



Top Turn Out ≠ Top Dollar

by Kelly Stasiuk

The vast majority of the equestrian community believes that top turn out means spending copious amounts of money. Yes the \$200 bonnet that matches the \$250 saddle pad looks great.

Now picture that horse/rider combination in your head. You probably saw someone at the top of the equestrian sport. Now imagine all those items on a 19 year old lesson horse. Clearly there is something more to turn out than just expensive tack.

Many of the qualities of a 'Top Turn Out Award' winner are attainable for the average equestrian. There is something to be said for sweat equity and making the best with what you have. It's not feasible for everyone to have the best of the best, but nothing stops those people from making the best of what they have, except for their perception of the situation.

Tail Brush

Every grooming kit contains a mane/tail brush. USE IT! Do not show up to the ring with a tail not brushed. Would Ian Millar show up to the International ring with shavings in his horse's tail? I think not! Buy a \$1.99 trial size Show Sheen, apply to tail, and brush it. Not expensive.

Braids

My mother always told me "If

you salute, you braid!" There is a judge who has dressed professionally and committed his/her time to be there. Show the judges the respect they deserve and braid your horse's mane. Spending a few extra hours every week at the barn and \$3 on a bag of elastics practicing your braiding is time well spent, plus you can turn good braiding into more \$\$ for you if you get good at it! Always braid on the right side. Fun Fact: It is theorized that once upon a time when you held your shield with your left arm, and drew your sword with your right hand it would get caught in the mane if it were on the left side. When braiding be your own worst critic, redo braids, and practice, practice, practice!

Saddle Pads

Your saddle pad should be white. Your neon pink saddle pad with sparkles costs the same as a white one. Buy a white one and only use it for shows and clinics so it lasts longer.

Breeches

It's beige or white for breeches. Same reasoning as the saddle pads, it costs the

same but looks professional.

Polish your Boots

Polish is \$5.99 from Walmart. Step 1: Buy polish Step 2: Polish your boots Step 3: Repeat Step 2 until you can see your reflection.

Your horse should be CLEAN!

Use your grooming kit and brush your horse. It costs nothing but time to have a well groomed horse.

To put everything simply; a clean cut professional look is always better than any flashy accessories. Owners of equine facilities invest millions of dollars and countless hours for you to show your horse. Would you show up to drink tea with the Queen wearing a sparkly pink dress or something simple and elegant? We should endeavor to conduct ourselves with the elegance and grace these shows deserve. 🐾

