

Extreme Mustang Makeover offers connection to American history

Hides tough as leather and hooves the size of dinner plates, wild horses roaming federal lands in the United States have literally been the stuff of legend. Known for being particularly hardy, America's wild horses have survived disease, drought and predator, both animal and human, for more than 500 years to become an American icon. Now, horse lovers have an opportunity to see, and perhaps become the owner of, a legend in the making with the debut of the first Extreme Mustang Makeover in Fort Worth, Texas, September 22-23.

One past adopter is well-known horseman and 2007 Road to The Horse Champion Chris Cox of Mineral Wells, Texas. "I'm impressed with the aggressive efforts of the Mustang Heritage Foundation in the creation of the Extreme Mustang Makeover," said Cox. "Since my ranch is in the Fort Worth area, I'm going to make every effort to stop by the Will Rogers Center during the competition to see these trainers in action. Mustangs are a growing segment of the horse industry and this event will showcase their trainability."

The Mustang Heritage Foundation (MHF), in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), created the Extreme Mustang Makeover event to highlight the recognized value of mustangs through a national training competition. The event will give the public a unique opportunity to see the results of wild horses becoming trained mounts and then participate in a competitive bidding process to adopt one of these treasured animals. The purpose of the competition is to showcase the beauty, versatility, and trainability of these rugged horses that roam freely on public lands throughout the West, where they are protected by the BLM under Federal law.

One hundred trainers from 28 states, who claimed the Nevada mustangs June 6-9 at BLM facilities in Oklahoma and Nevada, will compete for \$25,000 and demonstrate their mounts' abilities during competition September 22 in Fort Worth, Texas. The trained mustangs will be judged on conditioning, groundwork, and a "horse course" that requires maneuvers and includes obstacles found in trail and recreational riding situations. An adoption will take place September 23 where fees will be set through competitive bidding.

Nearly 29,000 mustangs roam federal lands across the country. In order to manage the herds and maintain both land and herd health, the BLM oversees the adoption of wild horses and burros through public adoptions held throughout the United States. Since 1973, more than 216,000 wild horses and burros have been adopted.

Horses between the ages of three and six years old are typically selected from the herds for adoption, while older horses are placed on privately-held pasture lands to live out their normal lives. However, some horses aged 11 or older or that have been passed over for adoption three times can be sold, according to a law passed by Congress in 2004. Since that time, the BLM has worked with livestock owners and ranchers to encourage the purchase of this population of horses.

For many mustang adopters, having the opportunity to own a horse with a storied past and an unconventional upbringing brings a unique element to their relationship

with the animal.

Clinician Clinton Anderson of Downunder Horsemanship is also a previous adopter and has featured his adopted mustangs on his RFD-TV program. "Once you get a mustang quiet and safe, they can be a great companion — sure-footed and calm," he says.

Protection for these celebrated animals began in 1950 when Velma B. Johnson, known as Wild Horse Annie, began a grassroots campaign, involving mostly school children, to save the horses from unscrupulous "mustangers" gathering horses for commercial purposes. While the bill passed by Congress in 1959, called the Wild Horse Annie Act, did prohibit the use of motorized vehicles in gathering horses, it did not provide for the protection or management of the herds. In response to the public outcry, Congress passed and President Nixon signed into law the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 that provided funding for the management care of these wild horses.

"Decades of careful management and attention have gone into preserving these magnificent animals," said BLM spokesman Tom Gorey. "With the public's help through these adoptions, we are able to place these animals with caring homes and provide them with useful lives as they become mounts for competitions, trail riding and personal enjoyment."

The public will be invited to participate in adopting one of the Extreme Mustang Makeover competition animals September 23. Even though the animals will have been handled and trained, the same conditions will apply for the new owner when the animal is adopted.

Potential adopters will apply for the opportunity to be included in the competitive bidding process at the event with BLM personnel available to review and approve the application on site. In order to apply, applicants must be at least 18 years old, have no prior conviction for inhumane treatment of animals or violations of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act and be able to demonstrate that adequate housing, food, water and facilities will be available to humanely care for the animal. Specific facility requirements also apply that pertain to type and height of fencing, as well as shelter from the elements.

Adopted horses remain with the adopter for one year before "title" of ownership is provided from the BLM.

"This event will be a real treat for any horse lover, whether they plan to adopt or not," said MHF Executive Director Patti Colbert. "Seeing how well these animals respond to training and handling after only 100 days is something the public has never seen before, let alone having the chance to own the horse. This is absolutely something not to be missed."

