

Man Advice for Horsewomen

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It has come to my attention that horsewomen, as a group, have a rough time with men.

Either the men in their lives simply don't understand the importance of the whole horse thing or they fully comprehend the situation and decide to rebel. They turn into control freaks and try to dictate just how much time can be spent at the barn. Or they try to dampen their sweetie's enthusiasm for equines by uttering not-so-subliminal messages like, "Gee, that's a long way to the ground. I bet it'd really hurt if you fell off. You might even break something. Have you considered taking up knitting instead?"

I consider myself fortunate that I have a husband who has resigned himself to the fact that a major part of my life's energy is devoted to horses. But trust me. Before I met Ron I had to wade through a bog of guys who resented my horses. Yet even though Ron will willingly muck a stall, mend a fence and stack hay bales, there are moments when I know what he's thinking. "How come I fell in love with a horsewoman? Couldn't Cindy have been infatuated with koi?"

Because I've spent a couple of decades happily married to a non-horseman, I believe I am qualified to offer advice to horsewomen who are suffering the trials and tribulations of searching for a man who won't become jealous of a 1,000-pound herbivore. Here are a few of my suggestions.

5 Easy Tips on How to Brainwash... I Mean Train... A Non-Horsey Man

1. Being tired often translates into being more receptive of bad news. It's much like working a green horse in a round pen. Once they've burned off their excess energy, they're much less likely to throw a hissy fit when you tighten the cinch. Therefore, before you confront your man with some uncomfortable horse-related news, like the bill for last month's horse show, encourage him to indulge in some brisk physical exercise.
2. At some point in your life you gained the confidence and trust of a shy or sullen horse by first offering it a treat or a carrot. Yummy food breaks down all sorts of barriers. So when you really need your man to agree to that new saddle, first cook him a great dinner. A big ol' glass of wine helps, too.
3. Be super supportive of any sport or hobby your man enjoys, whether it's golf, fishing, team sports or stamp collecting. Then tactfully remark just how wonderful it is that you each have a special activity that adds joy to your lives. Try to ignore any comeback remarks from him like, "Yeah, but my special activity doesn't include a living creature that's eating up half my paycheck."
4. Your man will be less defensive if he thinks he can contribute something to the horsey affair other than a credit card. So get him down to the barn. Encourage him to partake of some menial task, like brushing your horse. Regardless of how awkwardly he executes this most basic grooming skill, tell him what a wonderful job he's done. Gush over how your horse gleams. Tell him he could get a part-time job grooming on the show circuit. Feed his ego until he gloats. (Just don't let him see that you re-groom your horse properly once he's walked around the corner).
5. Use the tried and true tactic of compare and contrast. Out of the blue make statements like, "I feel so bad for Tammy. Her boyfriend won't let her go on weekend trail rides because he thinks she should be with him. I'm so lucky I have someone like you who isn't so possessive."

See? There are ways of dealing with non-horsey men. It might take a while, but with a lot of patience and consistency, men—much like BLM mustangs and off the track Thoroughbreds—can be trained!

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