

Horse Management Tips and Advice

The whole idea behind horse management is keeping both you and your horse safe and happy. If something should happen to you, then your preparations according to HM guidelines will allow anybody to come in and take care of your horse. It also allows the stable manager to be more efficient in aiding you. You should prepare by reading a) your manual b) your HM rulebook and c) the discipline's rulebook. Horse Management at a rally should reinforce what you should have already read and have been practicing in your day to day riding and horse management. Follow the HM rules at home and the rally will be second nature! You should be taking care of your tack on at least a weekly basis as HM can spot a 'right before rally' cleanup a mile away.

Labeling Your Stuff: Label EVERYTHING before a rally. The labels should be legible and large enough to see easily. They should last the duration of the rally.

1. Permanent Markers are good to use on plastic items, fabrics and sponges. Make sure the item to be marked is clean and dry. Since the buckets or feed tubs are going to get wet, put clear plastic tape over the label or writing to help preserve it.
2. 3-D or puffy paints are great to label nylon horse halters, wraps and saddle pads.
3. White Out is another great way of labeling anything black or dark. The pen type is easy to use. Use it on anything made from neoprene
4. Sewing your name or initials, either by hand or machine, is a perfect for labeling on fabrics. Sew your initials on polo wraps. Put at least your first initial and last name on other fabric items.
5. You can order metal tags and plates for your halter, bridle and saddle from most tack stores, but you might try the ones you normally buy for a cat or dog. They are usually cheaper.
- 6.. Stenciling large items such as plastic tack trunks, buckets and muck buckets is more lasting than permanent markers. Use a spray paint that is designed for plastic and won't wash off easily.
7. Make computer labels before the rally with the team name and/or the competitor's name. Use a black permanent marker to add your number once you get to the rally.
8. Garage sale tags or metal rimmed key tags are easy to label ahead of time, especially on extra equipment. They are fine for other items as long as they don't get wet or dangle in your horse's face and spook him. If you cover the information with a clear tape, they will last longer
9. Colored tape is good for items that are too small to label otherwise, such as double ended snaps.

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Feed Stall Fixes

1. All hay must be clearly labeled in the feed stall or feed trailer. A sign can be on the wall above your hay bale or written on a piece of masking tape wrapped around the hay string itself, but it must be obvious and easily found by HM looking to give that extra flake at evening checks.
2. If you pre-package your grain, bring a couple of extra feed bags labeled 'extra' AM and/or PM. Stack your feed so that the first feeding is on top (Fri PM) and the last at the bottom (Sun PM). Color-code your feedings. Red tape or label for AM and yellow for PM for example.
3. The feed **MUST** be secured from most animals. This means not just horses, but dogs, raccoons, possums, mice and rats. You can use a metal trashcan, plastic footlocker or other non-airtight, **FIRM** sided container with lid and locking/securing ability. You can use, rope, chain or some other securing device, but no bungee cords.
4. If your pony normally grazes all day, put "free choice" hay on the feed chart. Then you must have hay available in your pony's stall. This also allows the night watch person to throw hay into your pony's stall at night if there isn't any and your pony is antsy.
5. If you use a salt block for the rally, bring a holder or tie it up like a package and secure it to the stall or put it in the feed bucket.

Horse Stall Hints

- 1) Clearly label all buckets and their purpose. Make sure label won't come off when they get wet. Hang them securely to the wall or bars of the stall with nylon twine, bucket hooks, zip ties, nylon straps or a chain using a double-ended snap if necessary. All snaps should point inwards.
- 2) Use petroleum jelly or WD40 on the hinges or latch of your stall doors if they don't side easily.
- 3) If your horse shows any sign of irritation where the crownpiece rests, try wrapping it with vet wrap.
- 4) You may use a stall guard, with permission of the Chief HM Judge. The solid type and the closed web type are preferable. No ducking under the stall guard!
- 5) Make sure you mount's stall has sufficient bedding. Check the shavings level each morning and purchase more shavings, if necessary. Always bring more bedding than you think you will need, especially if it is an overnight rally.
- 6) If you bring a hose, make sure it is labeled and rolled neatly away or put it in an extra muck bucket after use. If it leaks and creates a mud puddle, it may have to be removed after each use.

