



Workout Time Is Essential

USDF members agree: To ride effectively, physical fitness is imperative—and riding alone isn't enough.

Christina Bevill works with a personal trainer twice a week. "It has helped strengthen my core and endurance, which is essential while riding," she says.

Dale Lewis, Duluth, MN, says she relies on Pilates, another core-focused regimen.

Megan McIsaac, Oregon, WI, participates in a variety of activities. "Weight training keeps me more fit and stronger in my core. Yoga maintains my flexibility. Zumba helps me with coordination. I love dressage, but I think you need to be in shape if you want to succeed. It is hard work, period!"

Competing in other sports has benefitted triathlete Lara Moody's riding. "Triathlon racing and training keeps me fit and strengthens my core," says Moody, of Ames, IA. "Additionally, participating in competitive sports regularly has taught me to remain focused throughout my dressage tests and to utilize nervous energy."

How Does She Do It? One Member's Story

Kelly Griffith, 38, of St. Joseph, IL, readily admits that she was crazy to buy the old farm that had been her home away from home as a young girl.

"My husband and I actually kept joking about it," Griffith says. But the old Arabian-horse farm spoke to her; and despite reservations, she and her husband bought the place, complete with a 1950s-era house, three barns, an arena, and inadequate fencing. The house was livable, but everything else had fallen into disrepair.

An attorney and former prosecutor who now teaches a law class at the Police Training Institute, Griffith and her husband have spent the last two years working on the farm. They refurbished, refinished, and replaced until they'd created a functional facility with a small boarding operation and Griffith's own three horses.

A self-described "hummingbird" who's always in motion, Griffith shared her tips for getting everything done.

Surround yourself with people who can help. Whether it's boarders or the hired college student who lives in an apartment above the arena, Griffith has learned to let reliable people lend a hand. "I like to do things a certain way, and I've had to learn to delegate," she says.

Griffith also credits her husband, Corbitt, as being the "number-one reason" she is able to do what she does. "He does the mowing, repairs, moves all the hay, spreads the manure. If it weren't for him, I couldn't do it."

Make a schedule and stick with it. In order to keep three horses tuned up, Griffith rides two a day, with everybody getting a day off on Friday.

Take advantage of flexible career opportunities. Griffith knows it isn't possible for everyone, but with a flexible teaching schedule, she finds more blocks of time. (This wasn't the case when she was a prosecutor.) "My schedule is kind of crazy. Some days I work from 1:00 to 10:00 p.m., and some days I'll work a twelve-hour day."

Griffith says she's on her feet from 6:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. but wouldn't have it any other way.

"I have a hard time just sitting and relaxing," she confesses.

Liz Bromberg, Chapel Hill, NC, cross-trains—and so does her mare. "Last year I started my mare on a hill-training program (fifteen minutes per day minimum). As a result, the 'hunter's bump' on her rump has disappeared beneath a layer of muscle. Now that she is stronger, my mare is also using herself more effectively; her gaits have improved; she is comfortable with the more difficult physical demands of compression and engagement; and she is more confident and enthusiastic than ever before." And yes, Bromberg's dressage scores have improved, she says.

Solutions to Other Challenges

In these tough economic times, it's not surprising that some USDF members have been forced to get extra-creative with their finances.



BALANCED: Griffith showing her 20-year-old Trakehner gelding, Alistair, at Prix St. Georges on the way to her USDF silver medal