

*So You Want To
Show Your Horse!*





So You Want to Show Your Horse?

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One gets a certain a satisfaction of getting out in a public place with your horse clean and shiny, the tack gleaming and the metal shining with you in nice riding clothes and polished boots. You and your horse are both looking your best. This is a chance to show how good you can be. You get to test your riding skills and your horse's skills and put your partnership to work. At the end of each class at the show, you will have an objective judge's opinion of how well you did compared to others. You also will have your own opinion of how well you did compared to the last time you showed and how well you and your horse worked together.

Because horse shows are judged, it is a good way to work toward goals of improved riding and having your horse better trained and more responsive. With so many of us having busy schedules, it is a nice way of giving us a reason or excuse to ride more often — once we have decided to go to a horse show and have paid the entry fees, you have a definite goal to work toward and an additional incentive to go for a ride or drive.

Showing your horse is another great way to have fun with your horse. After you have been to a few shows, you will start looking forward to the thrill of competition and the fun of socializing with your new horse show friends. A horse show is a break from the ordinary routine, whether it is a one-day, a weekend, or a week-long getaway. A horse show is a unique time to get away from your everyday life and have fun with your horse with other horse lovers.



Getting Started

What is a horse show?

A horse show is an event in which people bring their horses together to show them off and have them judged. It is an organized activity held on a showground that can accommodate various numbers of horses, people, and related equipment. It usually has a fenced arena, also called a riding ring or show pen, where the horses perform or are displayed by their handlers, riders, or drivers, and are ranked by an objective person, the show judge. The showgrounds will have parking facilities and may have stabling available and/or allow participants to show out of their horse trailers.

Some shows are informal and require no special attire for the person or tack for the horse other than what is considered to be neat, safe, and workmanlike. Others are formal and require all show participants be attired and in tack that conforms to specific, written rules. Yet all horse shows are governed by certain rules; open competition often uses U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) rules as guidelines. USEF is the governing body for equestrian sports in the United States.

The Basics

Visit a show before you take your horse to one.

Attending as a spectator allows you to observe how classes are run and the dress code for both horses and handlers, as well as any possible distractions for your horse.

What do I need to know ahead of time?

You need to know: where to park, when and where to arrive on the showgrounds, if stabling is provided, and what concessions are offered. It is helpful to find parking, the show office, stabling, and restrooms before you bring your horse(s) to the grounds.

All shows should require proof of a negative Coggins test. Arrange with your vet to have the test performed, as well as annual vaccinations against common equine infectious diseases.

Kinds of Shows

Open Competition Shows

Open competition shows are open to horses of all breeds, and may include both registered and non-registered horses. Examples include local riding club shows, schooling shows, and county fairs. Your local Morgan horse club can be a good resource for open competition shows in your area. A listing of AMHA recognized clubs can be found at www.morganhorse.com.

Most open competition shows take place throughout a weekend, which makes them easy to plan for and attend. These competitions also have lower entry fees and stabling charges than larger shows. Often the showgrounds may not offer stabling, although some offer a choice of on-site stabling or showing from one's trailer. A small fee usually is charged.

As with any show, be sure to check the entry deadlines. Smaller shows often will accept same-day entries and may be more flexible regarding late class entries and cancellations.

How do I find an open competition show?

Bulletin boards at feed stores, tack shops, and farm supply stores are a good starting point. Staff at these businesses also may be able to help you get in touch with local equine organizations. Local riding clubs, equine associations, 4-H groups, pony clubs, and public boarding and training stables also put on shows and are happy to provide information.

USEF Recognized Competitions

USEF recognized shows enjoy many privileges, including a commitment to fair competition and the welfare of the horse, which are provided through the enforcement of its rules. At an USEF-recognized show, you

will compete under a licensed judge as well as have a licensed steward on hand to answer any questions that may arise.

USEF bylaws and rules change annually. Review the rules which pertain to your chosen discipline every year. The USEF Rulebook can be accessed via the Internet at www.usef.org.

