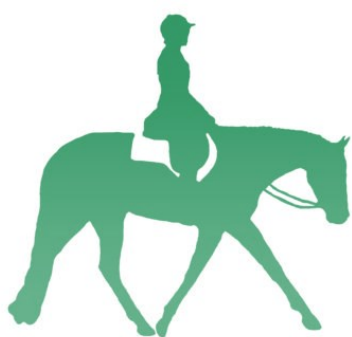




4-H Horse and Horseless Horse Project

Horse Show Manual

**A guide for members and families to help
navigate the world of horse showing**



Why should your child show their horse?

Responsibility

Caring for a horse is a lot of work. It teaches children to put others before themselves and to be kind and compassionate to animals. When heading to a show, riders must help prepare what they need to bring for their horses and themselves, care for their horse throughout the day, and manage their time.

Confidence

Learning to communicate with and control large animals can give children a sense of calm inner strength that can help them in other areas of life. They learn to take the risks, enjoy the rewards, and deal with the disappointments.

Life Lessons and Character Building

Horse showing can teach children how to handle success and failure, which are both important life skills. Competition can help children develop leadership skills. Showing a horse requires problem-solving, goal-setting and organizational skills. The rider must face issues as they arise and determine how best to resolve them, whether they relate to the horse, logistics, or even time-management.

Learning

Children can learn a lot from others through competition. No matter how much you know, there is always more to learn! Observe others and ask questions.

Exposure

Showing allows a horse to be exposed to life outside the barn, which prepares him for new environments and accustoms him to different sights and sounds. Ultimately, he becomes a better behaved animal, one not so easily spooked or distracted in new situations.

Bond with Your Horse

The connection between horse and rider is an inevitable result of the time the two must spend together as they strive to reach goals that will give them a competitive edge in the show ring. Together they are working toward the prize, but the tangential benefits of preparing for competition and showing are skills that for the equestrian extend to everyday life and for the young rider can last a lifetime.

Relationships

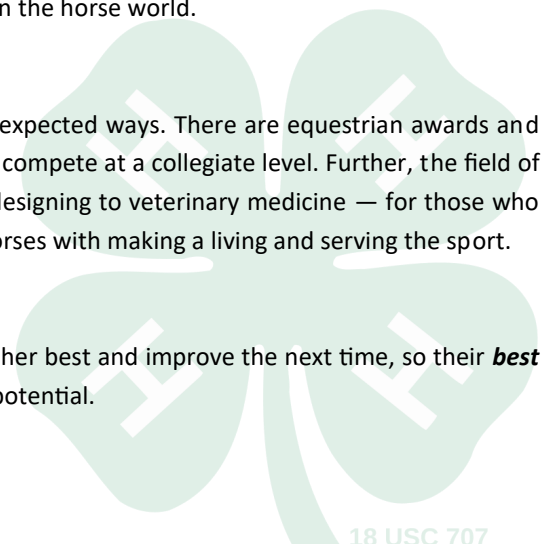
By showing, youth are introduced to many other riders that share a common passion. Many life-long friendships are formed at horse shows! Shows are also a great way to find mentors and make connections in the horse world.

Prepare for the future

For youth, showing a horse might help set a path for their futures in perhaps unexpected ways. There are equestrian awards and scholarships that could help offset college expenses, not to mention the ability to compete at a collegiate level. Further, the field of employment in the equine industry is vast — from training to advocacy, course designing to veterinary medicine — for those who envision themselves pursuing a career in which they can combine their love for horses with making a living and serving the sport.

And finally....

To make the best better! This 4-H motto encourages each member to do his or her best and improve the next time, so their **best** becomes **better**. Members stretch their abilities and capacities to reach their full potential.



What kind of horse shows are there?

Types of shows

Pleasure—A pleasure show is a horse show competition that includes classes that evaluate a horse's manners and suitability for relaxed riding. There are multiple types of pleasure show classes, including Western and English disciplines.

Gymkhana —Gymkhana (jim-kah-nah) is a competition consisting of speed pattern racing and timed games for riders on horses.

Ranch—A ranch show is a horse show that features ranch-type horses competing in a variety of classes that demonstrate their versatility and athleticism. Ranch shows offer rail and pattern classes, as well as cattle-working classes.

Jumping—Show jumping events have hunter classes, jumper classes and hunt seat equitation classes. Classes can be timed (jumpers) or judged (hunters).

Dressage—In a dressage test, horse and rider are judged on how well they can perform a series of prescribed movements.

Schooling—A schooling show is a casual, lower-cost horse show that provides a place for riders and their horses to practice and test their skills.

Who runs them?

4-H shows—4-H shows are put on by county horse projects for their youth members. The difference between 4-H and many other horse related opportunities for youth is that 4-H is centered on youth development. The various 4-H competitions available focus on youth development first, with "winning" a very distant second goal.

Open shows—An open horse show is a horse show that allows all breeds of horses and riders of all levels to compete. No breed registration or association membership is required.

Association shows—Association shows require participants to be members of their association in order to show. These associations typically have several shows throughout the year with annual and lifetime points earned.

Breed/color shows—Breed and color shows are horse shows that are specific to a particular breed/color of horse that are registered with the show's hosting association. They allow horses to compete with other horses of the same breed. They offer classes for different levels of the rider, the age of the horse, the horse's specialty. Points are involved for national recognition and for certain award levels/titles according to points.

Other horse competitions

- Eventing
- Polo
- Fox Hunting
- Endurance
- Horseball
- Racing
- Reining
- Western Dressage
- Cutting
- Rodeo
- Roping
- Sorting
- Team Penning
- Mounted Shooting
- Mounted Archery
- Trail Sports/Mountain Trail
- Mounted Orienteering
- Drill Team
- Combined Driving
- Skijoring
- Horse Pull
- Vaulting
- Trick Riding
- Liberty



What are those classes?

Halter	Shown in-hand; judged only on the confirmation of the horse. Horses are selected in the order of the resemblance to the breed ideal which is being judged. Characteristics evaluated include balance, structural correctness, and movement.
Showmanship	Shown in-hand; judged on the exhibitor's ability to show the horse at halter through a pattern. Judges look for a neatly attired exhibitor leading a well-groomed horse through a pattern performed with promptness, smoothness, and precision.
Pleasure	Shown ridden; judged on the equine and their appearance of being a pleasure to ride. Horses will be shown at requested gaits in both directions on the rail and will be judged on the quality of movement and consistency of gaits. Horses are shown in the ring together.
Equitation or Horsemanship	Shown ridden; judged on the skill of the rider, typically through a pattern. The judge evaluates the rider's ability to execute a set of maneuvers determined by the judge. The pattern should be performed with precision and smoothness while maintaining a balanced and correct body position.
Trail	Shown either in-hand or ridden; judged on both the rider and equine through specific obstacles. Obstacles may include a gate, a bridge, backing, sidepassing, tight turns, and ground poles at different gaits.
Pleasure Driving	Shown in cart; judged on the equine and their appearance of being a pleasure to drive. The judge evaluates the equine's ability to work with free movement, manners, and a bright expressions. Horses will drive at requested gaits in both directions on the rail. Horses are shown in the ring together.
Reinsmanship	Shown in cart; judged on the skill of the driver. The judge evaluates the driver's performance, handling of the reins and whip, control, posture, and overall appearance. Horses will be shown as a group at requested gaits in both directions on the rail. Horses are shown in the ring together.
Driving Cones	Shown in cart; timed course. The emphasis in judging is to show the exhibitor's skill and expertise in handling the driving animal through a Trot Cones course.
Hunter Hack	Shown ridden (English); judged on the equine at requested gaits in both directions in the ring, and then over two low fences (jumps).
Discipline Rail	Shown ridden; judged on the equine at requested gaits, as well as more difficult maneuvers, such as side pass, hand gallop, pivot, back up, roll back, lead change, extend trot, counter canter (lope). Horses are shown in the ring together.
Dressage Suitability	Shown ridden; judged on the horses' suitability to do dressage at requested gaits in both directions in the ring. Horses are shown in the ring together.
Western Riding	Shown ridden; pattern class that features flying lead changes

Showbill Terminology

Come As You Are	No show clothes or elaborate grooming required.
Lead Line	For beginner riders; rider will also have a handler walking alongside holding a lead line.
50/50	Class is judged half on the rider and half on the equine.
Jackpot	Winner will earn a payout from entry fees.
Restricted	Riders entering this class may not enter any other class that requires cantering.
At Will	Riders can perform these patterns at any time during the at-will timeframe.
Highpoint	Points are earned for placings in each class depending on the number of entries. The rider with the most points from all classes combined during the show wins highpoint.
Trailer/Jumpout	Fee per equine if not reserving a stall.

