



You Oughta Be In Pictures

By Kenda Lenseigne

A recent study from the Social Science Research Network found that 65% of the US population are visual learners. Visualization works as a teaching and learning tool because we can process visual data better than any other type. It's believed that the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, with 90 percent of information transmitted to the brain being visual.

Sounds a little nerdy and sciency for an article dedicated to mounted shooting, doesn't it? Before you yawn and turn the page, let's take that nugget and apply it to our mounted shooting plan. Whether you are just getting started or you are a seasoned veteran, everyone had to learn along the way. Being shown what to do can often prove more successful than simply reading words on paper, or hearing it in a lecture.

Let's take for example, something elementary such as learning how to saddle a horse. Reading a paragraph on a page or listening to someone explain it and then trying to apply the steps on your own with no photos or video to accompany could probably prove extremely frustrating. Clicking on a YouTube video or having someone show you the steps can solve the task within a few minutes.

Raise your hand if you've ever consulted the internet for a video to see how something is done... right, you're in that 65%.

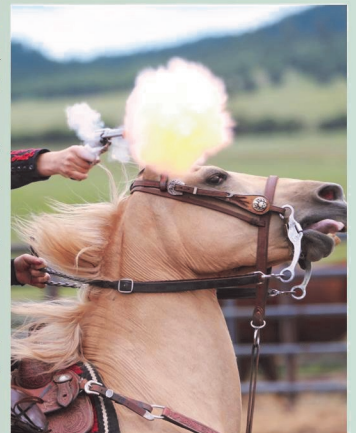
Thanks to the invention of the smart phone, and the camera that is hard wired inside nearly every device out there (minus all you die-hard flip phone users), we have no excuse not to use video or photos as a learning tool. Here are some examples:

For training: It's often tough to remember everything we might have done well or not so well while out on the

course, especially at a competition when there's so much that goes through our mind. For people who give advice (solicited or not), video helps to see what others see in us when we practice or compete, to know if we are helping or hindering our horse, looking ahead or down for our holster, pulling on the reins unnecessarily or keeping our horse free.

For a boost: Using photos or video can also help us gain confidence in our ability to be the rider that we aspire to be. I often hear, "that was a mess!", when a student finishes a run. I simply hand them the camera to review their video. 9 times out of 10 there will be a sudden sigh followed by the most common comment, "wow, it felt way worse than it looked!" Watching our best runs will help us relive the feeling we had when everything fell perfectly into place, and yes, we were going as fast as we thought!

For inspiration: From personal experience, I have hit many ruts over the last 20 years in this sport and have always gone back to using video as a source to see where I can improve. I've gone so far as to watch them frame by frame to pin point both the best parts of a run, and areas that need work. I cannot stress enough how important it is to keep the scale balanced when reviewing videos, meaning, don't be too hard on yourself - when we're instinctually focusing on the bad and the ugly, we must also point out the good.





Tips:

1. Keep all of your videos to review later, even the ones that tempt you to bury them under a rock and set them on fire. Sometimes we don't realize how much we've improved until we see our old self at a later date.

2. Photos can give us just as much insight, but in a different way. If you find yourself scrolling through your photos at the booth, and have a hard time finding one that is worthy of a frame, let that be a goal, to be the "never take a bad picture" person. Photos are an excellent way to check our form and to know if we are working as a cohesive team with our horse.

3. Zoom in, but not too far. Make sure your camera operator knows how to use the device, and is also knowledgeable enough to use the zoom feature. Watching a video that looks like a flea riding an ant will not do anyone any good; that also applies to zooming in too far or videoing the ground.

4. If you're entrusted with the camera, remember these simple tips: 1) Dismount if you're on a horse as they can move and it can be a challenge to stay steady. 2) Try to find a place to video where the sun is at your

back so the rider is clear and well lit. 3) Check that there is nothing in the foreground before you press record, meaning, if you're spectating from a lawn chair and the arena rail is in the way, the video will be difficult to view and learn from.


5. If you don't have a cell phone with a decent camera, check online for deals on small portable cameras and be sure to look for one with durable features. Cameras with external zoom lenses can jam easily in a dusty environment. If you don't have these types of resources, you can always opt to buy your professional photos and videos if they are offered at the shoot.



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