Competition begins at 8 a.m. Saturday, September 22 at Will Rogers Center Watt Arena with in hand or ground work, followed by the Horse Course at 1 p.m. The top 10 trainers and their horses will return at 7 p.m. for freestyle finals, which will allow trainers to show their mustang to the best of their ability (without obstacles) incorporating all gaits, stops, turns, backing and any other special talents their mustang might have. □

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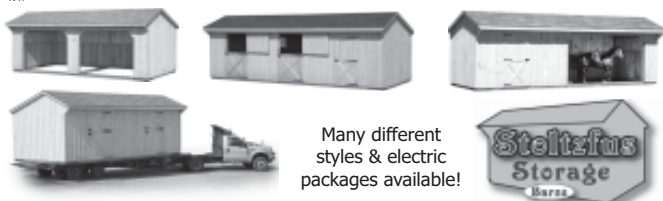
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Fall is the best time to test hay quality

Fall is the most important time of year when it comes to ensuring the quality of hay you are feeding your horses. As the weather begins to change, proper nutrition is essential to keeping weight on your animals. A horse's performance and health are highly affected by the nutrients in their hay.

Animals need to generate enough heat to maintain a normal body temperature when it is cold outside. Feeding quality forage, such as hay, enables their bodies to generate more heat. The most common types of hay used for horses are alfalfa, timothy, and orchardgrass. All of these varieties are of high quality and nutrition to horses.

Most farmers purchase a large quantity of hay in the fall in hopes of making it last throughout the winter.

Animals need time to adapt to changes in diet, and consistency is the best way to avoid complications.

Purchasing a large amount at one time is an excellent way to avoid varying the type and quality of hay your animals will be feeding on.

One way to grade the quality of hay is based on the maturity of the plant. The younger a plant is when it's harvested, the higher quality it will be. Also ask questions about whether it is a first or second cutting. Second cuttings generally contain more protein. You also want sweet smelling hay. A moldy scent is a fair warning you should not

purchase hay from that supplier.

Have your hay tested for its value of nutrition because it is hard to tell the quality even if it looks and smells acceptable. Agricultural dealers such as Southern States can take hay samples for you and send them to a lab to be tested for the protein and fiber content. This type of testing usually takes about a week for results and costs no more than \$20. If you purchase your hay, look for a supplier who will provide a lab analysis to confirm the quality of the hay you plan to buy.

Animals need to generate enough heat to maintain a normal body temperature when it is cold outside. Feeding quality forage, such as hay, enables their bodies to generate more heat.

Once you learn the quality of your hay, an equine nutritionist or any Southern States professional can help develop a feeding program to include quality feed and supplements to substitute any missing nutrients in the hay.

In addition to high quality hay, your animals need an adequate amount of warm drinking water. When horses drink cold water in the winter, their bodies exert energy

to get the temperature in their tissues warmed up again, causing them to drink less. Insulated buckets or automatic fountains are great ways to promote the consumption of water.

For more information about testing the quality of your hay, or to purchase any of the products mentioned in this article, visit your local Southern States dealer or visit us on the web at www.southernstates.com.

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He has excellent movement, literally dancing when he trots. He is good with farrier, bathes, ties, loads, lunges and is going well under saddle. Price is \$18,500

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540-303-0569

Building your own trail course

By Mary Hamilton



Building your own trail obstacle course doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

Moreover, it's something you can do right in your own back yard. Exposing your horse to new items in a controlled area

builds confidence and improves your trail horse. Plus, it's a lot of fun. This article summarizes the basics of building your own obstacle-training course.

Select a training location – When selecting a location for your obstacle training course, choose one with a barrier. A fence or arena wall provides a physical barrier and a stop zone for safety. Select a training site with low traffic. A quiet area is less distracting and can improve your ability to focus. Choose an area with good footing. Look for a location that provides a level grade and good traction. Stay away from slippery or hard surfaces.

Designate a safe zone – When constructing your obstacle course, leave a space where there are no obstacles. We call this, "The Safe Zone". It's a place to go and regroup when you are having difficulty. You and your horse can take a deep breath and relax before you try again.

Selecting obstacles – When selecting obstacles for your training course, choose safe and durable items. Your horse should be able to safely step on the item without breaking it or injuring himself. Minimize the risk of injury by closely inspecting your obstacles. Look for sharp edges that could cut your horse. Remove any strings or ropes that could entangle your horse. We like items that are lightweight and easily moved. This makes setting up and dismantling your course easy. Obstacles that you can stack, fold or roll up are convenient to store.

