

THE TRAINER'S CORNER

For an instructor (especially for a freelance instructor who travels from barn to barn), it is a good idea to keep things in order. Pieces of equipment are often gone just when you need them the most. This is how it often used to be for me. When I needed my things they could have been on the fence, in the covered arena, in the outside arena, in the office or in the car. Does this sound familiar?

We seldom see an arena that was built with the trainer in mind. In the summer we stand in the hot sun and dust, and in the winter in the rain or biting cold. Actually very little is required to make our working environment considerably better. A parasol, a lean-to shed, a windscreen and a sensible chair are some of the things that can make life a little more bearable in the arena. On occasion, I have requested a horse trailer be brought out so I can sit there. It works like magic!

When I drive out to riding clubs during the winter, I always take a small electric heater with me and a heating blanket. As a trainer in Scandinavia, it's something I can't do without. Then one day I got tired of this and decided to change the situation. In one corner of the arena I built a "trainer's corner" (see picture). Next to it is a cupboard for equipment. In it you can find: dressage whips in different lengths, side reins, a longe line, a hole punch, a hoof tester, a hoof pick, etc.

The ceiling of my corner has radiant heat for cold winter days and there is a comfortable chair that suits the instructor's tired back. Now chaos has been averted, order is restored and even the horses are pretty satisfied.

I have a large briefcase (more like a doctor's bag), which I always carry with me. Inside are my calendar/appointment book, head phones/walkie talkies, extra batteries, test booklet, rules and regulations, gloves, sunglasses, hoof pick, receipt book, pen, telephone list for all my students, band aids, stop watch (for checking free styles), cell phone, etc.

The need to work in a well-ordered environment obviously varies from one trainer to another but there can be no doubt that we work best when things are organized and convenient.

