

## **Professional tips for Videotaping your horse**

Adapted from an article by [Doreen Shumpert](#) from RIDE with [Bob Avila](#).

### **Choose the right equipment:**

The number one rule: Use a tripod – it will give you a steady, consistent picture. Put the camera/tripod on a hill or in the back of a pickup so you are shooting down on your subject. That will make the horse look cleaner and flatter.

Use a digital camera (in a wide-screen setting), which will give you the best results.

Practice your zoom so that it is slow and unnoticeable. Keep approximately 80 percent of the horse or horse and rider in the viewfinder of your camera.

Avoid wide angle and super telephoto, they both cause distortion of the picture. Take some “test shots” to see where your camera has the least amount of distortion.

### **Keep it short.**

Show enough action in the first 3 minutes to get the attention of a potential buyer. If they like what they see at first, they will watch the rest.

**For example** with a Western Pleasure horse you should get the walk, jog and lope, BOTH WAYS in the first 2 minutes. Add any additional things like lead changes and horsemanship or showmanship maneuvers. Do Not start your video by jogging one way for 2 minutes.

Keep your total finished time to 10 minutes or under. That will provide plenty of time to include conformation shots and the results of additional training.

You will lose your prospective buyer if you don't impress them from the start.

### **Remember your objective – To impress a buyer and make them want you horse.**

### **Plan your presentation.**

Prepare your horse like you would to show. Clean the horse, longe, work and tune up so the horse can be the best it can be.

**Have a photo script in mind.** Keep to the point with your video.

If you are marketing a trail horse, show your horse going over obstacles. Video your pleasure horse at all gaits, both directions. Show transitions, leads and departures.

If you are selling a performance horse, begin your video with the events your horse is being marketed for.

### **Examples:**

**Western Pleasure** – Walk 10 to 15 seconds, jog and lope 15 to 30 seconds in each direction.

Then add any additional things like lead changes and horsemanship or showmanship maneuvers in the next minute or so. Most horsemanship patterns take less than a minute.

**Reining** – Try to start with stops or spins, then do circles. A Reining pattern takes about 3 minutes, so you can plan with the number of stops, spins and circles required in a pattern. Don't lope circles for 3 minute before doing he more exciting things.

**DO NOT Train on your horse during the video shoot** or edit it out. Show the results of your training, don't just show a training session.

Don't do it from the grandstands. Be in the arena to show the judge's point of view. Pretend you are shooting movie scenes because that's exactly what you're doing.

### **Pay attention to details.**

Make sure your horse is well groomed – like spit and polished groomed.

Present your show horse or show prospect in SHOW TACK, NOT training gear, work saddles and work pads.

The horse handler should dress neatly. Wear show clothes, if it is a show horse or prospect. For trail riding horses and others on-camera, they just need to be aware that tank tops, t-shirts, sweatshirts and the like will detract from the overall picture. They should dress nearly and appropriately for the horse's line of work.

### **Include conformation shots.**

Show some conformation shots. Have someone stand him square, and start by shooting a strong front view. Be at least 35 feet away from your horse with a low camera angle. When you view your horse through the finder, a good angle for this front . shot is when the distance between the near front leg and the off hind leg appears to be about 6 inches. Do not wide angle this shot – it would elongate the horse's head and make him appear light in the rear end. Use a medium telephoto setting and shoot for about 10 seconds. Have an assistant get the horse's ears up, but don't get the assistant in the shot. Next, move to the profile shot. Do not shoot a straight profile. Keep a low angle, and move slightly to the rear of the horse around the flank area. Shoot for another 10 seconds or so. That should do it for the conformation shots.

### **Pay attention to lighting.**

Choose the time of day for maximum lighting conditions. From 8 am. To 10:30 am. Is good. The sun is low and will light your horse up well with a minimum of shadows Keep the sun at your back. Afternoon from 4 pm. To 7 pm are also good. Avoid shooting when the sun is highest, if possible. Overcast days offer very good lighting by providing a softer, more natural color. If you are shooting in an indoor arena that is open (or has sunscreens) your best video will be obtained at night. Video a small segment, including the entire arena, and play back to check quality and make necessary adjustments.

### **Pay attention to the background.**

Manure piles, haystacks and other unsuitable backgrounds will be magnified and may not be the overall picture you wish to present.

Usually, it is better to film at home, where you and the horse are at ease. But if you don't have a suitable background, it would be better to haul somewhere familiar to you and your horse to film.

When in a round pen, stand in the center with your camera on a tripod.

### **Don't zoom in and out too much.**

This is a mistake in the details that many people make. Avoid zooming at all if you can.

### **Hire a professional.**

Any job worth doing it worth doing right. If you are not satisfied with your end product, either do it over or hire a pro to do it the way you visualize it. **If your video does not satisfy you, you can bet it won't satisfy your potential buyer.**

If you hire a professional cameraman, remember that most of them are not horsemen. You will have to direct the filming and the action, including the camera angles that you want.