The Budget Equestrian Presents

DIY PROJECTS FOR YOUR TACK ROOM

DIY Projects For Your Tack Room by Lisa Goodwin

www.BudgetEquestrian.com

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Ok, now that the boring legal stuff is out of the way, how about we go build some stuff for your tack room? Yeah? All right!

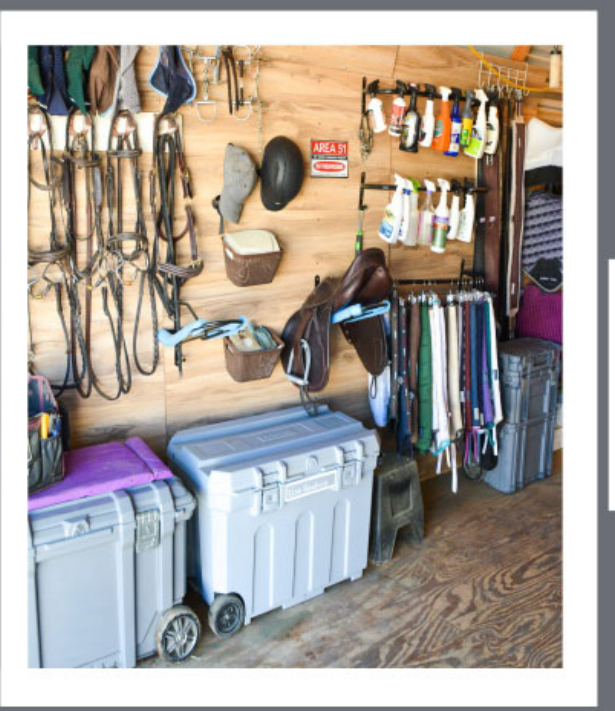
This book is dedicated to all equestrians who challenge themselves to make their own equipment. Be proud of what you create, and take pride in knowing that yes, you can do it yourself.

~ Lisa Goodwin

The Budget Equestrian

DIY PROJECTS FOR YOUR TACK ROOM





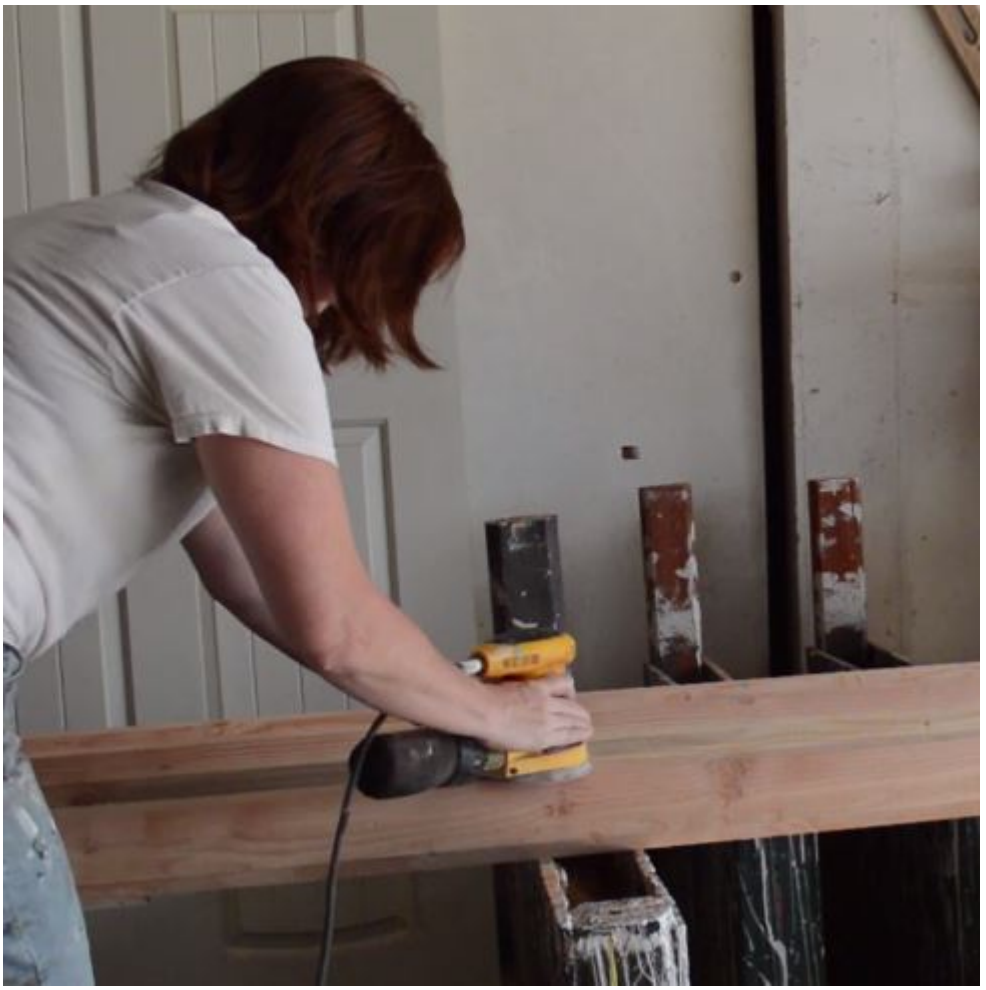


Lisa Goodwin

About This Book

Thanks for choosing to buy this book! You have taken the first step toward creating some unique and custom pieces of furniture for your tack room. I will show you how easy it is for you to make your own tack room furniture, instead of settling for something that is almost, but not quite what you want.

I love getting on the internet and searching through photos of beautiful tack rooms. There are people who have crafted Pinterest boards dedicated to tack rooms. And instead of searching for pretty pictures of tack rooms, I wanted to figure out how to make my tack room incredible.



I have been a diy type person almost as long as I have been a horse lover. I am a creative type, and I love to come up with ideas if items I can use for my horses. I also am always searching for new tack room ideas to make my tack room organized, functional and nice.

One of the main reasons I started to create my own tack room furniture was to finish off my unfinished tack room. It was just a rectangle room that I didn't really know how to use. For the first year after I had my barn, the attached tack room was more of a catch all than a useful space.



And once I started using the tack room as a tack room, I made a few mistakes of how to use the space effectively. I thought it would be nice to have saddle stands for my saddles. And they were, but they take up a lot of room. I got a bunch of hooks to use to hang up bridles, halter and blankets, but they were hung all over with no purpose, and were just there.

I had furniture that we weren't using anymore, and I wanted to see if I could make use of it in my tack room. It was helpful, but not practical.

Before I started making my own furniture, I thought about buying bridle racks and saddle racks that were already completed, but these were expensive. And they weren't exactly what I wanted.



I had come to the realization not only did I need to have different types of furniture that was purposely crafted for my tack room but needed to help keep my growing tack collection stay organized, and easily accessible. So, as I was coming up with different projects like saddle rack, bridle racks, and grooming totes I began to think about if others had these same challenges. I made a few videos, and then a few more for my YouTube channel. And the diy videos took off like crazy! This was pretty much the answer I needed to let me know that yes, there were other people like me, who wanted to diy projects for their own tack rooms.

And that is how this idea of a book began. I started making different projects, and once I tweaked the ideas enough to make a video, I started writing down the steps of how to do it. And then I did the project again, until it was perfect, and simple to make. A friend of mine who has horses was happy about this, because she ended up getting a lot of tack room furniture once I had made enough for myself, and I wanted to share my creations.

I also am obsessed with looking at houses for sale online. And when I find a horse property with a spectacular barn, and tack room, I want to move! And then I look at my tack room and come to my senses and just get busy making my tack room everything it can be. That is a lot easier than moving, right?

In my quest of crafting the perfect barn and tack room, I have come up with a lot of different ideas that I thought might be useful to others. I took my ideas and put them into this book. Some projects can be completed in an a few hours while others may take several days. But all the projects are fairly simple, and even if you are not a gifted carpenter, you can still make these projects. I did a lot of these projects when I couldn't ride because of weather, or season. My idea was to make the most of my down time and be productive instead of just sitting in my house binge watching Netflix.



And while some of the projects are geared more towards horse owners who have their horses at home, there are projects for those of you who are boarding your horses, and don't really have an option of making improvements to a barn. But, if you talk to the property owner and ask if you can make a few projects to improve their barn, maybe they would give you a discount on your board in exchange for some barn projects. You never know unless you ask. Or you could tell them about this book!

Learning a new skill is always challenging. If you own or ride horses, I am sure you can relate. Deciding to build your own tack room furniture is no different. In the beginning, it can be frustrating. But with practice and patience, you will be able to make some beautiful pieces for your tack room. The best thing about these projects is anyone can do them. Even if you have never used a power tool before, you can make these projects.

Each chapter of this book is a different project. I also tell you what you will need to make each project, including the tools you will need. If you make every project in this book (like I have) you will have a beautiful tack room that is organized, and a joy to have instead of a mess of stuff.



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Chapter 1

Your Needs

A good way to getting started with this book is to go into your tack room and make an inventory of what you need. If you are starting from scratch, sketch out your walls, and think about how to make the most of your space. You will need bridle or halter hooks, and probably also a saddle stand or rack. How about your grooming tools? Do you want to make your own grooming tote? And how will you store all your equipment to make the most of the space you have.



Make an inventory of the items you have, the items you want, and the items you want to change.

To make the most of your tack room, draw a floor plan diagram to figure out how you are using the space currently, and then draw out what you could do. This will give you an idea of what you want to make the most of your tack room. If you don't like to draw, you could snap a few pictures with your cell phone, or with your camera.



Then it is time to plan.

The equipment you will need to make the most of the space you have. Do you have furniture you are not using that you can repurpose for use in your tack room? Things like an old TV cabinet can be repurposed to a tack locker. An old shelving unit can be organized to hold blankets, grooming totes and first aid kits.

And think about how you are going to hang things on the walls. If you have metal walls, you will need to determine if you are going to hang wood to give yourself more surface area for attaching wall hanging furniture.

By having a plan ahead of time, you will save yourself countless hours when you are riding. Come up with a plan, and then list out what you want to make. Making lists and checking them off is so gratifying!

After you have come up with your list, now you need to determine what are the pieces you will repurpose, what you will make yourself, and what you will buy. This will help you to balance out your wish list with your budget. It will also help you to plan the purchases you will need to make to either make the items yourself, or to buy them. It is important to make wise decisions when planning your tack room. Not only will it save you money, but it will make the most use of your space, which will help you to make the most of your riding time with your horse.

When you are coming up with your plan, keep suitability in mind. It is a waste of money to 'trade-up' when you could have just saved the money and purchased what you really needed in the first place. This also holds true for building your tack room furniture. If you make what you want the first time, instead of something merely to get you buy, you will save time as well as money.



This also applies to the tools you will need to make all the projects that are in this book. Some of the tools can be find used for less money, and some tools should be purchased new, if possible. Below is a list of the tools I use on a regular basis in my garage and around my barn.

- 18 volt drills (both plug in and rechargeable)
- Impact driver
- Orbital sander
- Jigsaw
- Circular saw
- Air compressor with nailer
- Radial arm saw
- Table saw
- Miter saw

- Dremmel
- Paint brushes (yes, I consider these to be tools)
- Clamps
- Sewing machine
- Cricut machine
- Drill bits
- Toolboxes or shelving units to hold your tools

If you can afford these tools, it will make creating these projects much easier. You can add pieces to your collection as you go and increase the tools as you can afford to.



Chapter 2
Grooming Tote

I have always wanted a wooden grooming tote. I don't know why, but there is just something classic about a wooden grooming box. I have looked into purchasing one, but I just can't commit to spending over $100.00 for something I know I could make myself.

And after years of thinking about it, I finally did it. And now I am going to show you how you too can make your own wooden grooming tote.



The best part of making your own grooming tote is, the materials will only cost you around $36.00 total. Which will give you enough material for 2 grooming totes. So you can make 2, sell one, or give the extra one as a gift, or have one for every day, and one for show. It is really up to you. But I think the best part of this project is every time you look at your grooming tote, you will know that YOU made it. And the feeling it gives is priceless.

Materials List

To make a wooden grooming tote, this are the materials you will need:

- 2 1”x6”x8’ pine boards ($12.00)
- ¾” wooden dowel (at least 24” long, they are sold in 4’ pieces ($6.00)
- Your choice of stain, or polyurethane ($5.00)
- Finishing nails (or air compressor with nail gun) ($3.00)
- 180 grit sandpaper ($5.00)
- Wood glue ($5.00)

And you will also need tools, and these are not included in the cost of the materials. If you don’t have the tools, you can find them relatively inexpensively online, or when they are on sale. When you buy the tools, this is where a lot of money will be invested, but it is a one-time investment (usually). So spend what you can afford, and take care of your tools so they will last a very long time.

Tool List

- Jigsaw
- Orbital sander
- 18 volt drill
- Circular saw (I have my radial arm saw, which I got for free from my parents, best saw ever! I have found them on craigslist for about $75.00!)
- Hammer
- Measuring tape
- Sharpie marker
- Paintbrushes
- Paint or stain
- ¾” spade drill bit (I only had a ½” one, so I made do with that, and used my jigsaw to cut the hole bigger.)
- Hammer
- Air compressor with nail gun (not a necessity, but it will make this project MUCH easier)

Ok, so now you know what you will need, let’s build a grooming tote.

First you will be cutting the wood. You will need the following cut pieces:

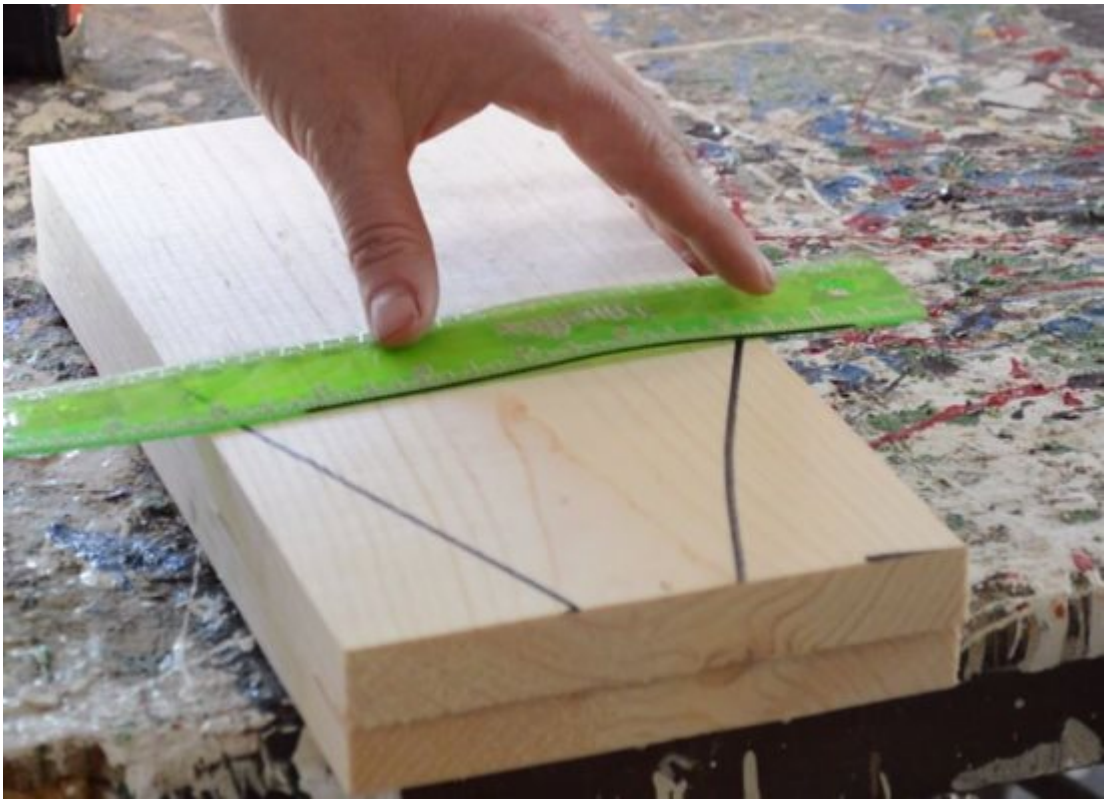
2 12” pieces of 1 x 6 wood

1 22” piece of 1 x 6 wood

2 23 ½” pieces of 1 x 6 wood

Wooden dowel cut to 24”

After you have cut the pieces, then you will take the 2 12” pieces of wood, and you will be cutting corners off one side. I used a ruler to get a straight line. You will be basically cutting of triangles. Use the jigsaw to cut these. The pine is very easy to cut with the jigsaw. That is unless you are cutting through a knot. And then it will be much more difficult, so try to not have to cut through a knot.