Constructing obstacles – A simple way to make an obstacle course is to use items you already have on hand. A tarp on the ground is a good obstacle to begin with. Use ground poles to hold the tarp in place. Ground poles also provide a pathway or guide to walk through. You can make this obstacle more challenging by placing empty plastic

bottles or brightly colored foam water noodles on it. Tires without rims separated by ground poles are another easy obstacle to construct. This obstacle simulates your horse

walking on uneven ground.

If you are the handyman type, you can build your own obstacles. A portable carwash can be constructed by attaching tape streamers to a PVC (plastic) frame.

A bridge obstacle can be made from a sturdy sheet of plywood placed on a tire base. Build a ramp and stairs by constructing it in three pieces then securely attaching them together.

Use your imagination when designing your course. Tailor your

obstacle course to items your horse needs work on. Include a variety of obstacles. Set up some obstacles on the ground, some incorporating movement, bright colors or sound.

Want more information? For more information on how to build your own obstacle training course and techniques to overcome obstacles visit our

website www.riderselite.com. Our interactive training cd-rom *Sensory Training Simplified* "A guide to despoek your horse" is now available as your personal training resource.

Mary Hamilton is a mounted police instructor who has worked in law enforcement for over 20 years. She is a certified riding instructor through the American Riding Instructors Association.

To learn more about the training visit www.riderselite.com. You can view a segment of the new DVD, "Conquering Trail Riding Obstacles, Helping You and Your Horse Ride Trails Safely". For information about the CD or setting up a clinic with Mary, visit her website, call 763-498-6565 or email Info@riderselite.com. □



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“Lovely, powerful, impressive horse.”

—Carter Bass (R)

Starlight



“Extremely talented and gorgeous.”

—Charlotte Trentelman (S)

For the 2008 breeding season, Dream Street Stallions is pleased to offer, Starlight. This magnificent black stallion offers a unique combination of three highly sought after European bloodlines, Sandro Hit, Corduer, and Argentinus.

His sire, Sandro Hit, first received International acclaim when he won the Young Horse

World Championships in 1999. Since then, Sandro Hit's offspring have taken center stage winning World Championship Titles themselves. Starlight in his own right is destined for greatness. Starlight completed his 30 day test in Germany with more than respectable scores and he demonstrates three beautifully expressive gaits, with a canter that is nothing less than exceptional.

At seven years of age Starlight willingly performs all the Grand Prix movements and is currently competing successfully at Prix St. Georges. Starlight has been undefeated on the line at breed shows, always earning the title of “Grand Champion” with no score under 85%. His temperament is generous and kind. Olympic Medalist Lisa Wilcox, who is renowned for her ability to bring out the best in the stallions she trains and competes, had this to say about this promising young stallion, “Starlight has three beautiful gaits. His excellent pedigree makes him a very interesting breeding stallion for a variety of mare types. His outstanding uphill exterior and jet-black color lend for a breathtaking picture in the arena. I compare his personality to

that of Royal Diamond. I hold great hope for this stallion.”

Starlight's first foal crop in Europe received rave reviews. His first foals in the USA will arrive spring of 2008. Starlight is EVA negative, and boasts a 100% conception rate via frozen semen.

Starlight- 17.1 hands, black, born February 27th, 2000. Starlight is approved for breeding by the German Oldenburg Verband.



\$1,800 Fresh (LFG)
\$1,000 Frozen (LFG)

Exceptional mares, small breeders, multiple mares, and repeat breeders will receive special consideration.





Lullaby

beautiful horse..."

—Brenda Minor (S)

"Wonderful horse!"

—Betsey Berry (S)

For the 2008 breeding season, Dream Street Stallions is pleased to offer, the Elite stallion Lullaby. This striking bright chestnut stallion brings together the best of the top Hanoverian bloodlines available in Londonderry and Donnerhall.

Londonderry (Lauries Crusader xx/ Warkant) won his stallion licensing and has quickly become one of the most fashionable dressage producers of all time and stamps his get with outstanding active hind-legs and strong uphill exteriors. Lullaby is from Londonderry's first foal crop and was his first son approved for breeding. Lullaby's dam Dunera is line bred on the legendary Donnerhall through her sire Duntroon (Donnerhall/Pik Bube) who was owned and competed by Australian Olympian Kristy Oatley-Nist.

