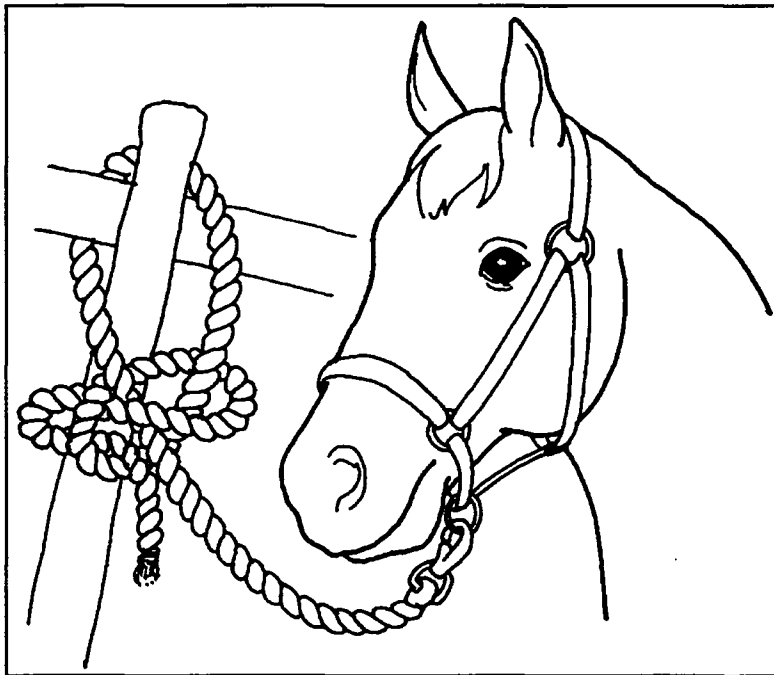




4-H Colt and Horse Training Manual



4-H 1303
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The *4-H Colt and Horse Training Manual* is designed to assist 4-H members and leaders in training the animal properly from the ground and in the saddle. The techniques outlined in this manual comprise one of several accepted ways to do the training. The 4-H member should also have the following materials:

- *The 4-H Horse Project*, 4-H 130 (PNW 587)
- *4-H Horse Contest Guide*, 4-H 13011 (PNW 574)
- *Oregon 4-H Horse Advancement Program*, 4-H 1302R
- *Oregon 4-H Dressage Project*, 4-H 1311

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4-H Colt and Horse Training Manual

Ground Training

Colt or horse training can be a very rewarding 4-H project. It can give you a horse that is useful and a pleasure to work with. At the same time it gives invaluable personal training. You will learn patience, self-discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence. To control your horse, you must be in control of yourself.

The system described is not the only system, but it does use basic principles that will work and that are good for the horse as well as the 4-H member. The methods emphasize teaching manners and discipline, so the colt learns to do what the trainer wants with the least possible effort on the part of the horseman or horsewoman. These lessons are not just for the colt, since it may be necessary to go back to basic training at any time in a horse's life when problems arise.

The leader or parent needs to give encouragement, suggestions, and supervision, but let the 4-H member do the work. Many adults worry about ruining the colt, but they will be surprised with the results (both in training and the development) of 4-H members as persons and as horsemen and horsewomen. Expert or professional help may be necessary at times.

Understanding the Horse

To be a top horseman, you need to have an open mind, always be receptive to new ideas, and never believe that you have no more to learn. You must have endless curiosity, always seeking answers to the question, "Why?" Study the horse's natural responses and behavior and use them to your advantage. This is "horse psychology."

Try to understand each individual horse, knowing when to be "easy" and when to be firm. No two horses are alike, and, like people, they have different moods. You must study these differences in order to determine the best approach as the training progresses.

You must develop patience and the ability to take it slow and easy. You must obey certain rules. *Never mistreat a colt and never become angry. If you as the trainer become angry, stop working the colt until you calm down.* To reemphasize—a good horseman or horsewoman has time and patience and uses them efficiently.

Basically, all horses have good memories but do not have the brain power to reason things. The horse must learn from repetition, and the communication between trainer and horse must be through a consistent set of signals, called "aids." A few words about the behavior of horses will help in understanding why these signals are important.

By instinct, the horse is timid and easily frightened. The natural reaction is usually to run from the danger. The horse's ability to survive is based on how well it can protect itself if escape isn't possible. If the horse is attacked from the front, it rears up on its hind legs, keeping its head far above the attacker, and strikes out with both front legs.

Attacked from the rear, the horse shifts its weight to its front quarters and kicks. If attacked from the side and at close quarters, it pushes sideways into its attacker or whirls and kicks. If the attack comes from above, it will buck violently; as soon as the assailant is thrown to the ground, the horse will run off at full speed.

However, if the colt or horse is relaxed and quiet, it will move away from pressure. The important thing to remember is that when a horse is relaxed, it reacts differently from when scared. This is why it is very important to use a system or "language" that gets the same reaction every time. You as trainer must develop a specific pattern of voice commands and pressure-and-release signals. The horse will learn what to expect and remain calm. Give these basic traits some thought and use them to good advantage.

One of the first essentials is that the trainer *be* the boss and demand discipline at all times. The greatest mistake is too much loving or pampering. The colt will take a lot less punishment if trained to mind from the start. This does not mean beating to get it to obey, nor does it mean you should never pet your horse. Be sure to be consistent and firm, and to demand correct response.

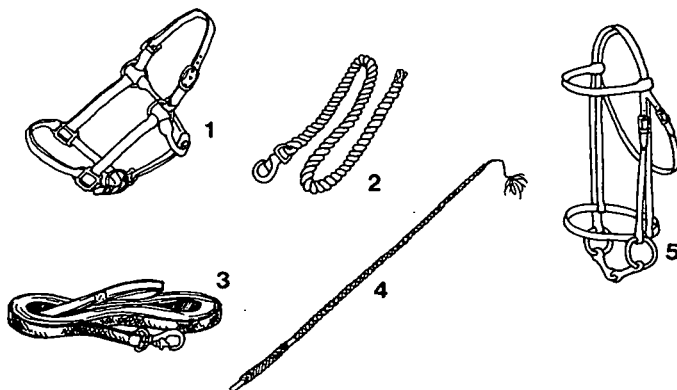
Punish only when the colt is deliberately doing something wrong. Abuse usually adds to its fears and develops into a fight. Never strike a horse on the head. It will very likely become head-shy, and you might well injure an eye. Reward the colt when it behaves well. A firm stroke of the hand and release of pressure upon response are good rewards.

