

English Elegance

With these English attire tips, you'll be dressed for success the next time you show your horse.

While horsemanship outfits are full of glitz, the only thing that really shines in an English class is your riding.

From [The American Quarter Horse Journal](#), with contributions from Kristin Syverson



English apparel is not as flashy as the rhinestones and sequins you might see in western pleasure or showmanship classes. The look is elegant and refined, but it doesn't have to be boring.

AQHA rules leave quite a bit to the imagination, so Cherylee's English Tack & Apparel helps us point out some helpful tips to make your English dress a success.

Hunt Coat

- Sleeves should be able to bend at the elbow.
- The coat length shouldn't be so long that you sit on the tail in the saddle.
- The correct sleeve length should be measured with your elbow bent, just like it is when you ride.
- Colors: stick to navy, browns or gray. Wear a lighter color for outdoor/summer events.
- Hunt coats come in a lot of different fabrics and designs. Stick to what feels comfortable. It's OK to try something a little different with patterns, like a subtle windowpane, but just remember this is a traditional event. Conservative is the name of the game.

Shirt

- Shirt colors do not always have to be white, but think basic. Just make sure it's not an iridescent color.
- Give your white shirt a little pizzazz by selecting one with an interesting pattern or texture. Some even have fun extra touches like colored trim inside the cuffs and collar.
- Shirts can have piped collars.

- The final touch to the shirt should be a monogram on the front of the collar. Monograms can range quite a bit in detail. Within reason, monograms are a fun way to personalize your look.

Boots

- Boots should be field boots, not dress boots. Field boots have laces.
- When you buy new boots, buy them about an inch too tall, because they settle.
- Boots should fit snugly around your legs so they do not slouch down.
- Young children show in short paddock boots, jodhpurs and garter straps. Though the age varies, it is traditional in the hunter-jumper world for children 12 and under to wear jodhpurs, and for 13 and over to wear tall boots.
- Garter straps go just below the knee and should match the boot color: brown with brown and black with black.

Pants

- English pant styles vary a little. Find something that you're comfortable in, but remember, colors should always be tan or khaki.
- Side-zip breeches are a popular style and tend to be the most flattering.

Details

- You need to wear black gloves.
- Makeup should be a finished look within reason. Make sure it is age-appropriate.
- Jewelry should be moderate. Keep earrings subtle, like these [horse shoe earrings from Quarter Horse Outfitters](#). Dangling jewelry of any kind is not only distracting, but poses a serious safety risk.
- Hair should be tucked under the helmet and well-groomed. You don't want fly-aways.
- In over-fences classes, all youth are required and all amateurs are recommended to wear an ASTM/SEI-approved helmet.
- Don't forget a belt.