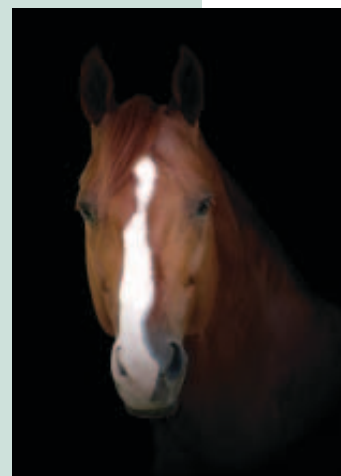
In 2006 Lullaby distinguished himself by earning a placement on the short list for the World Young Horse Championships under Olympian Lisa Wilcox. He placed 7th at the Young Horse National Championships in Lexington, Kentucky in September of that year with owner/rider Rick Silvia. Lullaby received a Horse of The Year title for FEI six-year-olds.

In 2007, two days after Lullaby turned seven, he placed in the open Prix St. Georges at the Gold Coast Opener CDI in Wellington, Florida. Lullaby has qualified to compete in the National Developing Horse Championships in Lexington, Kentucky.

Olympian, Lisa Wilcox had this to say about the dynamic young stallion, "Lullaby has an exceptional character! He learns very quickly and is a pleasure to ride and train. His lovely exterior and beautiful expression make him quite eye-catching at dressage shows."

Lullaby- 16.3 hands, Chestnut, born Feb. 14th, 2000. Valentine's Day.

Lullaby completed his 300 day German Hanoverian State Test at Adelheidsdorf, Germany. Placing 5th for dressage with a score of over 119.00! He is approved for breeding by the German Hanoverian Verband, German Oldenburg Verband, and is an Elite stallion with the American Hanoverian Society.



\$1,800 Fresh (LFG)
\$1,000 Frozen (LFG)

Only 50 mares will be booked for fresh semen in 2008 due to Lullaby's rigorous competition schedule. Special consideration for Weltmeyer mares, Special mares, small breeders, and multiple mares.



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Hoof abscesses and balance

By Ralph Casey, CMF

We often get calls in the summertime at the Farriers' National Research Center and School from horse owners who think their horse has broken its leg. The horse owner sees his horse in the pasture, unable to bear weight on a limb, which instills panic.

We receive many calls on about abscesses this time of year. Horse owners have more time and better weather to be out enjoying their equine companions.

The nice summer weather also brings ideal conditions for abscesses to form. If the hoof becomes too dry it will crack, allowing bacteria to travel up into the hoof wall and sole. Too much moisture can cause the same thing if your horse stands around in muddy, damp areas. With summer humidity, the morning dew is enough to cause a horse's hoof to become too soft and sponge-like. This condition is prime for dirt, bacteria and fungi to be worked through the sole and hoof walls. Once worked in, there is no way out. Most of the time it will occur in the front hooves.

The grime becomes locked in and begins to fester. The fester begins brewing, creating pus and heat from the rotting flesh locked within, causing great pressure against the hoof wall. This is similar to your bruised finger or toenail. Anyone having experience with this can testify as to how unpleasant this is.

Climate is not the only culprit. Riding a horse over rough, rocky terrain is a leading cause of abscesses. This is enhanced if the horse is not properly shod.

The main reason for shoeing a horse is to keep the bony column in alignment, so when the foot strikes the ground, the entire bony column including the spine, equally absorbs the concussion.

If the horse is out of balance the weight will not be distributed equally all around the hoof. This will cause a single area of the hoof to bear excessive weight. If the hoof happens to land on a hard and or sharp object, it will bruise or puncture the sole. Often the bruising or punctures will abscess. If you are riding your horse barefoot the chances of abscesses greatly increase.

Like people, most horses' feet do not strike the ground evenly due to their conformation. This in turn will create uneven wear, which causes the horse to become unbalanced.

Riding your horse barefoot will create chipped and cracked hooves, which is another easy way for abscesses to form. If you are in the market for a new farrier it is important to check their certification card and expiration to ensure they are continuing their education in farrier science. An untrained farrier may nail quick, pare out excessive amounts of sole or cut too deeply into live sole creating an environment for abscesses to form.

Often an abscess can go misdiagnosed and untreated. A trauma to the coronet band and hoof area made by rapping a fence while jumping, fly stomping, twisting a shoe, excessive pawing and forging are all capable of creating an abscess.

