

How to Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk, and Dress the Part for a Proper Foxhunt

Foxhunting is deeply rooted in tradition, and many traditions which originated on the hunt field are still carried out today in other riding disciplines, like plaiting manes or wearing a stock tie for dressage. While some of these items vary for different hunts, this list is applicable to ours.

Formal Foxhunting Attire



- **Helmet or Riding Hat:** Although you might see some riders wearing top hats or hunt caps without a chinstrap, an ASTM-approved helmet is generally recommended anytime you're riding, especially if you're jumping. For formal hunts, your helmet should be black velvet, with the bows in back pointing up (unless you're a member of the staff). Long hair should be pinned up in a bun or tucked into your helmet with a hairnet. Top hats should only be worn with coats with tails.
- **Coat:** Black, lightweight for warm weather or wool frock for winter. Some hunts specify navy, hunter green, or other colored coats for the members and/or masters, but black is usually a safe choice. Three buttons in front, two buttons on each cuff.
- **Shirt:** White, long-sleeved (like a show shirt), tucked in.
- **Stock tie:** A plain white stock tie should be fastened with a plain, gold pin. Some hunts specify a different type of pin, but a plain, straight, gold pin is a classic safe choice.
- **Vest:** A canary yellow or a tattersall vest is acceptable for most hunts.
- **Breeches:** Tan, buff, or canary breeches. For some hunts, masters and red coats will wear white breeches.
- **Boots:** Black leather dress boots are traditional, although many riders wear field boots (with laces).
- **Belt:** Belt should be black and shirt should be tucked in. Leather belts are advised, as they can be substituted as a rein or stirrup leather if needed.
- **Gloves:** Gloves may be black or white, depending on the hunt.

Informal Foxhunting Attire



- **Helmet or Riding Hat:** An ASTM-approved helmet is generally recommended anytime you're riding, especially if you're jumping. For informal hunts, your helmet can be black or brown. Long hair should be pinned up in a bun or tucked into your helmet with a hairnet.
- **Coat:** Tweed (in many patterns) and muted earth tone coats are acceptable for informal hunts and cubbing or autumn hunting. If you don't have one, a black or navy coat is fine, too.
- **Shirt:** A light-colored, collared shirt with sleeves, or an Oxford shirt with a neck tie.
- **Stock tie:** Any color stock tie except white during cubbing season, and for informal hunts white or any other color or plaid or patterned is alright, fastened with a horizontal stock pin. Stock ties may be decorative, but other jewelry is discouraged.
- **Vest:** Vests are optional but can be canary yellow, tattersall, plaid, or patterned.
- **Breeches:** Tan, buff, gray, or rust.
- **Boots:** Black or brown dress or field boots.
- **Belt:** Belt should match the boots and shirt should be tucked in. Leather belts are advised, as they can be substituted as a rein or stirrup leather if needed.
- **Gloves:** Black leather, brown leather, or string gloves. Stock pins may be decorative.

Don't have some of these items? Don't worry, our hunt is very understanding if it's your first time, and it makes sense to test the waters and see if you like foxhunting before committing to buying the whole outfit, so do the best you can, even if your coat isn't quite the right color, or you have half chaps instead of tall boots. If you're not sure if what you have will be appropriate, Contact the Field Secretary to be certain. Happy hunting!

YOUR HORSE AND TACK: Your horse should be smartly turned out and your tack clean, but it is not necessary to braid. A clean white pad is the norm. Bridles should be plain well fitting brown leather. Bits should be whatever it takes to control the horse.

START TIME: Be prompt. Call ahead or email your field secretary to be sure you know the start time and starting location of the meet. Arrive in time to ensure that you and your horse are properly turned out, have time to be introduced to the Masters and Field Master. If you are late, it's not appropriate to try to find the hunt by going across country on your own.

BEFORE THE HUNT: Please contact the field secretary (dlazares@centurytel.net) at least 24 hours before the hunt, they will send you information via email or text on how to pay your capping fee and get your waiver signed for the day. Prior to mounting your horse if you have already signed a release form for the current season and have no fees due, a cordial good morning will suffice.

ETIQUETTE: The members of the field (the riders) will be told who is the Field Master (the person to follow) for the day. You must, at all times, stay behind the Field Master, unless you are told to go on.