Abbreviations

W/T	Walk/Trot
WTC	Walk/Trot/Canter
SMS	Showmanship
EQ	Equitation
HMS	Horsemanship
HUS	Hunter Under Saddle
WP	Western Pleasure
E/W	English or Western
H/P	Horse or Pony
AQHA	American Quarter Horse Association

Pre-show Preparation

Horse health requirements

All shows require every horse to provide a negative Coggins test, which proves they do not have Equine Infectious Anemia. A copy of the test results must be printed to leave with the show office. If the show is out of state, you will also need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (health certificate) within 30 days of travel to verify that a veterinarian has examined the horse and found no obvious signs of illness.

Plan your accommodations

Know whether you will be using a stall at the show or will be keeping your horse tied to the trailer. If stalls are available and you would like to reserve one, you will need to do so in advance. Shavings are required if using a stall. Bring your own or ask if they sell them at the show. If staying overnight, find out if the stalls have concrete or dirt floors. Consider bringing rubber mats for concrete flooring. Wherever your horse is for the day, make sure they have plenty of time to rest and has access to hay and water.



Plan your classes

All shows will post their showbills ahead of time. Review the class list and have a plan prior to the show. If you are unsure of what the classes entail, refer to this guide. Most exhibitors and families at the shows are happy to answer any questions you have at the event.

Determine what division and age group you will sign up for. If you are not fully comfortable at a canter, there are walk/trot only classes you may sign up for. Most shows do not allow you to enter both walk/trot classes and walk/trot/canter classes. Age divisions are based on your age as of January 1.

Check the weather

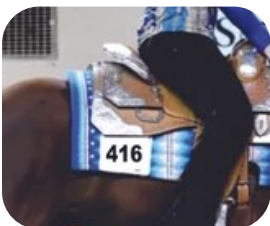
Do you need to plan for rain? Will it be hot and sunny? Make sure you have warm clothes, sunscreen, or rain gear, whatever is needed to keep you and your horse comfortable for the day.



Register

Many shows allow you to preregister for classes several days ahead of time so you have less to worry about on the day of the show. You will be able to add or drop classes during the show. Whether you preregister or not, check in with the office when you arrive at the show. Bring a copy of your Coggins to leave in the office. Leave enough time to register if there's a line.

Bring your checkbook to the show. When you sign in, you may open a tab with a signed blank check which allows you to add/drop classes without worrying about payment. When you are done for the day, stop in the office to close your tab and make sure that they have your classes correct. If you know you will not add or drop any classes, you may pay the full price when you check in. A few shows are now accepting online payment.



Each horse/rider combination will need a show number. Many riders prefer to keep the same number for their entire show career. If your rider has a number they would like to use, make sure to bring copies of the number printed on heavy-duty card stock in approximately half letter sheet size (8.5"x5.5") in a large, bold font. Laminating your number will help it last for several shows. Plan a backup number in case your desired number is already assigned. Show numbers are typically three digits, but can be anywhere from one to four digits. If you have no preference for a number, they will assign one to you at the show. Numbers must be worn on exhibitor's back for in-hand classes. For ridden classes, number may be either worn on exhibitor's back or on BOTH sides of the saddle pad.

Learn your patterns

Shows will post the patterns for showmanship, equitation/horsemanship, and trail either online before the show or on paper before the show starts in the morning. Study the patterns carefully! Know what gait you should be in each section, what side of the cones you should be on, which direction to turn, and which lead or diagonal to be on. Have a copy with you on paper or a photo on your phone to check it last minute before going in the ring. If given the opportunity, practice the patterns ahead of time!



Get a good night's sleep

Preparing for a show takes some time, so don't wait until the last minute. Make sure you finish early enough to get a good night's rest so you can be your best!

Presenting your horse at shows



Hooves

- Make sure your horse has a fresh trim before the show.
- Hooves should be clean. White hooves can be sanded if dirt won't wash off.
- Hoof polish gives an extra sharp look for pleasure classes, but is not used in ranch classes. Dark hooves use black polish, white hooves can use black or clear.



Trimming

- Trim your horse's bridle path (mane right behind ears)
- Trim hair on fetlock, around coronary band, and up back of legs. White socks can be trimmed completely.
- Trimming whiskers is no longer necessary.



Bathing

- Make sure you are showing a clean horse!
- Bathe your horse completely with shampoo. Use whitening shampoo if necessary.
- Conditioner can make your horse soft and shiny and make manes/tails easier to maintain.
- If weather conditions are too cold for a proper bath, brush thoroughly and use spot remover spray,



Cleaning Your Tack

- Use leather cleaner and conditioner on all saddles, bridles, and show halters. Use silver cleaner as needed.
- Wash and fluff any fleece girths or pads.
- Clean saddle pads/blankets. Most can be hand washed, machine washed, or pressure washed.



Banding or Braiding

- Western horses should have mane banded to help mane lay flat and still against neck. Many exhibitors choose to trim their horse's to a length of 4-6 inches and thin it for a neater appearance.
- Hunt seat horses should have their mane braided. To do proper hunter braids (small buttons), mane must be cut to 4-6 inches. If your horse's mane is longer, consider a running braid.
- Ranch horses may not have any type of banding or braiding.
- Saddle seat horses are shown with unbraided full-length mane. Some breeds show with ribbon braided into forelock and first lock of mane.



Finish!

- Use shine spray to give your horse a healthy glow.
- Don't let your horse be distracted in the ring—give them a good coat of fly spray before your class!

Presenting yourself horse at shows



Hair

- Hair should be neat, tidy, and pulled back from the face.
- A low bun is a common choice for long hair. For thick hair, pulling the top half into a ponytail under the helmet can reduce the size of the bun.
- Long hair can be worn in a low ponytail for Ranch classes or Western Pleasure.
- Hair spray, bobby pins, hair nets, or bun nets help give a neat appearance.



Hunt Seat Attire

- Show coat (black/gray/navy/hunter) worn over white show shirt with stand collar or wrap neck
- Beige or tan breeches with a belt.
- Tall riding boots or paddock boots with half chaps (young children may wear just paddock boots).
- Black riding helmet and black gloves.



Western Attire

- Western show attire can be as simple or as elaborate as you desire. “Bling” is common but not necessary.
- Long sleeve shirt with collar at minimum. As you advance:
 - Showmanship—showmanship jacket that goes to mid-hip.
 - Horsemanship/pleasure—Snug-fitting top that tucks into your pants.
- Solid-colored pants/jeans and belt with optional fringed chaps.
- Cowboy boots.
- Riding helmet for youth when mounted, cowboy hat or helmet when in-hand.



Ranch Attire

- Long sleeve button-up shirt with collar and cuffs. No bling or animal print allowed,
- Dark jeans and belt (no bling) with optional leather chinks.
- Cowboy boots.
- Riding helmet for youth when mounted, cowboy hat or helmet when in-hand.
- The following are NOT allowed: mane bands/braids, hoof polish, silver on tack (conchos/buckles ok)



Saddle Seat Attire

- Saddle seat coat over collared shirt, vest, tie, and dark boots.
- Jodhpurs that match coat color.
- Jodhpur boots.
- Riding helmet for youth when mounted. Derby or helmet when in-hand.



