



GUIDE TO SHOWING

FOR WEEKEND CUTTERS

Table of Contents

3 - Getting Started

Rules, Judges Card, Show Calendar, Budget and Goal Prep

4 - Tack and Bits

Trailer and Equipment, Tack/Tack Safety, Fitting Your Saddle, Bits

5 - Show Tips

Arriving at the Show, Horse Presentation, Paperwork, Organizing Help

6 - Show Tips Continued

Cows, Loping

7 - Checklist for Weekend Showing

Getting Started...

- Have a firm grasp of all NCHA rules.



[NCHA Rule Book](#)



- *Study your judges card.* Keep track of your scores. Photograph your judges card and store in a folder in your phone so you can see things you are consistently getting penalized for and things you are getting rewarded for.



[Watch Morgan Cromer Explain The judge's Card](#)



Be Strategic...

- *Plan out the year ahead.* Get a calendar and mark the shows you plan on attending. Estimate your monthly costs to feed, maintain and show your horse. Directly across you will see links to the NCHA weekend show calendar and the new circuit called the Challenger Series. The NCHA launched the new format to give weekend cutters a fun and affordable entryway to the sport. For more information about the series click the Challenger series calendar link in the red side section.
- *Set your goals* - this is part of being strategic. If you actually set some goals and write them down with a plan above for getting there, statistics shows you are at least 50-80% more likely to achieve those goals.



[Video on setting goals](#)

[Goal Setting Worksheet](#)



*Plan out
your shows*



[NCHA Weekend Show Calendar](#)



[NCHA Challenger Series](#)

[American Cutting Horse Association Show Calendar](#)

[World Cutting Horse Association Calendar](#)

Trailer and Equipment

Ready to head to a show? Make one last check through your trailer for bits, saddle, pad, chaps, wraps, a cooler sheet if needed, and water bucket. Make sure you have your hat and long sleeved shirt, you can't show without them. Finally do a safety check on your trailer, hookup, tires, your horse and how it's tied up in the trailer, etc.



[Click through to our Trailer and Equipment Checklist PDF](#)



Budgeting

➤ Once you've set your goals and marked out what shows you'd like to do for the year, plan your budget to make sure you can pay for the year without having to cancel any shows etc. It's always a good idea to have a contingency account for any unexpected expenses which generally always occur.



CHTO has created a unique budget tool for cutting that allows you to easily record all expenses and add any winnings so you know exactly where you are at.



[Click HERE to access the CHTO budget planner.](#)

Tack and Bits...

➤ Always do a *safety check on your tack* such as cinches and latigos. Make this a habit.



[Watch Dennis Moreland Explain Tack Safety](#)



➤ *Do you have the right tack?* Does your saddle fit you properly? Are your stirrups the right length? Why have you chosen to use that bit? You may have been cutting for a while, but these are often things we can overlook.

For example, many people ride in too small a saddle and with their stirrups too long and don't know it. There is a lot that goes into fitting a saddle which can make all the difference in how you ride and perform in the arena.



[Watch Master Saddler Calvin Allen share his advice on how to fit a saddle.](#)





[Click HERE to get a recommended list of expert saddlers, tack and bit makers.](#)



[Watch Ronnie Rice explain the bits he uses and why](#)



[Todd Bergun dispels myths about bits](#)



[Dennis Moreland gives tips about bits and spurs](#)



Before Heading To A Show...

- ▶ **Tune your horse on the flag.** Flags are indispensable in cutting. It's always good to give your horse a final work on the flag. If your horse has been out in the pasture, obviously you need to do this at least a week before you head to a show. Every cutter needs to have a flag. There are a handful of companies that offer a range of flags at a range of prices, you can even get some second hand. If the budget is extremely tight, they are actually very simple to make and cost less than \$50! We know we've done it ourselves and have included instructions here.



[Click Here to get your Guide To Making Your Own Flag](#)



At The Show

▶ Know when you are showing. Contact the show secretary by calling or text to get the order of events and ask when your class may start to help reduce waiting times. Remember this is always an estimation so add an extra hour in case things change to give you a buffer, even professionals have been caught out and missed their events.

▶ When you arrive at the show, check to see what class is showing, find the entry table and get signed up. If you miss the draw for your first class you will have to be added last.

▶ If your horse is on medication, always check dosages with your vet and confirm if you are required to submit a medication report to the NCHA.

[Click HERE for the form.](#)

[Click HERE for the NCHA Medication Policy](#)

Get Coached!



Everyone needs a coach. No matter who you are, or what level you are at, everyone needs a coach. Imagine being at a show and having your own personal videos with advice and skills given to you by your own coach? CHTO has created Get Coached where you simply send us a video of you showing or working a horse and we'll get a top trainer of your choice to personally coach you on it!



