

Number 1 Thing Not to Do At A Horse Show?

Loose your cool and by that I mean get flustered, antsy or worried. You as the rider and trainer have to remember that the horse is a living creature and can feel your tension, your nerves and your anxiety. Your tensions will result in undesirable performance from your horse and from you.



Getting flustered does not just happen magically while on the show grounds. It happens on preparation. Packing the trailer and even on the lead up to the horse show. If you think you are not ready for the show, you will often become stressed and irritable. WHY... These feelings will manifest themselves in your horse and destroy your day.

Remember:

“What goes in the brain, goes down the rein”

How to Stay in control

Getting stressed cascades onto your horse and they can feel it. Have in your mind the great rides you have had. Think about the last ride where your horse went well. Now, I'm not saying this is easy. It is not easy ... and you have to train your mind to do this. Susan Jeffers, *Feel the Pain and Do It AnyWay*. You must convey to the horse that you are in control. This is easier on some horses than others.

Get a grip and head tension off at the pass by following these simple tips.

To prevent this from happening remember to:

- **Get Organized –**
 - Have your memberships, insurance, vet papers together in one place to present them when at the horse show. I keep mine in a binder with photocopies of memberships and insurance for easy access.
 - If possible have a trunk ready specifically for show purposes. This way buckets, brushes and bandages are easily found and kept in one easy location for horse show purposes.
 - Get yourself ready before hand. The day before or a few days before organize yourself. Have a [check list of things](#) you need. Personally, I have to actually see the things go into the trailer or horse show vehicle. It doesn't take long, when you're at the horse show and you've forgotten your



- bridle, brush or boots to start checking things off while placing them into your vehicle.
- Organize your show season ahead of time.

- **Arrive on time –**
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 - Arrive on time suitable to get your horse ready. Maybe your horse can walk off the trailer and into the ring! Or maybe you have to arrive early enough to get your horse prepared by walking it or perhaps lunging it. This all takes time and leaving enough minutes before arrival and show start time will get you into the ring on time.
 - If you have to travel 1 hour for a horse show, and it takes you minimum 30 minutes to get ready, if the show starts at 9am then the latest you should be pulling out of the driveway is 7:30 am.

- **Don't sweat it**
 - Don't worry about a poor performance. What's done is done. Your time for preparation has past and this is SHOW TIME. Time to show off your horse. If your horse is not cooperating today. Use it as a schooling opportunity and not an outing to get the points or championships.



- **Know the Judge is NOT your enemy**
 - The judge genuinely wants to see you and your horse do well and have a great ride. They are there to see all of your best performances.
- **Other things you can do:**
 - Eat properly & Keep Hydrated
 - Listen to music
 - Breathe – Talk to your horse, sing a song, talk to yourself.
 - Reassure yourself
 - Keep your mind 'on task'
 - BREATHE