Feed the colt grain each day. This will not only help its growth, but it will learn to trust the trainer, and the grain will give it a reason to come to the trainer. Feed from a container, not out of your hand. Refer to the *Horse Project Manual* for amounts to feed.

Equipment

A circular corral or pen, from 40 to 60 feet in diameter, is very helpful in getting the colt started. The ideal setup would be solid walls 6 feet high in order to keep the colt's entire attention. An open field is a difficult place to work.

A well-fitted halter that will not slide around on the colt's head is desirable. It will give more control and better communication with the colt. A 10-foot lead rope will be long enough for leading and tying. Good, strong equipment is necessary in training a colt, because if it breaks a few halters or ropes, it could become a confirmed halter-puller. Nylon web halters are considered very strong.



Equipment needed includes (1) halter, (2) lead rope, (3) longe line, (4) longe whip, (5) snaffle bit and headstall.

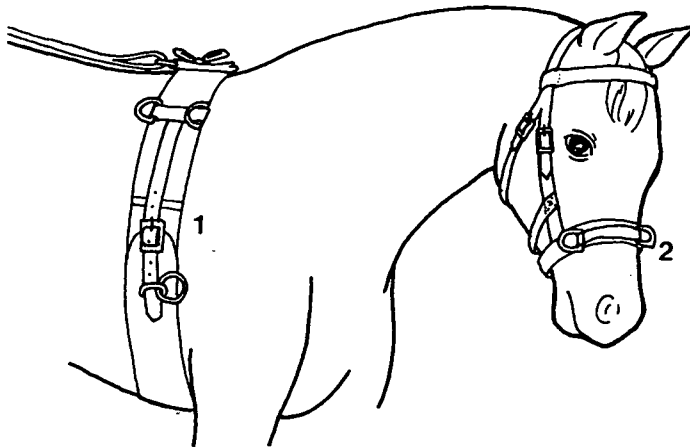
The longe line should be 30 feet long. Nylon or cotton webbing about 1 inch wide is strong and light.

A longe-type whip is useful in teaching the colt to lead up or work on the longe line. Use it to guide and control the horse. *Never use it for punishment.*

Use a jointed snaffle bit in the driving phase and in the early riding training period. You will need two lines, at least 20 feet long, for driving. The longe line, if long enough, will do the job, or you can use a light 40-foot rope.

The training surcingle is a useful piece of equipment, especially in teaching the colt to drive. You could improvise it with a cinch and straps with side rings attached, or you could use a saddle for the same purpose.

A special halter called a "longeing cavesson" has rings on the side and front to allow maximum leverage. It keeps the colt's body properly bent in the circle.

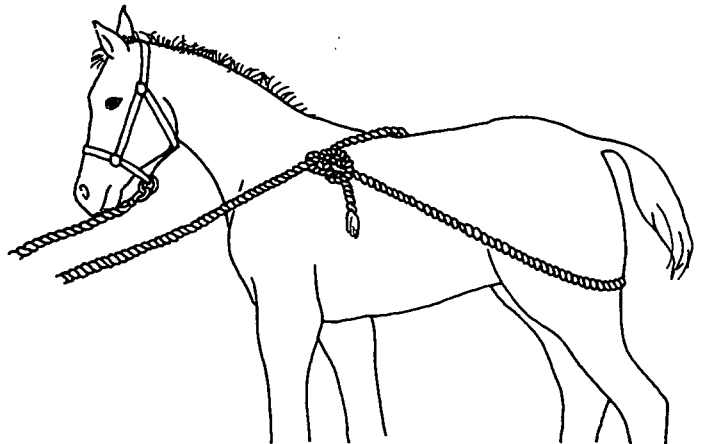


Optional equipment might include (1) surcingle and (2) longeing cavesson.

Start the basics for getting a horse to respond to pressure and release. Keep the lead rope in contact but slack, maintaining "light hands." Use the rope only to change direction or stop the foal. Lightly jerk but do not apply a long, steady pull. If the colt resists, move it to the right or left to get started. Apply pressure, and the instant the colt responds, reward it by releasing the pressure. This is the start of the pressure-and-release principle that is important in getting a horse to respond immediately to the aids.

Training sessions should be only 15 minutes or less with the young colt. Try to stop on a "good note"—when it has done something satisfactorily.

A body rope is very helpful in getting the older colt to move forward. Place a nonslip loop around the colt's hindquarters, bringing the long end forward. Use the regular halter rope to turn or stop, and the body rope to go ahead, as necessary.



A body rope teaches a colt to lead. Use a bowline knot so it will not tighten.

Training Program

Before starting the training, let's reemphasize the essentials:

- Use a definite training plan or method with a clear goal in mind.
- Be consistent in applying aids.
- Do not demand too much of a horse at one time.
- Do not move on to another step until the horse responds easily to aids. Remember, a horse learns by repetition.

The purpose of this basic training, or schooling, is to produce an excellent all-around riding horse, obedient to hand and leg pressures.

Leading

The best time to start training is when the colt is only a few days old. Halter breaking will teach the colt the trainer is in control. The first few times the colt is caught, work it into a corner with the mother. Merely hang on to the colt with one arm in front of the shoulder and the other one over the rear, so it can go neither forward nor backward. A good rubdown with the hand will give it confidence.

The next step is to put on the halter. This shouldn't be very difficult if the colt is used to being confined. Do not leave the halter on a horse in the stall or pasture. It could catch on some object.

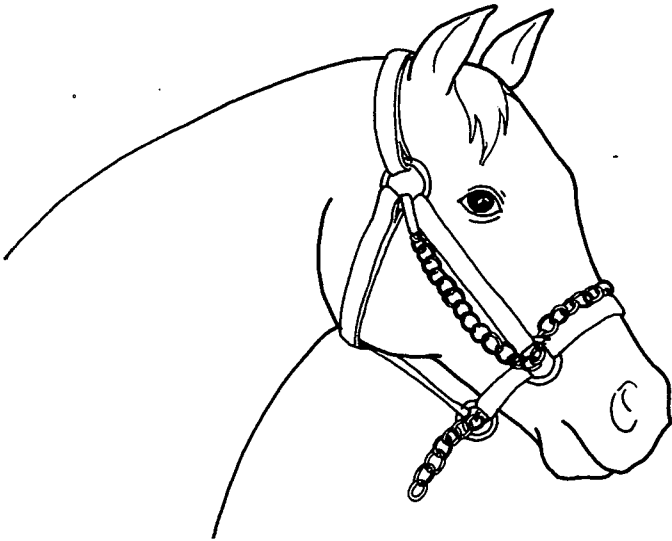
To begin moving the colt, have someone lead the mare while the foal is led close beside her. Stay ear to ear with the colt, and it will be less likely to balk (pull back). The idea is to push, not pull.