In order to compete at USEF-recognized shows, you must either be a member of USEF or pay a non-member fee as well as a Breed/Discipline fee at each recognized show you attend. If you plan to show at several USEF shows, it is more economical to become a member, and as a member you are entitled to a copy of the rulebook each year.

There are three classifications of divisions at USEF recognized shows: "A", "B," or "C." Rating or classification is determined by the number of classes, amount of cash premiums (prizes) offered, and whether required classes are offered in certain divisions. A show may qualify for several different ratings.

All-Morgan Shows

Classes are limited to registered Morgan horses at USEF-recognized all-Morgan competitions. These shows offer a larger number of classes from which to choose, providing more opportunities to show your horse. Classes often are divided into various sections within a division. For example, the Western Pleasure division of an USEF-

recognized all-Morgan show may offer classes for ladies, gentlemen, amateurs, amateur owners, junior exhibitors, junior horses, limit horses, and limit riders.



Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show

The Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show is held each October in Oklahoma City. The best of the best come together to compete for Grand National and world championship titles. Your horse can qualify to compete by placing first through eighth in that class at an AMHA Regional Championship show or by placing first through fourth in that class at a USEF-recognized show. Some classes do not require qualification; check the Grand National prize list for details.

In order to compete in world championship classes, your horse must qualify by placing first through sixth in the corresponding Grand National class and paying a declaration fee, or by being shown and judged in the corresponding class and paying an entry fee. All fees are set out in the Grand National prize list.

More information about Grand National can be found online at www.morgangrandnational.com

All-Breed Shows with Morgan Classes

Some USEF-recognized shows offer Morgan classes as well as classes for other breeds. These all-breed shows offer fewer classes to choose from, but often provide more time to visit with friends and experience some of the show as a spectator.

Selecting a Show to Attend

Now that you understand the difference between open and recognized shows, you are in a position to start deciding which shows you will attend. Information about shows can be obtained in many ways. One of the best places to start is your local Morgan horse club. Flyers for open, local shows may be posted around towns and communities in feed/tack stores or hardware stores, be distributed at local equine association or 4-H meetings, or advertised in newspapers and trade journals. These flyers, or prize lists, are your source of information about a show. A prize list tells you everything you need to know about the competition, including the show date, location, and contact person. It often contains a class list, show schedule, and entry form.

One important part of a prize list is the class description list, which provides complete specifications for the class and how it will be judged. This information may include gaits to be performed, shoeing requirements, appointments for horse and rider, rider restrictions (such as age), and horse restrictions (such as sex).

Another important component of a prize list is the class schedule, which lists the start time of the show as well as any scheduled breaks. The schedule is an important tool when deciding which classes you wish to enter, since it shows when all the classes will be held relative to each other.

The entry form is also important. Entry forms range from very basic to very complex and must be filled out as completely as possible. Small, open shows may permit you to complete your entry form upon arrival and generally ask for horse and rider names as well as the classes you wish to enter. Upon completion of the form, entry fees are paid, a

contestant number is issued, and you are ready to show.

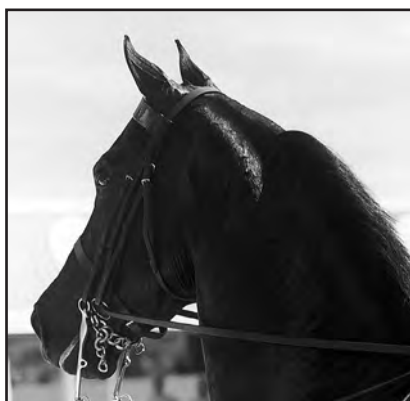
Some shows require participants to be a current member of a particular organization or association. Non-members are not precluded from competing, but must pay a non-member fee. The most common organizations/associations you may encounter in the Morgan horse show world include: U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF), the national governing body of equestrian sports; the American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA), exists to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the Morgan horse; United States Dressage Federation (USDF), dedicated to the sport of Dressage; and the American Driving Society (ADS).