Then use this piece of wood as a pattern for the second piece of 12” wood, so you will get identical pieces. These will be the end pieces of your grooming tote.



Now, find the center of the top, this is where you will be drilling the hole for the wooden dowel to pass through. Keep it centered (or close to it) so you have the strength of the wood, otherwise the dowel can crack the wood, and you will have to start over.

If you don't have a ¾" spade bit, you can use a ½" bit, and then trace around the hole with the dowel and you can cut out the excess wood with your jigsaw…..CAREFULLY!!! You want to cut a little bit, and then see if the dowel will fit through the hole. Only do a little bit at a time, because you want it to be snug.

Once you have these two pieces completed, and your dowel fits snugly, now you will sand all of the wood.



Now you will begin to assemble the pieces together. This is the fun part! Put the wooden dowel through your two sides, and then take the 22” piece of wood (this is the bottom of your tote) and place the two sides with the dowel on top of the bottom 22” piece to make sure it fits. Then take a little bit of wood glue and put it on either end of the bottom board. Just use a little bit of glue, because you don’t want it spewing out on either end, otherwise the stain won’t stick to it, and it won’t look perfect.

Carefully make sure all your sides measure up and are fitting well. Then you can use finishing nails, or if you have a nail gun (much easier) and nail the boards together.

Once you have done this, now you will add the front and back sides to your tote. Do one side at a time, and again, add a little bit of glue along the sides and of the boards where the front piece will go on. Use your finishing nails, or nail gun and attach the front side, and then repeat this for the back side.

You can also check your dowel to make sure it is coming through either end of the sides, and if it isn’t use your hammer to get it even, or cut off the excess dowel with your jigsaw. And to keep the dowel secure, place a nail through the top, so it goes down through the center of the dowel.



Give the tote a final sanding, and blow off or wipe of any dust, and then your tote is ready to for staining or painting.

If you are staining the tote, you may want to add a finishing coat of polyurethane to make it even sturdier and allow the stain job to last.



Or, you can opt for painting your tote. I first stained mine, and then decided I wanted to paint it. I used Heritage chalk paint in cobblestone. I love grey. All shades of grey to be honest. So this paint is perfect for me.



This chalk paint is easy to use, very forgiving, and lasts. This brand of chalk paint is very affordable and comes in lots of colors and I'm sure you could find one that you love to work with your barn colors.

Then if you want you can add embellishments to your tote to personalize it. You could add an engraved name plate, a customized name plate (like a small stall plate) or just paint your name on it.

You can make this as fancy or simple as you like, you're the boss, so make it what you want it to be.

Easy and Affordable Grooming Tote

Or fast forward a year or two and I have found an even easier option for those who want a wooden grooming tote, but don't have the equipment or the skills to make one.



This came about because I am on a streak of lots of homemade items and diy projects to keep me busy while I can't ride or work with my own horses. And I have to stay busy, seriously. I can only watch so much TV or study for a certain amount of time before my brain turns to mush.

Road Trip

So I asked my husband if he would be willing to go to IKEA with me. Ok, I basically begged him because I don't feel comfortable driving yet after surgery and even though we are lucky enough to have an IKEA within driving distance, it is still an hour's drive away from us. And we had to go to town anyway for my 2 week post-op appointment, so this was the perfect time to check out IKEA.

And I have never been in this store. I can see it from my work office, but even though I have always wanted to go, I have never gotten there, until this day.



And let me just say, this store is amazing. If you have an IKEA in your town and you like doing little DIY decorating projects, this place is incredible. It's so incredible that what was supposed to be a very cheap shopping trip ended up costing a lot more. We found a new sofa, so our $10.00 trip ended up costing about $1000.00. But, we have an awesome new sofa to lounge out on.

Cheap Is Always Good

While walking through the enormous store, I found this incredible little wooden tote. And that was no easy task. This Skogsta wooden box with a handle is basically a wood grooming tote, for $10.00! That is less than what it cost me to buy the wood to make the original grooming tote that I had made. And not only was it cheaper, but the time I saved was substantial. After I brought my treasure home, it took me about 10 minutes to put it together.

And then another 10 minutes to attach my little name plate because I am not talented with tiny screws.

IKEA does not sell this tote online. You can find it online, for about $45.00 plus shipping, but if you have a store close to you it is worth it to just go to the store and buy it. Hmmmm…. maybe this is something I could do, be the middle man, and sell the totes with some customization for around $25.00? This might be a

great little business opportunity. If you are always thinking of different ways to make an extra dollar, you're welcome for the idea I just gave you.



The tote isn't huge, but it is a good size to hold your grooming items. The finished size is 15 ¾x7 ¾x9 " And here are some photos to show you what you can get into the tote.

So if you have had your heart set on having a wooden grooming tote, but didn't want to spend close to $100.00 for a premade one, or invest the time to make it yourself, why not go to IKEA and buy this one? If you are going to go, here is the specifics of what this little tote is called:

SKOGSTA Box with handle, acacia; $9.99, Article Number: 402.979.66. I did find it on Walmart.com, and also on Amazon, but it was more expensive. Amazon was the cheapest at $39.00 with free shipping.

You could leave the tote as it is, or you can add some little extras to make the tote truly yours.

You can build and personalize this box in an afternoon, and then you will have a fantastic wooden tote to keep your most special grooming items in!



So whichever way you decide to go, you can make an affordable wooden grooming tote for yourself in a weekend. And if you are looking for something you could make to sell, to support your horse habit, this grooming tote might be a fantastic idea for you!

Chapter 3
Homemade Shedding Tool

Every year we as horse enthusiasts become excited when we start brushing our horses, and we begin to see little hairs that are releasing themselves from their coats. Just when we think the winter will never be over, and the glorious days of summer are too far off to even dream about, something magical happens. Our horses begin to shed! And the tools are getting better and better to help with this, but I am going to show you how you can DIY an incredible shedding tool for about $0.83!

It is a bittersweet happiness for me, because it gives me hope that the summer will soon return, and I picture myself outside for hours with my horses. But when they get fully into shedding mode and I am spitting horse hair out of my mouth, I am wishing for the shedding to be done in a hurry!

In the past I have used the typical shedding that you can buy for around $6.00. But it can be cumbersome to use, and honestly, I just don't like it. Then I found some new types of shedding tools you can buy online. And yes, they are nice, but they are expensive. The Groom Ninja is $24.00 for the horse size one. And there is the Sleek EZ for $20.00, but I am not crazy about the design of them, so I decided to make my own.



And the best part about making my own shedding blocks (as I like to call them) is how inexpensive they are! I could make several different sized blocks for about

$0.83. And I got a little creative, and wanted them to be pretty, so I painted them. There is just something happy about brightly colored brushes and grooming equipment!

Materials List

- 1” x 1” x 8’ lumber (I used pine)
- 10” hack saw blade (I used 24 teeth per inch blades for mine)
- Wood glue, or any craft adhesive
- Mod Podge Sealer
- Acrylic paints (optional)
- sandpaper
- Tools You Will need:
- Hand Saw
- Skill saw
- Wood clamp
- Tin Snips
- Orbital sander

What You Will Do

First you will need to cut the hack saw blade to the approximate size you want it to be. I wanted mine to be about 6” long, so I would be able to cover a wide section of my horse, but not too big where I could lose control over the blade. So about 7” was perfect for me.



After you have cut your blade, now you will cut the 1”x 1” lumber to the size you want it to be. For my shedding block, I wanted to there to be a gap of about 1” on either side of my blade, so I measured my block to be about 8” long. This works perfect for me to hold in my hand, cover a lot of my horse in one swoop, and still be easy enough to handle. I prefer the 1” x 1” lumber because it fits easy in your hand. But you can use whatever wood you would like, I just found this was perfect for my needs.



After you have cut the 1” lumber to the size you want it to be, now you will sand it smooth. All sides, and every part of the wood should be smooth. To make it even easier to hold once completed, round all of the edges. This makes it really nice to work with.

Now that your wood is nice and smooth, you will need to cut the groove where you will be placing the hack saw blade.

You want to have the blade be in the middle of the block of wood.

Secure the wood block to a surface so you can use your saw to cut into the wood. BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN USING THE SAW! You do not want to cut yourself while you are sawing the groove for your hacksaw blade!!!

Once the wood is secured, then taking your hand saw (even a hacksaw to begin) and slowly begin to work on the groove. It will take a little bit of patience, and a lot of slow sawing, but it will work, I promise!



When you have a good groove, insert the hacksaw blade to see how much it is coming out. You want the blade to be about ¼" outside of the block of wood. You can have it out a little bit more if you like. I chose to keep mine barely out, so I will not get too aggressive while I am using it!

Once your groove has been cut, and you are happy with the depth of the blade, remove the excess saw dust from your sanding. You could even go over it with your sander one more time.

Now that you are done sanding, you can paint or stain the block. I like to paint the block before inserting the blade, because then I don't have to be careful about getting paint onto the blade. Go ahead and paint, or stain your wood block, or leave it plain if that is what you want to do.



After the paint has dried, take your blade, and on the smooth part, this is the side you will be inserting into the block of wood. You will want the serrated blade part to be exposed. On both sides of the saw blade, close to the smooth side put adhesive all along both sides. I used a construction adhesive which works great, and dries fast. When it is dry it also dries clear, bonus!

Insert the glue sides into the groove. You will probably end up with excess glue coming out, this is ok. You just wipe off the excess glue, and it should seal the edges between the wood and the blade. After you have wiped off the excess glue, allow to dry for at least 24 hours.

I will warn you it will be difficulty to stop at this point, because you are so close to being done! But just think of the waiting time as an important step, and don't skimp!

To finish off your horse shedding tool, you will want to seal all sides of the wood with mod podge. Mod-podge comes in different sheen's, like matte, satin and high gloss. I like the high gloss in this instance because the hair and dirt that accumulate can be wiped right off.

After you have put on several coats of mod-podge, allow to dry 24 hours, and then your shedding block will be ready for use!

I have made several of these shedding blocks, mainly because they are simple to make, and it is nice to have several different sizes to use on my horses. They also make a thoughtful and unique gift for your horse loving friends or would make a fantastic prize at a horse show, or riding club auction. And each time, they looked better, and better.

Like I have said before, I love grey, and I really love heritage chalk paint. So I made this very shedding tool simply for the purpose of making one for the photos in this chapter of the book.

The chalk paint works perfectly for this project because of the texture of the paint. It makes it easy to grip the groomer, and it just looks fantastic.

And you may be wondering how this little shedding tool compares to the retail versions. And I can tell you it works great! When Frisby starts letting go of his long winter hair, this is the first tool I go for.

I think it works just as good on the body for removing extra hair as the more expensive retail versions do. I really do like the Strip Hair Gentle Groomer during shedding season. But that tool costs around $40.00. You can make this one for less than a dollar.

If this is your first attempt at a horse craft, and you aren't quite satisfied with your results, keep working at it. You will get better, and your end results will be incredible. And if you are a visual learner, I made a video of the entire process on my YouTube channel, The Budget Equestrian. I have over 500 videos all related to horses, I am sure you will find something you can make!

Chapter 4
Sheepskin Rubbing Mitt

So now that we have made a grooming tote, and a shedding tool, how about making another grooming tool that you can use every day on your horse?



To make a sheepskin rubbing mitt is easy and requires only basic sewing skills. I am not a seamstress. In fact, the sewing machine we have belongs to my husband.

But a sheepskin rubbing mitt is a fantastic piece of grooming equipment to add to your grooming tools. You can make several of them from one piece of sheepskin. You can also attach a strip of webbing to the back of the sheepskin to keep it in place on your hand to use like a curry comb.

Sheepskin is one of the best tools I have found to add additional shine to your horse and is better than a plain rub rag.

But finding the actual sheepskin can be challenging. But thankfully the internet is a great place to find sheepskin.

I found mine on eBay, but you can also search on Amazon and find remnants or pieces of sheepskin for around $12.50 for a pound. And if you have Amazon Prime, you can get it shipped fast and for free!



It can be hit or miss on the scrap pieces you will get. But every time I have ordered sheepskin scraps, I have been lucky enough to get at least two decent size pieces that I can turn into a grooming mitt.



Once you have your sheepskin, all you have to do is cut it, and stitch it together. Pretty easy right?



To make this mitt, find two pieces of sheepskin that you can matchup and you will be able to fit your hand into. You can trace around your hand onto a piece of paper for your pattern if you want to get fancy, or you can draw on the sheepskin itself, it's up to you.



If you are a talented seamstress, you can use a sewing machine. But I am not a talented seamstress, so I prefer to hand sew the mitt. It does take a little longer to sew it by hand, but it works just as well as sewing it with a machine.

Be sure NOT to sew the bottom of the mitt, otherwise you have nowhere to place your hand!

Make sure you have done a pretty good job stitching the two pieces together so it will really keep it's mitt shape when you are using it on your horse.

And if you want you can add a cuff around the bottom, but I found just creating the mitt worked well enough for me.

And then with the scrap pieces, I use them for cleaning my saddle, bridles and basically anything else leather.

Caring For Your Sheepskin Mitt

And you can wash your sheepskin mitt in your washing machine. If you want it to last longer, use the special sheepskin detergent that you can buy online. It's called Melp, and you can find it on Amazon, or Dover's Saddlery.

Wash the mitt on the gentle cycle, in cold water. And then I would advise you to hang it to dry or place it outside in a shady area. Once it's dry, put it back in your grooming kit until you need it again.

Chapter 5
Horse Boot Hanger

There is just something magical about opening up the door to the tack room and seeing every item in its place. And even though I would like to say that is how it is every time I walk into mine, it isn't. I always start out organized, but then things happen, I get busy, too many projects to do, and before I know it, my tack room looks more like a teenager's bedroom.



I am not the most organized person. I have no problem admitting that. I really do try to keep things neat and tidy, but life has a tendency to happen, and the tack room (and feed room) becomes messy and cluttered. After about a week or so of not being able to find a pair of boots, or gloves, or a brush I take some extra time to put things back the way they should be put away every day.

One way I have figured out to at least make one thing organized is to make a wall hanger to put my horses' leg boots on. It keeps the boots organized, and within my reach when I need them, and also makes it a lot easier to 'hang them up' when I am done using them. I was tired of searching for boots and having them lying

around. So I just went through my garage, and craft room and found things that I could make.

A long time ago, I decided I was going to make these and personalize them for my horses'. This way I know where Ethan's boots go, and I know where Frisby's boots go, and I am one step closer to keeping my tack room organized!

If you would like to make your own horse boot hanger all you really need to do is look around and see what you have. As you can guess, I do a lot of crafts, and wood projects, so everything that I used to create these hangers were things that I had lying around. But if you don't, I have added some links for where you can get these things. And just so you know, I do not have any affiliate links here (I'm not that cool….yet), these are just things that I have, and they work great, which is why I am linking to them.

