

# Advice from a Savvy Show Mom

Kathy Keeley has six years of horse showing experience from locals to A Circuit to NCCA Varsity Equestrian Shows. Get your free packing list when you subscribe to our newsletter at [www.ShowMom.com](http://www.ShowMom.com)—a great site packed with tips, information and advice for show parents.

## Horse Show Packing Woes

**H**ow many times have you heard, “Mom, I forgot my boots!” Maybe it’s, “Mom, where is my other sock?” How about, “Have you seen my choker?” or “Mom, I forgot the girth.” My favorite of all time has to be the 6 AM call I actually received from my daughter at our motel, “Mom, I forgot my saddle!” No matter how many times you show or how many lists you create or how many little talks you have about packing, something always seems to get lost, go missing, or be forgotten in the preparation madness to get to the next show.

It’s no wonder that packing for shows with our children turns out to be one of the most stressful parts of horse showing. In a recent survey conducted at [Showmom.com](http://Showmom.com), moms reported that the stress of packing and getting ready for a horse show trumped seven other show stressors by a wide margin.

This fact shouldn’t surprise any of us. We are parents with hectic schedules and busy children. Normal pre-show jitters, combined with pre-trip pressure-packed conversations and management of a long list of necessary items for horse and rider makes one wonder sometimes if horse showing is worth the effort?

This pre-show tension has several sources, according to show moms. A primary one is the child’s last minute “throw it together” or “do it tomorrow” attitude that drives many moms absolutely crazy. Instead of breaking the large task of packing into manageable day-to-day chunks, this type of child puts off doing any daily work and instead runs around senselessly at the last minute trying to get everything together. Without a doubt, this is a sure-fire recipe for leaving something critical at home.

Then, there is the chronically disorganized child, who has put nothing away since the last show. Items needed

for the upcoming show could be anywhere in their room, trunk or car. Of course, this disorganization results in endless searches under the bed, in the clothes hamper and under the seat of the truck or car. How many times have you had to say, “If you’d just put things away when we got home, it would be so much easier to find what we need when we need it.”

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How can experienced show moms survive this packing frenzy? First, you need be the parent. Your child is growing up and on the way to adulthood, so both packing and preparing for a show provide great teachable moments. Children look to parents as role models and emulate their behavior—actions speak louder than words here. Engage them in conversation on topics such as how to improve packing, how to reduce the tension or how to split up the work. Teachable moments provide a great way to demonstrate, discuss, or learn a life lesson.

Second, remember your child is in transition from pre-teen to teen and then from teen to adult, so tension naturally comes with the territory for both parent and child alike. Take the time to re-evaluate at each stage and make sure there is an appropriate level of responsibility as well as consequences, for poor behavior. Children are able to take on increasing levels of responsibility, so it is your job as the parent to ensure that the assignment of responsibility happens in a healthy way and is age-appropriate.

To ease the tension, I suggest moms think about packing tasks as a partnership. In this division of labor, the mom and child can become partners and divide up the work in order to get ready for the show. It was this mindset that helped me step out of the mother-daughter-teen roles. My daughter and I created separate jobs for each of us. Consequently, while she ran around looking for show clothes, I got the food and drinks packed in the cooler and the car packed with my list of items. Then, I got out of the way to let her deal with her own packing as I completed my to-do list.

Third, organize, organize, and organize. Create lists, get plastic bins for those collars, and find a place to put items so they stay organized. Help your child learn about lists and how to get herself organized. You can download a packing list at [www.showmom.com](http://www.showmom.com). Create a schedule of what has to be done four and three days prior to the show. (Remember to get the show coat to the dry cleaner). Vicki Dallas, a show mom with extensive packing experience, took the problem to heart and has designed a great set of luggage just for the show family—totes for Mom and garment and boot/helmet bags for riders. Check out [www.ippos.com](http://www.ippos.com) for these great time savers.

Finally, keep in mind that “this, too shall pass.” Horse showing is a great sport and there are many quality moments with your children over a long weekend. You may feel like a pack mule who walks on eggshells and writes lots of checks, but in the end there are those moments when it all comes together and makes it all worthwhile. And, good humor always helps.

So, since I have just gotten the call that my daughter forgot her show pad, I am off to the tack store to buy yet another. Here’s to the Savvy ShowMoms who always keep their checkbooks at hand!

The advertisement features a central graphic of a brown horse running, with the IPPOS logo in blue script below it. To the left, the word 'IPPOS' is written vertically in large, light blue, sans-serif letters. The collection includes:

- apparel tote**: A brown and black bag with gold IPPOS lettering.
- barn duffle**: A large, dark-colored duffel bag with gold IPPOS lettering.
- show duffle**: A large, brown and black duffel bag with gold IPPOS lettering.
- day tote**: A black bag with a red front panel and gold IPPOS lettering.

Other items shown include a blue jacket hanging on a hanger, a black boot bag, and a brown boot bag. A small inset image shows a rider on a horse in an arena.

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