To see a horse with a full-blown abscess is

quite dramatic. Often he will not bear weight on the affected limb. Usually the hoof will be warm to the touch with a rapid pulse. A certified farrier can diagnose the abscess by paring out the hoof and using a pair of hoof testers. Often the farrier will bore out the abscess to relieve the pressure. Treatment may include warm water and Epsom salt soaks making sure to soak up to the coronet band, and ichthamol packed and wrapped on the sole and on the outside of the hoof wall including the coronet band to draw the abscess out. The abscess is just as likely to "blow-out" at the coronet band as it will through the sole. The abscess pus will have a hideous odor; once you have experienced this odor you will recognize it from any other hoof-related ailment. A word of caution, do not get the pus on you or your clothing, it is very hard to wash this pungent odor off.

Once the abscess has been drained you should see immediate relief. At this time you must continue soaking the hoof with Epsom salt for several days. This will keep the wound flushed out and draining which will help prevent further infection. Your horse may remain sore and out of commission for several weeks. The area around the abscess is tender and it takes time to toughen up and heal.

To prevent this from happening, see your farrier regularly. He or she is the caretaker of the lower limb.

To keep the hoof from becoming too dry or too damp use a quality hoof dressing. If you are unsure about what product is right for your horse, ask your farrier for a recommendation.

Don't be a cheapskate, if you are riding your horse regularly, put shoes on him.

Photo 1 - We are pointing to a blown out abscess on a dry, cracked and unbalanced hoof. Note the overall poor condition of the hoof; this horse was being ridden



barefoot.
Photo 2 - One of our case studies at the FNRC is this Morgan

with severe and unattended hoof cracks that caused abscesses in both front feet. Without corrective shoeing this 21-year-old cannot walk and is very tender. With shoes he can run, play and be ridden lightly.

Ralph Casey is the owner of the Casey & Son Horseshoeing School, President of the Farriers' National Research Center & School (FNRC) and President of The Brotherhood of Working Farriers Association. For more information or to locate a farrier in your area, contact Ralph Casey, President, 706-397-8047, e-mail info@bwfa.net, or visit www.bwfa.net.

To learn more about hoofcare, trimming and shoeing, attend a clinic or watch *Horseshoe'n Time*, aired on Dish Channel 9411 and cable stations.

□

Team USA wins eventing and dressage gold at Pan Am Games

The U.S. dressage team took the team gold at the Pan Am Games held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The team included Lauren Sammis, Katherine Poulin-Neff, and Christopher Hickey, with an average score of 68.633 percent. Canada took silver and Brazil took bronze. The individual gold went to Hilltop Farm's head trainer Christopher Hickey riding Regent (Flemming x Falco), a nine-year-old Dutch gelding; Lauren Sammis of New Jersey took individual silver on Sagacious HF. The bronze went to Yvonne Losos de Muniz riding Bernstein las Marismas of the Dominican Republic.

The U.S. held the top four places in eventing and swept the medals, with Karen O'Connor making pony lovers world-wide ecstatic with her gold medal ride on the 14.1-hand Theodore O'Connor, a Thoroughbred / Arabian / Shetland cross. The entire team of O'Connor, Stephen Bradley riding From, Gina Miles and McKenlaigh, and Phillip Dutton on Tru Luck were strong, and finished with 162.8. Silver medalist Canada came in with 211.1 and the bronze went to Brazil with 235.6.

The U.S. team fought for a hard-earned bronze team show jumping medal. It was a battle between the host country, Brazil, and the teams from Canada and the United States

at Deodoro Stadium outside Rio de Janeiro. Fittingly, it was the host country's most popular equestrian athlete, Rodrigo Pessoa, that was the last to go in the two-round series of Nations Cup jumping that sealed the deal for a team gold medal. Team Canada earned the silver medal, and the U.S. contingent was awarded with a bronze. The four members of the U.S. team tried to fight off the challengers, including a run at a medal by the team from Mexico.

The Brazilian team finished their medal win on a combined computed score of 9.67, ahead of Canada's 14.72 and the 27.20 posted by the United States team comprised of North Palm Beach, Florida, resident Cara Raether aboard Ublesco (a 10-year-old Belgian Warmblood stallion owned by Trelawny Farm); Wellington, Florida., resident Lauren Hough aboard Casadora (an 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare owned by Laura and Meredith Mateo); Neshanic Station, New Jersey, resident Todd Minikus aboard Pavarotti (his 10-year-old KWPN Dutch warmblood gelding).

For more information visit www.useventing.com or www.horsesport.org. □

Saddlebred organization announces championship supplements

The American Saddlebred Registry's Grand National program has announced \$24,000 in new Championship Stakes for 2007, to be held only at regional championship events that have been supporters of the Grand National in previous years. This announcement is the initial step in a future integration of the Grand National with the new regional championship series begun by the American Saddlebred Horse Association.