Preparation of the Horse

Showing your horse is fun, but there is some work involved in looking your best to impress the judge. Now is your chance to make a great first impression. These tips will give you much success in the show ring.

Clipping

Begin by clipping the horse's bridle path. This is a three- to six-inch long section of hair that is removed between the forelock and the mane. Clipping the bridle path provides a neat place for the crownpiece of the bridle or halter to lie without getting tangled in the mane. All divisions, aside from hunter pleasure, hunter over fences, and Dressage, are shown with natural, non-braided manes and tails. Investing in a good set of electric clippers will make this job a lot easier.



Clip the horse's face from above the eye orbital to the bottom of the forelock to his nose. Don't forget to trim the long hair around the horse's eyes. Then trim the inside and outside of his ears to provide a more finished appearance.

The muzzle, jaw, nostrils, and throatlatch should also be free of any long hair. You may wish to shave the horse's muzzle close with a razor. The legs down the cannon bone area, fetlocks, pasterns, and coronet bands should also be clipped.

Of course, if you've never clipped your horse before, we encourage you to seek out a person with experience those first few times.

Shoeing

A good blacksmith is worth his or her weight in gold. Your horse's feet must be neatly trimmed without rough edges. If he is shod, his shoes must be tight and well-fitted. Consult the USEF rulebook for the hoof lengths and weight limits of your horse's division before going to the show. Champions and reserve champions at times are measured for length limits. If a shoe is thrown in the ring, the judge will weigh it to determine if it is within legal limits.

Before entering the ring, always pick the horse's hooves, sand them smooth, and follow up with steel wool and hoof polish for a glossy finishing touch. You may also wish to sand the horse's chestnuts and ergots and polish them to closely match the horse's legs.

A Clean Horse

Always vacuum or bathe (depending on the weather) your horse before a show.

Tack

Your tack should be neat, clean, and in good repair. The ends of the bridle leathers should fit neatly in their keepers and billets must be well-maintained. Ill-fitting saddle pads or blankets detract from the overall appearance of horse and rider. Remember, you want to make a good first impression!



Dress for Success

The exhibitor's appearance counts too. A good fit is of paramount importance. Make sure that your riding pants are long enough when purchasing your show attire. Sit down in them to be sure of proper fit and length. Pant clips can be used to keep jodhpurs in place while riding.

All hats should be worn straight on the head, be neatly shaped, clean, and fit properly. Ladies with long hair should tuck it neatly into a net or roll it into a bun. Ladies may also wish to invest in a good sport bra. Boots should be polished before each class and coordinate with your show attire, usually matching your hat and gloves. Gloves add a finishing touch, but are not mandatory. Excessive jewelry should be avoided: small stud earrings are best. Finally, the contestant number should be

attached between your shoulder blades, clearly visible to the judge, and pinned at the top and bottom.

There are many divisions in a Morgan horse show: check all of the tack and attire requirements in the USEF rulebook. You do not have to spend top dollar on your attire. Many tack stores and consignment shops offer gently used apparel at reasonable prices.

Packing for the Show

You and your horse are well prepared and entered in your first show: now it is time to pack! Organization is key. The best approach is to make a list. You may find that it works well to generate a new list each time you attend a show.

The equipment you pack depends on your choice of division(s). Examples of equipment for riders include bridles, saddles, girths, whips, and saddle pads. For drivers, the list may include cart, harness, whip, spares kit, and lamps. If you arrive at a show and find you have forgotten something, many larger shows have several tack vendors. People stabled near you may also be willing to lend inexpensive items such as tape, manure forks, and safety pins.

List all of the items that you will wear in the show clothes section. For saddle seat riders, this includes tiebars, elastics, jodhpurs, shirts, boots, hats, gloves, and coats. For drivers, this includes an apron or lap robe, hats, and gloves. Remember a rain coat and boots for inclement weather.