Dressage Attire

- Fitted 3 or 4 button show coat (black/gray/navy/hunter) over white show shirt and stock tie.
- Light colored breeches, typically white.
- Tall riding boots or paddock boots with half chaps.
- Black riding helmet and light-colored gloves.

Horse Show Etiquette



Practice Ring

- In a busy arena, always go the same direction as the other riders.
- Keep proper distance between you and the horse in front of you.
- Pass left-to-left when going opposite directions.
- Check behind you before you stop so you are not stopping in front of a fast-moving horse.
- Faster horses should stay near the rail, slower horses should ride towards the middle.
- Use caution and look before cutting across the flow of traffic to exit the ring.



Show Ring

- Be ready at the gate when your classes is called.
- When entering, yield to riders already in the ring.
- Keep at least one horse length between you and the horse in front of you.
- Almost always pass on the inside. Do not pass between another horse and the rail.
- Always look over your shoulder before shifting to pass or move back to the rail. DO NOT cut off another horse.
- If your horse acts up and becomes unruly, go to the center of the ring, dismount, and ask to leave the arena for your safety and the safety of all riders, the judge, and the horses.



Judge

- Do not talk with the judge while they are judging.
- Do not approach the judge during the show. If you need to speak with the judge, speak with the show chairman or ring steward and they will arrange an appointment for you.
- When approaching the judge, be courteous, prepared, and respectful of their time.



Office

- Remember most show staff are volunteers. Be patient and respectful!
- Have your paperwork complete before you arrive at the window.
- Remember to check out at the end of the show.



Sportsmanship

- Win and lose graciously. We all want to win, but there will be more times that we lose. Congratulate the winner, don't brag or gloat when you win.
- Help those around you when they need a hand.
- Horse shows are a great way to meet new friends with similar interests!



Remember to have fun!

- Sure, horse shows are competitive events, but more importantly they are for learning and having fun!

Riding Basics Across All Disciplines

Body Position

No matter what discipline you ride, someone looking at you from the side should be able to draw a vertical line through the middle of your ear, shoulder and hip, going down behind the back of your heel.

Sit tall and upright in the saddle, with your shoulders back and your heels down.



Eyes Up

Eyes up while riding means to keep your gaze directed forward and upwards, looking where you want to go rather than down at your horse's neck. This helps maintain proper posture, balance, and allows you to anticipate obstacles or changes in terrain, effectively guiding your horse with your vision.

Steady Hands

Be sure to keep your hands steady while riding. If your hands bounce around or jerk with your motion, you can unintentionally jerk on your horse's mouth. "Steady hands" while riding refers to maintaining a consistent, relaxed contact with the horse's mouth through the reins, allowing for subtle aids without excessive pulling or jerky movements, achieved by keeping your elbows soft, shoulders relaxed, and following the horse's movement with your hands rather than trying to hold them completely still; essentially, letting your hands "move with the horse" to maintain a steady connection.

Diagonals

Any English discipline requires the rider to post at a trot. Posting, also known as the rising trot, is a riding technique where the rider moves their body rhythmically up and down with the horse's trotting motion. This helps the rider stay balanced and comfortable while riding.

One essential aspect of posting is maintaining the correct diagonal. This refers to when you rise out of the saddle as the horse's outside shoulder moves forward. To ensure you're posting on the correct diagonal, watch the horse's shoulder movement and rise when the outside shoulder moves forward.



Rider on Left Diagonal

Left Diagonal

Rider rises when horse's right leg goes forward and sits when horse's right leg goes back. Used when horse is circling to the left (counter-clockwise) or the rail is on their right side.

Right Diagonal

Rider rises when horse's left leg goes forward and sits when horse's left leg goes back. Used when horse is circling to the right (clockwise) or the rail is on their left side.

Always remember to change diagonals when changing directions on the rail or in a pattern!

Leads

When a horse canters or lope, one leg always extends further forward (leads). The correct lead is **when the horse's inside front leg is leading first**. For example: When the horse is cantering a circle to the right (clockwise), the horse's right front leg should be leading first.



Horse on the Left Lead

Hunt Seat

What is Hunt Seat?

Hunt seat is a style of riding that's common in North American horse shows. It's based on the tradition of fox hunting and is one of the two classic forms of English riding, along with dressage.

How should a Hunt Seat horse move?

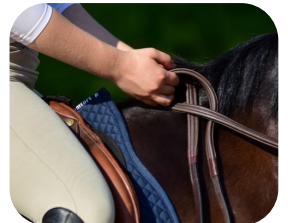
Smooth, quiet-moving, well-built horses with good temperament are desired. Regardless of breed, the horse should have a long stride with very little knee action, and should be well-mannered. For top level competition, movement and jumping form become increasingly more important. The horse is penalized if it must be ridden on strong contact on the bit, gapes its mouth, does not respond willingly to light aids, or does not travel in balance.



How should a Hunt Seat rider ride?

A hunt seat rider has a very secure position. This includes proper leg position, weight in heels, soft hands, good posture, balanced seat, eyes up, look ahead and post at the trot.

Rider shall use two hands and keep light contact on the bit. Rein should go between the pinky and ring finger, then up through the palms with thumbs on top.



Hunt Seat Pleasure or Hunter Under Saddle Classes (English Pleasure)

Horses are shown in the ring together. The judge will ask the rider to demonstrate the natural gaits of the walk, trot, and canter, and may also be asked to extend the trot or to perform a hand gallop. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, quality and conformation. The horse is to give the impression of being a pleasure to ride.

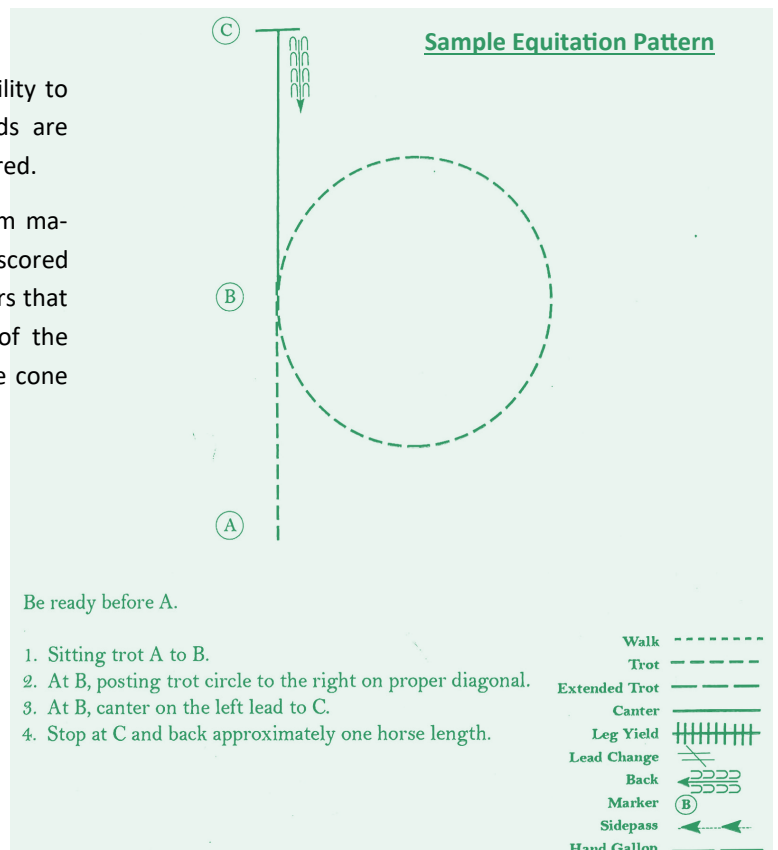
Hunt Seat Equitation (English Equitation)

Equitation is a class that focuses on the rider's skill and ability to guide a horse. The rider's position, form, and use of aids are judged, while the horse's performance is not usually considered.

Most equitation classes are pattern classes. Riders perform maneuvers shown in the posted pattern. Each movement is scored numerically, and the rider with the highest score wins. Riders that do not demonstrate the proper gait, miss key elements of the pattern (i.e. forget to back), or go on the wrong side of the cone may be disqualified.

