



So You Want To Be a Groom

Holly Grayton

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So many young people grow up with horses and want to make a career in the sport. The image of travelling to horse shows and competing with your peers or the world's best is unmistakably enticing. However, most people don't have the financial backing required to become a professional in the show ring, therefore, many look to grooming as a career to keep them in the horse industry. If this is you, consider this advice from those with experience; this is a demanding job but it does have its rewards.

- 1) Show up on time!
Make the start of your day a pleasure not a rush; and if you get some extra time later savor it.
- 2) Don't leave early.
Be someone to count on, you never know when your being there will make all the difference and it builds trust with those you work for and with.
- 3) Think...
While you are cleaning stalls, while you are turning out, think about the horses you're caring for and watch for things that are not as they should be. Think about what to do next and what you should be preparing for.
- 4) Develop a habit and order to how you do things.
For example if you make it a habit to pick out your horse's feet in the stall before you take them out you will never be caught having not picked out their feet...get me? Make a routine for everything from feeding to grooming, you will be more effective and efficient.
- 5) Make a great 'show ring bag'.
Get all the extra things you might need in there. Mine has braiding bands, towels, Vaseline, hoof paint, hoof pick, wrench, spare corks, chain shank, extra chest number, ear stuffers, boot polish, bug spray, cookies!!!!, spur straps, whip, safety pins, number cord, band aids, vet wrap, water bottle and probably a few more things. Being well prepared gives everyone reassurance.
- 6) Keep your eyes up.
Watch what other people are doing, if everyone in the waiting area is avoiding a particular horse, it's probably for good reason. If someone has a rail down while schooling, be the first to pick it up (but keep your eyes up so you don't get in the way!) This simple advice is true for all time spent around horses, they never mean to hurt you but it's up to you to make smart decisions and that starts with keeping your; you guessed it, your 'eyes up'.
- 7) There is always something to do!
If you can't think of something to do then pick up a broom. Being a good groom is intense and the days are full, so checking things off the 'to do' list is important and appreciated. When everyone is tired your energy will inspire theirs.
- 8) Make friends with the horses.



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That's why we are all here. Dote on them and really take the time to notice how they are feeling, they will love you for it!