A well-dressed horse is a necessity; don't forget to pack his blanket/sheet, cooler, leg wraps, halter, and lead, as well as his grooming equipment and feed. You may wish to measure out each meal he will get and put each one in a bag, including any vitamins or other supplements. This way, a friend may feed for you if you would like to sleep in one morning. Always think ahead!

If you decorate your stalls, pack the chairs, door covers, stall fronts, and a table and tablecloth. Don't forget the staple gun and staples! Also list any other items you may use to decorate such as signs and flowers. Again, organization is key. You may find it helpful to keep containers for small items such as rubber bands, rubber gloves, and safety pins in your tack trunk. Label each container so that you do not have to open each one to find what you need.



Tools are a necessary item at any show, for set-up and possible repairs. A hammer, nails, and screw eyes are all must-haves. You may wish to purchase a stool with storage in the lid from a home improvement store. These are very handy for stall set-up and double as storage for your tools.

Additional lighting often is needed in your tack stall. Two lights, with a 200 watt bulb in each, should provide ample light even after dark. Extension cords should be heavy duty and at least 15-feet long. Plug bars with at least six electrical outlets also are very useful. Don't forget a fan for your tack stall as well as your horse if the weather is hot! If you are able, you may wish to have one of each item on your list available just for show use. This allows you to leave everything in your trailer between shows. Simply go through with your list to see if anything needs to be replaced before attending the next show.

You will find suggested lists on page 14 and 15 that cover all of the items you might need while attending a show.

What to Expect When You Arrive

When arriving at the showgrounds, ask the person at the gate or in the show office where you can find your stall assignments. If arriving at night, call the show office before you depart for the show to get directions for barn and stall assignments. The bedding you ordered on the entry form will be at your stalls or delivered to you as soon as you have notified management that you have arrived. Unload as efficiently as possible and then park in the designated area, as a courtesy to others arriving at the same time.

Inspect your stall before unloading your horse. Check for, and repair, such things as loose boards and protruding nails. Settle your horse into his stall with his bedding, fresh water, and hay to help him relax into his new surroundings, then set up your tack stall.

Check with the show office as soon as possible to pick up your packets and entry numbers. While in the show office, introduce yourself to the officials there and ask any questions you might have. This is also a good time to get acquainted with the locations of the show arena and warm-up rings. Check the show arena for footing, wet spots, and anything that may cause your horse to shy. Any preparation of this sort will help you mentally prepare to make the best presentation in the show arena.

For many, this is a time to "ride your horse in your mind." This mental exercise will help put you at ease because it will make you feel more familiar with your surroundings.



Showing Your Horse

You have spent countless hours preparing for the moment when you enter the ring and give the performance that you have been practicing for mentally and physically. Before showing, try to watch a similar class in the division in which you plan to show.

Listen to the announcer as your class time approaches. It is up to you to arrive in the warm-up ring in plenty of time before your class, but not so early that your horse loses its bloom. You should know your horse well enough by this time to know the amount of time you need to warm up.

From the time you mount your horse until you have finished your class, your horse should be your primary focus. Be aware of his movement, watch his ears, and stay focused on how he is responding to you. Your best presentation will come through this total concentration. You will perform the different gaits as described in the prize list and called for by the announcer.

When your class is called, you will enter the ring going counter-clockwise. Enter with confidence and boldness, as this is your opportunity to give the judge his or her first favorable look at your horse and to make a positive impression. If you are a bold rider, you may wish to go in first if the opportunity presents itself, but remember the presentation of your entrance is more important than the order. Try

to gauge your entrance so you are two or three horse lengths away from the horse in front of you.

You have a limited amount of time to present your horse. To make the best presentation, try to stay away from groups of horses and avoid getting hidden in the crowd. Avoid other riders who are having problems and maintain your form and composure as you move away from hazards. You and your horse should perform each gait with collection and brightness while working and moving forward, riding aggressively and thoughtfully. Always look up and be aware of what is happening around you. Take advantage of opportunities to put your horse in a better spot for the judge to view. If you are in a group of horses and are hidden behind them, look for a way to move out and away by cutting across the ring near the end of the arena, but be sure to not cut directly in front of another horse.