Get personally coached now no matter where you live [by clicking here.](#)

- Make sure *your horse is presentable*. The more professional you look, the more eye appeal you will have and judges will think you know what you are doing. When horses are stabled in winter and exposed to artificial light, it helps to keep hair growth to a minimum. (Make sure you blanket your horse at night)



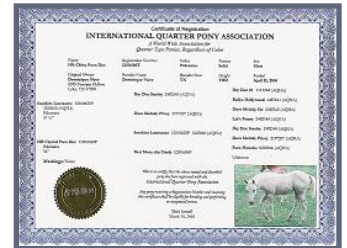
[Watch Lauren Crouch demonstrate how to maintain a beautiful tail](#)



Show Tips...

- When away from home, always *water your horse* with your own water bucket to stop spreading disease.

- Always *carry a copy of your horse's coggins and registration papers* to give the show secretary. If you are crossing state lines to go to a show, check with the show secretary to see if you also need health papers from your vet in that state.



- *Take a photo of all horse papers* and health papers so if the hard copy ever gets lost or torn, you still have a digital copy with you.

- *Organize your help*. Don't wait to the last minute for whoever is on a horse to turn back for you. Get organized, don't be afraid to ask trainers or others to help you. You will be better mentally prepared to show this way.

- Get someone to *video your run* or watch/purchase your video from the videographer at the show. Watch it over and over again, and compare it to your judges card until you understand why you scored as you did and what you could have done to improve the situation. Ask a trainer to watch it and what you could improve. Send your video to [CHTO for a Get Coached!](#) critique by a top trainer of your choice.



► *Lope your horse thoroughly.* Know exactly how much loping your horse needs. Listen to your trainer if you have one and follow through on its loping program. This will bring more consistency to your showing.



[Watch Miranda Westfall demonstrate how to lope your horse](#)



[Click here to download a PDF on Loping Tips](#)

[Click here to download PDF on Loping Etiquette](#)

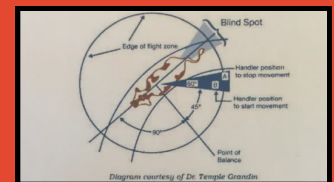
► Be mindful of *loping etiquette*. Walk your horse on the inside of the loping pen and lope on the outside. Don't cut someone off when you are changing pace and moving from inside to out and vice versa.

Cows...

► Watch your own cattle. This is a great way to step up and take more responsibility for your results. Don't always rely on others to watch the cattle for you. Your understanding of cows will rise exponentially. You need to watch the cattle being settled every chance you get. Watch these two excellent videos to get a better understanding of what to look for.



[Watch Jonathan Rogers and Steve Oehlhof Explain How to Pick a Good Cow in the Herd](#)



[Watch Gabe Reynolds Explains Cattle Handling](#)



[Watch Gabe Reynolds and Cullen Chartier's Video on Identifying and Remembering Cows](#)



After The Show...

- *Warm your horses down* adequately after showing to reduce soreness - *at least 15 minutes of walking.*
- *Go get your judges card and study it* for the next time you show. CHTO has a great guide to help you read your judge's card.



[Click Here to grab a copy.](#)

- Though definitely not mandatory, giving your helpers \$5 or \$10 each at a weekend show is an appreciated courtesy. These guys don't expect it but they certainly appreciate it. Rule of thumb, the bigger the show, the bigger the bill. Most often, a heartfelt thank you goes a long way!



Show Tips Continued...

- If you've drawn early in the class and don't have anyone to lope your horse for you, ask someone you know that is good at watching cattle to watch them for you. Your trainer is probably the best choice or someone you've hired to help. Get with them before you go in to see what they say, but just remember, *when you are in the herd, your job is to "feel" the cows* and cut what wants to be cut. No one really knows what a cow is going to really do in front of a horse until they start to cut it.
- *Watch the rest of your herd.* After you show, keep watching how the cows you studied ended up cutting. It will hone your cows skills and build your confidence in your cow selection to see what each cow did. *Watch the class before yours to get to know the cattle.* This a great habit to develop.

By watching the cows in the herd before yours, you will have a much better idea of what they are like, and which ones you should choose. For example, are the colored cows more responsive than the others, are they steers or heifers? Remember, steers can be duller than heifers and need to be cut more assertively.

- *Don't forget our showing checklist on the following page. Print it out or take a photo of it and use it each time you attend a show!*

Good Luck!

Checklist for Weekend Showing:

- Have a firm grasp of NCHA Rules
- Study your Judge's cards
- Write down your cutting goals
- Plan the next 12 months for shows
- Estimate costs/budget
- Work your horse in the week before each show
- Safety check on tack
- Ensure your horse is presentable
- Equipment and trailer check
- Ensure you have Coggins, and registration papers (and health papers if necessary)
- Know when you are showing
- Watch the class before yours to know the cattle
- Organize your help well in advance
- Organize someone to video your run (or purchase it)
- Lope your horse thoroughly
- Watch your own cattle
- Warm your horse down adequately
- Watch the rest of your herd

Good Luck!