Grand National Championship supplements of \$3,000 each will be added to stakes purses already on offer in selected 2007 competitions. Only Grand National-eligible horses qualify to win the purse supplements for their current owners, recorders and nominators of the sire of the Grand National horse. Grand National prize supplements are awarded to the top finishing three horses in each class that are Grand National-eligible; therefore, horses other than those winning the top three prizes in the class itself may still win substantial prize money.

As a forerunner of pending changes in Grand National purse payouts, the \$3,000 supplements will be paid equally to the owner, recorder and stallion nominator for each place: first is \$1,500, with \$500 to each; second is \$1,050, with \$350 to each; and third is \$450, with \$150 to each.

This year, at the Arizona Futurity, \$3,000 is added to the Three-Gaited Show Pleasure Championship; at the California Futurity, to the Fine Harness Open Championship; at the Northwest Saddlebred Association Futurity, to the Three-Gaited Country Pleasure Championship; at the Wisconsin Futurity, to the Five-Gaited Open Championship; at the St. Louis National, to the Three-Gaited Open Championship and to the Five-Gaited Show Pleasure Championship; at the North Carolina State Fair, to the Western Country Pleasure Championship; and at the Southeastern Charity Horse Show, to the

Three-Gaited Park Open Championship.

These championship prize supplements are in addition to the other, different classes that have already been announced for these competitions as part of the regular Grand National prize program. Details on the Grand National are available at www.saddlebred.com/Prize-Grand-National. Grand National-eligible horses are denoted with a special symbol on their Certificates of Registration.

According to Registrar Alan F. Balch, Executive Secretary of the American Saddlebred Horse Association, the purse supplements are just the beginning of a sweeping reform and revitalization of the Grand National prize program. "At our convention earlier this year, the Grand National Committee asked the staff to consult with Marcia Carothers, who has been with the Grand National since its inception, to brainstorm with various constituencies ways and means to improve the program. A number of suggestions were brought back to the committee and the registry board of directors, which then were developed and improved."

For a lifetime recording in the Grand National, at present, any horse by a Grand National Stallion can be recorded for life at the following fees: \$1,500 for a four-year-old or older horse; \$1,000 for a three-year-old; and \$750 for a two-year-old. Stallions can currently be nominated for their lifetimes at \$2,500 for a horse by a Grand National sire and \$3,000 for a stallion not by a Grand National sire.

The registry will take all reasonable steps to assist competition managements of this year's regional championship events to make sure all potential exhibitors at their competitions are notified of the purse supplements.

Questions about the Grand National should be directed to Patricia Edwards, Senior Registry Associate/Program Manager, atp.edwards@asha.net. □

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A reflection of stop and go

By Ryan Gingerich



Good horsemanship begins with complete understanding of how the horse's mind works. Most human-horse conflict finds its roots firmly within the confines of

poor communication. Good communication between human and horse begins with the complete consolidation of the stop and go cues. These are the horse's most basic responses, yet they have the most to do with how he responds to the pressures of training. All conflict behavior can be traced to the lack of responsiveness to your stop and go cues.

Conflict behavior occurs when the horse is torn between correct and incorrect responses. Unlike humans the horse is unable to rationalize the difference between a correct and incorrect response. When two cues are exerted at the same time or if the horse has not fully learned the proper cue response sequence he will quickly turn to his instinct of flight, causing conflict behaviors to arise among the lines of communication.

Conflict behaviors such as biting, bolting, bucking, head shyness, rearing, girth shyness, kicking, jiggling, tail swishing, teeth grinding, weaving, spooking, bawling sour, barn sour, pulling back, won't go and won't stop, are all by-products of a bad stop and/or go cue.

Conflicts which happen in front of the girth, such as biting, pawing, and rearing, tell you that you need to revisit your stop cue.

Conflicts which happen at the back half of the horse, like kicking out with the hind legs have more to do with the go response.

Unfortunately, the horse has a high genetic tendency to show conflict behavior. This is due to the horse's natural instinct to try various responses to different stimuli. If the correct responses to these stimuli aren't found quickly the horse will begin to try through its hyper-reactive responses. A horse shows its hyper-reactive responses as a high head carriage, tension or stiffness, a hollow back, and short quick strides. When these mild flight responses do not alleviate the conflict, the horse will quickly escalate these hyper-reactive responses into any one of the other behaviors.