If the class has a lot of entries, get off the rail and out of the crowd so you can be seen. Riding to the inside of the arena will place you directly in front of the judge as you make your passes.

Think before reacting when the judge calls for transitions. You need your horse's attention before you ask for a change in gait. Take time to prepare yourself and your mount for the gait change.

Throughout the class, ride with a goal and purpose. Direct your horse to perform with collection, balance, and precision, whatever the gait or discipline. Your expression is important, but the main thing is to concentrate on your riding. If it is natural to smile, do so. Otherwise, your expression will be strained which will take away from your ride.

The second way of the show ring is performed clockwise in most divisions. After the class has performed all of the gaits, the judge will call for a lineup. By this time, you will know the approximate location of the judge and you may use this opportunity to make one more pleasing pass in front of him or her. Continue to show your horse as you enter the lineup.

Once the show is over, it is time to check out at the show office. You will pay any outstanding bills and pick up any papers that might be needed to leave the grounds. Show managers may require that an exhibitor have release papers from the show office giving permission to remove horses from the showgrounds.

Disassemble your tack room and pack everything so it is ready for the next event. As you are loading your horse and traveling home, reflect on all the memories you just made and get ready to make more. Stay positive and keep that winning attitude!

Resources for More Information

BOOKS:

The Basics of Western Riding

By Charlene Strickland

The Complete Morgan Horse

By Jeanne Mellin Herrick

*Grooming to Win: How to
Groom, Trim, Braid, and
Prepare Your Horse for Show*

By Susan E. Harris

*Riding for Success: Both In
and Out of the Show Ring*

By Gayle Lampe

Riding Show Horses

By Marilyn Carlson Childs

Saddleseat Equitation

By Helen Crabtree

*Trailer Your Horse:
A Visual Guide to Safe
Training and Traveling*

By Cherry Hill,
Richard Klimesh, Photographer

*Training Your Colt to
Ride and Drive*

By Marilyn Carlson Childs

*The United States Pony Club
Manual of Horsemanship:
Basics for Beginners/D Level*

By Susan E. Harris (Editor),
Ruth Ring Harvie (Editor)

*The United States Pony Club
Manual of Horsemanship:
Intermediate Horsemanship
(C Level)*

By Susan E. Harris

Western Practice Lessons

By Charlene Strickland

WEBSITES:

The American Morgan
Horse Association
www.morganhorse.com

U.S. Equestrian Federation
www.usef.org

The United States Pony
Club, Inc.
www.ponyclub.org

Packing List Show Planner – English

LOCATION:

EQUIPMENT

Bridles	
Carriage or Cart	
Girth	
Harness	
Lamps	
Saddle	
Whips	
Spares Kit	
Side Reins & Overcheck	

SHOW CLOTHES

Boots	
Bowtie & Cummerbund	
Chaps	
Day Coats	
Driving Aprons	
Elastics	
Gloves	
Hairnets	
Hats	
Jods	
Muckers	
Shirts	
Studs & Lapel Pins	
Ties & Tie Bar	
Tux Jods	
Umbrella & Raincoat	
Vests	

HORSE

Blanket or Sheet	
Buckets (4)	
Cooler	
Feed & Hay	
Halters & Leads	
Tail Set	

STALL SET-UP

Chairs	
Door Covers	
Stall Fronts	
Staplegun & Staples	
Table & Cover	

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Baby Oil	
Baby Powder	
Bellboots	
Black Spray	
Black Tape	
Bridle Rack	
Brushes	
Carpet	
Clear Hoof Spray	
Clippers	
Crossties	
Curbchains	
Drop Cords	
Fans	
Flashlight	
Fly Spray	
Footstool	
Harness Hook	
Holepunch	
Hoofblack	
Hoofpick	
Hooks & Snaps	
Hose & Nozzle	
Ice Chest	
Latex Bandage	
Lights	
Liniment	
Locks	
Lunge Line	
Manure Basket	
Metal Polish	
Mirror	
Nails	
Pitchfork	