Teach the colt to lead up with its ear parallel to the handler's from both sides. A buggy whip will help. First, rub the whip all over the colt's body to be sure the animal will not be afraid of it. Then hold the whip in the hand farthest away from the colt with the handle forward. A twist of the wrist will put the whip in contact with the rump. If the horse tries to move sideways, work along a fence or wall. You can use the handle on the chest to help stop it at the command "Whoa."

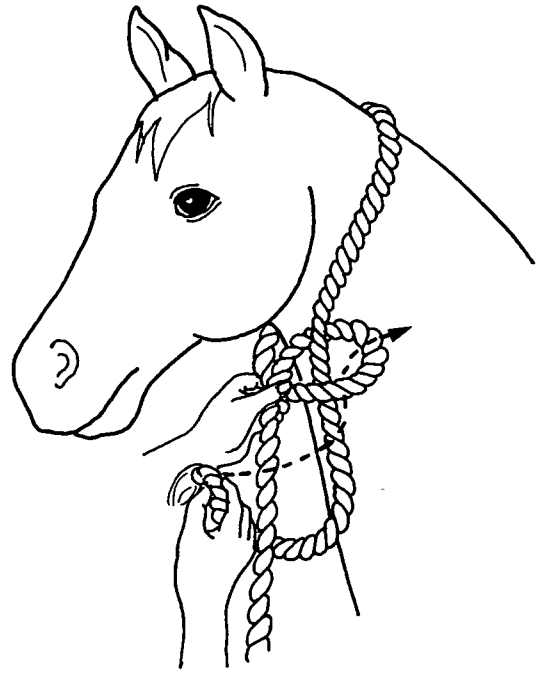
"Whoa"

A horse should learn to obey the command "Whoa" instantly. Say "Whoa," allow the horse time to respond on its own, then jerk sharply if necessary. To be sure the colt understands, require it to stand still for 10 to 20 seconds.

A lead chain, used with the lead rope or longe line, may be necessary to control older, unmanageable horses. Run chain through the halter ring, then over the nose through the noseband rings, and up the cheek to the throat latch ring. This keeps the halter from pulling to the side. The chain over the nose will encourage the horse to stop with its nose down. Be sure to change the chain from one cheek to the other to lead or longe from the right side. Never tie a horse with the chain.



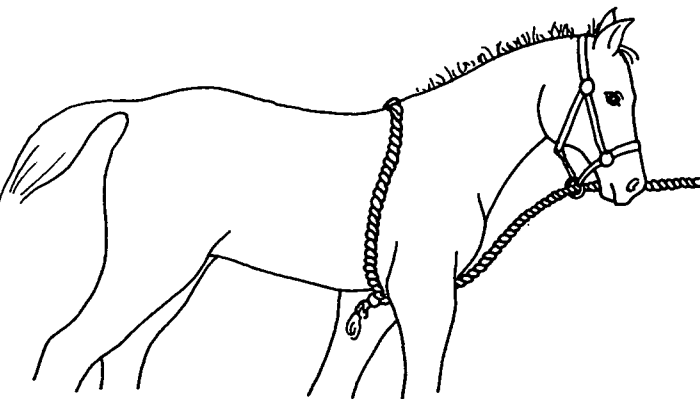
The chain is properly attached to lead from the left side. Never tie a horse with a rope or chain loop around the nose.



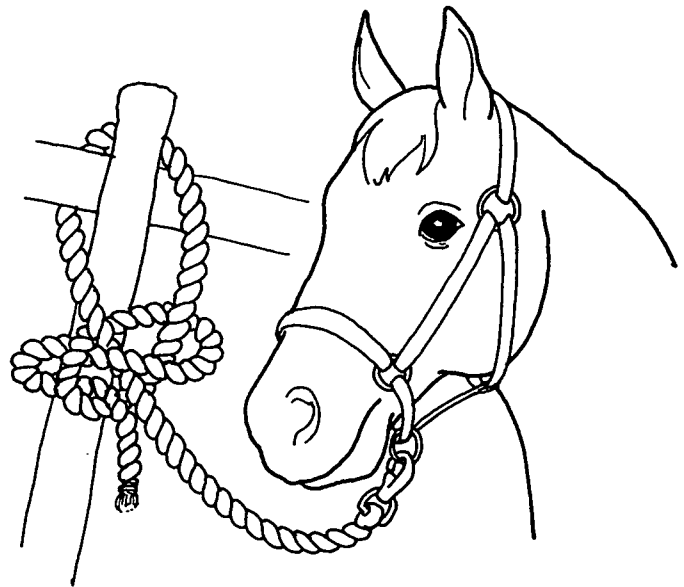
Always use a nonslip howline knot on the horse's neck, body, or legs.

After the colt begins to lead, start tying it up for short periods. Find a smooth wall, a tree, or a sturdy post in a clear area with soft footing. Do not use a fence, as the colt may put its feet through it. Tie the colt about wither height to avoid pulling the neck out of joint, and to prevent the colt from stepping over the rope. A rubber inner tube may be securely attached to the wall or post and the lead rope tied to it. The rubber will help absorb the shock of a sudden jerk. *Do not leave the colt alone.*

The safest tie is with a nonslip body rope around the heart girth, then run through the halter ring.



Use a nonslip bowline knot around the body.



For quick release, use a slip knot to tie the horse.

Grooming

Do a lot of grooming at this stage of the training to teach the colt that it has nothing to fear in letting itself be handled. This will develop trust and confidence. Pay particular attention to gently touching the foal's head, ears, tail, and feet. This is a good time to check for any leg problems that may be starting.

Sacking Out

Get the colt accustomed to unusual things so it will be unafraid and more relaxed. "Sacking out" gets the name from the burlap sack or blanket used. Rub and flip the blanket all over the colt until it is not afraid of it. Soon the colt will become accustomed to strange objects and will be less frightened when something flies up toward it.

Another type of sacking is with a rope. This teaches the colt to stand quietly when being saddled. It may also cut down on the chance of getting cut if it gets into wire, because the animal is not so apt to panic. Stand to one side and quietly swing the rope, being careful not to hit the horse. Move around the animal. If it becomes excited, talk softly until it quiets down. Use a calming word such as "Easy" as a signal. Ease one end of the rope over its back and catch it under its stomach. Hold both ends and pull it back and forth over the body and eventually down the legs.

