



Grooming Challenge Winner

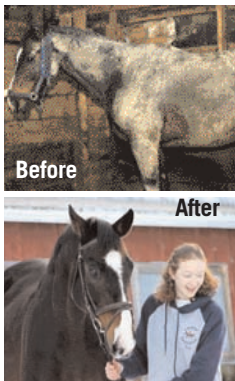
The results are in from the *Horse Illustrated* Grooming Challenge contest.

Amy Conforti of Maine had the winning entry with "Pig-Pen"

My Thoroughbred, Wally, loves being dirty. Anytime it rains, I know it is going to take me double the normal time to clean him before I ride. Mud is my worst enemy and his best friend. When I turn him out, he only walks about 2 or 3 feet before he is down and rolling around. I've come to the point where I barely even groom him when I'm done riding because he is just going to be filthy in a matter of seconds. My barn owner told me that he watched Wally roll, let the mud dry, roll again, let it dry, et cetera, until he was completely caked with mud.

Believe it or not, there is a gorgeous dark bay, almost black coat underneath all of that dirt and manure. Wally now has the nickname of "Pig-Pen" around the barn, since he seems to leave a trail of dirt everywhere he goes! In this worst-case scenario ("before" photo above), I would normally have just hosed him down, but being late winter, I couldn't do that. Instead, I was grooming for 45 minutes to get all of the ground-in dirt off, which ended up all over me.

Thank goodness for Absorbine products, ShowSheen especially, as it somehow makes Wally's coat shine by the end of the grooming session. It's my secret weapon to get all of the mud off of him. ShowSheen isn't just for shows. It's also great at keeping my "Pig-Pen" clean, whether he wants to be clean or not.



Amy will be able to keep Wally clean with her grand prize grooming basket from Absorbine, including ShowSheen products and more.

BOB LANGRISH



More Winners ONLINE



We gave away 10 bottles of ShowSheen.

Visit HorseChannel.com/GroomingChallenge for the winners.

Grooming Solutions

Absorbine grooming expert Molly O'Brien solves your top grooming problems.

Here are the top three grooming problems you submitted in the *Horse Illustrated* Grooming Challenge:

1 Mud

The first step to mud removal is to let the mud dry. Short of rinsing your horse off with a hose, or trashing more towels than you can imagine, there's no good way to remove wet mud. For dry mud, you should start with a good curry comb, using it in the traditional circular pattern. Be careful not to use it on the face or below the knees and hocks. For those sensitive areas, use either a specifically designed soft curry, or a soft brush.

During shedding season—which often goes hand-in-hand with mud season—use a metal shedding blade next. It helps remove some of the dirt you've loosened with the curry comb, and of course helps with getting rid of the old winter coat. As with the curry, don't use the blade on the face or legs, and be gentle on the barrel and underside if your horse has a ticklish belly.

After currying, and using the shedding blade if necessary, the next step is a stiff body brush. Brush in the direction of the hair, giving a solid "flick" away from the horse's body at the end of every brush stroke.

Depending on your horse's sensitivity level, you may gently use this stiff brush on the lower legs, but preferably not on the face.

A soft body brush comes next. As with the stiff brush, give a good flick at the end of each stroke. This brush can be used everywhere, including the face and all the way down the legs.

ABSORBINE EXPERT TIP: To remove any remaining dirt and dust, and to create a nice finished shine, spray ShowSheen on your

horse's body. Using either a clean towel or your hands, wipe in the direction of the hair until the coat is dry and glistening.

2 Tangled Manes and Tails

Your approach depends on the cause of the tangled mess. If it's wet mud, your best bet is to let it dry, then break out the big clumps of dirt by hand. You don't want to apply anything liquid until those clumps are gone, lest you bring the mud back to life.

Once you've removed as much dirt and debris as possible by hand, apply a detangler such as ShowSheen Moisturizing Detangler liberally through the hair, from top to bottom. Next take a wide-tooth comb and start from the bottom, gently combing out the tangles. Take your time working through the knots and snarls, and don't tug or pull.

ABSORBINE EXPERT TIP: When you've successfully combed out all the hair, spray thoroughly with ShowSheen Continuous Spray Finishing Mist. The non-aerosol spray disperses the ShowSheen evenly throughout the hair, while the ShowSheen itself helps keep tangles from reappearing.

3 Stain Removal/ Brighter Whites

For white leg markings, try a close clip on socks and stockings. Using a No. 10 blade on your clippers, clip upward from the bottom against the hair, ending just where the white marking meets the darker hair above. The shorter hair makes it much easier to clean. Don't use anything finer than a No. 10 blade; otherwise, those white markings will look scalped.

To remove stains, your best bet is to use a cleaning product specifically designed for horses. A horse's skin is very sensitive, especially in terms of pH balance, so using a generic shampoo or something like dish soap can potentially disrupt that balance, leaving the horse more prone to skin infections.

Start with a spot treatment formulated for a horse's skin and coat, such as Absorbine's new ShowSheen Stain Remover & Whitener, available soon at a retailer near you. Apply the whitener to the white areas, let it sit a few moments, then give a complete bath with an equine shampoo. To help keep everything clean after a bath, spray ShowSheen over your horse's entire body—skipping the saddle area—and rub in the direction of the hair. ShowSheen repels dirt and dust, which helps keep those white areas truly white.

ABSORBINE EXPERT TIP: Too cold for a bath? Try Absorbine's Miracle Groom, which is designed to help clean your horse's coat and remove stains without using water. Finish with ShowSheen Continuous Spray Finishing Mist. The non-aerosol sprayer distributes the ShowSheen very evenly in a fine mist, so you don't end up with any blotchy wet areas that might get chilled. ☐

Molly O'Brien works in the marketing department at W. F. Young, Inc., the maker of Absorbine products. She is a lifelong horse owner, and currently owns two Morgan mares.



With so many great entries, it was hard to pick just one winner. We selected some of our favorite and most unique grooming challenges to share with you at HorseChannel.com/GroomingChallenge