International Women’s Day – Juggling motherhood with mucking out!

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We all know equestrians are rock stars! Name me another demographic who juggle horses through winter mud and darkness, fish hay seeds out from underwear and get to work on time - with brushed hair?!

But just how tough is it when you throw in the chaos of raising children too? We spoke to some super Mums ahead of International Women’s Day to find out how they survive and thrive too!

SPILLERS own Superwoman Danni Twose has found the mental battle tough – “When you become a parent it feels like you lose your identity, and your hobbies get put to one side. You must remind yourself you’re not ‘only’ a parent and ensure you have your own quality time too.”

“Being a parent to both horses and children is so rewarding and a huge privilege, and with good time management it can work. When the children were younger, I would always utilize nap time as a cheeky excuse to put on my jodhpurs and go for a quick canter round the fields. The 1–2-hour window was a blessing.”

Danni says she had to learn to accept that her horse isn’t as immaculately turned out for a gentle plod round the village as she once would have been and admits “The stresses of being a parent never go away, so just enjoy every ride. A happy Mum creates a happy home.”

Equine vet and Mum of three Leila Loveday jokes “I write A LOT of lists and spin a lot of plates. If it’s not on the list it’s likely forgotten and, in all honesty, I drop a few plates along the way”. Leila’s three children play a lot of sport and planning is essential. “It’s not uncommon for me to drop one child off at football on the way to Pony Club with another, while my husband heads in the other direction for cricket training”.

Leila’s horsebox makes regular appearances at school pick up. “If I can squeeze in a lesson at 2pm and be outside the school by 3.30pm I’ll make it happen. My horse is my “me time” and non-negotiable. I don’t compete much these days as the kids’ hobbies come first, but I do ride almost every day, often at 6am before the kids wake up. Being a vet, I can often juggle half an hour watching a school play between calls. My clients know I’m bonkers and work on Leila time, but I always show up and give them plenty of time.”

Riding coach Emma Lacey has mentally battled with horse ownership since becoming a Mum of Two. She says “I’ve nearly given up several times but since I’ve had (new horse) King, I’ve realised having the right horse is key. He’s so easy, if I don’t ride him every day he doesn’t become silly and if I want to take him out jumping without much training, he just gets on with it”.

“Breakfast is the most stressful time of day as every mammal needs feeding at the same time! Having horses at home has its pros and cons” says Emma. “If I had to go to a livery yard twice a day it would be very difficult, and I would recommend getting help at one end of the day, especially just after maternity leave”. Having the stables by the back door means Emma can get routine jobs finished before the children wake up. “King is happy living out, as are the kids’ ponies and this has taken a huge strain off as my last horse couldn’t.”

The juggling too many balls theme is reoccurring, but all Mums agree, the minute you get on your horse and don’t hear word ‘Mummy’ every two minutes you know it’s worth it!

Super Mums’ Top Tips

- It’s ok to park your hobby as you adjust to becoming a Mum. Whether your horse has a few months off or goes on loan, give yourself time.
- Set the alarm early! Try and get as much done as possible before the children wake up and need your attention.
- Invest in good head torches!
- Lower your expectations and be kind to yourself! So long as your horse’s welfare needs are met it doesn’t matter if their mane is untidy.
- Schedule in time to ride around work, kids’ clubs etc, even if just 2 or 3 times a week.
- Find reliable back up before emergencies occur - paid or not, make sure you have support for times you’re unable to get to the yard, kids are sick or you’re working away.
- If you’re on a livery yard, buddy up with someone who doesn’t mind watching your children when you ride and you can help them too.
- A lot of fun can be had with a bucket and a sponge, whilst ‘Mummy’ cracks on with the riding or yard duties

We’d love to hear how you juggle the madness of being a Mum to both human and horse. Leave a comment with your top tips to help other Mums out!

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