

## The Frugal Show Mom

For the most part, mothers everywhere have always been the ones who have made sacrifices for their family and sought out the most creative and resourceful way of doing things. Show moms are no exception. With the current state of the economy, the responsibility of keeping their riders in the ring and their horses maintained in the manner to which they have become accustomed to falls squarely on the shoulders of the show mom.

Now that's not to say that all the dad's out there aren't offering suggestions to help cut costs. It's just that for the most part their suggestions are usually more in the form of cutting the expenses of everyone else, horses included, while still clinging to their 300 movie and 1400 high definition sports channels on Direct TV.

Encouraging us to learn how to cut our own hair, shop less and fire the cleaning lady are not the type of suggestions we are looking for. Oh, and let's not forget it was your very own rider who innocently suggested you start to walk the brisk five miles to and from your office each day so that you can "conserve gas" for more trips to the barn each week.

No, what you are looking for here are the subtle and slightly more covert changes you can make around your house that no one in your family would ever suspect.

For example, you could start substituting generic brand cereal—which no one will ever eat—in brand name cereal boxes. You can get creative with all the leftovers in your refrigerator by throwing a jar of spicy salsa over the top and calling it dinner. This works best with any kind of fish filet that everyone turned their nose up at several nights before. Served with chips, in front of the TV, this makes a very credible meal despite a few random complaints that the chips are a bit "fishy." And if you are feeling particularly environmentally conscious and you are handy with a screwdriver you can install a low flow showerhead in all the bathrooms in your house.

Now initially with this last suggestion, as you can well imagine, there might be some complaints about the water pres-

sure, but if you can keep your husband from wanting to dig up the entire front yard so he can see, "where the clog is," you know you are home free. However, a word of warning here: If he should dig up the front yard while you are otherwise engaged in your quest for cutting costs, any savings you would have noticed in your reduced water bill will be completely negated by the replacement costs for new sod, a new irrigation system and quite possibly for repairs to the water main for your entire neighborhood.

Amazingly enough, about the only thing you won't have to worry about replacing are the cable wires that bring you 300 movie and 1400 high definition sports channels.

Another suggestion that every mom on the planet can get behind is instituting a household rule that implies you actually have to wear your clothes more than once before having them washed or dry cleaned. Unfortunately, every mom on the planet also knows this will never happen in their lifetime. Why? Because you know that most of the clothes that are lying on the floor, just adjacent to the empty clothes hamper, may have only been tried on for a split nano second before being discarded into a heap on the floor. Any covert attempt on your part to pick them up, re-fold them and put them back in a drawer will only result in your rider asking you if you were still unable to do laundry this week because of the broken water main in the front yard.

But at the end of the day, when all the advice and helpful suggestions from your family don't add up to the significant savings you were looking for there is still one final option to consider. The "students-in-training" program. Every community has one, it's just a matter of how much life insurance you have and how committed you are to your rider's future. Not only can you get your hair cut and colored by an energetic hip-hop teenager for \$1.50 plus tip, you can also sign, in triplicate, all the personal injury release forms and have your teeth cleaned for just 99 cents more. The fact that you will have to go home immediately and shave your head and stuff two boxes of cotton balls in your mouth to

control the bleeding, all while cooking dinner and re-folding laundry, should have little impact, if any, in your personal pursuit to control household expenses. Only later, during dinner, when someone innocently asks if perhaps, "you have done something different with your hair?" do you suppress the urge to stand up and scream, "WHAT HAIR?" and continue to drink your dinner through a straw and quietly make a mental note to cancel Direct TV and all NFL channels immediately.

Besides, getting flustered will only start your mouth bleeding again and at this point, you are probably completely out of cotton balls.

And then it dawns on you one day while you are walking home from work, in the rain without your umbrella

because you foolishly left it in the car you are no longer driving except to the barn, that being a horse owner is really one of the best things you have ever done for your child. Aside from all the ribbons and the responsibilities and the lessons learned, riding horses is their passion. And if supporting your rider means you're the only one that makes little sacrifices along the way then that's what you will do because that's what show moms do best.

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*NOTE: The views expressed by the author are her reflections and hers alone and should not be seen in any way as a reflection upon her daughter or her mechanically challenged husband. Any similarity to either one of them again is purely coincidental. Special thanks to the assorted group of plumbers who helped us restore the water lines in our neighborhood. And to all the neighbors that were inconvenienced by our alleged "clog" just know it really could have been worse if certain power tools had not been under lock and key. The publishers of Saddle & Bridle Magazine are sincerely thankful that they don't live in the author's neighborhood but hope that the reader will take the tongue in cheek musings of a nervous show mom with the humor in which it was intended. You can email the author at Patti@Adestudio.com.*

