



# Western Horse Show Checklist

A practical list for western riders, parents and trainers: from entries and patterns weeks out to the ride home. Print it, tick it off, keep it in your tack trunk.

Show / Venue: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rider / Horse: \_\_\_\_\_ Classes: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 to 6 Weeks Out

### Entries and Paperwork

- ☐ Read the prize list: classes, age and division rules, equipment and attire rules
- ☐ Confirm membership and eligibility with your association (AQHA, APHA, 4-H or others)
- ☐ Submit entries before the closing date; confirm stalls, shavings and hay
- ☐ Get the patterns for your classes (horsemanship, trail, ranch riding, reining) and read them closely
- ☐ Confirm Coggins, health certificate and vaccination requirements for the venue
- ☐ Book trainer, groom, trailer and lodging; plan your budget

*Tip: Rules differ by association and show. Check the current rulebook for bit, headgear and attire requirements.*

### Horse Fitness and Care

- ☐ Schedule the farrier visit for about 1 to 2 weeks before the show
- ☐ Dental and veterinary check if due; ask your vet about travel and show-day plans
- ☐ Build fitness for the number of classes and patterns you will ride
- ☐ Practice trailer loading and a trial haul if the horse is inexperienced
- ☐ Plan clipping, bridle path and bath schedule

## 1 to 2 Weeks Out

### Practice and Polish

- ☐ Ride your patterns at home in your show tack
- ☐ Practice trail obstacles: gate, bridge, poles, backing and side-passing
- ☐ Practice showmanship: leading, setting up and trotting out for the judge
- ☐ Do a full dress rehearsal in your show outfit at least once
- ☐ Check tack for wear: stitching, latigos, cinch, curb strap, reins and headstall
- ☐ Clean and condition saddle and bridle; confirm saddle and cinch fit

### Rider Outfit

- ☐ Show hat clean and shaped, or approved helmet where the rules allow or require it
- ☐ Show shirt: long-sleeved and neat, as the class and rulebook require
- ☐ Pants or jeans clean, pressed and the right length over your boots
- ☐ Chaps if required or customary for your classes
- ☐ Boots polished, with a proper heel; belt and buckle
- ☐ Gloves if used; hair neatly tied back; back number and holder
- ☐ Backup shirt and pants in case of spills or tears

## Packing List

### Western Tack and Equipment

- ☐ Saddle, show pad or blanket, cinch (and back cinch if used)
- ☐ Headstall or bridle, bit(s), reins, breast collar if used
- ☐ Show halter and lead; showmanship halter and chain if the rules call for them
- ☐ Spare tack pieces: latigo, reins, curb strap, headstall
- ☐ Longe line, longe whip, and schooling equipment you use
- ☐ Cooler, sheet, rain sheet and blankets for the weather; fly mask and fly spray

### Grooming and Show Look

- ☐ Brushes, hoof pick, sponges, towels and sweat scraper
- ☐ Show sheen, mane and tail products, hoof polish or dressing
- ☐ Clippers and spare blades for last-minute touch-ups
- ☐ Banding or braiding supplies if you use them and the rules allow
- ☐ Baby powder or stain remover for last-minute touch-ups
- ☐ Lint roller, steamer or iron, and hangers for your show clothes

### Feed, Stall and Health Kit

- ☐ Hay, grain and supplements pre-measured and labeled per feeding
- ☐ Water buckets, feed tubs, muck fork, wheelbarrow, shavings
- ☐ Equine first-aid kit and contact numbers for vet, farrier and trainer
- ☐ Copies of Coggins, health papers, registration and membership cards
- ☐ Human first-aid kit, sunscreen, water and snacks for you

## Day Before and Show Day

### The Day Before

- ☐ Bathe, clip touch-ups and prepare mane and tail
- ☐ Load the trailer; check hitch, lights, tires and brakes
- ☐ Fuel the truck and confirm route and arrival time
- ☐ Lay out show clothes, hat, boots, number and gloves

### Arrival and Setup

- ☐ Check in at the show office; pick up your back number and confirm your stall
- ☐ Inspect the stall for nails and loose boards before unloading
- ☐ Walk and hand-graze your horse; offer water
- ☐ Walk the grounds, warm-up pen and show arena; find the in-gate
- ☐ Check the posted class schedule and patterns for changes

### Before Your Class

- ☐ Eat, hydrate and use the restroom
- ☐ Dress, tack up and groom; do a final tack check
- ☐ Warm up with enough time to settle your horse, and leave a buffer
- ☐ Review your pattern with your trainer; walk it out if allowed
- ☐ Be at the in-gate early and check in with the ring steward if required

### After Your Class

- ☐ Cool out and walk your horse; offer small sips of water
- ☐ Remove tack, sponge off sweat and cover as needed
- ☐ Check legs and body for heat, swelling or soreness
- ☐ Thank your trainer, helpers and ring crew

## Heading Home

### Pack Out and Back at the Barn

- ☐ Clean the stall as the venue requires; settle fees with the office
- ☐ Pack the trailer carefully and check that nothing is left behind
- ☐ Walk your horse before loading; offer water and hay for the trip
- ☐ Unload and check legs and overall condition; give a light feed
- ☐ Clean tack and wash pads; hang your show clothes
- ☐ Give your horse an easy day; watch for fever, cough or lethargy and call your vet if concerned
- ☐ Write down what went well and what to improve next time

### Show Notes

*This checklist is general guidance. Always follow your show's prize list, your association's rulebook and your veterinarian's advice.*