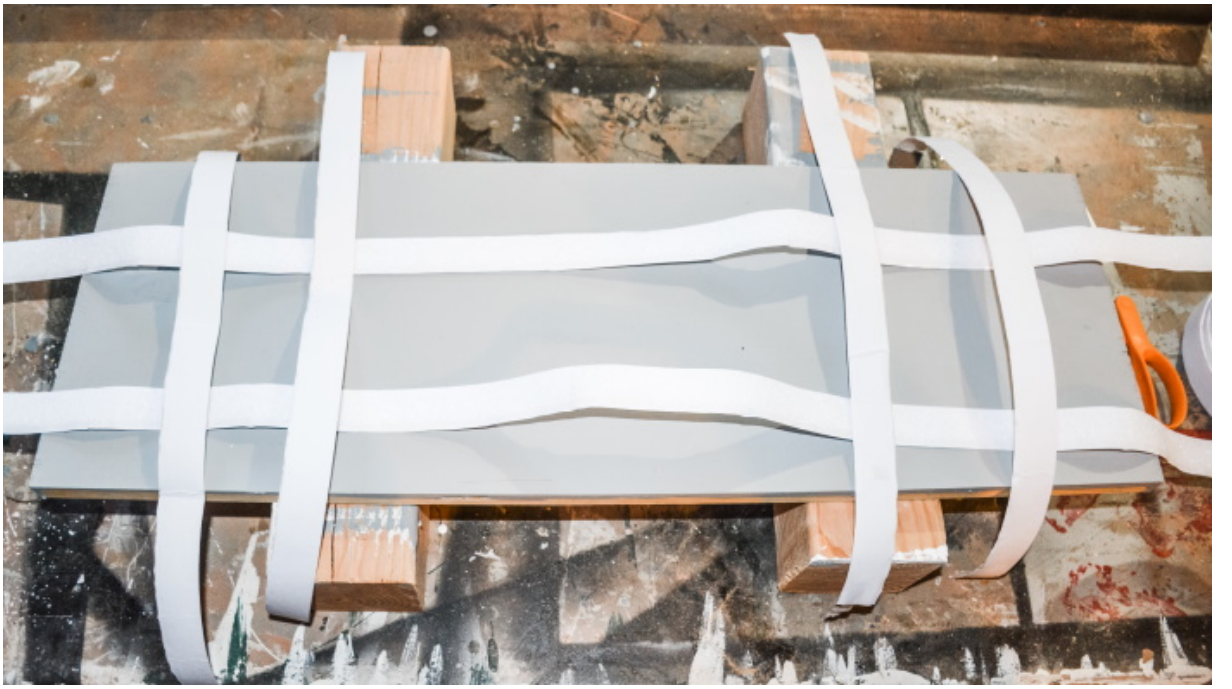
Materials List

- 1 piece of wood (length is determined by what you want)
- 1" wide self-stick hook and loop Velcro
- E6000 Glue
- Paint
- Sandpaper
- Letters for the name (I used my cricut machine to make the letters)
- Mod Podge
- Screws for hanging

(1)

What You Will Do

Sand the wood and paint it in our choice of color and allow to dry. Once it is dry, take a fine grit sandpaper, I used 120 grit, and sand the painted wood to give it a distressed look. You can do this by sanding some of the corners, and the wood grain, so the natural wood color shows through.



Now separate the Velcro and attach the sticky side down to the length of the wood. The self-sticking Velcro is great, but it will not stay stuck to the wood when you are repeatedly pulling boots off.

So to make the Velcro stay in place permanently, place a few drop of E6000 craft glue onto the back of the Velcro.



The E6000 glue is super strong and will help keep your Velcro intact on the board.

Like I said before, I have several versions of these horse boot hangers. Mainly because the first time I made it, I didn't fully understand how much space I would need to hang up horse boots.



Once the Velcro is attached, if you are personalizing the boot hanger, you should do this now.

You can put the personalization on however you like, but I chose to keep the names in the center.



I used a cricut machine to cut the letters out of bright card stock, and the letters are 1 ¾" tall. I positioned them first, and then covered the wood above the Velcro with Mod Podge. Then I set the letters and recoated the top section again with another coat of Mod Podge to seal it.

I have made several different versions of this boot hanger. And just like I am always saying, you can make this any way that you like, that will suit your needs.



For the latest version I made, I added some cup hooks to the bottom of the board to be able to hang up the boots that I have that don't have Velcro closures.



And keep in mind, you can make your horse boot hanger as big as you need it to be. For a long time, I put my horse boots into a dollar store bin that I made. But I find it is actually easier to make this boot hanger to hang up the boots that have Velcro. It keep the pairs together, and helps to keep my tack room even more organized.

And this type of hanger isn't just for horse boots. Think about your riding gloves too. If you are anything like me, you probably have about a dozen pair of riding gloves. Mainly because I lose one of the pair all the time. I am still searching for my Rockel gloves. I wore them once, and I have no idea where I took them off!



But you can easily hang up your Velcro backed riding gloves on a wall hanger such as this one to make sure you can always find your riding gloves. You just have to remember to hang them up when your done using them, instead of sticking them in your pockets, or into your grooming tote!

Or, if you would rather go the really affordable route, you can get some bins from the dollar store.



I got these bins at the dollar store, and then made some little plaques to hang on the front. They are really helpful for storing lots of smaller items that you want to keep somewhat organized.



If you don’t have a lot of money, or a lot of space, these bins can help out a lot.

Chapter 6
Wall Mounted Saddle Rack

In this book, I have a chapter showing you how to make a fancy saddle stand, which is really nice and I love it. However, I do not have a lot of space in my tack room, so I wanted to make the most of the space that I do have. So to make the most of this space, I decided I wanted to have a wall mounted saddle rack. This wall mounted saddle rack is a variation of my portable saddle rack that I made. It allows me to set 3 saddles on the rack, and only takes up about 24” of space in my tack room! This is a huge improvement over the saddle stands that I had, which were taking up a large portion of my tack room.

It was very easy to make this saddle rack. I used wood that was left over from other projects, some astro-turf carpeting, and some stain that I already had. The only thing I had to buy were the screw eyes and the rope hooks. If you are thinking of making one of these racks for yourself, when you go to the hardware store, go to the rope section, that is where they have the rope hooks. These are what I used to make the "hangers". And the rope hooks come in 2 different styles. You can get the U shaped hook ($4.50 each) or you can get the angled hooks. These are only $2.10 each, and they work just as good as the U shaped hooks.

Materials List

- 2 x 4 x 8 lumber
- 4” wide cedar fence picket
- Landscaping timbers cut down to 24”
- Screw eyes ½” diameter
- Rope hooks
- 3” Decking screws
- Carpet or heavy fleece remnants
- Stain or paint for your 2 x 4
- Staples
- Sand paper
- Wall anchors

Tools List

- Radial arm saw
- 18 volt drill

- Orbital sander
- Paint brushes

First you will cut the 2 x 4 down to the size you want it to be. I cut mine to 6 foot long. This will really be determined by how tall you are, and how high you want to reach up to grab a saddle.

Then cut your landscaping timbers to 24" long. This is the length I made mine, because if I have a western saddle, or a larger seat English saddle I want to have the timber be long enough to be supportive to the saddle.

Attach the cedar picket to the back of your 2x4. This will give a little added strength AND will prevent the screw eyes from going through your 2 x 4, so you won't have a sharp point protruding through the back of the 2x4. I used my husband's brad nailer to attach the fence picket.

Once all your wood is cut, then measure where you want the saddles to sit. I measured mine at 2ft, 4ft, and almost 6ft. Mark it off, and then drill a hole about ½ way through the 2x4. This is where you will put the screw eyes. Attach the screw eyes into the 2x4. I used a larger screw eye that I had to make it easier to get each screw eye into the wood, it was too difficult to turn them by hand.

Taking your drill and now drill through the 2x4 in the top, bottom, and a few holes throughout the length of the 2x4. This is where you will be attaching the wood to the wall in your tack room.

Now sand the 2x4 so that it is smooth. Be sure to get close to the screw eyes, to make sure you get any little splinters of wood that may have occurred when you were drilling the holes and inserting the screw eyes. You want to make sure it is sanded very well, so there are no rough edges on the 2x4 that could potentially snag or damage your saddles once you start using the saddle rack.

Now that your wall portion is completed, it is time to build the saddle racks themselves. Take your scrap carpeting, or artificial turf, and measure off so that the landscaping timber will be completely covered with the carpeting. Then grab your staple gun, and start stapling the carpeting to each landscaping timber. I did this like I was wrapping a Christmas present. I wanted the end that would be visible to be covered, so I covered that as well. I cut the carpeting, so it was easier to attach.



Once all the carpet is attached, and you are happy with how your saddle racks look, now is when you will attach the rope hooks to each saddle rack. Put the saddle rack up against the 2x4, and put the rope hook through the screw eye. You do this to help you determine where to attach the rope hook to the saddle rack (landscaping timber). Once you are happy with where you will attach the hook all that is left to do is to attach the hook with the 3" decking nails. When you are attaching the hook, make sure to have the seam of the carpeting on the bottom, so the seam will not be showing.

Do this to all your saddle racks

Now you have pretty much finished your saddle rack. All that is left to do is to paint or stain the 2x4. I chose to stain mine with a dark poly-stain. I allowed it to dry in between coats, and I applied 3 coats of stain. Once the stain is dry, and you are happy with how it looks, it is now ready to hang in your tack room.



If you are attaching the rack to a wall that does not have supports that you can drill into, grab your drill and some wall anchors when attaching it to the wall. This will keep your saddle rack on the wall, and it won't pull its way out and be wobbly.

You could also personalize the saddle rack with names, or whatever you like, if you wanted to.

All that's left to do is attach the saddle racks themselves and hang up your saddles!

Chapter 7
Portable Saddle Rack

You can do the same thing with the saddle racks if you would like to have a portable saddle rack. All you will need to do is attach a screw eye to whatever it is that you want to have a saddle rack close by, like your hitching post, or on a wall where you tack up.



It is nice to have a portable saddle rack because you can remove it when it is not in use, or hang it flat, so it is out of the way.

I made a separate one that I use when I am tacking up to ride at my hitching post, so I can move my saddle from the tack room to the hitching post. And I have to tell you, I use it all the time. This is probably one of the most useful pieces of tack room furniture I have ever made.

But if you have only made 2 or 3 of these, you could just bring the rack with you when you bring out your saddle.

Materials List

- Landscaping timber cut down to 24”
- Screw eyes ½” diameter
- Rope hooks
- Carpet or heavy fleece remnants
- Staples
- Sand paper
- Glue
- 3” Decking screws

Tools List

- Radial arm saw
- 18 volt drill
- Orbital sander
- Stapler

Take your scrap carpeting, or artificial turf, and measure off so that the landscaping timber will be completely covered with the carpeting.

If you want to make sure the carpeting, or astro turf stays in place permanently, you can add a little bit of glue to the back of it. Then grab your staple gun and start stapling the carpeting to each landscaping timber. I did this like I was wrapping a Christmas present. I wanted the end that would be visible to be covered, so I covered that as well. I cut the carpeting so it was easier to attach.

Once all of the carpet is attached, and you are happy with how your saddle racks look, now is when you will attach the rope hooks to each saddle rack.



When you are happy with where you will attach the hook all that is left to do is to attach the hook with the 3” decking nails. When you are attaching the hook, make sure to have the seam of the carpeting on the bottom, so the seam will not be showing.

Do this to all of the racks that you are making.

I have gotten so much use out of this portable saddle rack. I use it every time I tack up my horse to ride. And having it be portable, and easy to move makes it super easy to remember to use. I usually get my tack out before I grab my horse to tack him up, and I always grab this first.

One thing to keep in mind, if you are using this portable saddle rack while you are tacking up, once you use it, reverse the saddle rack, so that it points down. Safety first!

Chapter 8
Hanging Saddle Pad Rack

Equestrians seem to have numerous saddle pads. There are so many pretty colors, and pads for special use, and we seem to accumulate a lot of saddle pads. But being able to quickly access all of these pads can be difficult, especially if you have multiple pads for multiple horses. And there are many different ways to hang up saddle pads.

I know, I have tried many of them!

But this hanging saddle pad rack is really handy to have, because it allows air to circulate underneath the pads while they are on the rack. And I like to use this rack to place my saddle pads on after I have ridden.



Not only does it allow the saddle pad to dry out from the ride, but it also helps me to stay organized. When my saddle pads are hanging on this rack, I know I have used them. And I can look to see how dirty they are, and if they need to be brought in to be washed.

And once they are clean, I hang them on hangers just like you would your clothes.

But we are talking about building the hanging saddle pad rack first, so let's build it!

This hanging saddle pad rack was fairly simply to build, and the total cost to make this was about $18.00, not too bad for a custom made wall rack to hold at least 5 saddle pads. Which is a lot cheaper than buying one. I found a 5 pad saddle rack online, ready made, for $106.00. No thanks, I will build my own.

The rack I made is for English saddle pads, but if you wanted to hold heavier and longer western saddle pads, you can, you will just need to make the 2 x 2's longer to accommodate the longer pad, and may want to add some extra support to hold the extra weight of the heavier western pads.

Materials List:

- 1" x 4" x 48" long piece of wood
- 2" x 2" x 24" long pieces of wood (I have used 5 pieces on this rack)
- 3" decking screws
- Liquid nails construction adhesive
- Spray paint, paint or stain
- Sand paper

Tools list:

- 18 volt drill
- Radial arm saw, or jigsaw
- Orbital sander
- Paint brushes

To begin, cut all of the wood pieces the length you need them to be. For example, my 1x4" wood is 3ft long. And the 2x2 lumber I used is 2ft long.

Next, sand all of the wood until it is really smooth. The smoother it is, the better your finished product will be, and the smooth wood will prevent your saddle pads from picking up splinters, or snagging.

Once the wood is cut and sanded, measure on the 1 x 4 how far apart you want your saddle pads to set. I measured mine about 10". This allows me to stack multiple pads, but you could put the rungs closer together if you only want to put one pad on each rung.

After you have measured off where you will put the rungs for the pads, drill holes in the center of your markings. Also pre-drill, or start the screws in the center of each 2x2, it makes it easier to connect the rungs to the backing board.

Now you will want to secure the 1 x 4 to your table, so when you attach the 2x2 it will be stable. This is really important once you get to about the third rung, it gets a little top heavy!



After you have all of the rungs attached, allow them to dry, and then put in an extra screw into the back of each rung. This will make it stronger. Go slow so your wood does not split, otherwise you will have to start all over.

Once all of the rungs are attached to the back board, now you will paint or stain the entire piece.

The first time I made this rack, I used spray paint to paint it. Using spray paint is simple, and fast, however for the one I made for this example, I used the heritage chalk paint in cobblestone. Not only does the grey look awesome, but the finish of the paint helps to seal the wood and make it smooth. This way I'm not snagging my saddle pads on the rough wood.



Once the saddle pad rack has completely dried, you can hang it up. If you are going to be storing a lot of pads on this rack, you may want to add wall anchors to be sure it will stand up to heavy use.

This is a very simple and inexpensive saddle pad rack you can make yourself to customize your tack room and keep your saddle pads dry and organized while looking fantastic.



This saddle pad wall rack takes up minimal space and provides a lot of storage for a lot of saddle pads. Or you can use it like I do, and reserve it for the used pads.

You can always personalize it or add additional hooks for even more storage if you need to.

Easy Saddle Pad Hanger

And I also wanted to include the other saddle pad hanger that I mentioned in the beginning of this article.



If you don't have the capability to make the wooden saddle pad hanger, but still want to hang your saddle pads for easy access, this is a great option.

All you need is a pre-made blanket bar, and a bunch of skirt hangers.

You simply hang the blanket bar on a wall, and then put each saddle pad on one of the skirt hangers.



I found the blanket bar at Dover's for around $10.00 and the skirt hangers are from Amazon. I got a pack of 10 for $14.00. If you have a lot of saddle pads, this could get a little expensive! But, it is a very nice option for a large collection of saddle pads. And much better than just having them stacked up.



It makes it easier to find just the pad you are wanting for your ride without disrupting a huge stack of saddle pads!

And this can be done with wester pads too, just be sure to hang the blanket bar high enough so the pads are up off the ground.

Chapter 9
Horse Name Stall Plaque



There is just something special about seeing your horse in his stall with a dedicated sign letting everyone know e a stall plate with your horse's name is really easy, and fun. You can make 6 or 7 stall signs from 1 piece of wood, so you could make multiple signs for about $10.00 total!

Materials List:

- 1 piece of wood (I used 1 x 3" pine)
- Stain
- Paint
- Sandpaper
- Mod Podge
- Paint brushes
- Letters for name

Tools List:

- Jig saw
- 18 volt drill with 1/8” drill bit
- Orbital sander

Every horse should have a name plate, wouldn’t you agree? And since they are so simple to make, you could make these for all of the horses in your stable. If you are just getting started with diy projects, stall signs are a very simple way to start. But I must warn you, once you get started, it is very difficult to stop doing diy projects for your tack room!