Hunt Seat Tack

- Hunt Seat Saddle
- White Contoured Show Pad
- Hunt Bridle with snaffle bit



Western

What is Western?

Western is a style of horse riding with origins on the ranch. Because of the necessity to control the horse with one hand and use a lariat with the other, western horses were trained to neck rein, or change direction with light pressure of a rein against the horse's neck.

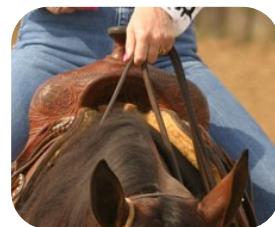
How should a western horse move?

Horse should move in slow, smooth gaits on a loose rein. Horse should be calm, quiet, have collected, soft, comfortable gaits. Strong muscling is required to sustain slow, controlled movement in the most competitive horses.

How should a western rider ride?

The Western Pleasure rider's seat is deep, with a long stirrup. Rider should sit tall with shoulders square. In western pleasure, the free arm is hanging down, but in horsemanship, the arm is held at the same height as the one holding the reins.

Reins are kept loose and relaxed, though quiet and subtle rein signals are still used. Rider holds the reins with one hand just in front of the saddle, with the index finger between the reins and excess reins hanging loose on same side as the hand holding the reins. A rider with a horse that is five or younger can use two hands using a snaffle bit or bosal.



Western Pleasure

Horses are shown in the ring together. The judge will ask the rider to demonstrate the natural gaits of the walk, jog (slow trot), and lope (slow canter), as well as stand quietly and back up readily. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, quality and conformation. The horse is to give the impression of being a pleasure to ride.

Western Horsemanship/Stock Seat Equitation

Equitation is a class that focuses on the rider's skill and ability to guide a horse. The rider's position, form, and use of aids are judged, while the horse's performance is not usually considered.

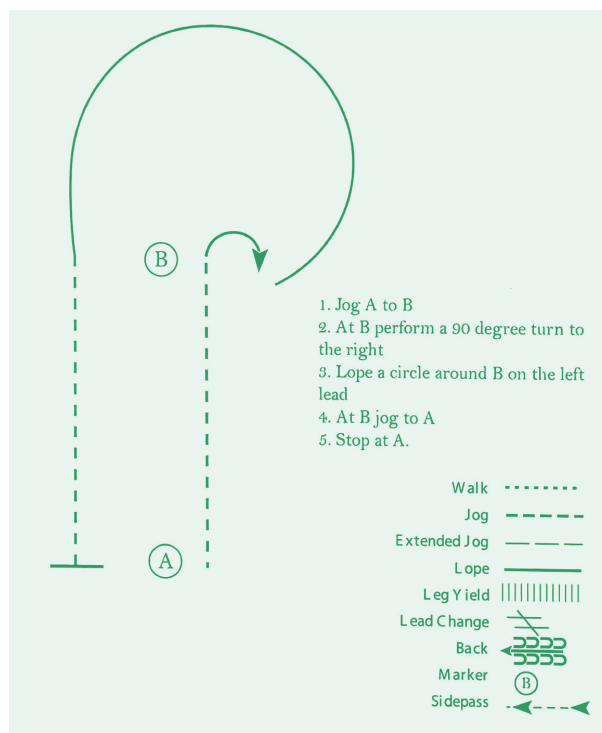
Most equitation classes are pattern classes. Riders perform maneuvers shown in the posted pattern. Each movement is scored numerically, and the rider with the highest score wins. Riders that do not demonstrate the proper gait, miss key elements of the pattern (ie forget to back, did not canter when directed), or go on the wrong side of the cone may be disqualified.

Western Tack

- Western Saddle (silver optional)
- Square Back Show Pad
- Western Bridle with shank bit



Sample Horsemanship Pattern



Saddle Seat

What is Saddle Seat?

Saddle seat is a style of English riding that originated in 19th century England, did not evolve from hunt seat riding, and does not involve any jumping. Horses are most often shown at the three gaits of walk, trot, and canter. Some horses perform five gaits which includes two additional gaits called the 'slow gait' and 'rack'. The horse breeds most commonly ridden saddle seat are American Saddlebreds, Morgans, Arabians, and National Show Horses.

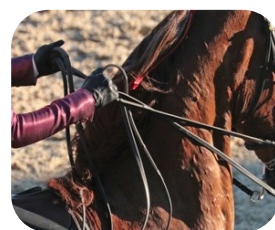
How should a Saddle Seat horse move?

These horse breeds have a natural, more upright, higher neck and head carriage that is free-moving with animated gaits. **The** upright movement is elegant with ears forward and their gaits are collected.



How should a Saddle Seat rider ride?

Due to the horse's natural higher neck and head carriage, the saddle seat rider sits further back in the saddle with hands held higher. The rider's posture is upright and still, with eyes up, shoulders back, and heels down. This puts the rider in balance on a collected horse. The rider's forearms are typically horizontal, which maintains the proper angle of contact with the bits in the horse's mouth. The rider posts when the horse trots and posting should look effortless and graceful. Reins should be held in both hands, with good contact with the horse's mouth but not tight.



Saddle Seat Pleasure

Some shows offer Country Pleasure, Classic Pleasure, or Country Pleasure. Horses are shown in the ring together. The judge will ask the rider to demonstrate the walk, trot, and canter. Some classes may require an 'extended trot', which may be a little faster trot and more animated. Incorrect canter leads are penalized. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, conformation, and overall quality that gives the impression of being a pleasure to ride.

Saddle Seat Equitation

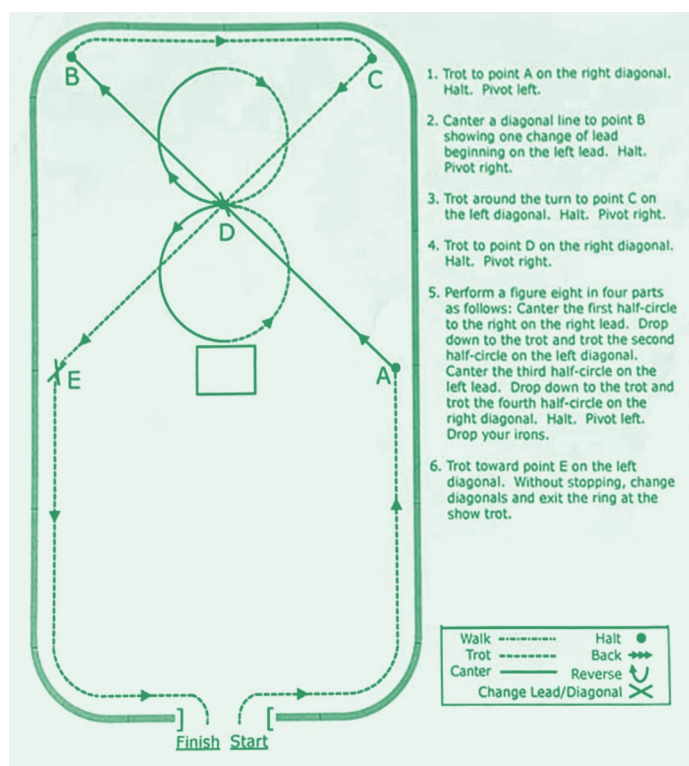
Equitation focuses on the skill of the rider to present their horse as best as possible while maintaining correct posture and form that looks effortless, as described above. Incorrect diagonals are penalized. Classes involve all riders as a group judged 'on the rail', then lined up, and then individual patterns are completed and judged. Good 'rail work' and correct completion of the pattern are both judged.

Saddle Seat Tack

- Double Bridle with both snaffle and curb bits, each with separate reins
- Cutback English saddle
- Small Cushioned Saddle Pad



Sample Equitation Pattern



Dressage

What is Dressage?

Dressage is a sport involving the execution of precise movements by a trained horse in response to barely perceptible signals from its rider. The word dressage means “training” in French. Particularly important are the animal's pace and bearing in performing walks, trots, canters, and more specialized maneuvers. Dressage can improve any horse from many different disciplines by developing better strength, balance, and flexibility. Balance and flexibility are major aspects in a successful dressage rider.