When you have firmly consolidated the stop and go cues from the ground and under-saddle you can quickly delete these behaviors from the horse's repertoire. The stop and go cues need to be taught using the pressures of the bit. It is not sound horsemanship to attempt to teach these cues without the clear pressure signals provided by the bit. If you attempt to teach the cues using simple changes in body posture or attitude your signals can be blurred or even ignored once the pressures of training exceed the ability of these signals to control the horse.

Your safety and your horse's safety should always remain high on your list of priorities. The stop and go cues, once completely consolidated will provide you a high level of reassurance that no matter what lies around the next bend you will be able to quickly delete any unwanted behaviors that your

horse may show.

To begin to teach the stop and go cues you will need a few convenient tools from your tack room: a dressage whip, a strong proper fitting bridle with a D-ring or full check snaffle bit and continuous rope reins. I would also recommend that you fit your horse with the proper protective gear, such as sport medicine boots or splint boots.

Start teaching the "Go" cue first. To do this stand facing the horse's left shoulder. Place your reins over the horse neck as if you were going to ride the horse. Grasp the reins six to eight inches below the bit with your left hand.

Your right hand should be holding the dressage whip. Raise your left hand upward an inch or two. This will signal the horse to get ready to go. I call this your pre-cue. Next take your whip hand and begin to lightly tap the horse on the top half of the hip. It is important that you do not tap too low as the horse could strike out with his hind legs in confusion to your request.

Continue tapping the horse until the horse moves forward and around you in a small circle. Remember to stop tapping the hip with the dressage whip once the horse takes its first step forward. Once the horse has covered half the circle around you, apply pressure to the rein by moving your hand backwards toward the point of the horse's shoulder.

When training it is important to be completely specific with your cues. Remember exclusivity (one cue for one response.) The rein in your hand controls only one foot, not

the whole horse. The foot that the left rein controls is the left front foot. It does not control the hips and it does not control the barrel or the right foot. The left rein at first tells the left foot to slow and turn left. The hips and the barrel and the right front leg are merely along for the ride.

Make your focus be the left front foot. Tell that foot it has to do three important things for you. It has to become light, it has to be rhythmic in its stride, and it has to stay on the line you dictate. Each of these qualities will come one after the other. They don't come all at once and they don't come mixed up. To get line you have to have rhythm and to have rhythm you have to have lightness.

Again your horse is walking around you in a small circle; apply backward pressure on the left rein toward the horse's front left shoulder. By doing this you are asking the left front foot to slow and turn towards you. You want the foot to respond to your cue immediately. When the foot begins to slow, release the pressure on the rein, then repeat the pressure release sequence until the horse is stopped and is facing you.

I am not worried about the horse's hips right now. That will come in due time. Only focus on the horses left front foot. Get only that foot to stop and face you.

C.J. Hull found the number of times that a behavior was expressed or repeated influenced its persistence and likelihood to result again from the same stimulus. He also found that you should repeat the same pressure-

STOP AND GO, CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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response-release sequence in sets of five to seven weeks, followed by a short break. This works well with horses because the horse's brain contains little connective tissue between the two lobes. This is why you must train both sides of the horse evenly. Giving the horse a short break on the left side enables us to then repeat the same lesson on the right.

The same principles apply to the right as to the left. Once the horse is going from a light cue signal and is stopping with lightness, rhythm and line, I will begin to teach the stop and backup cues.

This can be confusing to the horse at first, especially horses that root forward with their noses or pull heavily on the bit while being ridden. The stop and back up cue is para-

mount to your safety on the trail or on the rail. It allows you to immediately delete any conflict behavior by a downward transition from one gait to the next or to completely halt forward motion.

At this point your horse should be fairly light with his go cues and subsequently his stop cue. To get the horse to further consolidate his stop cue and to become lighter, you will need to develop his responsiveness to the backing cue. Backing helps the horse to learn to engage his hindquarters, by lowering his head, raising his back and pulling under his hocks. A truly consolidated back cue will cause responsiveness in the front end of the horse.

To teach a better stop we have to again

look for five qualities from the horse. First look for the horse to just give you a basic attempt (he trials through his responses), second look for the horse to begin to become lighter with the cue, look for his feet to come up and off the ground as he backs, they shouldn't drag along. Third, begin to ask the horse to have rhythm in his feet. Can you speed up and slow down the speed of the legs by lengthening the stride of the horse? Fourth, is the horse backing straight? Are all four legs pushing backwards with even pressure?

It is important to remember that all conflict behavior is a by-product of your stop and go cues. If your horse is showing conflict or "bad" behavior go back to the basics. You

have room for improvement and it won't take long before your horse is showing you a marked improvement in his responses.

