

De-Stressing Dressage

Do

- Look the part – first impressions count so make sure your horse is clean and plaited, your tack and boots are clean and long hair is in a hairnet.
- Practice your test – make sure you have had a run through of your test so you know which bits might be the most difficult for you and your horse. You can then focus on improving this with your schooling at home before the show.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the show – dressage is stressful enough, don't make it worse by rushing!
- Remember to be polite – a smile and good morning/afternoon to the judge before and a thank you after your test will go a long way.
- Use a caller if you are nervous – It's better to have one and not need it, than need one and not have it.
- Ride a good centre line – remember, as you trot down the centre line the judge can only see you head on. Therefore straightness and forwardness is key for a good mark even if your outline isn't the roundest.
- Show a difference between a circle and going large around the arena – use your corners when going large and think of circles as diamonds. Eg a 20m circle at A is ridden to 4 points – A,K,X and F
- Try and make your test flow – the best marks are awarded to forwards, flowing tests that look symmetrical – dressage is a subjective sport so we need to make it look nice.



Don't

- Try to school your horse in the warm up – if you can't get something at home you won't get it at a show and you will end up frustrated – this is why we practice. The warm up is the time to get your horse on your aids and obedient ready for the test so don't over complicate it.
- Worry if you make a mistake – marks are awarded per movement so even if you get a low mark for one movement you can get a better mark for the next one provided you remain calm.
- Forget to show off your horse – confidence is key! If you present your horse well this will be reflected in the marks.

Most importantly **DO** remember to have fun! You have spent a lot of time and effort training your horse so make sure you enjoy it!