



www.albertashowjumpers.com

For Albertans About Albertans

Tips and Tricks of the Trade

By: Lauren Mills

Everyone in Alberta knows you must always prepare for any type of weather, whether it is rain or snow or a twenty degree temperature change. But I would like to share a couple tips, or better yet rules, that I try and live by at all the horse shows we go to.

Tip # 1

Know where you are going. Time is precious – you never seem to have enough. It is very important to know where you are going, not only at a large show ground like Spruce Meadows, but other shows as well. The amount of time it takes you walk to the ring varies and being even just 5 minutes late can stress out your rider, or rushing your horse can make him nervous. At places like Spruce Meadows, one ring can be 5 minutes away, while the International ring is 15-20 minutes. Not to mention that if you have never walked there before the paths can be confusing. If you are aware of the time it takes to the ring, where to find the office or even the wash racks you will save yourself valuable time. Once you have groomed a week or two you understand the importance of 5 minutes. It can make or break your plan.

Tip #2

Always be prepared. This goes with tip # 1 but I would like to discuss having your ring bag prepared for every situation. Now this doesn't mean being a pack mule and carrying a 100lbs bag, but never underestimate the important of having zap straps, duct tape, a spare wrench, towels (yes two, because one might get boot polish on it and you can't wipe your horse off with that). Cookies or mints are always required. My two must-haves, however, are vet wrap and a good stiff brush.

Tricks

Nothing will ever replace elbow grease, but in a crunch Santa Fe spray will do wonders on a dusty coat and will make your horse very shiny. Cowboy Magic in the tail is brilliant for a lovely shine, but I don't like to use it in the mane as it makes the mane difficult to braid; best to stick to water for braiding. Baby powder will brighten any white socks and a touch of baby oil on the nose for hunters. I always make sure my groom stall has the above items and is also stocked with mini purple razors just in case.

If you are new to grooming I hope the above tips have brought a few things to mind when you pack and set up for your next horse show. The more experienced groom will understand exactly what I am talking about!