Ok, enough of the talk, let’s make a stall sign for your horse!

First you will take the piece of lumber and determine how long you want your stall sign to be. I made mine about 13” long. Just measure off 13” and cut the wood. If your horse has a long name, you can cut the plaque longer.

After the wood has been cut, then using the drill with a super tiny drill bit, drill holes on the upper corners through the wood. This is where you will attach the stall sign and by predrilling the holes you will prevent the wood from splitting when you hang it. Then sand the wood until smooth, the front, back and all sides.

Then you can stain the wood. Once the stain has dried, paint all sides of the sign and allow to dry.

After all sides are painted, put a new piece of sand paper on your sander. Gently sand the painted surface until you start to see the stained wood show through. This is what gives the sign a distressed, or older appearance.

Then all that’s left to do is create the lettering for your sign. I use my Cricut machine and cut the letters out of cardstock. There are different cartridges you can buy with fancy fonts, or you can just use simple ones if you prefer. My personal favorites are lyrical letters, and everyday fonts. You can usually find the Cricut cartridges on eBay for around $10.00 complete. I have an older Cricut machine that cost about $125.00 from eBay, and it has paid for itself with all of the signs and personalization’s I have been able to create with it.

Just to give you an example, at one time I created stall plates to sell on eBay for $10.00. So once I had sold just 15 stall plates that paid for my Cricut machine. So for me, it was definitely worth the investment.

Ok, enough side tracking….let’s get back to your stall plate!

Once you have cut out the letters (or painted them) you seal the letters to the plaque using Mod Podge. Mod Podge is an affordable sealer that will make the sign weather safe, even for outdoor use. If you use a larger paint brush, you will not see as many brush strokes in the sealer. For a more handcrafted look, you can use a smaller brush, which will leave a lot of brush strokes. This can be nice, if that is the look you are going for.

And some may argue the Mod Podge is not a good sealer to use on things that are going to be exposed to the elements, however I disagree.

I make a lot of name plates for my horses, and I have never had any problems with hanging them outside. They are in the rain, sun and snow and they hold up just fine. I have never had any problem with the finish coming off.

Now if my horses would leave them alone, that would be a wonderful thing….

Now your stall plate is complete! You can hang it on your horse's stall, or wherever you like!



And if you want to get even more crafty, you can add some embellishments, like a charm or two, or even a lock of your horse's tail. You are only limited by yourself, so get creative, and make a memorable stall sign for your horses stall.



These are some stall signs I made for my friend Lynda's horses. I added little horse charm embellishments for decoration. And now she hangs these pretty little signs hanging over her saddles in her tack room.

Chapter 10
Barn Signs



Once you have figured out how to make a stall sign, now you can apply the same idea to creating some incredible signs for your barn!

Materials List:

- 1 piece of wood (I used 1 x 3" pine)
- Stain
- Paint
- Sandpaper
- Mod Podge
- Paint brushes
- Letters for name

Tools List:

- Jig saw
- 18 volt drill with 1/8” drill bit
- Orbital sander

The same rules apply for making fun signs for your barn like they did for the stall name plate.

First you will take the piece of lumber and determine how long you want your sign to be. I have made mine anywhere from 6” to 24” long, depending what I am putting on the sign. Just measure off how long you want your sign to be and cut the wood.

After the wood has been cut, then using the drill with a super tiny drill bit, drill holes on the upper corners through the wood. This is where you will attach the stall sign and by predrilling the holes you will prevent the wood from splitting when you hang it. Then sand the wood until smooth, the front, back and all sides.



Next to create a weathered or antique appearance, you can stain the wood. Once the stain has dried, paint all sides of the sign in the color you want and allow to dry.

After all sides are painted, put a new piece of sand paper on your sander. Gently sand the painted surface until you start to see the stained wood show through. This is what gives the sign a distressed, or older appearance.

Then all that’s left to do is create the lettering for your sign. Like my stall name plate, I use my Cricut machine and cut the letters out of cardstock. There are

different cartridges you can buy with fancy fonts, or you can just use simple ones if you prefer.



Once you have cut out the letters (or painted them) you seal the letters to the plaque using Mod Podge. Mod Podge is an affordable sealer that will make the sign weather safe, even for outdoor use. If you use a larger paint brush, you will not see as many brush strokes in the sealer. For a more handcrafted look, you can use a smaller brush, which will leave a lot of brush strokes. This can be nice, if that is the look you are going for.

If you need ideas of what type of signs to make for your stable, here are some ideas…

- Tack Room
- Feed Room
- Office
- Bless this Barn
- I'd Rather Be Riding
- Happiness is Horses

- Keep Calm and Ride On
- Livery
- Pony Rides
- Dressage
- Hunter Jumper
- Ride
- Life is Better at the Barn
- Show Jumping
- Just Jump It
- Cowgirl Up
- Cowboy Up
- Cowgirl Tough
- A Happy Horse Live Here
- Horse's = Happiness
- My Happy Place
- Breeches and Boots
- Whips and Spurs
- Manure Happens
- Family
- Carriage House
- Polo
- Happy Trails
- Eventing
- Always Kiss Your Horses Goodnight
- Walk Trot and Canter
- Yee Haw
- Horse's Leave Hoof Prints on Your Heart
- Welcome
- I love my Horse
- Giddy Up
- Courage

- Happily Ever After
- Barn Sweet Barn
- Love Me, Love My Horse
- Saddle Up
- Ride
- You Had Me at Rodeo
- My Barn… My Rules
- Whoa
- Equestrian
- What Happens at the Barn…..Stays at the Barn
- Dream Big
- Live Laugh Ride
- Barn Princess
- Horse Crossing
- Love Life
- Horse Show
- C U @ X
- Barn Rules
- I Believe I Can Fly



Hopefully that gets your creative ideas flowing! If not, I just gave you a lot of ideas to make signs for your tack room, stable, or even your home.

There is no limit to what you can create! And if you are looking for an idea of how to make some extra money to support your horse habit, I just gave you 56 ideas….You're welcome.

Chapter 11

Fancy Bridle Rack

We all have our favorite bridle that we choose to use when we ride. Or, we have our special bridles like those we use for showing that we need to take special care of. And many of these bridles are an investment and a necessary tool we need to ride our horses.

These bridles can last a very long time of they are cared for properly.

And just like everything related to horses, a good quality bridle rack can be very expensive. Just as an example, I was considering buying a very nice bridle rack from Burlingham Sports, but for a six bridle set up, it costs $ 135.00. That was a lot more that I wanted to spend on something that I would be hanging on my wall. Yes, it is worth it, but I was pretty sure I could find something just as nice for a lot less money.



So I kept looking at all of the available options, and I did find some nice bridle racks but they were still around $100.00. There were cheaper ones, but they didn't have the rein hook. And I really wanted to be able to hang my reins separately from the bridle itself. I also found some pretty simple ones for $7.00, but I didn't want to deform the crown of my bridles. My last and best option was to make my own bridle rack.

I have tried multiple times to make bridle racks with remnant pieces of wood that I had lying around, but I was never really satisfied with their appearance, until I made this bridle rack.

I decided this would be the best option for me. This way I could make the bridle rack exactly what I wanted it to be, and it would not only be something to hang up my bridles and halters, but it would also look nice in my tack room. I know that may sound petty but, my tack room is one of my happy places. This is where I get ready to ride my horses. And walking into the tack room and seeing everything put away where it should be, providing a sense of calm. It is also helps me to stay organized. If everything is put away where it should be, and I have places to put everything, I can see what I have, and find it easily. This helps me to make the most of my time with my horses. And let's face it, we always want to make the most of the time we have with our horses, right?

This bridle rack only cost me about $16.00 to make. I had left over lumber from different projects that I had saved because I knew I could find something to do with it, rather than throwing it into the trash. I also had the paint and all I had to buy was the spray paint and the bridle hooks.



So now let's get down to the business of building this bridle rack, shall we?

Materials List:

- 2" x6" x 6' long piece of wood

- Bridle hooks
- Screws for mounting bridle hooks
- Spray paint, paint or stain
- Sand paper

Tools list:

- 18 volt drill
- Radial arm saw, or table saw
- Orbital sander
- Paint brushes

To get started, you will need to determine how long you want your bridle rack to be. For my bridle rack, I used remnant lumber. My bridle rack is just over 4 ft long.

Once you have determined how long you want your rack to be, now you can paint the bridle hooks the color you want them to be. That is if you are going to give them a custom paint job.



Once you have figured out where you want the bridle hooks to go, then it helps to drill some starter holes on either end of your bridle rack back board. This will help prevent the wood from splitting when you hang up your finished project.

The next step is to sand the back board until it is extra smooth. You do not want any splintered or rough edges to damage your bridles or halters. Take a little extra time, and make sure the back board is sanded smooth. When I was sanding, I rounded all the corners.



Now you can paint or stain your bridle rack. I choose to paint mine with chalk paint, because well, I love chalk paint.

After your paint or stain has dried, now you can set the bridle hooks. Don't secure them down until you are happy with the spacing. I have mine spaced about every 6 inches. Once you like where they are, go ahead and secure them down to the back board of your bridle rack.



The only thing left to do is to hang your bridle rack up on the wall, and add your bridles, halters, or whatever you were planning on hanging up.

Remember to take your time with every building step of this project to have an incredible piece to hang in your tack room and you will be happy with your results. If you want to, you could also add an engraved name plate on your bridle rack for a truly custom looking bridle rack.

Chapter 12
Equine First Aid Kit



Having a first aid kit in your barn is extremely important. Not only for your horse, but you should also include human items as well. You never know what can happen at the barn. And you may need some first aid at the barn for yourself as well.

When you have horses, accidents seem to come with the territory. Horses seem to be a magnet for injuries so it is important to have a first aid kit readily available in your barn, tack room, or wherever you keep your horses. If you have horses, I am sure you have had instances when you have needed a first aid kit. If you have not, consider yourself extremely lucky, but eventually something will happen.

Let me give you an example….

On a very cold and snowy March morning, I heard something outside. I do not know how to describe it other than a ruckus, a HUGE ruckus. I went running outside to the barn, and I had a headlamp in my hand because it was 5:30 AM. I shined the light at my horses, and all I could see was blood gushing from one of my horse's back legs. I had no idea of what happened, but the way the blood was

running out of his leg, I knew I had to get it stopped, and I had no idea of how badly he was injured.

Thankfully he was very calm, he allowed me to halter him, and tie him to my hitching post (Thank God I had built that about 3 weeks earlier.) I shined the light on his back leg, and the blood was freely flowing. I ran to the tack room and grabbed my first aid kit, and then back to him to wrap his leg. He was in pain, so when I would wrap around his leg, and apply pressure to the wrap, he would lift his leg, but he never kicked. I started at the top of the leg, and worked my way down, but the blood was still coming through, and running down his leg. I used everything that I had, and it was still bleeding.

By this time I am completely freaking out, trying to find the vet's phone number. I found it, and called the answering service, and waited for the vet to call me back.

In the meantime, I found a roll of duct tape, and started adding more compression to my dressing, trying to get the bleeding to stop. When it was all done, I had used 4 rolls of gauze, 3 ace wraps, 3 rolls of vet wrap and a lot of duct tape. Oh, and as a side note, in case you were wondering, duct tape does not stick very well when it is soaked in blood, and it is 30 degrees outside.

Thankfully, this story has a happy ending. Ethan (my horse) was ok and he fully recovered from his injury.



March 16, 2016 April 20, 2016 May 25, 2016

He severed a large vein, but no broken bones, and he is sound. To this day I do not know what happened, but he managed to get his leg above the four foot tall kick wall of his stall, and put his back leg through the metal part of his stall.

But if I was not prepared by having a stocked first aid kit in my barn, his outcome may not have been a happy one. Which is why I felt it important to share with you the most important items you really should have in your equine first aid kit. And you don't have to get everything at one time but buy a few items at a time until you have a complete kit.

Here are some of the most important items to include in your equine first aid kit;

Headlamp

This is much better than a flashlight, trust me. You have the light, but you are also able to keep both hands free, so you are able to focus on what you need to see. You can find headlamps everywhere, but my favorite is the kind that has a rechargeable battery that you can plug in. This is the best investment you can make, and the cost from $5.00 to $65.00, depending on what you want. You do get what you pay for though, so don't be a complete cheapskate, and spend a little bit extra to get a quality lamp.

Thermometer

Make sure you get a horse safe thermometer, because you will need to use this rectally, pretty much the only way to check your horse's temperature. It is also advisable to learn how to take your horses temperature, when he isn't sick so you will know how to do it, and your horse is accustomed to it so when you do need to do it, it won't be a shock to him. Keep in mind a normal temperature for a horse is 99.5 F to 101.5 F

Stethoscope

You really do need a stethoscope for your horse. Not only can you check his heart rate, but you can also hear gut sounds easier with a stethoscope. It doesn't need to be a fancy $200.00 unit, you can find them at Jeffers Equine for about $5.00, and it is well worth it to have in your first aid kit. An adult horse's normal resting heart rate is 28-44 beats per minute.

Vet Wrap

Everyone knows what vet wrap is, the bandage that sticks to its self. You don't have to buy the vet wrap brand, but you do need to have at least 5 to 6 rolls of this in your first aid kit. You can find it at Jeffers Equine or State Line Tack for about

$1.50 a roll. When you get your vet wrap, do not remove it from the outer packaging. Because once the package is open, the elasticity and sticking power of the vet wrap lessens. So keep the packaging sealed until the time comes when you need to use it.

Duct Tape

There will always be a use for duct tape, especially when it comes to horses and needing around the barn. You can get a roll of duct tape for about $4.00 and it will be an investment you will be happy to have made if the need ever arises that you need it.

Wound Ointment or Spray

This is a staple in my barn. I have found the most incredible wound ointment ever for people as well as horses! It is called silvasorb gel, and you can buy it online. Amazon has it, and it isn't cheap, but it is the absolute best and in my opinion, most important item to have in your first aid kit. It costs about $24.00 for a 3-ounce tube, but it lasts forever. This should replace any antibiotic ointment you have already been using for yourself or your animals. It has silver in it, and it is a gel (get it, silva-sorb gel???) It is actually a smart gel. It knows if a wound needs more moisture, and it will donate it, or if there is too much moisture, it will suck it up. The silver in it is nature's antibiotic, and there is no worry if bacteria will become immune or resistant to it. It works for small cuts and scrapes, as well as large gashes. It speeds up healing, and decreases the risk of infection. So please, if you are buying Neosporin for yourself or your horses stop it now! The only ointment you should be using is Silvasorb, it is by far the best wound and burn ointment ever created.

Feminine Hygiene Pads, or ABD Pads, or Both

These work great for applying over a gash, or even creating a poultice to put on. They are absorbent, and can suck up a lot of fluid. Who knows what you may need them for, but eventually you will need them. You can buy a cheap box (or bag) of pads for about $7.00 at Walmart, or even the dollar store!

Bandage Scissors

I love the Lister type bandage scissors. They make fast work of dressings, and work great for simple things such as cutting twine, or even cutting a bridle path. You can find them on Jeffers Equine for about $6.00 a pair. And since scissors tend to disappear around my barn, I have a few pair, just in case! I prefer to use

bandage scissors for anything related to horses. Regular scissors are not safe. If you use regular scissors, you run the risk of cutting your horse. Bandage scissors have uneven blades, so the risk of cutting yourself or your horse is greatly lessened when using these types of scissors. So do yourself a huge favor, and invest in a pair of bandage scissors for your first aid kit.

Epsom Salt

You can use this for yourself, and your horse! For your horse, you can make Epsom salt soaks for a hoof abscess, or for soaking your horse's hooves. Creating an Epsom salt soak can kill viruses and fungus so it is a great addition to your to your first aid kit. You can buy a bag of Epsom salt for about $2.00

First Aid Kit Box



It is also equally important to have a place to store all your first aid supplies, so you will need some sort of box to keep all of your stuff together. You can buy a box made for storing first aid supplies, or you can get creative and make your

own. I'm sure you have some sort of metal or plastic bin laying around your home that you don't use, so you can repurpose it, and turn it into your barn first aid kit.

