

How to Survive a Warm-Up Disaster

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There are many reasons your warm up may not go to specifications. You fall off, your tack breaks, a hundred mistakes seem to pile up into defeat and it's too late to fix it, you have to go into the ring. But as they say in show business, the show must go on.

It has sometimes been said in the horse business, "bad warm up, good show." This can certainly be true, but as anyone with a little ring experience knows the opposite can also be true as well

as a few other permutations and combinations. So instead of betting the odds, there are a few things you can pop into your emergency kit just in case you need to shake off a less than ideal warm up.

A little planning...

Let's begin with the obvious; what can you do to prevent a disaster in the first place? This is a question every trainer will want their students to be able to answer. The idea here is to decide what the 'controllables'

of muscles in both athletes to prepare for the athletic demands. How much and what you do is dependent on many variables. How many classes you have already had, how your horse has been going, what is required of you by this specific course and how your skills have been shining, or not. Your trainer will of course assist you with this aspect, but do come prepared with your own ideas.

Perspective:

The wonderful news about just about everything unfortunate that happens to us in sport is it can be looked at from another angle. If you do suffer a warm up glitch, there is always another way to make sense of it.

So yes, one way to cope is to say the worst has happened; now I am free to experience my best. Perspective is an all important tool. Remember that a bad warm up is just that, a bad warm up. It has no magical predictive powers over what happens next. This is the gift. The trick is to change your thinking in some way so you don't carry the baggage with you, you have to check it at the in-gate.

Stop and regroup

Find a way to interrupt what has just happened. This is

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are and be prepared. Being on time for your class is under your control, as is being dressed (weather appropriately) and knowing your course.

The purpose of the warm up is to ready yourself and your horse for competition. It has two main components: physical and mental. The physical entails the warming up