Picking Up Feet

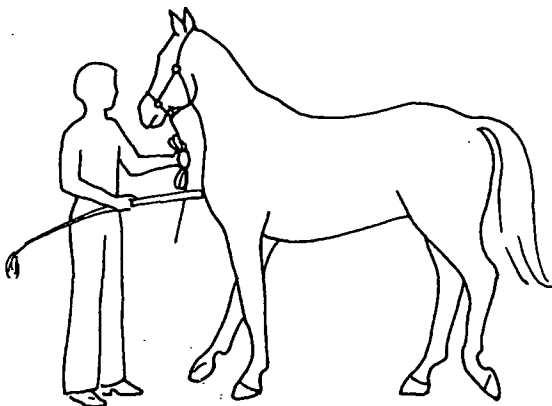
It is important to start picking up the feet, since all horse's hooves need to be trimmed or shod. If the colt needs corrective trimming to straighten its legs, this is the time to start.

To pick up the feet, have an assistant hold the colt, or tie it in a familiar place. Start with the forelegs by placing your closest hand on its shoulder and running your other hand slowly down each leg until it becomes accustomed to it. Pick the foot up and hold it for a moment, then set it down. Gradually increase the time. A colt should never be allowed to set a foot down on its own or jerk it away, or it will always try to do it.

The hind feet are much harder to handle than the front because a horse has more kicking power with those legs. It is safest to stand near the colt's side, placing your closest hand on the hip joint in order to shift the weight to the opposite leg. It can then be pushed off balance if it starts to kick, and it is more likely to bump you with its leg than to catch you with a hoof. At first, just pull the foot up under the colt, then begin to step under it. When it no longer resists, take the leg out behind, holding it until ready to put it down. Refer to the *Horse Project Manual* for more details.

Backing

Teach the colt to back when it is young. Give the command "Back," then apply pressure on the nose with the halter, using light



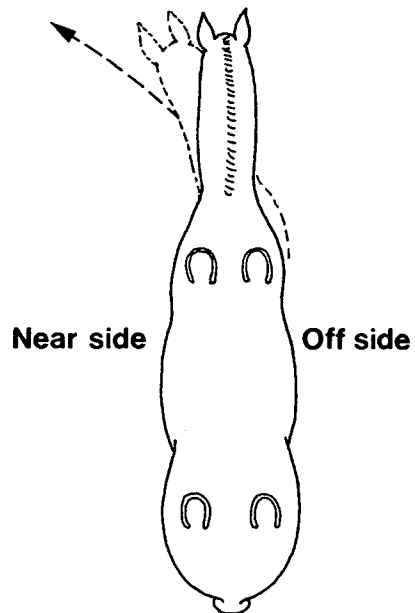
To help the horse learn to back, stand to one side and push on the point of the shoulder.

jerks. Avoid a steady pull. At the same time push it on the point of the shoulder with the whip handle or a short stick. The instant it responds, reward by releasing the pressure. At first, ask for one step at a time.

Posing

After the colt is responding well to "Whoa," start training to place its feet and pose. The horse should learn to move its feet by applied pressure on the halter. To move the rear feet, pull *down* slightly—down and toward you to move the right rear (off) foot forward, down and away to move it back. Do the opposite to move the left rear (near) foot. You can use word commands such as "Set" for the rear and "Foot" for the front before applying pressure.

Lift the head slightly to move the forefeet—up and toward you to bring the off forefoot forward, up and away to move it back. Avoid kicking or pointing with the toe as a signal.



Pull upward and to the left front to move the right shoulder and foot forward.

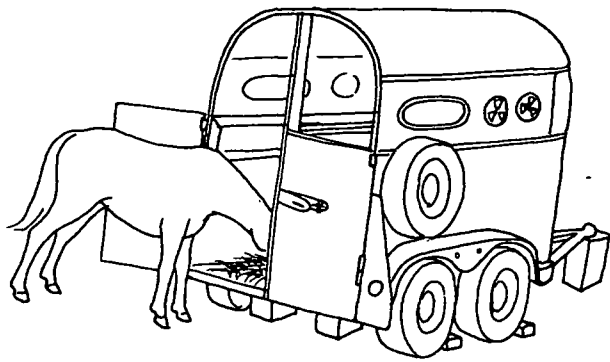
Loading in a Trailer

Since most horses are hauled frequently, start training the horse to load early. If the colt's mother loads easily, the simplest way is to lead it into a double trailer with its mother after it is well started with leading lessons.

Take plenty of time and have patience during the first few attempts at loading the horse. Move into the trailer, but let the colt stand and relax before leading inside. From the other side of the divider lead it forward to get the front feet in and pause again. As soon as the colt is inside the trailer, shut the tailgate while it eats grain or hay.

If the colt is older and larger, put a trailer and the colt in a small corral with plenty of water. Feed it hay and grain only in the trailer until it is used to it. Gradually move the feed further forward until it is in the manger and the colt must go all the way in. Be sure the trailer is blocked solidly so it won't tip up and frighten the colt. Close the colt in the trailer for a short time while it eats.

Allow the horse to develop confidence in loading, rather than being forced, and it is less likely to balk or fight in the future.



Put blocks under the tongue and the back, and behind the wheels of an unhitched trailer.

Longeing

The definition of longeing is "use of a long rope to guide a horse during training or exercise." This is an excellent method of basic training or teaching the colt discipline. It muscles it up and improves its balance and gaits for future work under saddle. It helps teach the young horse to use the correct or inside lead.

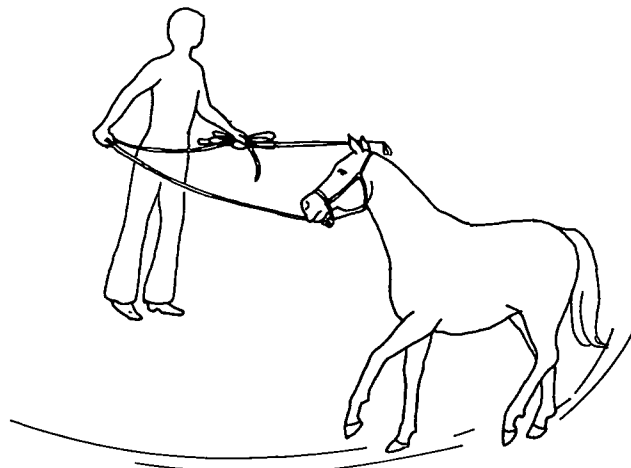
The equipment necessary for longeing is a halter or longeing cavesson, a light rope or nylon webbing 30 feet long with a swivel snap, and a longe whip. Do not use a lead rope because small circles put too much strain on the colt's legs and shoulders. It is wise to protect the front legs with splint boots every time the horse is worked, through 3 years old. A round corral is helpful, if available, but any small fenced area is better than an open field.