For myself, I had a really cool locking box that I got when I bought my drill. And since I use my drill all the time, and never keep it in the box, the box was just taking up space, I decided to put it to use. I spray painted it white, and painted a big red cross on it. Everyone seems to know a red cross is synonymous for first aid, so that's what I did, I made a first aid box for about $5.00, and put something to use instead of throwing it away.

I have my "homemade" first aid kit in my tack room, as well as a second first aid kit in my tack trunk. I also have a portable shelving unit with drawers that I keep extra first aid items in my tack room as a just in case. The one thing I have learned, especially since I got Ethan, is there is no such thing as too much when it comes to first aid items. So I collect as much as I can, and add items to my stock pile whenever I can.



Maybe it is because I am a registered nurse, or a mom, or because I have a horse that is accident prone. Whatever the reasoning, I have a very complete first aid

kit. I want to be prepared for an emergency if it arises in the barn, pasture, arena, horse show, trail, or basically anywhere.

This is a list of items I have in my people and equine first aid kit, and I would encourage you to have in yours as well.

Equestrian First Aid Kit For Horse and Rider

- Vet wrap
- Different sized ace wraps (2", 3", 4" 6")
- Different styles of tape (plastic, medical, elasticon)
- Duct tape
- Bandage scissors
- Head lamp
- Stethoscope
- Thermometer
- 4 x 4 gauze
- 2 x 2 gauze
- Non-sterile packaged gauze
- Abd pads, or maxi-pads
- Set of polo wraps
- Emergency halter and lead rope
- Rolled cotton
- Cling rolled gauze
- Different size band-aids
- Nitrile gloves (1 box)
- Alcohol
- Sterile water
- Vetericyn wound wash
- Vetericyn wound and skin care
- Corona cream
- Epsom salt
- Silvasorb wound gel

- Peroxide
- Nitrofurazone Dressing
- Wonder dust
- Chlorhexidine Disinfectant Solution
- Tweezers
- Pill crusher
- Bute powder
- Horse treats
- Paste dewormer
- Swat fly ointment
- Fly spray
- Jelly lubricant
- Humane twitch
- Alcohol prep pads
- Mastisol
- Different sized syringes (5,10,20,60 ml sizes)
- No bow pillow wraps
- Different size towels
- Clip board with important phone numbers (as well as your horse's weekly vital signs)

This is a very comprehensive list of everything you really should have in your first aid kit for your horse, and yourself at the barn.

You don't have to buy everything at once. You can pick up an item or two when you make an order from your favorite place to shop online. You can buy a lot of this stuff at tack stores, or even drugstores, but it will be more expensive. I have found the easiest way is to spend about $20.00 a month to really build up my first aid supplies.

You can have multiple first aid kits too. Don't forget your car, trailer, and even a small pack if you are going on trail rides. And speaking of trail rides, if you do a lot of trail riding, especially alone, it might be a good investment to have a bridle tag on your trail bridle with a phone number, and a saying like "rider down" so if your horse wanders away from you and someone finds the horse, then they can call for help.

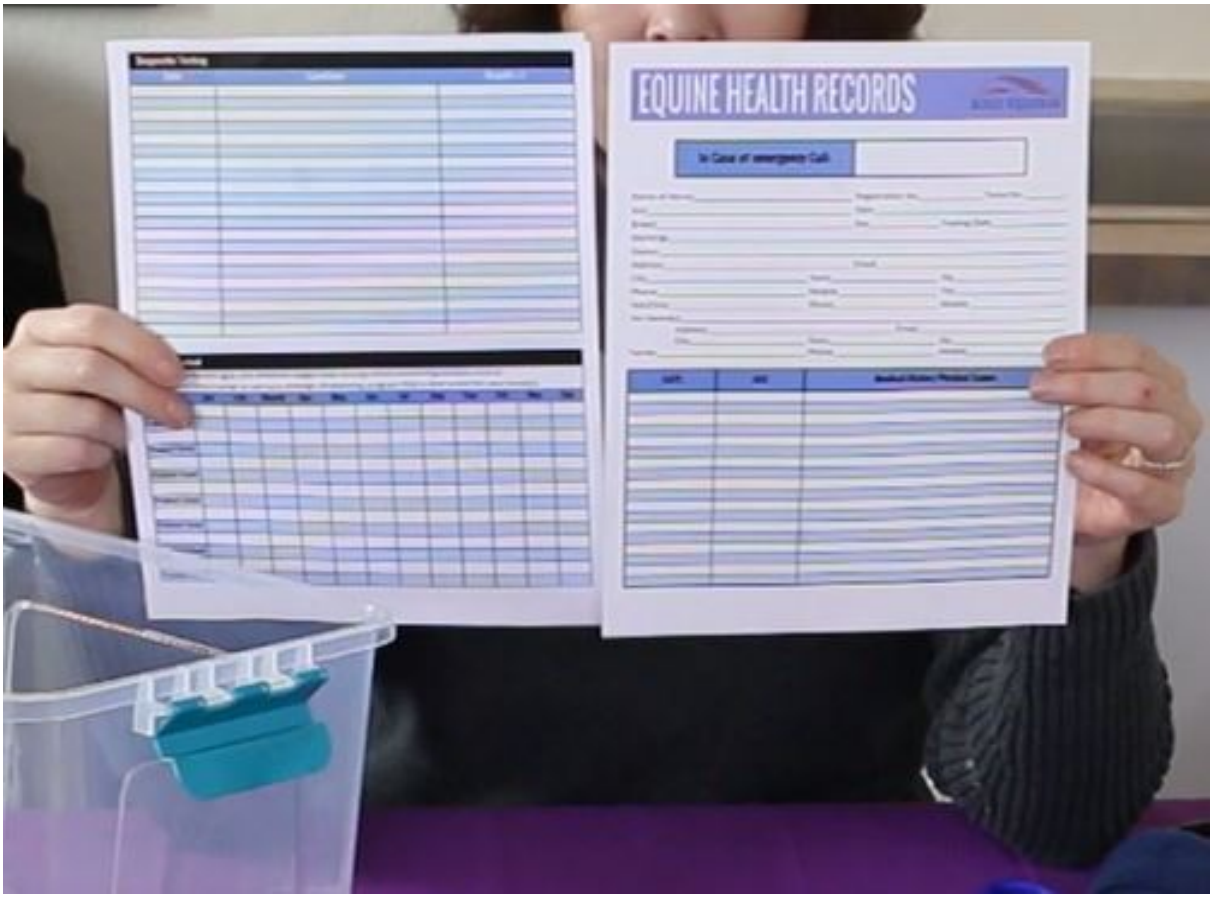
One more thing to think about is when storing your first aid supplies in extremely cold or hot weather. Where we live, it gets below freezing for several months of the year. When I am getting my barn ready for the colder weather, I gather all my first aid items and bring in the items that can freeze. Because if you do have an emergency, and you can't use what you need, that can turn an already stressful situation from bad to worse. So plan ahead, and keep your first aid items together, and ready for use no matter what the weather could be.

And the last thing on the list I have listed is a clip board with phone numbers, and a weekly record of your horse's vital signs. Do you know what vital signs are, and how to check for them? If you have your own horse, knowing how to check vital signs and report them to your vet can help give some insight to how serious the situation is. This is why I have included this in my book. I feel very strongly about knowing how to check for vital signs and I feel every horse owner should know how to do it.

Equine Vital Signs

Vital signs are temperature, pulse, respiration and for horses, you may want to include gut sounds. It is a good idea to keep track of these vital signs, so you will know what is normal and what is not normal for your horse. It will also be tremendously helpful for your vet, if you know what your horse's normal is. And it is also helpful for your horse to get used to being fiddled with, and it will help to desensitize him (or her) to the tools your vet will use like a stethoscope and thermometer.

It is also helpful to know what the normal ranges are for each of the vital signs. Because knowing what is normal will help you to know if something is not quite right with your horse.



It is a good idea to plan a weekly vital check with each of your horses. Once you get good at it, it will only take you a few minutes to listen to his heart, check his temperature, gut sounds and respirations.

Temperature

A horse's normal temperature range is 99 degrees Fahrenheit to 101 degrees Fahrenheit. However, keep in mind that your horse's temperature can fluctuate as much as 3 degrees depending on the time of day, and the outside temperature. So if you can, always check your horse's temperature at the same time, or close to it to get a consistent idea of what his temperature is.

To take your horse's temperature, you will have to check his temperature rectally. This means you will put the thermometer into his bum. Most horse's do not mind this, but some really don't like it. This is one of the reason's it is a good idea to get your horse used to it.

First, make sure your thermometer has a long string attached to it. You do not want to lose the thermometer in your horse's rectum, believe me it does happen. If the thermometer 'disappears' you want to be able to retrieve it. This is what the string is for. To prevent this from happening, it is best to keep hold of the string at the end of the thermometer once you place it into the rectum.

A digital thermometer is the easiest to read and is accurate for horses. This is just a regular digital thermometer. But do not plan on using this for people, keep this thermometer just for your horses!

Place some lubricant on the tip of the thermometer, and standing to the side of your horse (never directly behind him) lift his tail to the side, and gently slide the thermometer in once you have turned it on. It may take up to 3 minutes for the thermometer to get the temperature, but that isn't really that long. Just stand next to your horse facing his rear, and keep hold of the thermometer. Once it beeps, gently remove it and read the temperature.

Once you are finished using the thermometer, CLEAN IT! You can use alcohol to clean the thermometer, and put it away. But always be sure to clean the thermometer, especially if you have multiple horses that you will be using this on.

Pulse

The average range for a horse's pulse (heartbeat) is between 30 to 40 beats per minute. If he has just exercised, this will be higher, but on average, if an adult horse's heartbeat is over 50 beats per minute this could be due to your horse being in physical distress. A high heartbeat can be caused from pain, disease, or nervousness. The higher is heart rate, the more distress he is in.

To check your horse's pulse, you can use your fingertips, just don't use your thumb, otherwise you may get your own pulse instead of your horse's! You can find your horses pulse under the left jaw bone. There is a large artery there that sticks out slightly. Press your fingertips against this area firmly. Once you find the pressure point you will feel the pulse of the blood as it moves through the artery. Every bump against your fingertips counts as a heartbeat. Once you find it, using a watch or stopwatch, count for 15 seconds every time you feel the 'bump' on your fingertips. Then multiply this number by 4 to get your horse's pulse. To get the most accurate number though, you could do this for a full minute.

If you have a stethoscope (which you should), you can also use this. Place the stethoscope just behind your horse's left elbow and listen. You will hear a 'lub-dub' sound, and each lub-dub counts as one beat.

Once you have your horse's pulse, write it down onto your worksheet.

Respirations

Respirations are how many times a minute your horse inhales and exhales. The normal range for respirations for your horse is 8 to 15 breaths per minute. This of course will be different if your horse has just exercised, or is nervous.

To check your horse's respirations, you can watch his ribcage. You will see it rise and fall. Each rise and fall is counted as 1 respiration. You will do this for a full minute. If you can't see your horse's ribcage, or if this is proving to be a challenge for you, you can also watch his nostrils, or put your hand up to his nose and feel him exhale over your hand.

Another way to check his respirations is to place your stethoscope up to his windpipe and listen. This can be helpful to do, because sometimes you may hear strange sounds, which can alert you if something is wrong.

When checking respirations, you will do this for a full minute, it is best not to do it for 15 seconds and multiply it by 4, because this will not give you an accurate count. Just take a full minute to count the respirations, and then write it down.

Gut Sounds

Gut sounds are easy to check for. You can use your ear, or stethoscope. Simply listen to your horse's gut. Place your ear (or stethoscope) up to his side and listen. You should be able to hear gurgling in his tummy, this is a gut sound. Horses should always have gut sounds. If they are absent, this is a big problem. If you cannot hear any gut sounds, contact your vet immediately.

Dehydration

Even though checking for dehydration is not really considered a vital sign, it is a good idea to know how to check if your horse is dehydrated.

To check for dehydration, pinch a portion of your horse's neck skin (not hard) If it flattens back immediately your horse is fine. If the skin is slow to return to flat, this means your horse is dehydrated. The longer it takes for the skin to flatten out, the more dehydrated he is.

Horses normally drink at least 5 gallons of water per day. If your horse isn't drinking, he will get dehydrated. You can encourage drinking by adding Gatorade or apple juice to his water. The sweetness will encourage him to drink more. And if it is cold outside and your horse's water source freezes, he won't be able to drink. So be sure to keep an easily accessible water source for your horse, even if you must add a heater to his water source. But make sure to use an approved water heater for your horse!

And now that you know how to check your horse's vital signs, you will need a way to track the information that you collect. You can print out the following sheets and hang them on a clipboard in your tack room or barn so you will have a history of your horse's vital signs.

Vital Signs Record Sheet

Horse's Name_____Month_____

Date	Temperature	Pulse	Resp.	Gut Sounds	Cap Refill

This recording sheet can be very helpful in keeping track of what your horse's vital signs are over a period of time. And if you get into the habit of checking on a daily basis, you will be a pro in no time. And it's also helpful to know what is normal for your horse. Which can be important if something changes.



Chapter 13
Ear Bonnet Hanger

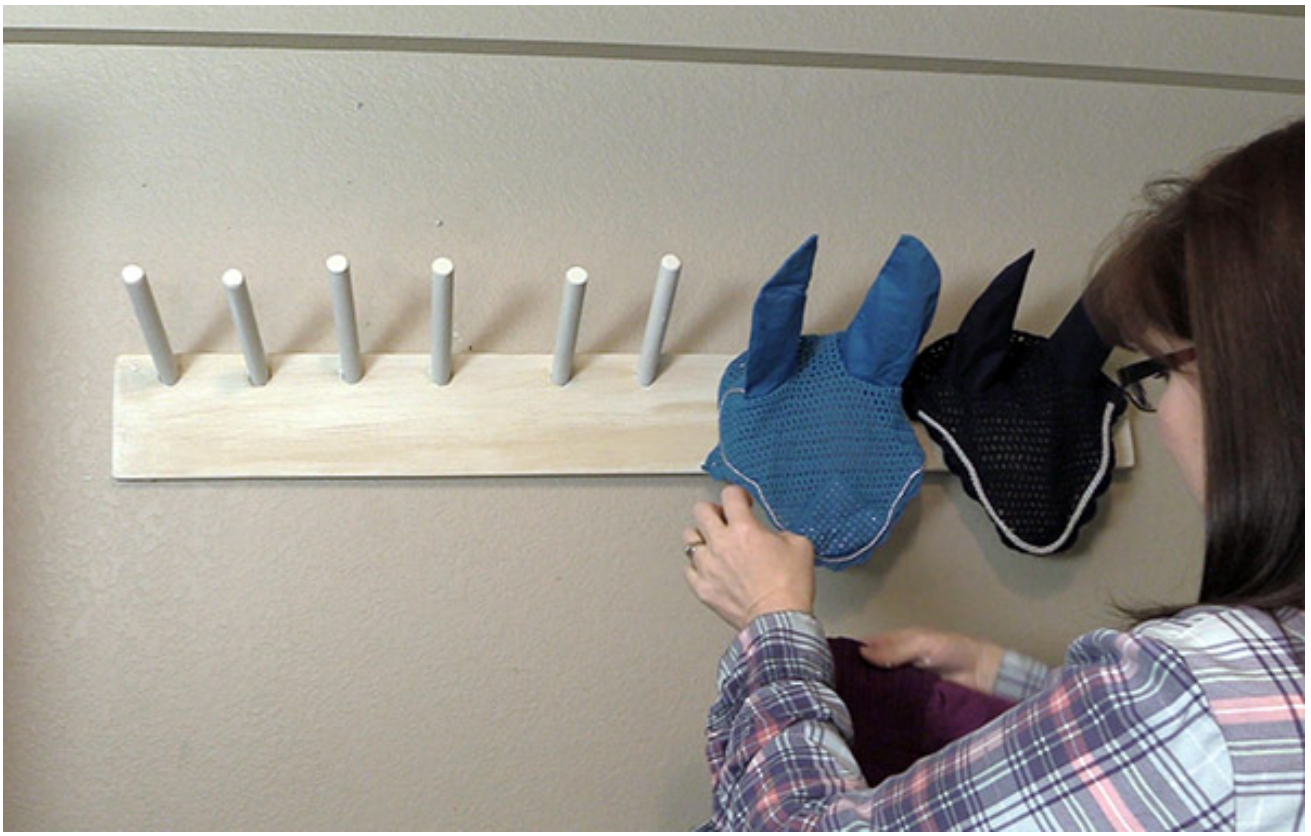
My latest obsession in tack is ear bonnets. And from the first time I used one, I noticed a difference in the way my horse was acting when I rode him. He wasn't flinging his head around as much, and he seemed quieter. And this wasn't some fancy-schmanzy bonnet with sound absorbing qualities. No, this was a $10.00 ear bonnet that I bought.



