that they lose their memory!

Help the rider brush up right before entering the arena by checking for untucked shirts, loose hair-ties, crooked hats, uneven reins and the like. Make sure they have their number in the proper place and visible. Take a towel over their boots for added shine and maybe paint the horse's hooves with hoof oil. Also, run a soft grooming brush over the horse one last time to remove any dirt or debris they may have picked up while in the practice arena. Make sure the tail is not tangled between the horse's legs and do a quick equipment check - make sure the girth is snug and the headstall and bit are in place. Don't get too meticulous though. You'll only make the horse and rider more nervous by nit-picking at small things that don't really matter.

During the Competition

Trotting the outer perimeter of the show arena alongside the rider and coaching them is a definite no-no. That's what practice at home is for. Let the rider show what they have learned. This is their time to shine. If your favorite rider passes you as you are sitting in the stands, it is permissible to give him a reassuring nod or a quick and discreet word of advice. But make sure you do so in a positive manner! You don't want to make the rider more nervous or represent the team you are pulling for poorly!

Do not verbalize the rider's every move as they compete to those sitting around you. It's okay to make a comment about a part or two of the performance, but you don't need to put your two cents in about every single step taken. More than likely, the person whose ear you're filling - whether it be a family member, friend, or even a stranger - will appreciate that you allow them to take in the experience and have their own thoughts. Good, bad, awesome or ugly, just let the competition take place in a peaceful environment. Discussion once the class is over is certainly

acceptable and encouraged, but again, remember to keep any criticism positive and constructive.

Do not, **do not** openly criticize the other contestants when you are in the stands! You never know who is sitting within earshot. You'd be surprised how much people around you are hearing. Also, you never know who the person you're talking to is or isn't friends with... judges, other show parents, other competitors, industry officials, etc. I personally witnessed a friend overhear someone in the stands saying something pretty nasty about her performance in the arena earlier that day, and the only person it made look bad was the gossiper! I know it's not always easy to keep mum about the competitors, but just try to keep it to an extreme minimum (nothing is best!) while the show ensues. Trust me, you'll be thankful in the long run if you practice taste and class even in the toughest competition.

The easiest and best advice to a rider in the show ring is to smile. It will not only make them look confident but it is very hard to be nervous with a smile on your face. Remember, this is supposed to be fun!

After the Show

If your rider wins or places, **do** show enthusiasm and happiness! It's a big deal! But, show good sportsmanship. Some say your excitement should vary for different types of competition, but clapping and a proud smile is the fail-safe way to go. Some shows call for boisterous whooping hollers while others require a golf-clap at most. You know your audience. In your own excitement, do not forget that there are others that tried hard too and may not have fared as well. You shouldn't allow that to put a damper on your joy but just don't be obnoxious about it.

Enjoy the day you and your rider got to share together. It is a unique sport and experience.

CHECKLIST

PAPERWORK

- Map/directions to the show facility; phone number to call in case you get lost
- Cash/checkbook/credit cards
- List of classes and rules - printed off horse show website

GEAR

- Saddle - cleaned
- Saddle pads (schooling and show) - cleaned - white fitted show pad for classes
- Cinch or girth - cleaned
- Bridles (schooling and show) - cleaned
- Bits - sparkling clean!
- Tie down and/or martingale - cleaned - cannot wear martingale in flat classes
- Show halter/lead - if participating in lead line classes or showmanship classes
- Spurs - if needed
- Chain shank - stud chain
- Whip/crops
- Protective boots/wraps - for stall or trailer if needed
- Saddle covers

HORSE CARE ITEMS

- Feed
- Feed bucket or tub if needed

- Supplements if needed
- Hay
- Hay net
- Water buckets
- Extension cord if clipping at show is needed
- Duct tape and bungee cords - you never know when these will come in handy!
- Tools - hole punch, wrench - who knows !?
- Molasses, cider vinegar, Jell-O, Kool-Aid or Electrolytes (if needed to flavor water so your horse will drink)
- Manure fork and bucket or wheelbarrow - always good to have on hand
- Broom
- Bedding shavings or straw (if you're not required to buy it on-site)
- Horse blanket and hood, if needed
- Sheet or fly net/fly mask
- Cooler, if needed
- Halter and lead rope (please bring 2 in case horse breaks one)
- Tail/leg wraps
- Longe line and whip - VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR OWN
- Treats for a good horse

TACK CARE

- Saddle soap/leather cleaner
- Sponges/cloths
- Roll of paper towels
- Small bucket
- Bit wipes - toothpaste and toothbrush works even better.
- Old toothbrush for cleaning saddle stitching and tooling

FIRST AID (FOR YOU AND YOUR HORSE)

- Iodine-based antiseptic solution (Betadine)
- Triple antibiotic ointment
- Nonstick gauze pads
- Stretch bandaging tape - vet wrap
- Scissors
- Cotton/disposable diaper or sanitary pad (to use under wraps as an emergency bandage)
- Chemical ice pack
- Liniment
- Sunscreen (for you and your horses, if needed)
- Bute and Banamine (if needed and your show association permits)
- Advil or Tylenol (for you)
- Human first-aid kit

GROOMING SUPPLIES

- Currycomb
- Brushes
- Towels
- Sponges
- Hoof pick
- Sweat scraper
- Bucket
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Spray-on coat conditioner - like Show Sheen
- Mane/tail detangler
- Fly spray/insect repellent
- Hose, if needed
- Baby powder or corn starch (for brightening white markings)
- Baby oil or commercial highlighter (to dress eyes and muzzle)
- Hoof sealer or hoof black (if your association permits)

- Electric and/or battery-operated clippers - horses bridle path, muzzle, legs and coronet bands must be trimmed
- Plastic razor (for last-minute whisker clipping)
- Mane/tail comb
- Hair brush
- Rubber bands for banding if needed
- Yarn for braiding if needed
- Scissors
- Tail wrap - if braiding tail

RIDER ATTIRE/PERSONAL GROOMING

- Breeches (appropriate color of breeches - tan)
- Shirt (English show shirt - white or light color for Hunter/Under saddle classes)
- Shirt (English show shirt - any color for Jumper classes).
- Coat - Hunt or Jumper Coat (jumper can just wear show shirt).
- Boots/socks - boots must be polished and clean at all times
- Gloves - black
- Hat (helmet); make sure you check with your breed/sport association's rules regarding helmets
- Baseball cap/sunglasses for sun protection
- Hair nets (bring several and make sure they match your hair color)
- Bobby pins
- Safety pins
- Grooming apron/coveralls - An old pair of p.j. pants for over show clothes works just as well
- Hair comb/brush
- Hair spray/gel
- Mirror
- Appropriate jewelry - typically only small earrings, nothing dangling
- Rain jacket - if needed
- Rubber rain boots
- Extra towels
- Boot polish and rags
- Hat brush
- Stain remover
- Sewing kit and scissors

MISCELLANEOUS

- Emergency cash
- Cell phone
- Camera and/or video recorder
- Folding chairs
- Plastic bags
- Extra clothes
- Extra paper towels
- Wet Ones (or other antibacterial wipes)
- Umbrella/sun shade - umbrella only were appropriate - they scare the horses
- Shade awning/rain canopy
- Ice chest
- Cold drinks/bottled water/Gatorade
- Nutritious snacks: fruit, sandwiches, granola bars, energy bars, nuts
- Paper cups
- Reading material, phone or iPad etc. for downtime
- Box for putting ribbons in (to protect them)