To prevent future unsoundness, colts under 18 months old should not be longed at the canter. Work all colts on at least 20 feet of line. Pay attention to the footing; eliminate hard, rough spots. Avoid letting the colt pull on the line, as it puts extra stress on shoulders and legs.

Don't work the colt for more than 10 minutes on the longe line at first. Gradually increase the time to 20 minutes. Be sure to work the colt an equal amount of time each direction so it does not become one-sided.

Walk and Trot on the Longe Line

To begin, hold the longe line about 24 inches from the halter and walk in a big circle with the colt. Slowly slide your hand down the line until you are several feet away from the colt. Keep the colt walking



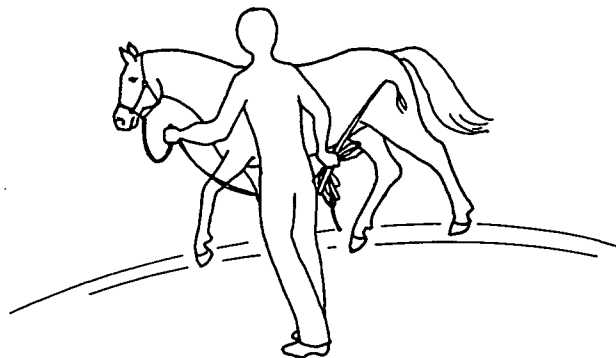
The trainer leads the colt with the line while holding the whip behind the colt. Light contact is important.

while working still further away from it. If necessary, use the whip to keep it moving. Slowly raise and lower it to the ground or flick it at the colt's hocks. It should not be necessary to touch the colt with it.

Stand near the center of the circle, but not in one spot. Move along with the colt in a small circle, more or less driving it. Turning in place will come later when the colt has become obedient to the spoken commands "Walk," "Trot," "Canter," "Whoa," and "Reverse."

Stay approximately even with the colt's hindquarters. The first objective is to keep the green colt moving. Hold the line in your "leading" hand — the hand toward the direction in which the colt is circling — with the excess portion of the line in the opposite hand along with the whip. Teach the colt to work by voice command. As soon as it understands what is wanted, insist on prompt obedience. Be patient but firm.

At the walk, carry the whip on or near the ground; at the trot, carry it between the hock and stifle; at the canter, hold it croup high.

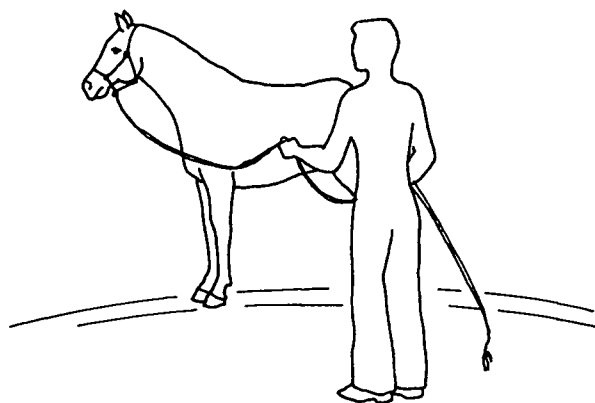


At the trot the whip is held level.

"Whoa" and Reverse on the Longe Line

To stop the horse, sharply call out "Whoa" and take a long step sideways in the direction of its head. Give a sharp snap on the longe line. Be sure to give the command "Whoa" before applying pressure.

Do not let the colt come toward the center. If it tries, say "Whoa" and flip the longe line to stop it. Make it stand. This training will help when the horse must stand for mounting. Response to this command may also help prevent an accident in an emergency.



Make the horse stand quietly until it is asked to move. It should not turn toward the center.

After it has been made to stand for a few moments, walk up and pet it. Be sure to take up the slack line. Shift the extra line and whip to the other hand. Say "Reverse," turn it, and start circling in the opposite direction. Eventually, teach the colt to reverse by standing in the center of the circle, holding the whip in front of it, and giving the command "Reverse".

Canter on the Longe Line

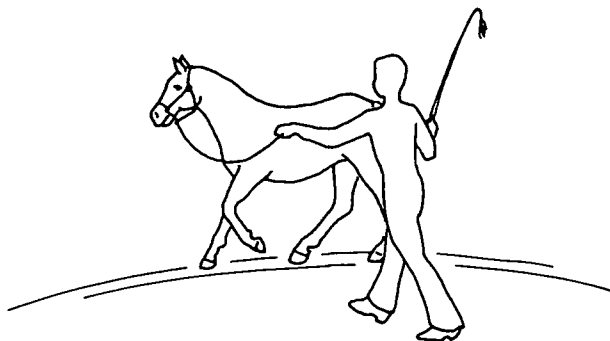
Start the canter after the horse will work calmly at the walk and trot. If it is pulling on the line, you will have difficulty keeping the correct lead.

Give the voice command "Canter," then raise the whip and step sideways to the horse's rear. Flick or crack the whip, if necessary, until it breaks into a canter. Keep it going for two or three turns. Gradually increase the number of circles each day to allow time for conditioning. Work both directions.

The colt should be on the inside lead. If not, slow to a trot and start the lope again. Be sure the lope is slow. If it is too fast, halt the horse and reverse the circle. Let it settle down by walking or standing after fast work.

If the colt is overeager or working too fast after a week of daily training, analyze the problem. It may be unusually high strung or nervous or too fresh from insufficient exercise or too much grain— or something is spooking it.

It takes even more careful handling to quiet the nervous colt. You must make every effort to be quiet yourself.



At the canter hold the whip above the croup.

The final goal is to begin each gait from a stop.

As a reminder, do not start the lope, or canter, training until the colt has learned prompt obedience to the commands "Walk," "Trot," and "Whoa." Work the colt in all maneuvers in a relaxed manner and as calmly as possible. Do not hurry the training. Remember who is in command. The colt should be doing what it is *asked* to do, not what it wants to do.

Encourage the colt to move at a free, fast walk, a slow trot, and a relaxed, slow canter. The objective is to develop a horse that will promptly take the gait and speed its rider demands and maintain that gait on a light rein until the rider signals for a change.

Saddling

The young horse is usually developed enough at 30 months to begin carrying a rider's weight during short training sessions.

After the horse is working well on the longe line, start getting it used to carrying something on its back. A small saddle is much better than a big heavy one. To start with, remove the stirrups or tie them up so they won't flop.

