

Kelly Turner's Eventing Essentials

This month local event rider and BHS AI Kelly Turner from Mill Hill brings us 10 top tips for the Show Jumping phase from riding the first fence to going affiliated.

Top 10 Show Jumping Tips

Kelly is based in London and provides friendly, professional tuition for all levels in show jumping, dressage and eventing. Individual or group lessons available. Call 07914 327868. Visit her new website at www.kellyturnerequestrian.co.uk



NEXT TIME Kelly's top Dressage Tips!

ON THE DAY OF THE SHOW ARRIVE IN GOOD TIME

Walk the course carefully planning the route you intend to ride. Try to give yourself plenty of time for warming up, especially if you are on your own, as you will have to use the jumps as other people set them. Do not over jump and try to work to the same routine at every show so you and your horse are both relaxed and confident before you enter the ring.

PROBLEMS AT THE FIRST AND LAST FENCES ARE ALMOST ALWAYS RIDER ERROR

The horse doesn't know he is jumping, so it is up to you to ride positively to the first fence to let the horse know that there is a jump coming. Don't ride to the last like you have already finished; ride as though there is another fence to jump.

BEING THE FASTEST DOES NOT GUARANTEE A WIN

A clear round will always beat 4 faults. Particularly indoors, the shortest route is usually the quickest. For example, with a vertical leading to a tight turn back, approach slowly to allow for a more balanced, tighter and therefore quicker turn on landing.

MOVING UP A LEVEL

Become established at a height before moving up a level, but be prepared to move back down if problems occur. If your horse can jump 1m comfortably at home, it does not mean you will find a 1m course at a show as easy.

UNAFFILIATED VS AFFILIATED JUMPING

People think that affiliated jumping is just for the elite, however, this is not true. Once you feel established at 80cm – 90cm at unaffiliated level, the next step would be to try an affiliated class, which you can enter on a day ticket. You will find the courses built to a set standard to encourage horses and riders. You are given correct distances to suit and they encourage positive riding and confidence building.

WHEN THINGS DON'T GO SMOOTHLY AT SHOWS

Investing in help and advice through training at home with an experienced person, or while hiring a course, will be invaluable for you and your horse to improve your performance.

ALWAYS JUMP ONE OR TWO HOLES HIGHER AT HOME THAN YOU ARE PLANNING TO JUMP AT A SHOW

The course will always ride that bit bigger at a show, so if you have done your preparation at home, including doubles and trebles/combinations and related distances, you and your horse will feel more confident and ready.

THE ESSENCE OF GOOD SHOW JUMPING IS FOR YOU AND YOUR HORSE TO HAVE AN EXTREMELY SMOOTH ROUND

For this you need to be able to establish a rhythm which is not too fast or too slow but with a balanced powerful canter to allow your horse to lengthen and shorten its stride whilst maintaining the same rhythm. For instance, an upright/verticle will be better jumped from a more collected stride, whilst a big wide oxer will require a more forward stride.

THE JUMP IS THE JOB OF THE HORSE, PRESENTING IT TO THE JUMP IS THE JOB OF THE RIDER

During the last 3 strides to a fence, there is absolutely nothing you can do to improve the jump. Fiddling at this stage will only make things more uncomfortable for both you and your horse. In these last 3 strides all the rider has to do is to keep an even contact to the horse's mouth with the legs on so the horse feels secure. This is not always easy with a horse that wants to rush his fences; this type of horse can be helped by cantering towards a small fence and then 4 strides or more from the fence circling away if the horse starts to rush, then continue and jump it again. If it still rushes next time circle once more; continue this until the horse stops anticipating and relaxes.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND ENJOY

You have to ride positively and believe in yourself and your horse, but most of all enjoy yourself and have fun!



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