How should a dressage horse move?

The ideal dressage horse movement is one that is balanced, rhythmic, and relaxed, with the horse showing good regularity and well-flexed joints. Walk should be relaxed, yet energetic. Trot should be highly collected with a cadenced, elevated rhythm. Passage is a slow tempo, very elevated trot with clear suspension. Hind end should come underneath the body in the canter.



How should a dressage rider ride?

The rider should have a tall, proud posture. The rider should feel like they are standing on the ground in the saddle, with their weight evenly distributed on their seat bones. The rider should sit tall in the saddle, with their pelvis stacked up correctly and their spine in a neutral position. Foot should be directly under body, but with less bend in the knee than in hunt seat. The rider's elbows should have a little bend, and their hands should be carried close together.



Dressage Tests

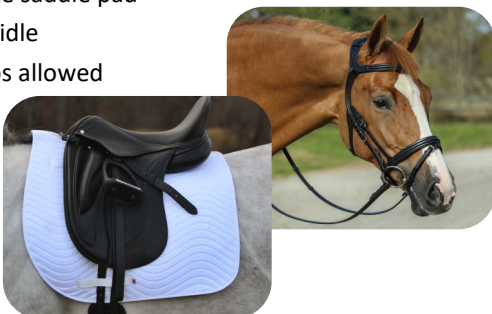
A dressage test is a series of movements that a rider and horse perform in front of a judge to demonstrate their skill level and the horse's development. Dressage tests serve as a measure of the horse and rider's schooling. Each level builds upon the preceding level's principles. This helps to ensure that the horse and rider build the strong foundation required for the skills needed at higher levels. Each maneuver is judged on a scale of one to ten.

Western Dressage

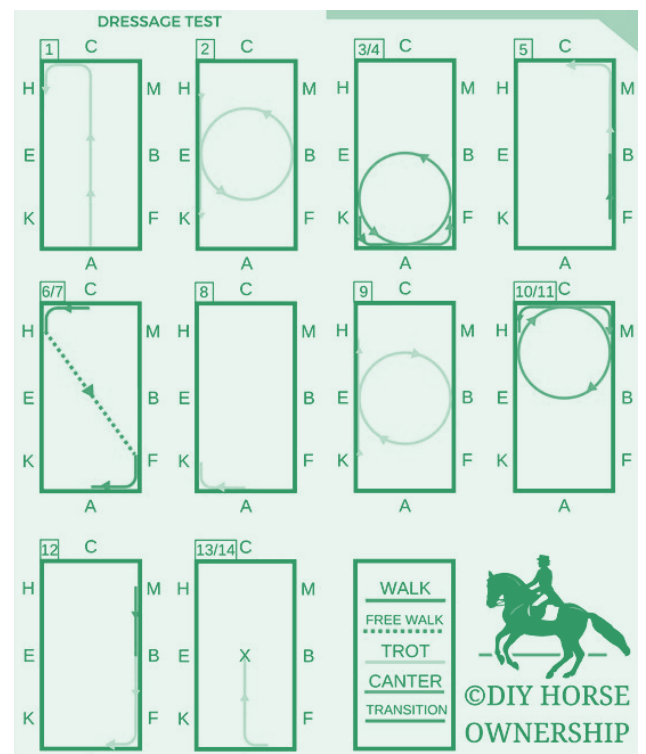
Western Dressage integrates the historic principles of dressage with the best of the western stock horse tradition. In Western Dressage, the test can include a turn on the forehand of 360 degrees and a turn on the haunches. English Dressage tests don't have these movements. Additionally, the horse's gait is different in English and Western Dressage. The horse demonstrates the walk, trot, and canter in English Dressage. But in Western Dressage, the gaits displayed are walk, jog, and lope.

Dressage Tack

- Dressage saddle (straight flaps)
- Square white saddle pad
- Dressage bridle
- No leg wraps allowed



Sample Dressage Test



Ranch

What is Ranch?

Ranch horses show skills that are needed for work on a cattle ranch. In addition to rail and pattern classes, most ranch shows also have individual cattle working classes, such as boxing, ranch cutting, ranch roping, and working cow horse.

How should a ranch horse move?

Ranch Rail Pleasure emphasizes a more forward and purposeful movement. For each gait, horses should demonstrate forward but controlled motion. Gaits range from the basic walk, trot, lope, to extended versions of each gait. Judges note horses that are free-moving, looking through the bridle, and exhibiting that they could cover long distances in a comfortable fashion. A horse that can also smoothly transition from one gait to the next will be rewarded.



How should a ranch rider ride?

Rider should sit in saddle with legs hanging straight and slightly forward to stirrups or knees bent slightly and weight directly over ball of feet. Body should always appear relaxed and comfortable. The free hand and arm may be carried bent at the elbow or straight down at the riders side. Rider must sit the trot but may post or two-point the extended trot.



Light contact on the bit is encouraged. Rider holds the reins with one hand above or just in front of the saddle. For split reins, the index finger is between the reins, but for romal reins, rider holds the reins in their fist with thumb on top. A rider with a horse that is five or younger can use two hands using a snaffle bit or bosal.

Ranch Riding/Ranch Rail

Horses perform as a group, exhibiting the natural gaits of the walk, jog (natural trot), extended jog, and lope (canter), as well as to stand quietly and back up readily. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, quality and conformation. The horse is to give the impression of being a pleasure to ride as well as being well-suited for performing work needed to be done on a ranch.

Sample Ranchmanship Pattern

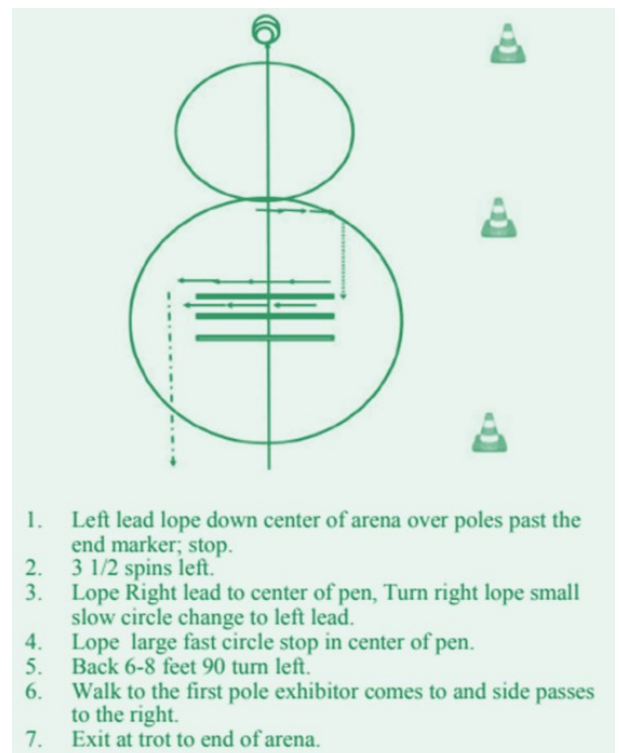
Ranch Horsemanship

Horsemanship is a class that focuses on the rider's skill and ability to guide a horse. The rider's position, form, and use of aids are judged, while the horse's performance is not usually considered.

Riders perform maneuvers shown in the posted pattern. Each movement is scored numerically, and the rider with the highest score wins. Riders that do not demonstrate the proper gait, miss key elements of the pattern (ie forget to back), or go on the wrong side of the cone may be disqualified.

Ranch Tack

- Western Saddle (NO silver)
- Square Back Show Pad
- Western Bridle with shank bit
- Split or Romal reins
- Lariat rope
- Sport boots (optional)



Pleasure Driving

What is driving?

Driving is a broad term for hitching equines to a wagon, carriage, cart, sleigh, or other horse-drawn vehicle by means of a harness and working them in this way. Pleasure driving features light breeds of horses and ponies hitched to a two or four-wheeled show cart.

How should a driven horse move?