Be sure the colt is under control. It is already familiar with the blanket from the "sacking out" lessons. Place the blanket and saddle on its back gently. Raise the blanket off the withers to allow shoulder muscles easy movement. Avoid making any quick or unexpected motions. Do not pull the cinch too tight; gradually tighten it just enough to hold it on. Walk the colt a few steps to prevent its becoming a "cinchy" horse that tries to lie down. Give the saddle a shake and slap the seat. If the colt is startled, say "Whoa" and stroke its neck, then repeat the shaking until it stands calmly.

Work it on the longe line with the saddle. After a few circles, check the cinch for tightness.

As with previous steps, continue working the colt until it is completely relaxed. Horses learn best through repetition. A few days or a few weeks may be required for each step, according to the individual horse.

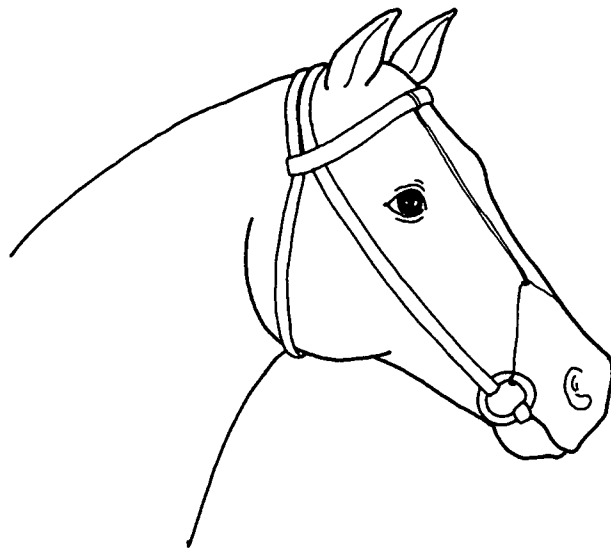
Introducing the Snaffle Bit

Refer to the *4-H Horse Project Manual* for information on types of snaffles and fitting.

Do not put a bit in the colt's mouth until it is at least 24 months old.

Start getting the young horse used to the snaffle by removing the reins and letting it "carry" the snaffle in the stall or corral for several 30-minute periods. Then longe it with the reinless snaffle under a halter until it is no longer playing with the bit and is keeping its mouth closed. If the colt tends to lower its head or pull on the lines, attach riding reins to the snaffle. Tie them to the saddle horn with enough slack to allow natural head carriage.

Many colts slip their tongues over the bit. You can solve this problem by putting a noseband on the bridle. Adjust it just snugly enough to keep the mouth from opening wide. Another method is to tie a string from the browband to each snaffle ring, lifting it above the tongue.

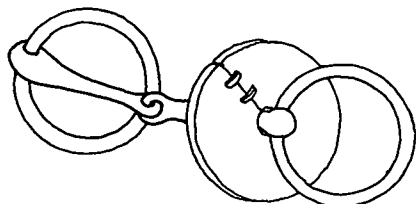


A string attached in this manner will help keep the snaffle bit on top of the tongue.

Check for wolf teeth in the upper jaw if the colt continues to fuss with the bit. These sensitive teeth may need to be pulled.

If the snaffle has round rings rather than D-rings, fix it so the rings cannot pull into the colt's mouth. You can make guards out of thick leather cut into circles about 3 inches in diameter. Put a hole in the center large enough for the bit mouthpiece. Then cut a slit from the hole to the outside to slip it over the bit. This slit can be held together with a small piece of lacing leather.

Now, using the bridle instead of the halter, be more careful than ever to use a light hand.

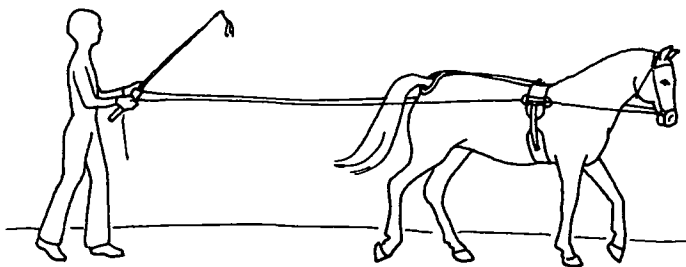


Snaffle bit guard.

Ground Driving

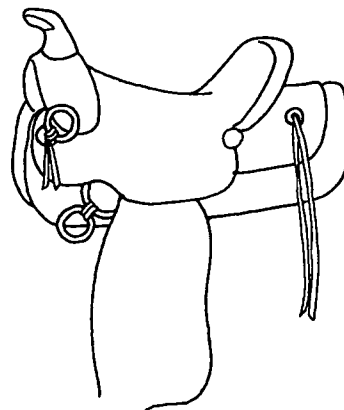
Ground driving is an advanced form of longeing. It gives more precise control and teaches the animal to respond to the reins before it is ridden. Ground driving also develops the colt's gaits and natural balance before carrying a rider. If a young colt is to be driven, do not use a bit. Attach the lines to a halter, bosal, or longeing cavesson. If you use a halter or cavesson, be sure it fits snugly for better contact. Use the rings on the sides of the noseband for the lines.

Keep the long driving lines in place with a training surcingle, if available. If you use a surcingle, the colt must become accustomed to the crupper, which fits under the tail to prevent the surcingle from creeping too far forward.



The lines are run through side rings on a surcingle.

You can use a saddle in place of the surcingle by tying the stirrups underneath the horse. Attach side rings and run the long lines through them. This will keep the horse's head in position and avoid getting the lines underfoot.



You can attach side rings to a saddle. Use the lower rings if the colt tends to turn back underneath the driving lines.

Walk and "Whoa"

Follow directly behind the colt, staying at least a horse's length behind its heels. It may be wise to have an assistant at the head with some young horses.

Ask for the "Walk" and keep a very light feel of the bit. Do not shake the lines. Keep the horse moving by flicking the whip, or tapping it if necessary. If the horse is going too fast, use "give and take" rein pressure and a calming voice to slow it down. You may find it necessary to tug harder with alternate reins, one at a time, if it still resists.

Make wide turns by pulling one rein and releasing the other, to allow the head to go in the direction of the turn.

After the colt settles down, give it the command "Whoa," set the reins so the colt goes into the pressure, and hold the pressure until the colt relieves it by backing one step. Do not let it turn around. After several stops, make it stand, then bring the outside line over the back of the colt and move forward to stroke it. Maintain contact with both lines.

Get good obedience to the lines at a walk before trying to trot. Frequently practice stopping and starting. *Make a point of handling the lines as delicately as possible.* A heavy feel on the lines tends to discourage the colt from moving forward freely with extended head and neck.

Backing on the Driving Lines

While still working the colt on the driving lines, teach it to back. The back has already been started from the leading position.