WHO IS IN THE HUNTING FIELD:

The Master of the Foxhounds

It's the Master who is responsible for the day's sport and makes the decisions. The Master calls upon the owners over whose property the hunt rides. They supervise the hound breeding program, schedule the hunt meet locations and appoint the hunt staff members who work for them. If they do not hunt the hounds themselves, they appoint a huntsman, who is sometimes a paid professional. Most hunts have more than one Master to share these responsibilities. No matter what the arrangement, all of a hunt's Masters are always treated with the utmost respect and courtesy. They have absolute authority over the day's hunting.

The Huntsman

The huntsman is the key to good sport, so the actual hunting revolves around him or her. They're responsible for the day's hunting. Huntsmen care for, train and hunt the pack of hounds, whose names, traits and voices they know completely. The hounds respond to the huntsman's horn, voice and both mounted and unmounted body position.

Whippers-In

Whippers-in assist the huntsman in hunting the hounds. They're an extension of the huntsman, usually far out on the flanks. They help assure that the hounds do the huntsman's bidding. They act as safety valves to prevent hounds from running onto roads or on to land not open to hunting and to assist the huntsman with myriad tasks related to the hunt. Whippers-in must be bold riders, able to stay up with hounds and, if necessary, get ahead of them.

Field Masters

The Field Master is the most important person for people riding in the field. The Field Master leads the field, and no riders in the field should ever pass the Field Master during a hunt. The Field Master is usually one of the Joint-Masters, but he or she can also be a person appointed by the Master as a permanent position or just for the day. Field Masters have absolute control of the riders and their horses. Their job is to keep the field close enough to enjoy watching the hounds hunt and yet not so close as to interfere with the huntsman. A good Field Master will provide the field with frequent views of hounds. It is the Field Master who disciplines riders for infractions while out hunting. They, along with the Masters, have the authority to dismiss a rider from the field.

The Field

The field can be any number of riders, but on rare occasions, fields of more than 100 can show up on weekends or special meets, such as Opening Day, the day after our Hunter Trials, New Year's and the Blessing of the Hounds. Many hunts have a first, second or even a third field, each of which has a Field Master.

- First Flight: The first field consists of the riders who stay closest to the huntsman and hounds. They stay with hounds as they gallop over all obstacles, through water and all types of terrain. The first field should always consist of experienced riders with safe horses accustomed to hunting.
- Second Flight: The second field is usually mounted foxhunters who prefer a slower pace, or have green horses that need to be trained to foxhunt. The second field can go around obstacles but tries to stay up with hounds whenever possible. The primary goal of second-flight riding is viewing the sport.
- Third Flight (Hilltoppers): The third field is often called "hilltoppers" because they're usually positioned on hills or places that give them maximum viewing opportunities. This group of mounted followers doesn't jump or gallop. They mostly walk or trot from one location to another and, unlike the second field, they're in no hurry to stay with hounds. Often the group consists of older members, very young children on lead-line ponies, inexperienced riders, or riders on green horses.
- Car Caravan: For some hunts we have one additional field, called the "car followers." They try to observe the hunt as best they can from their cars, while following on the roads.

Horses inclined to kick must ride at the back of the field and wear a red ribbon in the tail. Serious kickers should not hunt at all! Riders should stay with the field they choose. Riders who desire to change fields must secure the permission of their Field Master first. If joining another flight, make your presence known to your new Field Master. Similarly, riders should inform the Field Master if due to danger or exhaustion they feel they must leave the hunt altogether. Do not attempt to hack back to the Club alone if you do not know the Reservation. Ask a member to accompany you.

Foxes Club

These are the individuals that lay our drag. The drag is the scent left from a lure dragged on the ground for hounds to follow, simulating a live fox in a drag hunt. The drag can either be laid by horseback or a runner on foot. The hounds follow the drag. The field follows the hounds.

Field Secretary

The Field Secretary ensures that all riders have signed their [Agreement for Release and Waiver of Liability form](#) and have paid the appropriate fees, either annual membership dues or capping fees. Our current Field Secretary is JT Master Theresa Lazares. She may be reached at dlazares@centurytel.net or 253-973-8639

Resources for Fox Hunting Attire and Kit:

RJCLASSICS.COM

THEFOXINGSHOP.COM

HUNTINGSTOCKMARKET.COM

HORSECOUNTRYCARROT.COM

THEHUNTINGSHOP.CO.UK

Also EBAY and Etsy are a good source for used and vintage Fox Hunting attire