And after I bought my first ear bonnet, and then my second, and third….

Well, I have quite the collection of ear bonnets. And I like to be able to see which ear bonnet is which, so I decided to make a hanger for them.

But as my collection has grown, I have decided to keep this fancy ear bonnet hanger indoors. So my extra special ear bonnets will have some place to be displayed. While the ones that are in every day use will live out in the barn. But more on that later!



How To Make an Ear Bonnet Hanger

To make this ear bonnet hanger you will need a piece of wood, some wooden dowels, and some paint. If you want to duplicate what I have made, this is what you will need:

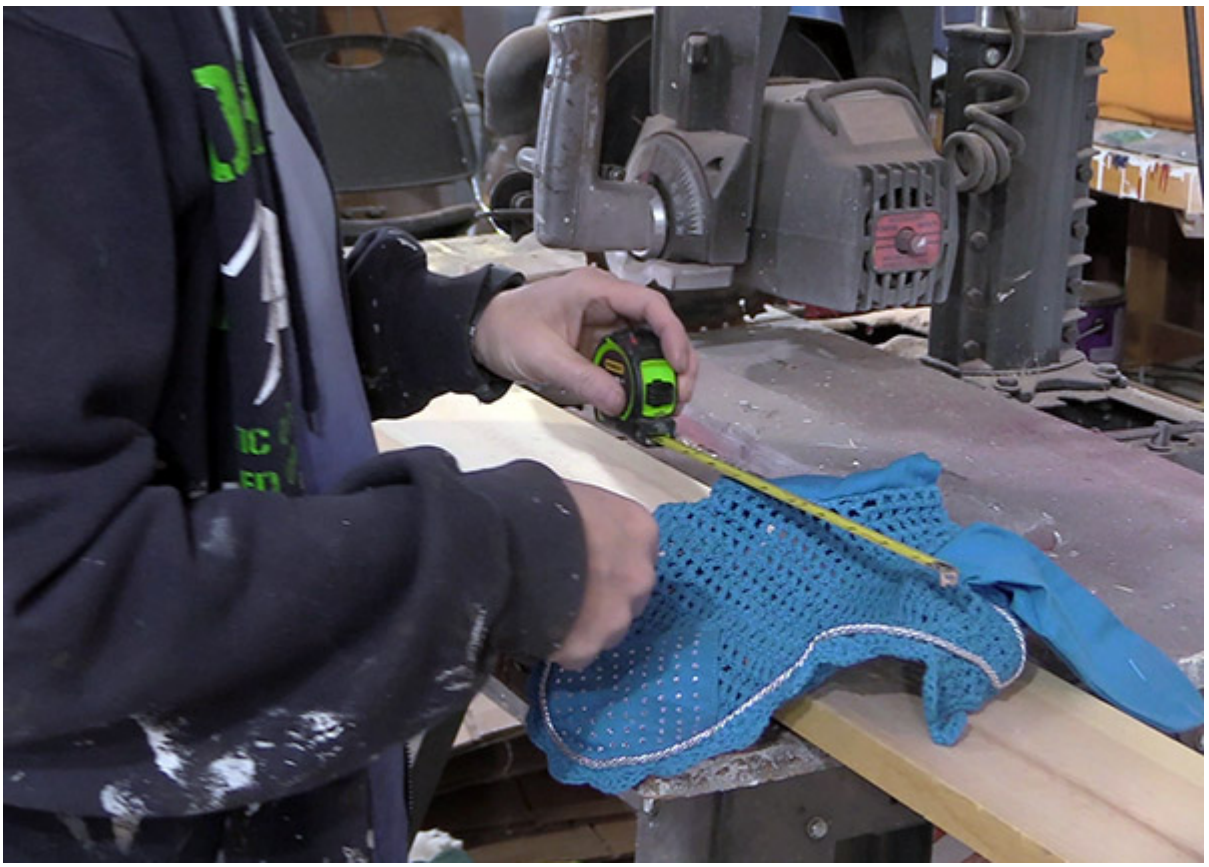
Materials List:

- 1″ x 6″ x 48″ pine board
- 3/4″ wooden dowels
- 3/4″ spade bit (Or a door hole set – like I happened to have)
- 1/4″ drill bit
- Sandpaper
- Gorilla glue (or wood glue)
- Chalk paint
- Antiquing wax (clear and dark)

Tools List:

- Saw
- Orbital sander

And that's it! Not a lot of stuff right? And if you are anything like me, you probably already have all this stuff in your garage, or workshop.



The first thing I did was place a bonnet on a piece of wood to see how long I would need it to be. At the time of making this ear bonnet hanger, I only had a handful of bonnets, so I just wanted to make the hanger for what I had at the time.

Then, I took the wooden dowels, cut them down to 8″ long, and placed them about 4″ apart above the wood. These dowels are how the bonnets will hang on the wall rack.

Next I had to drill into the wood for where the dowels will be placed. And I wanted them to be at an angle, but I wasn't quite sure how to make that happen. They do make fancy tools that do this, but I don't have one. So I made due with what I already had, which was a set that we bought to drill holes in blank doors. It happened to work fantastic. The



holes ended up being a little larger than the 3/4″ dowels that I had, so all I had to do was angle the dowel when I attached it to the piece of wood. I love it when things work out!

Sanding the Wood

This is a really important step, especially if you are not using chalk paint. The reason it is so important is that the wood needs to be really smooth. Otherwise you run the risk of snagging your fancy ear bonnet ear when you hang it on the hanger.

After everything was cut out, and my ear bonnet was safely put away, I sanded all of the pieces of wood. This included the 1″ x 6″ wood and the dowels. When I was sanding the dowels, I sanded one end really well. I did not want any splintered wood that might cause damage to my ear bonnets. So I really made sure they were sanded well.

Painting the Wood

Then after putting the pieces together, and being happy with how the pieces would sit, I painted all of the bare wood BEFORE I assembled it. It is a lot easier, and faster, to paint the wood before the rack is assembled.



And once the chalk paint was dry, then I applied a coat of clear wax, and then a coat of the antiquing wax. I am so obsessed with chalk paint right now. Ever since I made a couple of farmhouse style decoration pieces for inside my home, I have decided to do this in my tack room as well. I just love the way this looks.

The wax is really helpful to keep the wood smooth and makes it easier to hang your bonnets.

After all of the separate pieces had dried, then I put all of the pieces together. I secured the wooden dowels with a little bit of Gorilla glue, using my glue gun. I also drilled 2 small holes for the screws to go on the top of the rack so I can hang it up. The 2 starter holes for the screws will allow me to hang the rack on the wall without splitting the wood. This is a very important final step which should not be skipped!

And this is the finished project! All of my ear bonnets are hung up, easy to find, and ready for use. I am so so SO happy with how this turned out. And honestly, I

am shocked that I haven't seen this before on Pinterest, or in stores for sale. Don't people want to hang up their ear bonnets? I do! I like to see what I have and make the most of the space that I have.

Maybe this will help you, and give you an idea of how to display your bonnets, while making them easy to access. Not only does it show off your collection, but with the way the bonnets hang, it also helps them to dry out after they have been used. Hopefully this will make the bonnets last longer too.



Maybe one day I will tackle the project of making my own ear bonnets, but for now I am happy to buy them, and then hang them up.

Alternative Ear Bonnet Hanger

And just in case you are looking for a speedy alternative to making a large hang up for all of your bonnets, this is an affordable option that is quick and easy.



This is a couple of over the door hangers from Dollar Tree. Yep, they only cost a dollar. For one dollar I have 6 hooks that easily accommodate my ear bonnets.

For $3.00 I have created enough hooks to hang up 18 bonnets.

Like I said, this is a very affordable option if you don't have the capability to make a hanger, or if you don't want something quite so large.

With this type of hanger, the hardest part is going to be how to hang it. For myself, I literally made a wall in my tack room which gives me more space for hanging some of my tack room furniture. And at the top of the wall, I have easy access to hang this over the door hanger.

I love these hangers. They are so useful for many different pieces of tack and riding equipment.



And now my ear bonnet collection is encroaching on my bit hanger! But that's ok, I will just go to the dollar store and buy another over the door hanger. Problem solved.

Chapter 14
DIY Mounting Block



I am super happy to be able to get back to my DIY projects. And this project is something I have been wanting to do for a while now. I say that a lot, don't I? I guess that means I always have new ideas in my head of something I want to see if I can build. And while I am not a professional carpenter, I do like making things.

And thankfully I have a lot of tools that I am able to make things for myself. And then I can shear the ideas with you! And this mounting block is one of those ideas.

I already have a mounting step stool. But it is a little too short. Or my legs are a little too short for my tall horses. So I decided to spend the afternoon building a wooden mounting block. If you wanted, you could also use this as a step stool. But the main purpose of this piece of furniture is to make it easier for me to get into the saddle.

And all of the wood that I used for this project were scraps of lumber that I had saved from prior projects.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

To make a mounting block like this you will need a few things.

- 1″ x 6″ pine boards
- 2″ x 4″ pine boards
- 1″ x 2″ furring strip
- 2 1/4″ screws
- Latex painters caulk
- Sandpaper
- Sander
- Paint
- 18 volt drill with screw head attachment

(2)

(3)

What You Will Do

Not a lot really. And like I said, all of this wood was scrap. I had it lying around and decided to make a mounting block. The 2 x 4's were cut to 16″ long, and then 2 pieces I cut were 12″ long.



The remaining wood I cut was all 20″ long. To make this mounting block you will need the following pieces of cut lumber:

- 2″ x 4″ x 16″ (6 pieces)
- 2″ x 4″ x 12″ (2 pieces)
- 1″ x 2″ x 20″ (2 pieces)
- 1″ x 6″ x 20″ (6 pieces)

And that's it. Not a lot of wood really for this project.

Then you will just assemble the pieces together. First you will make the sides using all 6 pieces of the 16″ 2 x 4 lumber. Each side will take 3 pieces.

Then take one of the 12″ pieces of 2 x 4 wood, and attach it to the long front side of the already assembled 2 x 4 sides. And repeat the process on the other side.



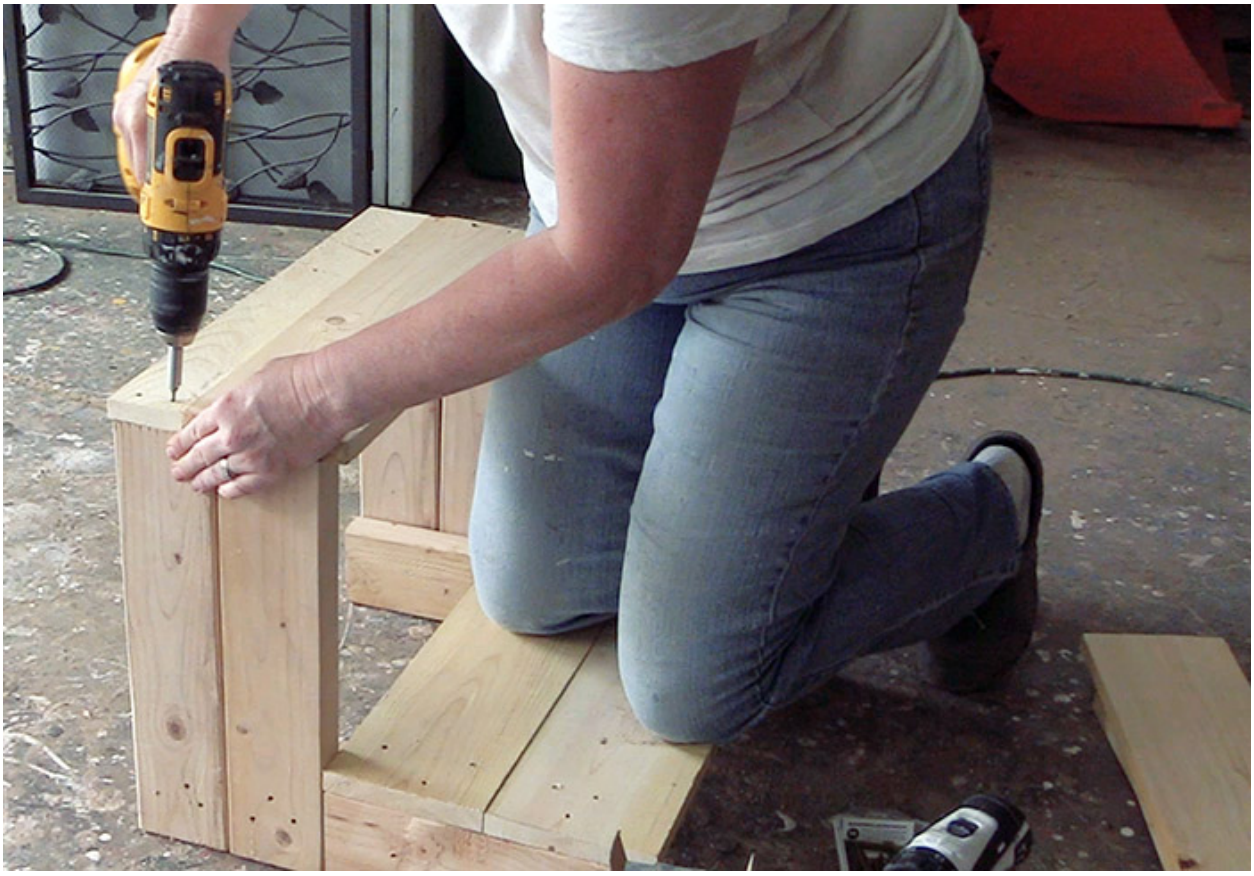
Adding the extra little 2 x 4 piece adds stability to your mounting block, and gives you additional surface area to screw the 1 x 6″ wood down.

Next you will assemble the bottom stair. Using 2 of the 1 x 6 x 20″ pieces of wood for the bottom tread, or stair.

And then take another 20″ piece of 1 x 6 and attach it to the tall, or upright portion of your mounting block. Then attach a 1 x 2 x 20″ to the remaining open area of the top step.

Next, secure a 1 x 6 piece to the back at the top step, and flip the block over and secure another 1 x 6 piece of wood to the front of the top step.

And take your final piece of 1 x 6 and attach it to the back on the bottom of the mounting block. By adding this bottom piece, it will make your mounting block much more stable when you are climbing onto the top step.



This little mounting block can support my weight, and it is stable. So I don't have to worry that it is going to move around while I am climbing into the saddle.

And once I had it assembled, I sanded all of the pointy edges. For me, it's important to have rounded and smooth edges, so I always sand all of the sharp corners, just in case.

Once you have all of the sanding one, you can give it a more seamless appearance by caulking all of the seams, and the screw holes. I like to use DAP latex painter's caulk. It is easy to use, and it cleans up with soap and water. It also helps to protect your new mounting block from the elements if it's going to be living outside.



And all that's left to do is paint it. I used Kilz 2 primer paint. It's very affordable, and it will protect the mounting block from the weather. Kilz 2 is safe for indoor and outdoor use. If you want to , you could paint another finish color on top, but I was happy with just having the mounting block. So two coats of primer paint was enough for me. But if you want to paint it in your stable colors, or favorite color, go for it!

And once the pain is dry, you have a very sturdy mounting block, or step stool, or place to sit. This is a very helpful piece of equipment to build for your arena, as well as your barn.

And believe it or not, it's fairly lightweight. Making it easy to be moved around the arena, or the barn.

Not to horrible, right? And like I said, it's very nice to have a mounting block in your arena.



So if you have some scrap wood, and a couple of hours, why not make your own mounting block? It will make it easier to get on your horse, and you will get rid of scrap wood! And it looks pretty neat too.