Standing directly behind the colt and holding the lines about chest high, command "Back." Pull lightly on one line and then the other to turn its head slightly back and forth, then pull firmly and evenly on both lines. The reason for turning the head back and forth is to upset its balance just enough to lighten the weight on one foreleg and the opposite hind leg. It will then naturally step backward when even pressure is applied with both lines.

The reins should help in guiding the colt back in a smooth straight line. The instant the colt responds, give it release by slackening the lines. Only ask for one step at a time.

Stand a few moments to settle and relax the colt, then drive it forward a few strides so it won't get in the habit of running backwards or balking.

Remember—pressure and release. Be sure to vary the sequence of training to avoid anticipation and "souring" the horse through boredom.

Turning on the Haunches on the Driving Lines

It is time to start making 180° turns on the haunches. To turn to the left, start the colt circling to the right, with both lines run through the side rings. Move over, almost directly following it. Transfer both lines to the right hand, reach out a full arm's length with the left hand, and shorten the left line. With a firm steady pull turn the colt to the left. As it turns, step to the right in order to keep behind, and keep the right line slack. Tell it immediately to "Walk."

Circle the corral a few times, then turn to the right by reversing the movements.

The command "Left" for a left turn and "Right" for a right turn will help in teaching the colt. The spoken command warns the colt it is about to turn and gives a chance to prepare. Be sure to give the voice command before pulling on the line. Response to word commands will help to keep its mouth soft.

For at least the first part of the training, turn toward the fence. Be sure to allow room between the horse and fence so a turn can be made. These turns are easier to do by turning left when circling right, and vice versa.

After the horse understands how to turn, get it in the habit of turning on its hocks, keeping its inside pivot foot in place. Hold the haunches in place with the outside line. Later, when under saddle, an outside leg aid will hold it on its pivot foot.

Be sure the colt is working perfectly at the walk before trying these turns at a trot. Concentrate on teaching it to turn neatly and smoothly in response to the lightest possible pull on the lines.

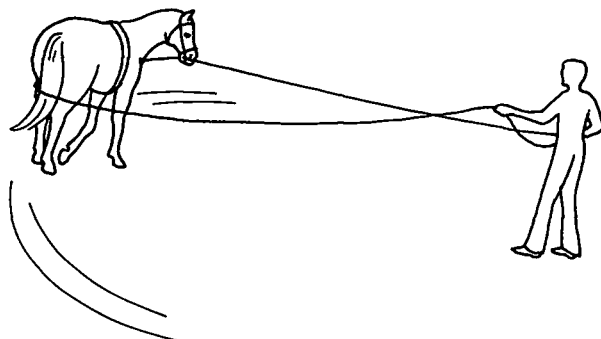
Never follow the same routine or turn in the same place. Teach the horse to respond when pressure is applied, not just when the horse expects a response is wanted.

Circling on the Driving Lines

Driving in a circle allows the horse to be cantered on the lines and to learn to take inside leads both directions.

When circling to the right, the right line is the inside, or leading line. For the first few lessons, do *not* run the inside line through the side ring of the surcingle. Run it directly from the colt's head to the right hand. Run the outside line through the ring or stirrup to keep it from slipping up over the colt's back. It should come around just above the colt's hocks to keep it from facing the center or cutting corners.

Train the colt from the start to look in the direction it is moving by adjusting the inside or outside line. Work as in longeing; keep toward the center, but move with the horse. Give the command "Walk" and keep a very light feel on the inner line. The outside line against its hocks may spook it, but make it walk. The horse may want to turn in, but keep it away by using the outside line.



The horse's body is properly "arced," or bent, while circling to the right.

If the colt tries to trot or run, move along with it, put pressure on the lines, and demand the "Walk." If it stops, start walking again at once.

Reverse by changing the lines so that the other line is run through the outside ring. As in longeing, it is important that an equal amount of time be devoted to driving the horse in both directions.

After the colt relaxes at the walk, begin to trot and canter. Gradually stay in the center of the circle. When the horse is circling at the canter on light contact, both reins may be run through the side rings.

Concentrate on bending the horse's body. Forcing the hindquarters to the inside causes the horse to take the inside lead. Drop to a trot and repeat the aids if the colt picks up the wrong lead.

Work toward quick, smooth response in changing from one gait to another, including the canter from a walk.

Leg Aids

Another lesson that you should add before the colt is mounted is response to leg pressure. The training has been started that will control the front end. Now start the training that will help control the hindquarters. The colt should learn to move them sideways in either direction, away from pressure on its side. Apply this pressure with the hand where the leg aid will eventually be used (slightly behind where the cinch will be). You may have to apply pressure further back at first.

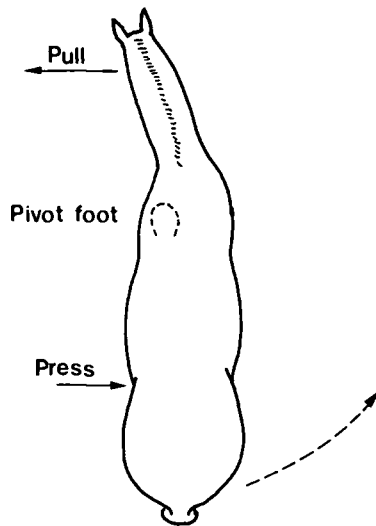
Forehand Turn from the Ground

Facing the horse, take the halter in the left hand to hold the head up. With the right hand, or a stick held in the right hand, touch the horse very lightly about 4 inches behind the girth, where the heel will act when mounted, and at the same time pull the head slightly to the left. The horse will move its haunches to the right.

Do not ask for too much of a turn to start with. Take only one or two steps, then reward it by rubbing the neck and giving voice praise. The colt will eventually make a complete turn on the forehand. The

left foreleg acting as a pivot may step up and down, but it should remain as nearly as possible on the same spot. The right leg must step around *in front of* the left.

Repeat from the other side with the right foreleg acting as the pivot and the left leg stepping around in front of the right.

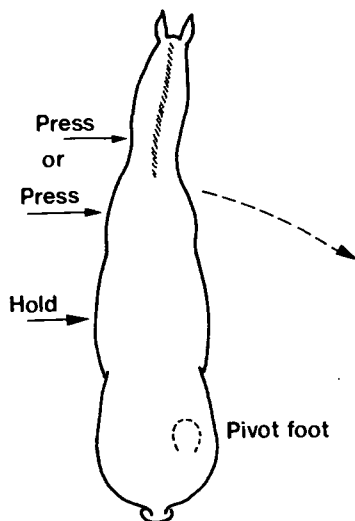


Forehand turn on left front pivot foot.

