



Volunteer and Rider Newsletter

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Strides Therapeutic Riding Centers, Inc.

Riding Lesson: How to Bathe a Horse

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Upcoming Events

- * **April 3** First day of Spring Quarter a Strides
- * **April 21, 22, 23** CalNet Horse Show at Equestrian Center
- * **May 6** Mother's Day (almost) Horse Show at our Ranch
- * **June 23** Last day of Spring Quarter
- * **June 24-July 1** Quarter Break
- * **July 3** Summer Mini Quarter 1: morning classes only
- * **July 31** Summer Mini Quarter 2
- * **August 27** Summer Mini Quarter 3

The fact is, baths keep horses happy and healthy. Here are a few easy-to-apply steps.

1. Make sure it is a nice warm day out or you have a warm water source.

2. Take the hose and slowly get the horse's legs wet; make sure your horse sees what you are doing.

3. Move up the body. Most horses don't like water on their faces, so wet the face with a sponge or wet cloth.

4. After he is completely wet, apply horse-friendly



soap to your palm or sponge and scrub away dirt.

5. Take the hose and rinse your horse thoroughly.

6. Take a sweat scraper or your hand and scrape away excess water. Take a clean dry towel and dry him as best as you can.

7. Move him to a sunny spot and let him finish drying.

Tips:

* If you have a curry comb handy, after you applied the soap you can use it to help scrub away dirt.

* Baby shampoo and a sponge is a great way to wash your horse's face. Baby shampoo doesn't sting if gotten in eyes, and the sponge can help wet the face of a shy horse who doesn't like the hose in his face.

Strides Horse Show Edition

This edition of the Strides Volunteer and Rider Newsletter is dedicated to preparing riding for competition.

As we head into the horse show season, we thought it

would be appropriate to dedicate this issue to the ins and outs of horse showing, including preparation, as well as what to expect when you go to a show.

We have taken articles by

some famous riders, to help you prepare for your show experience. Our own Head Instructor tells you what she (and we) believe showing SHOULD be all about: having fun! Enjoy the experience, as you enjoy riding.

What it Really Means to Show

Strides Head Instructor, Nichole Simpson, tells us what showing is all about. Nichole writes from her experience showing in 3-Day Eventing, as well as her experience taking the Strides riders to horse shows.

Just as any sport, horse shows are very competitive. What makes them different than other sports is that showing can tend to be biased. We hope that this is not the case, however, the horse you are showing, the barn you are with, and the elite appearance you present are all factors that may influence the judges opinion. After years of horse competitions I

have come to realize what showing is really about.

Showing is about the experience. It's not about the ribbons you get or the ones you did not. It's how you were able to show what you already know, how you handle your horse in unfamiliar territory, and most of all having fun!

The excitement of coming to the show builds as each day goes on but the minute you get to the grounds it's tremendous! Not only are you excited but your horses are too! As you get ready to warm up the two of you are a huge mountain of energy (don't forget

how much a horse can pick up on your feelings and emotions) and now it's time to show what you know. How can you possibly control yourself and your horse? Always try to remember that it's about what you already know. You've already done what the judge may ask you a thousand times. So this is old news. Don't forget to cheer your barn members on or even those from other barns you are competing against. Team spirit only helps you from being so nervous.

Always remember to have fun! You've made it to the world of showing and what an accomplishment that is!

Dress (rehearsal) For Success

Leading hunter/jumper trainer, John French, shares these tips on preparing and dressing for a successful show.

Use the months, weeks, and days before the show to prepare yourself by . . .

- Getting completely comfortable riding in your show turnout (boots, breeches, gloves, hunt coat) and using any and all show equipment (spurs, a different stick, another bit, double reins, etc.).
- Competing in "pretend" classes - warm up, learn hunter and equitation courses, ride the courses at the heights in your division, even have awards ceremonies.
- Lining up a horse-loving friend to groom, especially if you're showing on your own. Your friend can

free you up to keep your focus by braiding, longeing, and bathing your horse; tacking up and changing equipment; picking up your number, keeping tabs on your classes, and checking in with the gate-person; carrying water bottles, tack, spurs, rub rags; setting fences and keeping an eye on warmup-area traffic; listening while you rehearse your course . . . and holding your ribbons.

- Arriving early so you and your horse can settle in: the day before or (for a one-day show) at least a



few hours before your first class.

This article first appeared in the December 1997 issue of Practical Horseman magazine.

Preparing for Your First Horse Show by Samantha Port



Lacks collection

Showing horses is just like any other competition sport in which you might engage yourself. It is an opportunity to show off what you have learned in your riding lessons and to gauge your own progress against other riders of the same experience

level. In most cases, horse show classes are sorted according to the age of the rider, the abilities of the horse, and the level of complication. Your horseback riding instructor can assist you in choosing classes in which you will be most likely to excel.

If you are showing in English classes, then there are two types of classes: ground and over fences. Ground classes consist of walking, trotting, cantering and halting in front of one or more judges. Over fences classes are competitions in which you will be required to jump a series, or course, of fences at varying height levels.

GROUND CLASSES

In ground classes, the judges will be looking at how well you ride your horse, and how well your horse responds to commands. Your presentation in this class is extremely important, as is your ability to ride amidst a large group of other horses. In some classes, there might be upwards of thirty horses in one arena, all competing for the judge's attention. Your riding and your horse must be such that it gets you noticed.

Hold the Rail. If you end up lost in the middle of the arena with no way to return to the rail, points will be deducted from your score. Inevitably, some horses travel faster than others, which means that passing is almost always required. If you find yourself coming up fast on another horse's tail end, you need to start thinking about how to pass. Pinpoint a spot on the rail ahead of the slower-moving horse, and while giving that horse a wide berth, head for that spot. Staying on the rail is very important in getting your horse noticed.