When judging a horse's movement while pulling a cart, the primary focus is on its smoothness, cadence, and efficiency of stride, looking for a balanced gait with even weight distribution on all four legs, minimal head bobbing, and the ability to maintain a steady pace. A driving horse should also be responsive to the driver's cues and free from any signs of discomfort or lameness.



How should a driver drive?

The driver should be seated comfortably on the seat, so as to be relaxed and effective. Either one or two-handed method of driving is acceptable. The elbows and arms should be close to the body, with a steady hand enabling a consistent "feel" with the horse/pony's mouth.



Pleasure Driving

To be judged 70% on performance, manners and way of going, 20% on condition and fit of harness, 10% on neatness of attire. The horse/pony should be well broke, with an easy-going pleasurable way.

Reinsmanship

The emphasis in judging is to show the exhibitor's skill and expertise in handling the driving animal. To be judged 75% on handling of reins and whip, control, posture, and overall appearance of the driver, 25% on condition and proper fit of harness and vehicle and neatness of attire. This class is comparable to an equitation riding class.

Horse/pony may be exhibited both ways of the ring at a walk, slow trot, working trot, strong trot, and rein back. Drivers may be asked to execute a figure eight

Trot Cones

The emphasis in judging is to show the exhibitor's skill and expertise in handling the driving animal through a Trot Cones course.

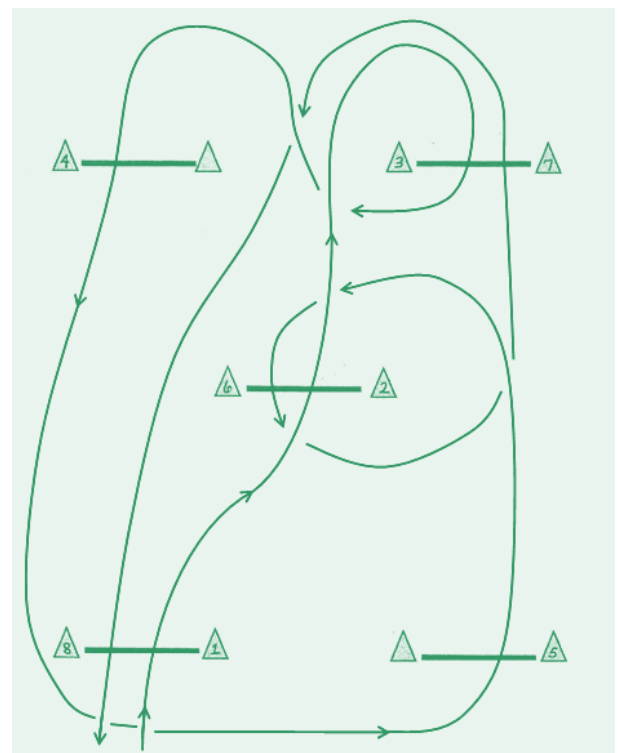
Clean patterns are placed before exhibitors with penalties. Fastest time to finish the course in the correct order, with added penalties determines placing.

Driving Tack

- Two or four wheel cart for one or two passengers
- Breast collar or full collar harness
- Bridle with blinkers
- Driving whip



Sample Driving Trot Cones Pattern



Showmanship

What is Showmanship?

Showmanship is judged on the exhibitor's ability to show the horse at halter through a pattern in-hand. Judges look for a neatly attired exhibitor leading a well-groomed horse through a pattern performed with promptness, smoothness, and precision. Showmanship is available at pleasure shows of most disciplines.

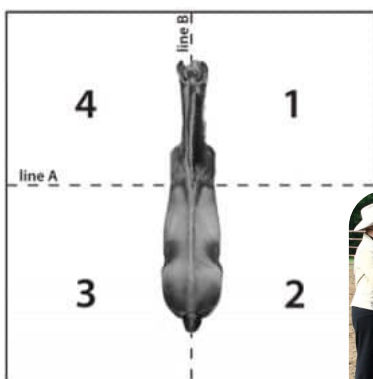
How should a showmanship horse move?

Showmanship horses should have crisp, responsive movements. Horses must be able to walk, trot, back, and pivot (on right hind foot) with minimal cues from the handler.



How should a showmanship exhibitor perform?

Exhibitor should always stand tall. When at the jog, exhibitor should not bounce their body or swing their arms. Forearms should be parallel to the ground, bent at 90 degree angle at the elbow. Pretend a pizza box is resting on your arms and don't want to drop it! Exhibitor should remain next to the horse's head while moving and should never walk in front of the horse. Do not move until the judge moves or signals you to. Make eye contact with the judge whenever possible.



Inspection

The exhibitor must set the horse up near the judge for inspection per the pattern. When set-up, the horse's feet should be square (see image below). Setting a horse's feet should take no more than five seconds. Exhibitor's hands and toes should point at horse's shoulder.

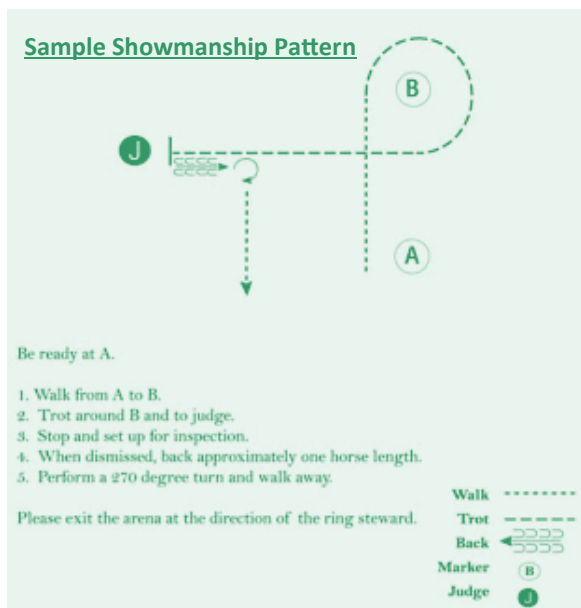


Exhibitor should always position themselves so that they can see the judge but are not blocking the judge's view of the horse. Exhibitor moves from one side of the horse's head to the other (quadrant 4 and 1). Exhibitor should always be in the quadrant adjacent to the judge. The judge will walk around the horse, typically clockwise. If the judge

is lined up directly in front of the horse, the exhibitor should start in 4. When judge moves from 1 to 2, exhibitor should move to 1. When judge moves from 2 to 3, exhibitor should return to 4. When judge moves from 3 to 4, exhibitor moves to 1. When the judge stops in front of the horse and nods, exhibitor returns to 4 and continues the pattern.

Showmanship Tack

- Western: Leather halter (often with silver) with leather lead and optional chain
- Hunt Seat: Leather bridle
- Ranch: Plain leather halter or rope halter with leather or dark nylon lead



Hunter/Jumper

What is Hunter?

Hunter or **Working Hunter** classes focus on the horse's form and style, and are judged subjectively. They can be without jumps (under saddle) or a basic jump course with 8–12 obstacles. **Handy Hunter** classes also include elements such as a roll back, narrow fence, trotting obstacle, or opening/closing a gate.

What is Equitation?

Equitation classes focus on the rider's form, position, and accuracy, and are judged subjectively. Equitation classes can be without jumps (on the flat) or over fences.

What is Jumper?

Jumper classes focus on the rider's speed and accuracy, and are judged objectively (faults and time). Jumper courses are designed to test the horse's athleticism and trust, and may include water jumps, ditch jumps, and longer jumps.



Hunter Terminology

Beginner/Limit/Novice/Modified: Rider may not have shown above certain height at any previous show (i.e. Modified 2'3" rider may not have shown above 2'6")

Mini/Short/Long Stirrup: Based on age and experience level

Medal: Combination class with over fences and flat work

NOTE: The same class may be listed on the showbill more than once. The course for the two classes will go in opposite directions.

Jumper Terminology

Table II: Single round. All clear rounds are equal in placing. There is no penalty for touching the jumps as long as they aren't knocked down.

Table II, 1 (1st is the fastest clear): Single round, no jump off. Riders with no faults place above faults. For riders with equal faults, faster time places higher.