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Tack Stall Tips

- 1) Never hang your bridle on a nail, instead nail an old tuna fish can or peanut can to a board. Paint the board in your club's colors and plastic tape or paint can be used to cover the cans.
- 2) If your horse is the biggest OR the smallest, bring an extra halter, girth, and bridle to fit him. The rally kit should have extra equipment, but if your horse isn't similar in size to your teammates, then bring your own labeled with your name.
- 3) A neat, well-organized tack room is easier on everybody's nerves...yours, your teammates, and the Horse Management Judges. Pet peeves of HMJ are food and cans/bottles strewn all over the floor. A trash can with a liner and lid helps.
- 4) Keep the aisle swept in front of all the stalls and if your horse poops, clean it up. It isn't the stable manager's job to clean up after you or your horse.
- 5) Make sure if you wear tall leather boots, that you have toe and boot trees. These can be as simple as rolled magazines covered with a tube socks or nylon knee hi's or legs of pantyhose secured at the top. Also depending on your boots, you can use 1.5 liter or 2 liter plastic bottles wrapped snugly with newspaper or sheet cotton. Cover with nylon stockings and secure. Toe shaped newspaper covered with duct tape or tennis balls cut in half for the toes are simple to make.
- 6) Notice boards should be visible and have each rider's formal and riding times listed. If you have any notes for the HM staff they should be easily viewed and vice versa.
- 7) Tack cleaning hook and sponge basket needs to be hung so they aren't at anyone's (adult or competitor) eye level.
- 8) In a pinch, you can use two metal hoof picks as boot pulls. They can also be used as a screwdriver.
- 9) Sprinkle baby powder on your legs and inside your breeches to make them easier to pull on. The same is true if you have tall boots
- 10) Put a lint roller or wide masking tape in your grooming kit to clean your jacket and velvet helmet.
- 11) The Equine and Human First Aide kits should be placed where they can be easily seen and retrieved in an emergency, just inside the tack room door, not in a tack trunk.

Practice explaining the use of the various items in the required kits. Each competitor needs to know what is in each kit and how to use it.

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Turnout Inspections Ideas

1) Always arrive BEFORE your scheduled time and check in with your station's scribe or checker if there is one.

2) Introduce yourself and your pony. Tell the inspector what your rating is and the name of your club. "Hi, my name is Polly Pony clubber. I am a D2 from Perfect Pony Club. My pony's name is Sweet pea? I am ready for my Turnout Inspection." Also, warn your inspector if your horse is spooky, girthy, head shy, etc.

3) Prepare for the next rating up's Turnout Inspection. If you are a D2, clean up to a D3's inspection level. You can look at the Turnout Inspection Score Sheets in the horse management handbook for what they are checking for.

4) If your horse has dandruff, tell the judge you are aware of it and how you are treating it, such as dandruff shampoo, Listerine, etc. Put Listerine (the plain kind) in a spray bottle and spray just where you want it and rub it in. Allow it to sit for an hour, rinse, shampoo, and condition.

5) Ask your stable manager to come with you to your inspection and bring a "last minute" bucket of grooming supplies. Wipe the dust off your boots, brush off your boot bottoms, and make sure your pony didn't just walk through mud or manure on the way to inspection. If they can't be there, tuck a wet wipe or two into your pocket and do the job yourself. You can also use a 'Swiffer' cloth to clean the dust off your horse and your tack. It is disposable and uses static electricity to pick up the dust.

6) As your inspector goes around your pony, always face her on the side she is on. Make sure as you are moving your horse into position, you move the horse away from you, not into you.

7) Your saddle pad does not have to be brand new and unstained, but it should be washed. If you bleach your pad make sure it has been rinsed twice to remove the residue. Bleach and heat could cause an irritation on your horse's back.

8) Don't let your pony graze while waiting for inspection or he WILL have a green bit and lips.

9) Know whether your attire is correctly formal or informal and WHY. Learn how to tie a stock tie BEFORE you go to the rally or buy a pre-tied one! Make sure your stickpin is sharp. Run it through a bar soap or your hair to make it slide more easily.

10) Use aerosol or pump type of 'Pledge' furniture polish as a substitute coat polish on your horse. Spray the body, tail, and mane, but NOT the face or where the saddle sits.