Rubber Gloves	
Rubberbands	
Saddle Rack	
Saddle Soap	
Safety Pins	
Sander	
Sandpaper	
Scissors	
Shampoo	
Shoe Polish	
Shoelaces	
Showsheen	
Splint Boots	
Sponges	
Stall Rug	
Steel Wool	
Sweat Scraper	
Tail Baubles	
Toolbox	
Towels	
Twitch	
Vacuum	
Vaseline	
Water Heater	
WD40	
Wire Brush	

Packing List Show Planner – Western

LOCATION:

EQUIPMENT

Bridles	
Girth	
Breastcollar	
Saddle	
Saddle Pads	
Side Reins	

SHOW CLOTHES

Boots	
Ties & Pins	
Chaps	
Jackets	
Slinkies	
Elastics	
Gloves	
Hairnets	
Hats	
Jods	
Muckers	
Shirts	
Umbrella & Raincoat	
Vests	

HORSE

Blanket or Sheet	
Buckets (4)	
Bustle Covers	
Cooler	
Feed & Hay	
Halters & Leads	
Tail Set	

STALL SET-UP

Chairs	
Door Covers	
Horsehead	
Stall Fronts	
Staplegun & Staples	
Table & Cover	

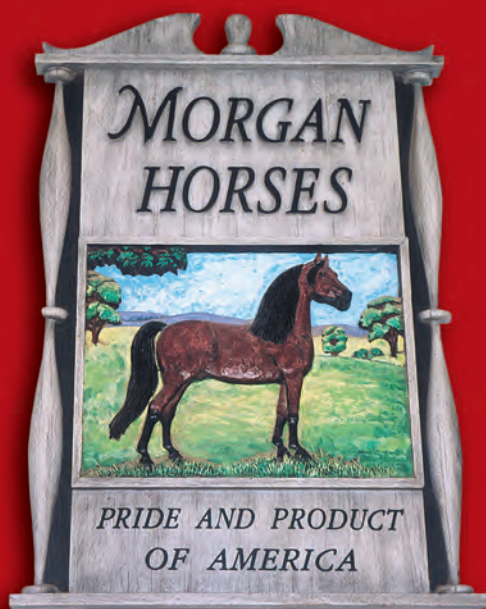
SUPPORT MATERIALS

Baby Oil	
Baby Powder	
Bellboots	
Black Spray	
Black Tape	
Bridle Rack	
Brushes	
Carpet	
Clear Hoof Spray	
Clippers	
Crossties	
Curbchains	
Drop Cords	
Fans	
Flashlight	
Fly Spray	
Footstool	
Harness Hook	
Holepunch	
Hoofblack	
Hoofpick	
Hooks & Snaps	
Hose & Nozzle	
Ice Chest	
Latex Bandage	
Lights	
Liniment	
Locks	
Lunge Line	
Manure Basket	
Metal Polish	
Mirror	
Nails	
Pitchfork	
Rubber Gloves	
Rubberbands	
Saddle Rack	
Saddle Soap	
Safety Pins	
Sander	
Sandpaper	

Scissors	
Shampoo	
Shoe Polish	
Shoelaces	
Showsheen	
Splint Boots	
Sponges	
Stall Rug	
Steel Wool	
Sweat Scraper	
Tail Baubles	
Toolbox	
Towels	
Twitch	
Vacuum	
Vaseline	
Water Heater	
WD40	
Wire Brush	

CAMPING GEAR

Camera	
Carpets	
Drop Cords	
Electrical Plug	
Leveling Boards	
Mounting Block	
Toilet Paper	
Towels	
Water Hose	
Scooter	
Propane	



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