Table II, 2a (After the class): Two rounds. Riders with no faults on first round complete jump off after all riders finish first round.

Table II, 2b (Buzzer): Two rounds. Riders with no faults on first round complete jump off when buzzer sounds.

Table II, 2c (Continue): Two rounds. Riders with no faults on first round immediately proceed to second "speed phase" round.

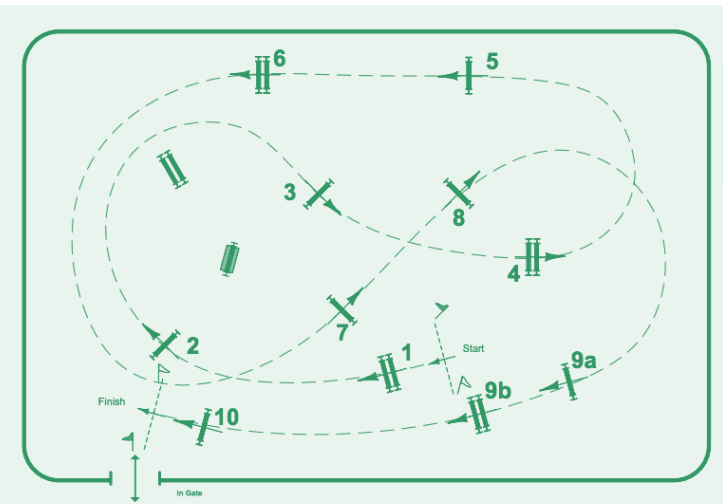
Table III: Each rail down or stop is a four second penalty. Fastest time wins regardless of number of faults.

Abbreviations

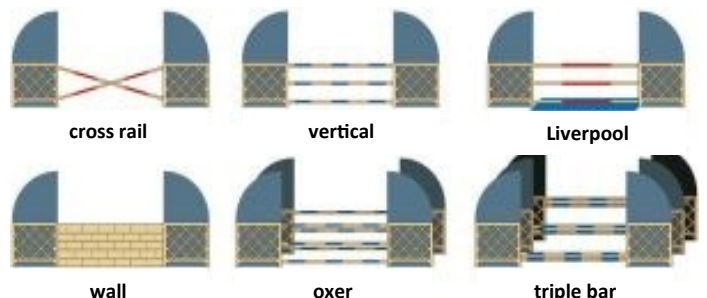
O/F: Over fences

U/S: Under saddle—no fences

Sample Jumpers Course



Jump Types



See Hunt Seat information for tack and attire

Gymkhana

What is gymkhana?

Gymkhana (jim-kah-nah) is an equestrian event consisting of speed pattern racing and timed games for riders on horses. There are several classes that are staples at every gymkhana show (barrels, poles, plug, flag race), but event organizers usually add several other fun classes as well. All riders are welcome, regardless of horse's speed!

How should a gymkhana horse move?

Since gymkhana classes are timed instead of judged, no particular movement is expected, but some traits tend to be more successful. Horses need to be able to make quick turns and run fast, ideally with long strides. Horses must be balanced and sure-footed, and should be able to move their shoulder freely around a turn.

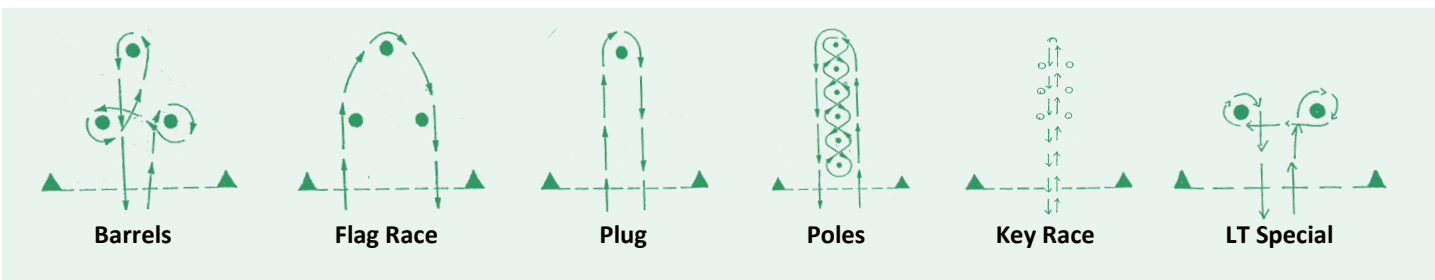


How should a gymkhana rider ride?

The rider must have a deep, balanced seat around the turn. Your body should always be in an upright position (not leaning to the side) – head up, shoulders up, elbows in and belly button pointed straight at the saddle horn.



Wisconsin 4-H Gymkhana Classes



Gymkhana Attire

- Many shows just require boots with a heel and long pants.
- 4-H shows require a long-sleeve button up shirt with collar and cuffs, long pants, boots, and a helmet.
- Horse should be clean, but no other grooming requirements.

Gymkhana Tack

- Western Saddle with deep seat
- Bridle with throatlatch—can be shank bit, snaffle, hackamore, etc.
- Barrel reins
- Sport boots (optional)
- Breast collar (optional)



Horse Show Pack List

Show Tack

- ☐ Western saddle
- ☐ Western girth
- ☐ Western pad
- ☐ Western blanket
- ☐ Western bridle
- ☐ English saddle
- ☐ English girth
- ☐ English blanket
- ☐ English half pad
- ☐ English bridle
- ☐ Show halter
- ☐ Show lead
- ☐ Leg wraps (if used)

Show Attire

- ☐ Helmet
- ☐ Western boots
- ☐ Western shirt
- ☐ Western pants
- ☐ Western belt
- ☐ Western chaps
- ☐ Western hat
- ☐ English boots
- ☐ English shirt
- ☐ English jacket
- ☐ Breeches
- ☐ English belt
- ☐ Half chaps
- ☐ Gloves

Accessories

- ☐ Hair ties
- ☐ Hair net/bow
- ☐ Bobby pins
- ☐ Make up
- ☐ Number/safety pins
- ☐ Sports Bra
- ☐ Spurs

Protection

- ☐ Tail bag
- ☐ Sheet
- ☐ Sneezy
- ☐ Shipping boots
- ☐ Fly mask

Barn supplies

- ☐ Water bucket(s)
- ☐ Bucket hanger
- ☐ Hay bag
- ☐ Hay
- ☐ Feed dish
- ☐ Grain
- ☐ Supplements/meds
- ☐ Manure fork
- ☐ Manure bucket
- ☐ Shavings for stall
- ☐ Lunge line
- ☐ Whip
- ☐ Saddle stand
- ☐ Bridle hooks
- ☐ Scissors/knife

Grooming

- ☐ Stiff brush
- ☐ Soft/finishing brush
- ☐ Mane brush/comb
- ☐ Hoof pick
- ☐ Spot remover
- ☐ Fly spray
- ☐ Baby wipes

Bathing

- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Conditioner
- ☐ Hose/sprayer
- ☐ Wash bucket
- ☐ Sponge
- ☐ Sweat scraper
- ☐ Towel

Finishing

- ☐ Clippers (if not done at home)
- ☐ Shine spray
- ☐ Hoof sandpaper
- ☐ Hoof polish
- ☐ Banding bands
- ☐ Baby powder (whitening)
- ☐ Fake tail (optional)



Miscellaneous

- ☐ Coggins
- ☐ Cash/checkbook
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sun glasses
- ☐ Baseball hat
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Pen
- ☐ Permanent Marker
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Mirror
- ☐ Lint roller

Miscellaneous

- ☐ Drinks
- ☐ Snacks/lunch
- ☐ Cooler
- ☐ Camp Chairs
- ☐ Wagon (hauling tack)
- ☐ Step stool
- ☐ Phone charger
- ☐ Trash bag
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Horse treats
- ☐ Spare Chicago screws