Be safe, train smart, and get active.

Ryan Gingerich is a John Lyons Certified Trainer, though his methods are uniquely his own. Throughout his ten years as a professional trainer and clinician, he has worked one on one with several of the top clinicians in the country.

He says, "You can learn something from everyone. No one has the perfect training process for every horse. The more you know about the different training styles the more effective you will become."

For more information visit Ryan's website at www.onlinehorsetrainer.com

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Ground tying

by Ken McNabb



Would you like to be able to drop the lead rope, walk away, and have your horse stand where you put him? This month, we will cover how to teach an exercise called ground tying. This exercise

builds on the ground work, especially longeing and leading exercises. For this exercise all you need is a halter and lead rope. Practice in an enclosed arena or pen where you can catch your horse easily until he knows the exercise well.

Have you ever noticed how well a ranch horse will stand after a hard day of work? How about the Amish horses, who plow all day? In these situations, the horse has been worked until he is tired and is thankful for the chance to rest. But most of us don't ride fifty miles, or plow twenty acres with our horse in a day. We don't have the time to make them tired enough to stand. Instead, we need to create the desire to stand in their head.

Begin this exercise by longeing your horse in a circle around you at the trot. By asking him to move his feet you will begin to create the desire to stand still. Change directions frequently, and try to engage your horse's mind and get him focused on you. After you have worked your horse for a while, offer him the chance to stand. Pet him, and let him know that he is doing the right thing. Before he gets bored with standing, send him off to work again. It is very important that you anticipate him getting restless and make the decision to have him move before he makes it himself. Send him off while he is still focused on wanting to stand. Repeat this exercise a few times, letting your horse stand for a little longer each time. Keep in mind that your goal here is not to make your horse sweat and tire him out. Your goal is to improve on the ground work exercises that you have already taught, and engage your horse's mind.

Now, you are ready to move on to the next step. First, pick a verbal cue that you will use every time you want your horse to stand without moving. Many people like to use "stand". I frequently use "stay". The important thing is that you pick something that works for you, and use it every time. Now, drop the lead rope on the ground, tell your horse to "stay", and back one or two steps away from him. If he stands, wait for 15 to 30 seconds. Then go back and pet him, reward him, and let him know that he did exactly what you wanted. You don't want to stay away for so long that he decides to move on his own.

If he tries to follow you or move when you first back away from him, move him

back to where he was before and try again. If he tries to move more than once or twice, just put him back to work longeing for a while and then offer him another chance to stand. Once your horse stands for you once and you reward him, put him back to work around you again. This is not a punishment, but rather a way to further reinforce the desire to stand that you are creating in your horse.

Repeat this exercise, asking your horse to stand for longer and longer periods of time, and moving farther and farther away from him. Always try to anticipate when he is going to move off, and go back to him and reward him before he does. You want to get this up so your horse can win again and again. With that in mind, start in an area with as little distraction as possible, and gradually move to areas with more and more distractions. If you are in an arena with other horses on one side of it, ask your horse to stop and stand facing away from them at first. You don't want to set him up for failure by making it too tempting to walk towards the other horses. As he understands the exercise better, you can add more challenges.

Begin by longeing your horse in a circle around you at the trot. By asking him to move his feet you will begin to create the desire to stand still. Change directions frequently and try to engage your horse's mind and get him focused on you.

When my horse is ground tying, I allow him to put his head down to smell the ground or even graze, as long as his feet don't move. One situation where I will let my horse move his feet is if he has stopped crooked. Then he

is allowed to move enough to square up so he can stand easily and comfortably, but no more than that.

Once your horse seems to understand this exercise, you will need to give him the opportunity to make mistakes. As you go farther and farther away, and leave for longer periods of time, your horse may move. If this happens, just go back to him and return to the longeing exercise, then ask him to ground tie again.

This is a fun exercise to teach and it is very useful on the trail when you stop for lunch, or even when you just need to open a gate. It can be used when you are grooming and saddling if you don't have a place to tie your horse. It is also a great way to impress your friends.

Enjoy your horse and until next time, may God bless the trails you ride.

— Like most kids who grow up on ranches, Ken was working cattle and training his own horses while still in grade school. In 1993, Ken became one of the first certified John Lyons trainers. Using these gentle methods, Ken began producing better saddle horses, then began teaching his techniques in 1996. He offers an environment where the horse is trained using the best methods, and the rider is coached to bring his personal best into the arena. For more information call 307-645-3149 or visit www.kenmcnabb.com.