

Packing and getting ready...

Packing and getting ready for shows, according to show moms, is the #1 stressor when it comes to competing. Moms and [especially] teen-age daughters find packing -getting ready for the horse show- a difficult time full of tension with occasional temper outbursts.

Why packing? According to many moms, this is the time when the combination of the stress of getting ready with too much to do in not enough time is combined with normal mother-daughter tension. Different styles for getting organized and just a small dose of competition jitters makes packing a loaded pre-horse show moment.

For years, I thought it was just my daughter and I who did not get along during the pre-show packing time. I tried different techniques to diffuse the situation, from discipline to lists to heart to heart talks. Most of the time we still found something that fell within the range of a mild exchange of words to an out and out explosion while we were getting ready.

So what is a Savvy Show Mom to do? I have friends who simply send the child off to the trainer the night before and let it become his or her problem. The theory is that the child would not speak to the trainer the way they speak to their mother, so avoidance works wonders.

TIPS TO EASE THE WAY

- Create lists

One way to handle the situation of forgotten items and the last minute rush to find things is to create a list

that can be printed out for each show. Maybe even two lists: one for mom and one for the rider, but it's good to have a central main list to use over and over.

- Divide the Work/Get help

Sometimes there is too much to do with schoolwork, jobs, and other family members. Getting help or assigning tasks to spread the work can be useful. (Kids still need to learn responsibility, so do not give away all of the work.)

- Assume a different attitude

Parents who can approach this with an attitude of this is a partnership and I have my role and you have your role can sometimes step out of the traditional parent/teen tension. The mindset creates a different set of expectations and attitudes toward each other.

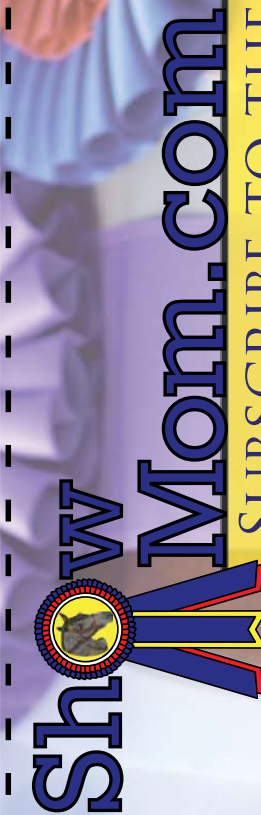
- Let go sometimes

Our children, much to our dismay, do not always do things the way we do, so letting go of some of the control, letting them learn from mistakes can help.

FAVORITE THINGS TO PACK

- Lip balm in the tack trunk, in the car and in the suitcase
- Fleece jacket for cold mornings and rain jackets for wet ones
- Travel candle and matches for the hotel room
- Favorite pillow for sleeping
- Sewing kit for buttons
- Safety pins - you never know
- Pain medicine for those hard days

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