

Ride at Home

Advice to build your perfect arena.

By Sharon Biggs

Many horse owners dream of owning a home riding facility. Lucky you—your dream has come true. You have the barn, your horses are happily settled, and now you're eyeing that bare patch of ground and envisioning your dream riding arena. Many home riders make do with a sectioned off piece of ground near the barn that they affectionately call their arena. But this homespun effort is really an arena in name only. Without a good base and proper footing, it's difficult to make the going consistent enough for your horse's health and safety. If you want a safe, workable arena that will hold you in good stead for years, it's going to take planning, effort and, it must be said, an investment of resources.

Robert Malmgren, author of *The Equine Arena Handbook: Developing a User-Friendly Facility*, is considered the foremost authority on arenas. He says creating an arena on your own is very hard if not impossible because you need several players to help you avoid pitfalls.

"Making an arena seems like a lot of complications, but you'll avoid mistakes if you plan right and employ the right people," explains Malmgren, who is from Colorado Springs, Colo. "Mistakes are very costly to correct after the arena is installed."

****For the full article, pick up the September 2007 issue of HORSE ILLUSTRATED.****

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