And if you would like to watch a video of me making this mounting block, well I have that for you too! Happy mounting block building!

Chapter 15

Free Standing Saddle Stand

For as long as I have had saddles, I have wanted a nice, free standing saddle stand. I don't know why, but they are just so beautiful, and they always seem to be on my 'someday' list.

But like all of my other DIY projects, I was tired of waiting for some day, and I decided to just make one. And I will let you in on a little secret, it wasn't very hard to build!

Materials List:

- 1" x 12" x 8' lumber (2 boards)
- 1" x 3" x 8' lumber (1 boards)
- Sandpaper
- Wood glue
- Nails
- Paint or stain
- Hook for bridle (optional)
- Engraved name plate (optional

Tools:

- Circular saw (I like to use a radial arm saw)
- Jigsaw
- Orbital sander
- Brad Nailer
- 5-gallon bucket
- Carpenter's pencil

It's kind of impressive, isn't it? You really don't need a lot of materials or tools to build your own saddle stand!

First you will need to cut the 1" x 12" lumber for the main frame and either end of the saddle stand. Determine how tall you want your saddle stand to be. For this one, the stand is 38" tall. If you want to duplicate this stand, cut 2 pieces of the 1" x 12" lumber to 38".

Now you will need to use a 5-gallon bucket. And on one side of the the 1" x 12" wood, place the bucket. You will want to have the bucket be in the center of the

wood so that the arch of the circle will be at the top center of the board. Now using your pencil, trace around the top of the bucket.

Once you are finished, use the jigsaw to cut the top of the board.

After it is done, place your uncut 38” piece of 1” x 12” lumber, on a flat surface and then put the cut one on top of it. Make sure the bottoms are matched up and that the pieces are exactly equal and then trace around the round section on the top board. Then you will repeat the cutting process. When you are done, the 2 boards should match perfectly. If they do not, sand the edges until they are a matched pair.

Now you will need to cut 2 more pieces of 1” x 12” lumber. These 2 pieces will be 24” long, and they will make up the sides of your stand.

Once they are cut, then you can attach them to the 38” upright sections of your saddle stand. These will make the sides, or the base of your saddle stand. You can attach them either with wood screws, finishing nails or my personal favorite, a brad nailer gun that you use with an air compressor. I have found the brad nailer is the quickest and will give your saddle stand a very professional appearance. However, if you don’t have this tool, you can do it with finishing nails or screws, just do it very carefully.

After the side pieces are attached it will be much easier to work with your stand. And now you will need to make some supports for the interior of the base. You will need to cut 2 pieces of the 1” x 3” lumber 20” long and then attach them to the long sides of the interior of your base. Attach them 4” below the top edge. This will allow the shelf to sit flush with the top of the base.

Then you will need to cut a piece of the 1” x 12” lumber to 24” long, this will be the top of the box you just made, and it will sit on the side supports you added. You can also add a handle, or even a piece of 1” x 3” lumber to the center of this piece of wood. You can attach this to the center and stain it all at the same time. If you are adding any other sort of embellishment wait to add it after you have stained the shelf.

After the base is complete, now you can add a shelf, if you like. I really like the shelf as it gives me extra storage space for odds and ends.

To make the shelf supports, cut 2 pieces of 1” x 3” wood and measure off where you want your shelf to go. For my saddle stand, the shelf braces are attached at 20”, so that the top edge is at 23”. This way when I added the shelf (more on this later) it would sit at 24”. You will also need to cut the shelf, and this is made from 1” x 12” wood, cut to 24” long. Do not attach the shelf yet though, you will want to stain or paint this separately, and it is more difficult to stain the underside of the saddle stand with the shelf in place, so wait to put the shelf in when you are done staining the underside of the saddle stand.

Now you will need to cut 7 24” long pieces of 1” x 3” lumber. These will create the round part of the saddle stand which your saddle will sit on. After they are cut, you can sand them down until they are smooth. If you want too, you can stain these slats before you attach them to the round sections of the 1” x 12” part of your stand, or you can attach them raw. By this point of my saddle stand building, I get too excited, and I want to see it finished, so I attach the slats, and stain later.



To attach the slats place one at the top and center of the round section of the saddle stand. Again, you can attach the slats with screws, finishing nails or the brad nailer. Once you have the center section attached, attach the remaining slats. There will be 3 on either side of the center.

The last thing you will need to add are the feet. These will add stability and support to your saddle stand. You will cut 2 pieces of 1” x 3” lumber 20” long,

and then using your jigsaw cut off the top corner on one side of each foot, and then attach them to either end of your saddle stand.

And now the construction of your stand is complete!

Now that you have completed the building of your saddle stand, go over all the wood with your sander. Be sure to sand the shelves that you created that aren't attached yet.

After you are satisfied with the way the stand looks, now you can complete it by staining or painting. On one saddle rack I made, I used a poly-stain that has polyurethane in the stain to make it glossy and shiny. But you can do whatever suits your taste and style.



For the second one I built, I painted it with Rustoleum high gloss white paint. It has made a durable finish that easily wipes clean. And I really like the look of white, because it goes with my grey and white theme very nicely!

If you want, you can add a bridle hook to the end if you like, and an engraved name plate not only completes the saddle stand, but also claims the saddle stand as your own.

If you want to get creative, you could make your saddle stand shorter too, to keep in your car for your saddle to ride if you have to drive out to your barn, or even to keep in your trailer for shows. You would just need to cut the sides shorter, say 24” for example, and then adjust the base box to your needs.



Chapter 16

Custom Tack Trunk and Grooming Tote

While this is not made from the ground up, it is a very easy project. And you can have a nice rolling tack locker AND grooming tote. And then add some personalization, and you can have a custom set for about $150.00. How much would it cost you to buy this readymade? Around $750.00. Which option is more affordable? Yep, this one!

Tack Trunk

To make this tack trunk (or locker), you need to find either a Husky or Stanley brand large rolling tool box. I found my first one at Home Depot, and I got it while it was on sale for about $75.00. And then something amazing happened, my dad gave me one too!



And now that I have 2 rolling tool boxes (aka tack locker) that hold so much stuff! Which is great for keeping things in the tack room organized, as well as

portable storage, say if you were going to a horse show, or if you are boarding your horse at a barn away from your home.



These also work great as emergency kits. A perfect example of an emergency kit you could create with a tool box like this is an evacuation kit for your horse. You could store everything that you would need in case of an emergency evacuation. It isn't something fun to think about, but it's better to be prepared, just in case.

To customize your tack locker you can choose either letter stickers, and apply them to the tote and then cover them with a coat of Mod-Podge.

Or you can create custom name plaques. I made some custom name signs using my Cricut machine, and some wood strips that I bought at the dollar store. These little pieces of wood are the perfect size to make name plates.



I bought wooden signs, and I didn't really care what the signs said, because I was looking to get the most bang for my buck and looking at how many pieces of wood were on the hanger.



The dollar store is the best place I have found for finding multi-purpose pieces of MDF type wood that works perfect for making name signs, art for the barn, or a lot of other uses too.

As a budget equestrian, I go to the dollar store a lot. I am always looking for things that I can use in the barn.

Custom Grooming Tote

Another good option for a space saver is creating a grooming tote using a portable tool box.



I found this 3 piece set at Home Depot. It is made by Husky and it makes the perfect large grooming tote.

This tool box has 3 separate container which will fit even the largest grooming collection. And it's perfect for taking everything with you to a horse show, or if you are stabling at a boarding facility.

This thing will hold everything! The top compartment is good for smaller items, the middle compartment is perfect for brushes, and the third (or bottom) compartment offers taller space for a lot of taller spray bottles.

The multipurpose function of this toolbox is why it is so fantastic to be used as a grooming caddy. It even has a collapsible handle and it's on wheels making it easy to tote around.



And if you are at a show, or don't have a portable saddle stand, it can double as that too.

And then it tucks away neatly against a wall in the tack room!



If you are limited on space, this is a fantastic grooming tote. And honestly, if you are planning on showing, and want to stay organized this grooming caddy is the way to go.

And if you are like me and like to be matchy-matchy, you can either paint your tack and grooming totes or spray paint them. This is what I chose to do, to make them all look similar.



I also find that by making the totes a lighter color, they don't show the dust as much as the original black color does. And you can even add a name plaque so that everyone knows who this tote belongs too, as well as so that it matches all of your other tool boxes, oops, I mean tack totes!

Chapter 17

Hitching/Tie Rack

You can build your own hitching post/rail for your horse for about $50.00, depending on where you live.

I have wanted to make one of these for as long as I have lived in my house, and I have FINALLY built it!!!



It is a hitching rack, but I use a Blocker tie ring that I have connected to the post, because the post has been set into concrete. So, between the blocker tie ring, and the concreted 6″ wide post, it is very safe.

I built this like a rail so I can set my tack, saddles, blankets, etc. on it and have them close by when I am tacking up to ride.

Materials List:

- (2) 6″ wide round posts that are 8 feet long
- (3) 2 x 6 x 8′ boards that I cut down to 7′ long
- Bag of quick-crete concrete mix
- Rustoleum gloss brown paint and a paint brush
- 3″ decking screws
- Wood glue

Tools:

- Shovel
- 18 volt drill
- Circular saw

What You Will Do

First you will need to dig the holes for the posts. I measured how far apart I wanted the posts to be, and it ended up being about 6 ½ feet apart. We used a post hole digger to make quick work of the dirt. The holes are about 4 feet deep.

Once the holes were dug, I put the posts in and tried to make sure they were about the same height. If I had to do it again, I would have used a level just to make sure it was perfect.

When I was happy with the depth of the holes, and how the posts were sitting, I used a half a bag of the concrete mix and dumped it into each hole. And then I filled the rest of the hole with the dirt that had been removed. I did use a tamper to make sure the dirt was firmly packed around each post.

I waited a day, and then I secured the 2 x 6's to the posts. It probably isn't going to do much, but I did add a big glob of wood glue to the posts before securing the 2 x 6 piece of wood with decking screws.

When I put on the front and back pieces, I had my husband help me, because I am not talented enough to try and hold them up on my own.

Once all the boards were on, I took scraps of the 2 x 6's and attached them to either end, just to make the hitching rail look more complete.

Then it was time to paint. I made sure to paint all exposed areas of the wood, including the posts. I also did the inside of the boards too, to make sure any parts that may meet the weather will be protected.

After the paint dried, I attached the blocker tie ring to the post so I can tie up my horses at the post, and I know it is secure, and they will be safe.

The rail part is very handy for setting stuff on, which is the main reason I built it this way, but for safety reasons, I probably will not be tying my horses to the 2 x 6 section, I know it is sturdy, but if there is one thing I have learned from owning horses is to always expect the unexpected, and if they can find a way to get hurt, they will!

I bought my blocker ring through State Line Tack, I think it cost around $30.00, and it was well worth the investment. I am pretty sure you can find these blocker rings everywhere now for that price.



And now after having this hitching post for about 5 years, I can tell you, it is sturdy. None of the boards have pulled loose, and the posts are secure in the ground.

I have added two rubber mats in front of the hitching post to have a bonafide grooming space. The mats have made such a difference when the ground gets wet. It helps to keep the mud away, and allows me to work around my horse without turning into a muddy mess when the weather gets wet.

This past summer I did paint the hitching post white with Kilz 2 primer so that it matches the rest of my grey and white color scheme. The only problem is the

white shows all the dirt. I did repaint it with Rustoleum high gloss white to help make the dirt not be able to adhere as well, but the white is still really difficulty to keep clean.



This is one thing to consider when you are choosing your paint color. Number one, you want to make sure the paint you choose will compliment your color scheme (if you like to be matchy-matchy, like I do) and also how concerned re you with seeing the dirt. If you want a white or light colored hitching post, make sure to use a high gloss paint so the dirt can be easily wiped away.

The same goes for dark paint. The dark color will show dirt and dust. So having a high gloss paint job will make it so you can easily wipe away the dirt, but it will still probably show some dirt after you have had it for a long time.



It’s also important to think about where you will be building your hitching post. For mine, it is close to the pens, but not too close that a horse in the end pen can reach the hitching post. It’s also close, but not too close to my little red barn, which is where my tack room is.

If you are making your hitching post a permanent addition to your property, make sure you are happy with it’s placement. Because once it’s in, it’s in!

Chapter 18
Horse Blanket Hang Up



If you have your horse at home, like I do, and you have a lot of blankets, sheets, and coolers, you know these pieces of horse clothing can take up a LOT of space. And one way to remedy this is to be able to hang them up.

This is also a good idea to help your blankets dry out if they get wet. And while there are many types of blanket hangers you can buy ready made, they can be very expensive. I don't know about you, but I have a limited budget, and I would rather not spend all of my money on a blanket hanging system, even if it is really cool. So I came up with an affordable option.

How To Make A Blanket Hanger Rack

Materials

- 1 2" x 4" x 8' long piece of wood
- 1 2" x 6" x 4 long piece of wood
- 4 Heavy duty L shaped shelving brackets 12" long (hopefully they have the screws included, otherwise you will need 1" heavy duty screws)
- Paint or stain

- 3” decking screws
- Sand paper
- Liquid nails construction adhesive

Tools

- 18 volt drill
- Drill bit
- Paint brushes
- Orbital sander
- Radial arm saw (or saw for the wood)

Once you have gathered all your supplies, the first thing you need to decide is where you are going to hang your blanket rack. And be sure to have it tall, because let’s face it, horse blankets can be LONG! If possible, you want your blankets to be up off the ground. But, you don’t want to hang it so high that you can’t reach it. You will have to lift the blanket off the ground to hang on the hanger. Find a place in your tack room that you have at least 4 feet of space (or longer if you have a lot of blankets to hang up) that you can have a tall and wide space to accommodate your blankets.

Which brings me to the next tip, selecting an L bracket.

You want to be sure that the L shelving brackets you buy are strong. Don’t get cheap and buy this style:



You will be wasting your money and your time. So spend a little bit extra, and get the heavy duty brackets.

I found these at Walmart. They are 8” x 12” long. You can find them on Amazon too, but they are a little more expensive. And you don’t have the opportunity to pick them up and feel the quality of the brackets. This is why I opted for these. I could see them, touch them, and determine they were what I needed to make this blanket rack.

This rack is 44” or just about 4 feet long. It accommodates 4 brackets allowing 4 blankets to be hung up. If you have more blankets, you will just need to make the back board section longer. Just be sure to keep the blanket hangers at least 8 inches apart. You can space them out more if you like. But I found that 8 inches gives enough space for air to circulate and I can remove a blanket without disrupting the others.

Take the 2 x 4, and measure of 2 48” long pieces and cut them with a saw. Then sand the edges smooth.

Next you have to connect the 2 pieces of wood together. I did this by hanging the 2 x 4 wood onto the wall where the blanket hanger will be living permanently.

Apply some liquid nails to the back of the 2 x 4’s before you hang the wood.

Allow plenty of tie for this part of your project to dry before moving on to the next part of the project. If you leave it alone overnight, this should be a sufficient amount of time for it to dry.



After the glue has dried, now you get to paint or stain the backboard of your hanger. I chose to use some grey paint that we had left over from when we

painted our house. It's exterior paint and it matches the decor of my tack room. I love grey, all shades of grey.



Then you need to let your paint (or stain) completely dry as well.