Fair/State/Stall

- ☐ Box fan
- ☐ Fan holder
- ☐ Extension cord
- ☐ Tack stall lock
- ☐ Tack stall curtains
- ☐ Zip ties
- ☐ Stall décor
- ☐ State plaque
- ☐ Pliers (removing staples)
- ☐ Staple gun
- ☐ Packing tape
- ☐ Tack stall rug
- ☐ Stall mats (if concrete)

First Aid

- ☐ Ibuprofen/Tylenol
- ☐ Band aids
- ☐ Gauze
- ☐ Vet wrap
- ☐ Wound ointment
- ☐ Antiseptic wound cleanser
- ☐ Bute/Banamine
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Bandage scissors
- ☐ Instant cold pack
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Coagulant powder

Wisconsin State 4-H Horse Events

State 4-H Horse Education Days, Horse, Bowl, and Hippology Contest

Held at UW-Green Bay in May—Registration deadline April 1

- Horse Bowl (team horse knowledge contest)
- Hippology (individual horse knowledge)
- Public Speaking
- Interpretive Reading
- Individual or Team Demonstration



State 4-H Hunter & Dressage Shows and Clinics

Held at Sheboygan Fairgrounds in late June—Registration deadline May 15

- Dressage Clinics and Classes
- Over Fences Clinics and Classes
- Hunt Seat Flat Classes

State 4-H Gymkhana Show

Held at Wisconsin State Fair Park the Saturday after Labor Day—Registration deadline August 15

- Speed Classes

State 4-H Horse Expo

Held at Wisconsin State Fair Park the second Saturday after Labor Day—Registration deadline August 15

- Showmanship
- Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat, and Western Pleasure and Equitation
- Driving
- In-Hand and Ridden Trail
- Judging
- Team Problems
- Art, Photography
- Creative Communication
- Model Horse Show



Waukesha County Fair

The Waukesha County Fair is held every July at the Waukesha Expo Grounds. The fair is a great way for members to show off their hard work throughout the year.

Registration is open from March 15 through June 15 at <https://www.waukeshaountyfair.com/entry-info/>. Horse classes are in department 206, and Horse and Pony exhibits and contests (art, posters, hippology, photography, etc) are in department 210. Sign up for ALL classes you might want to show in. You can cancel classes at the show, but you may not add any classes.



When registering, don't forget to send in Waukesha County Fair Horse Stall Reservation Form and Camping Reservation (if needed).

Fair Horse Barn Prep

You will have a stall for your horse as well as a stall for your tack (tack stall may be shared). It is highly recommended to bring a lock for your tack stall. A rug for the dirt floor and curtain for changing privacy are helpful.

Each club will have coordinating stall decorations. Stall decorations can be set up Monday or Tuesday. Bring a pliers for pulling old staples and a staple gun for hanging new decorations. Some stall doors may catch decorations when sliding, so packing tape may be needed to protect décor. Decorations must be hung before start of fair and must remain up until Sunday at 7:00pm.



Additional stall prep may also be done on Monday or Tuesday. You can put your shavings (required) in your stall, hang water buckets, and bring in any feed/equipment you want to leave in your tack stall. Do not bring any valuable tack prior to fair.

The barn can get hot in July, so box fans are recommended. Bring a fan hanger, extension cord, step stool, and zip ties for cord management. Make sure fans are in good condition to prevent electrical fires.

Horse Barn During Fair

Fair-goers come to the barn during fair to learn about and see animals they don't normally get to see. It is your job to present your animal to the best of your ability.

- Keep your horse and your stall clean.
- Make sure that your horse has food and water.
- Keep aisle raked and clean.
- Keep aisles clear for spectators. Groom and tack your horse in your stall, not in the aisle. Do not leave unattended chairs in the aisle
- If you want to open your stall for spectators to pet your horse, you must provide a proper stall guard (not just lead rope). Your stall may NOT be open unless you or a knowledgeable family member or friend is right by the door.
- Include information about your horse on your stall. People want to know your horse's breed, age, what you do with your horse, and any other interesting information you can think of.
- If you are sitting in the aisle, make yourself available and approachable for answering questions.



Fair Events

Youth fair and open fair pleasure show classes, hippology, and other judged entries must be registered online by June 15. Other fair events are open to fair participants without prior sign up.

- Educational Clinic— Any 4-H member may attend. Fair exhibitors may attend with their horse.
- Costume Parade—Dress up yourself and your horse!
- Extreme Trail Contest (stick horses available for members/family members without horse at fair)
- Fun Show (stick horses available for members/family members without horse at fair)



Safety

Trailer Safety

Proper Rig—Do not exceed the towing capacity of the vehicle. Make sure both truck and trailer are properly maintained. Make sure your truck has a brake controller compatible with the trailer.

Drive Smoothly—Take turns slowly and do not accelerate until the rig is straight. Allow plenty of time to stop when braking.

Lights—Check trailer lights and brakes before every trip, and double check your hitch and chains before departing.

Tires—Check tire pressure on truck, trailer, and both spares. Have tools with you to change a flat on truck or trailer and know how to use them.

Ventilation—Make sure trailer has adequate ventilation to prevent overheating or respiratory problems

Drop-Down Windows—Many trailers have drop down windows. When in motion, make sure either windows or bars are up, do not let the horse stick its head out the window. If just the bars are up, cover the bars with screens or put fly masks on your horse to protect their eyes from road debris or blown hay.



Securing Your Horse—Use a breakaway halter. When tying your horse, make sure the tie is long enough to allow them to keep their head in a natural position. If you use a lead rope instead of a trailer tie, make sure the knot is a quick release and do not drop the windows as the end of the rope may come out and get tangled in the tires.

Hay Bags—If hay bags are used, make sure they are hung high enough that the horse cannot get their foot caught in them if it paws.



Leg protection—Shipping boots can protect your horse from injury during transport.

Prepare for Emergencies—Have a first aid kit and knife readily available.

Safety Around Horses

Footwear—Anyone leading or approaching your horse should wear closed toed shoes. Boots with a heel must be worn when riding.

Helmets—Helmets are required for all riders at all 4-H events.

Don't Get Too Close—There are many unfamiliar horses at the show, and some of them need a lot of personal space. Do not bring your horse behind others or tie your horse near a horse at a neighboring trailer.

Tying—Use a quick-release knot that can be untied if a horse pulls against it. The tie should be no longer than three feet to prevent the horse from stepping over the rope or getting it over its head. Do not tie your horse to the arena fence or similar structures.



Additional Resources

Waukesha County 4-H Horse Project

- <https://www.wc4hhorse.org/>

Wisconsin 4-H Equestrian Guidelines—rules, expectations, tack, and attire guidelines for 4-H pleasure, equitation, and driving classes.

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NRkbQQ4eiWE65Ewf2G7VxVAqVZHpLH9moH_IfeYQvno/edit

Horseless Horse Guidelines

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/14aEDDvIX_FSaMdqpUSeLxSPipUpDC2ZsRIghdHuJO_0/edit

Wisconsin 4-H Horse Association Handbook—Links to current state 4-H shows (hunter/dressage, gymkhana, and expo)

- <https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/opportunities/projects/large-animals/horse-project/wisconsin-4-h-horse-association/>

American Quarter Horse Association

- Western Pleasure: <https://www.aqha.com/-/showing-western-pleasure-the-basics>
- English Classes: <https://www.aqha.com/disciplines/showing/start-showing/showing-classes/english>

Hunt Seat & Jumper Resources

- Hunt Seat & Jumper Manual: <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2050/2023/01/PNW488.pdf>
- Hunter Class/Division Descriptions: <http://associatedhorseshows.com/bylaws.html>
- The Ultimate Guide to Show Jumping: https://rjclassics.com/blogs/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-show-jumping?srltid=AfmBOorYnixgrxBb9-tF_2nbRgkAaC8HUqZF0yjPE2f2h9tYv01xBg0o

American Ranch Horse Association

- Main Page: <https://americanranchhorse.net/index.asp>
- Rule Book: <https://americanranchhorse.net/uploads/forms/2024%20Rulebook-compressed.pdf>

United States Dressage Federation

- <https://www.usdf.org/>