Stay Out of Groups. Believe it or not, some riders are very competitive, and will do anything to ensure that they nail blue ribbons. There are several tactics that unscrupulous riders use to knock competition out of the way, and one of those tactics is clustering. They will come up to a horse and rider pair, and position themselves between that duo and the judge, thereby limiting the judge's vision of other riders. To avoid these clusters, choose a place on the rail where no other horses are. If riders steer their horses toward you, simply cross the arena.

Smile. It seems so simple, but I can't count the number of times that I've watched my students travel down the rail looking as though they were being slowly tortured to death. No matter how you think a show is progressing, smile the entire time! It lets the judge know that you really enjoy the sport, and that you're having a great time in the middle of his arena.

Respond Immediately. When the announcer calls a transition (i.e. from Trot to Canter or from Canter to Trot) respond

immediately. Don't wait for the other riders to change gaits just to make sure you heard the announcer correctly. Quick, smooth, effortless transitions are one of the largest banks on the score card.

Heads Up. Sometimes, riders fall off during a show. It doesn't happen very often, but when it does, you should notice immediately. While concentrating on yourself and your horse, also pay attention to the rest of the riders. If someone falls, immediately halt your horse and wait for further instruction. If the loose horse continues to run about the arena, dismount and stand with your horse. You don't want to end up in the dirt, too.

Ground classes are a lot of fun, and they force riders to be correct in their aides and form. Even if you are participating in over-fences classes, enter a few ground classes as well. Who knows, you might pull a few ribbons!

OVER FENCES

In contrast to ground classes, over-fences classes are performed one at a time. There will never be more than one horse in the arena, and you will not be listening for the announcer's orders. Instead, you will have a pre-learned course that you will have to execute in front of the judge.

There are two types of over-fences classes: hunters and jumpers. Hunter classes are judged on the form and effectiveness of the horse and rider combo. The judge looks for correctness of aides, spacing between jumps, the horse's form

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Give Back To Your Horse

You've asked a lot of your horse. Your horse has spent as many hours as you have in practice for this horse show. In addition, he or she has put up with being washed, brushed, shaved, polished, wrapped and trailered. Then, you ask your horse to perform at it's best in the show. So don't forget to give back to your horse for all he or she voluntarily gives to you!

*Bring some horse treats to the show. Sliced apples, cut up carrots, and mints are as appreciated as store-bought treats.

* Make sure your horse has access to plenty of water before and after each class. Offer a drink of water before going in the arena. The horse is nervous if you are, and water will not only hydrate your horse, it helps ease the nerves.

After the class, the horse will need water again.

*Give your horse lots of praise for the job he or she has done at the end of the class. You couldn't have done it without your wonderful horse!

*Cool your horse off by walking him or her out, then wash off all the itchy sweat spots before putting him back in the trailer. Thanks for caring!!

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Reaching for the Stars...

Strides Therapeutic Riding Centers, Inc., is a non-profit benefit corporation providing therapy on and with horses for disabled children and adults, and abused teens and adults. Our program was founded in January 2000, and has provided the highest quality of therapy for hundreds of riders.

Volunteers are always needed and always welcome. The minimum age for volunteers is 13. Riders are welcome from age 3 up.

Donations are appreciated and help us to keep our prices low for our riders.

Strides is a NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped) Premiere Accredited Center.

Preparing for Your First Horse Show (Continued)

(Continued from page 3)

over the jump, and the rider's form in the saddle. In jumper classes, the rider is not judged at all, and speed wins the class.

Hunter courses are usually eight fences long and range from one foot to four feet in height. Sometimes, the fences will have solids under them - such as flower boxes or brick walls - and sometimes, they will have just rails. In addition to scoring on form and beauty, you are also judged on faults, which means that points are taken away from your score for knocked rails, falls, and refusals.

Jumper classes are a little more exciting, and involve higher fences with no concentration on form of rider or horse. Your job is to get over the fences in the correct order as quickly as possible. You score is based on your time, and time is added to that score for knocked rails, refusals, and falls.

Smile. Again, even if you are in a jumper

class, always smile. It shows that you are having fun and that you enjoy doing what you do. Judges of hunter over-fences classes are always looking for the smile.

Memorize. Go over your course with your instructor several times before heading into the ring. At my first show, I forgot my course halfway through, and was eliminated. If you take even one wrong fence in the order, you will be asked to leave the arena, which is rather embarrassing!

Slow & Steady. Even if this is a jumper course, your first show should be about having a positive experience, and not about winning. Take each jump with care, and don't worry about the clock. You can factor in speed later in your career.

Injury. If, God-forbid, you feel that your horse has become lame during your course, STOP! It is better to stop your horse yourself than to have the show steward blow the whistle and ask you to leave. Pay attention to your horse and any problems he may be having.

Look Good. Your horse should be properly groomed, your tack cleaned and oiled, and your clothes neatly pressed. At hunter/jumper shows, appearance is everything, and you don't want to throw the judge off by looking as though you just rolled out of bed. Your horse shouldn't have stains on his coat, and your hair (if long) should be tucked neatly into your helmet.

No matter where you are showing, or in which classes, it is normal to be nervous. You will probably not do everything right your first time around, but what is important is the experience you gain. Your first show is about learning how they work, determining what is acceptable, and taking that experience on to your next show. Be excited, but not too worked up, because mistakes during your first show are expected and allowed. You'll do great, and you'll have lots of fun!