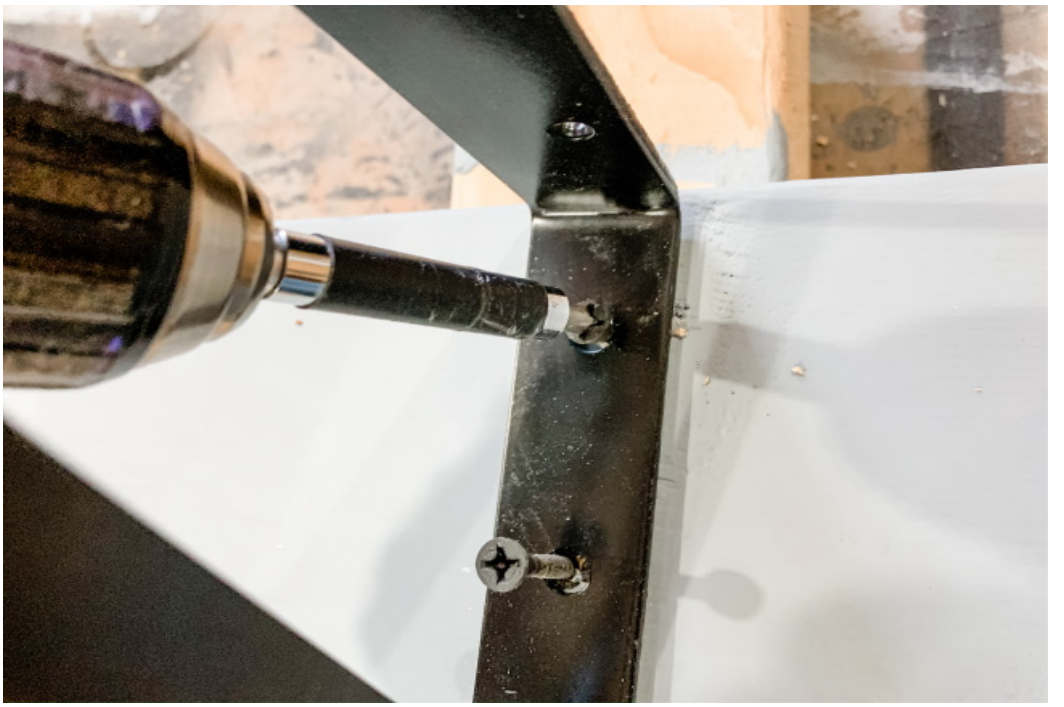
Once it is dry, then you can plot out where you will be hanging up your hangers.

Measure off how far apart you want your hangers to be. For mine, I measured off 9 inches. That gives me a little space on the ends but allows each hanger to be spaced out evenly. Now can you see why I sunk the backboard screws at 4"?

Make a little mark with a pencil where you will be placing each bracket.

Then take a step back, and see if you like how it looks. If you are happy with your configuration lightly trace the bottom of the bracket onto your backer board.

Next attach each bracket to the backer board.



And once that is done, all that is left to do is take the hanger out to your tack room and hang it.

Since you will be hanging this fairly high, it does help to have someone with you to assist holding the rack while you hang it. And to make sure the wood does not split while you hang it, pre-drill your screw holes.

To hang the rack, I used 3” long decking screws. And I used a level to make sure it was straight when I mounted the rack.



This is easy to do. After you secure the rack with one screw(not all the way tightened down) you place the level on top, and move the rack until it is level. Once it is, go ahead and attach another screw on the other end.

Take a step back and see how it looks! And for a little extra support, add 2 more screws on either end to secure the rack in place.



Now all that is left to do is hang those blankets on your lovely new rack!

All you have to do is secure the front hooks and straps on the front of the blanket, and hang it up, just like that.

And now you have a wall mounted blanket rack that allows you to store your horse's blankets out of the way, but you still have easy access to them.

And hanging the blankets like this also allows for them to dry out if they are wet.



Affordable Blanket Hanger Option



Now if you are looking for a really affordable option, that takes no time at all, you can use bike hooks to hang your blankets. I did this for a long time, before I made my wall mounted version. You can find bicycle hooks online for around $11.00 for 8 of them. This is a very affordable option, and it works really well too.

It does help of you have a drill to get the hole started for the screw part of the hook. But once it is in place, it is easy to hang the blanket. Just be sure to secure this hook into a solid piece of wood. If you just screw it into dry wall, it will pull out as soon as you hang the blanket.

Chapter 19
Making Over Your Tack Room

All right, this is the part you have been waiting for! This is where you determine how you are going to configure your tack room and put in all of the furniture you have been making.

The first thing you need to do is draw out a floor plan of your tack room. You are basically making a blueprint of your tack room and going to design it so that you utilize all of the space as efficiently as possible.

Think about how you walk through the space, and what is important for you. A well organized space will make it easier to get what you need, when you need it.

And something very important to think about when you are crafting your idea is to make sure that everything has a home. Meaning you have space for everything you could possible need when it comes to your horse.

So get out some paper, and start drawing.

Think about how the space is laid out, and what type of walls you have to work with. You also want to make sure that you have planned for all of the new furniture to go in.



It's important to do this first, and see if your plan will work BEFORE you start adding things like blanket racks, saddle racks, bridle racks, etc. If you have a working blueprint, you won't be spending your time reconfiguring your tack room later on.

You can determine if you can get by with separate saddle racks, or if it makes more sense to use a vertical style saddle rack.

You can come up with the space you will need for bridle racks, and blanket hangers. Or how many different ways to hang your saddle pads are available to you.

And you can make sure to keep space for things like grooming boxes, tack trunks, and extra hooks for what seems to be an endless number of things that work best hanging up.

The biggest thing to keep in mind is how easy it is to get what you need when you need it.



I have had many tack room make overs, or tack room updates. I even added wood flooring to the walls so I would have more space to hang things.

Lets just say, I have done a lot of projects, and then had to reconfigure how my tack room is laid out to make the most of the space.

It's all about using space effectively to get the most out of it. It will help to keep you organized, and make things easy to find.

And you could even do the blueprint before you start building these different projects. This way you will have a game plan of what is most important for you to build first, and then what your space will allow for.

And one piece of advice, if you don't need it, don't try and force it to make it work. All it will end up doing is taking up valuable space in your tack room. So if you don't really need it, get rid of it.

However, on the other hand, if you have a piece of furniture that you can utilize in your tack room, and it makes sense, use it!

I did this with a couple of shelving units that we no longer were using in our home. I brought them out to the barn, and now I have added storage space.

The bookcases have moved throughout the years, but they offer a great deal of storage for all of the extras I seem to accumulate.

And once you have come up with your plan, plan on dedicating at least a full day to getting everything put away correctly.

This means pulling everything out of your tack room, cleaning everything, form the floors to the ceiling, and only then do you start moving things back inside.

And if you don't have the luxury of a designated tack room, you can make a smaller space act as a tack room.

For example, I have a bedroom closet that acts as my wintertime tack room. I don't ride as much in the winter, and I do not leave my good leather tack out in the cold. So I needed a place to store my valuables while they are not being used outside.

This is also really important for perishable items, like fly sprays, and grooming products that shouldn't freeze.

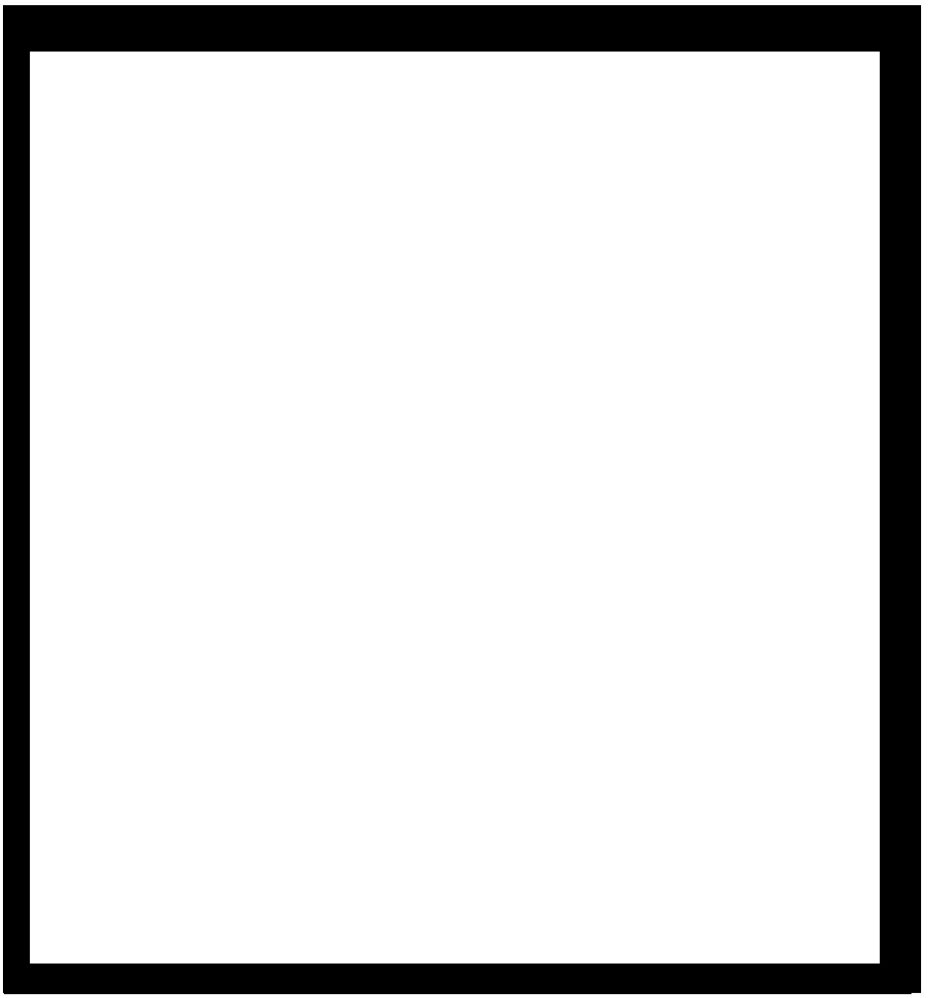
Then I can simply close the closet doors, and my tack closet hides all of my horsey items that aren't really a part of my decor. I think my husband appreciates this, since my tack closet is in his office.

Again, I started off with a drawing of how to use this space efficiently. That way I could make changes or alterations before I started drilling into the walls of the closet!

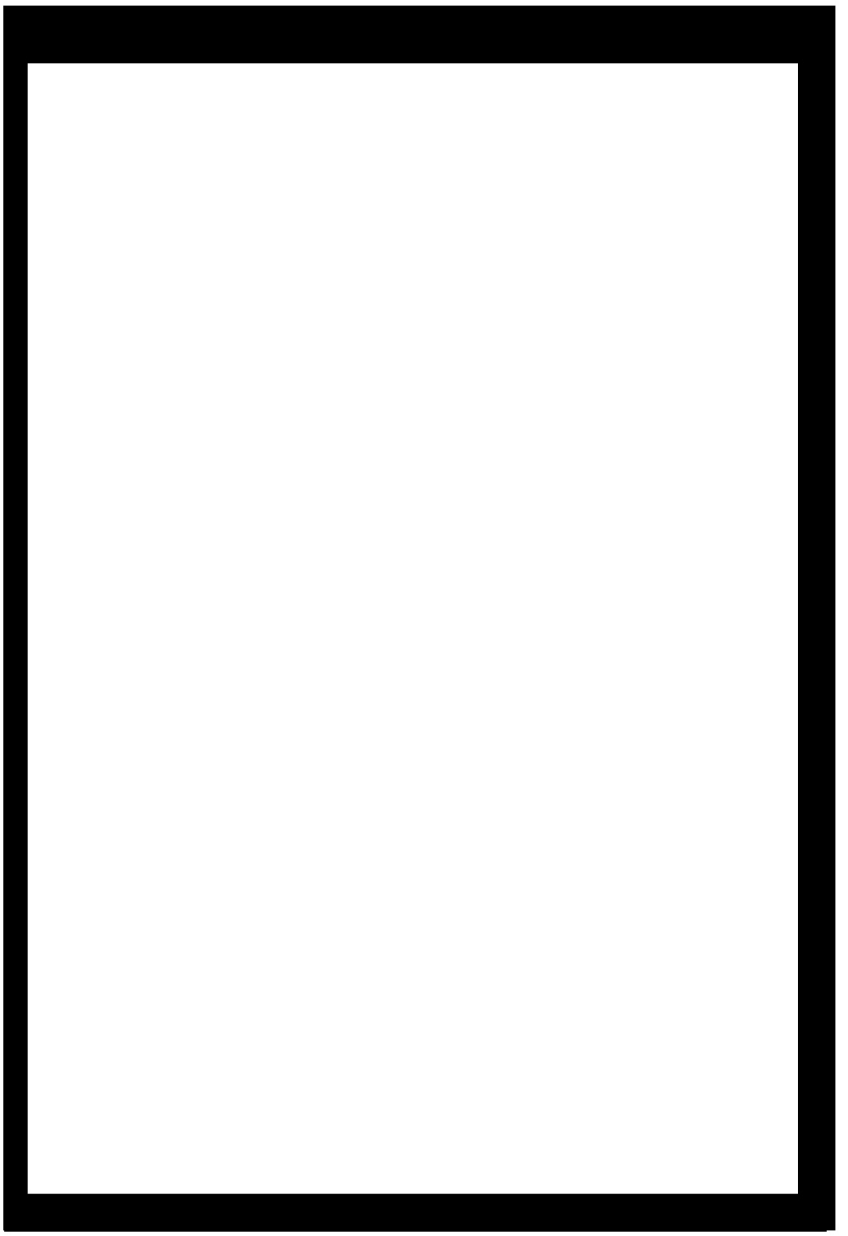
Making Plans – The Blueprint

So now that you have all of the instructions to build the furniture, lets plan how you are going to organize it and plan your tack room. Preferably before you start building everything!

Here are some blanks for you to plan out your tack room.



Tack Room Planning



Tack Room

Planning

Make Some Tack Room DIY's!

Well that is it! You have come to the end of the book. Hopefully this was helpful for you to be able to make some items for your tack room that will help you to make the most of the time you have with your horse.

The most precious commodity we all have is time. And being able to use the time we have with our horses seems even more precious.

If everything you have for your horse has a place to live, you will be more organized and can send more time with your horse, instead of looking for whatever it is that you need to be with your horse.

I have seen some pretty disastrous tack rooms, and at one time, mine was one of them! And when you have a huge mess that you have to sort and search through, well, this makes it take twice as long to get what you need, and even longer when you have to search through piles of tack to find that bit you have been wanting to use.

So stop wasting time, get organized, and get out there with your horse. Enjoy the time you have with him instead of getting frustrated. And be proud of yourself for taking on these projects! You can do one, or all of them. That is up to you. The most important thing to do though is get started.

About The Author



I hate writing about myself in third person. It sounds weird, don't you think? So I'm just going to tell you a little bit about myself, like I'm talking to you.

I am and always will be horse crazy. I got my first horse (a miniature mule) when I was 12 years old. And through the years, I have always been a DIY type person. I was never able to afford the best of the best, because there was always something that took priority with my income. But that doesn't mean I didn't get what I wanted when it came to my horses.

I am always coming up with new ideas or wondering how I could make something for myself to make my horse time even better. Or how to be able to afford a really nice piece of tack. That's just how my brain works, always thinking and coming up with projects whether for myself, or as an opportunity to earn some extra money for something horsey.

And once I moved to my home where I live now, and I was able to keep my horses at home, my DIY brain went into overdrive!

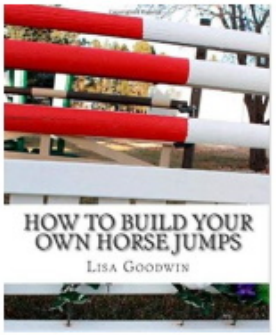
And over the past 15 years I have come up with a lot of ideas. And to help my brain stay organized, I started a YouTube channel (The Budget Equestrian) where I have over 540 videos as well as my blog where I share my ideas with you.

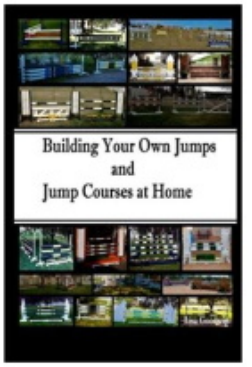
My YouTube channel: The Budget Equestrian

My Blog: https://www.budgetequestrian.com/

I figured I wasn't the only one who was looking for ways to DIY equestrian related items, so I decided to share my ideas with you.

This is the third equestrian related book I have written, and the first that is on the wider topic of tack room helper style stuff. My first book is all about building your own horse jumps, and the second, and more complete book is building horse jumps and courses at home.









And I have even written fiction stories, Within Dreams, and its sequel, Dark Dreams. And all of my books can be found on Amazon.

I don't think I'm done yet either. I know I have at least a couple of book ideas left in my brain that I need to transform into a written book. Tie will tell when they will finally come to fruition!