Haunch Turn from the Ground

In turning on the haunches, pressing with the hand behind the girth keeps the horse's hindquarters in place while the front quarters move around like a gate. The horse has already learned that driving line contact on the outside hip means holding the hindquarters in place for a 180° turn.

To move the forequarters to the right, hold the halter rope in the left hand close enough to the head to keep the colt from moving forward, but long enough to be able to push on the neck. The right

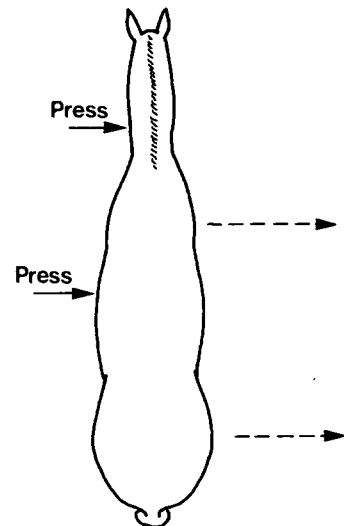


Haunch turn on the right rear pivot foot. It may be necessary to push on the shoulder first.

hand used as a leg aid holds its hindquarters, keeping them from moving to the left. Use the pressure-and-release principle to get it to move away from the pressure on the neck. This also starts the lesson in neck reining. The body should be kept as straight as possible. Again, ask for only one step at a time. *Be sure not to let the horse step back with the pivot foot.*

Sidepass from the Ground

After the colt learns to turn on the forehand and hindquarters, teach it to sidepass to the right or left by pressing on the neck and side at the same time. *Concentrate on making this a forward motion with front and rear feet crossing over in front.* Some horses do not cross over in the rear, but simply bring the feet together. This is acceptable.



Sidepass right.

Training to Ride

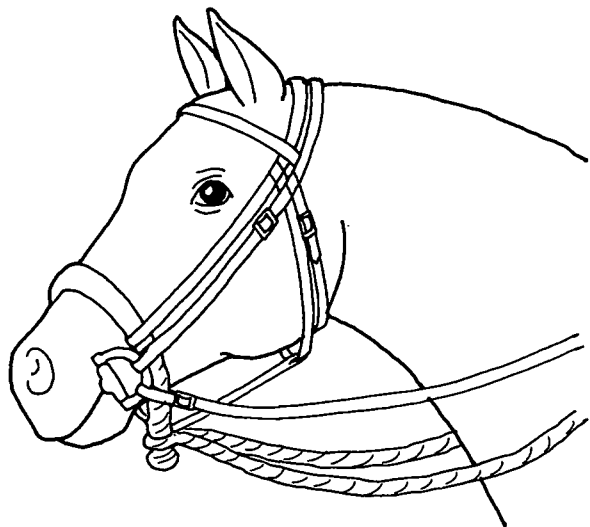
Bitting

The word "bitting" means getting the horse to yield, or "give," to the bit before using it to control it. A well schooled horse will yield its head to the slightest pressure on the rein. This requires a good mouth, responsive to the lightest touch, yet never sore.

You could start bitting by letting the horse stand a half hour each day with a snaffle bit in its mouth. The horse will have been well gentled first through ground training. You can fasten the reins to the surcingle or the saddle, preferably with an elastic insert. Adjust the reins so that the horse may stand without pressure on the bit when its head is in the proper vertical position. This reward will teach the horse not to resist the pull on its mouth.

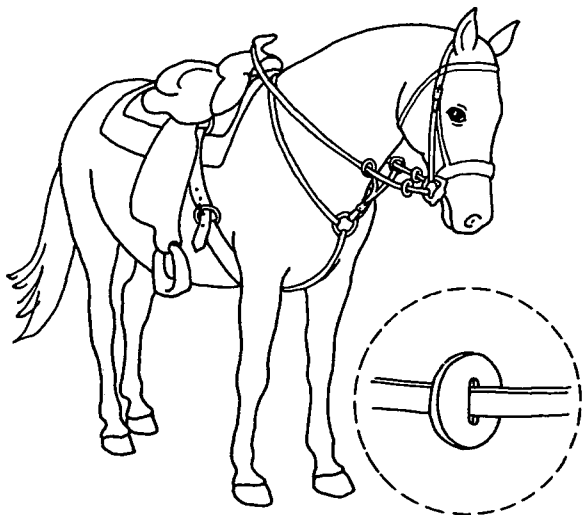
Later, when riding begins, use gentle pressure on the reins as an aid to ask the horse to lower its head and relax its jaw. This will "flex the horse at the poll." *A good head set takes much time and patience.* Your horse should be able to stand flexed with slack reins.

Instead of starting the colt with a snaffle bit, you may use a bosal hackamore for ground driving and the early riding phase. When it is ready to be advanced to a bit, use the bosal and snaffle together. During this time, you may bring the bit gradually into use, but use the bosal if a firm hand is necessary.

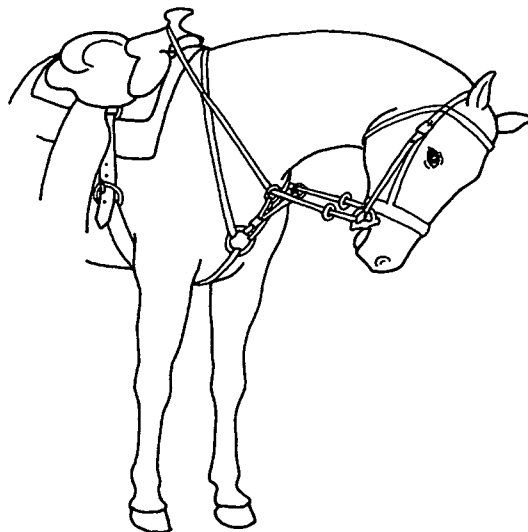


Use the bosal to start the horse, then use with the snaffle. The snaffle eventually replaces the bosal.

A running martingale is useful in preventing the horse from throwing its head up to escape bit pressure on the bars of its mouth. Adjust it so that it does not affect the reins while the head is properly set.



Attach rein "stops" of leather to prevent the rings from catching on snaps or rein ends at the bit. The poll is properly flexed in the 6-inch area behind the ears, with the face vertical.



Too short, the running martingale is forcing the horse to flex at the crest, and the face is behind the vertical line. The tight reins allow no relief from the bit, which is acting as a nutcracker on the bars of the mouth.

Gimmicks

"Gimmicks" might be defined as restraints used to get control. Standing martingales, hobbles, wire curb straps and nosebands, tack collars, war bridles, or running W's are often an undesirable shortcut; their results are usually not lasting. Gaining the horse's complete confidence and obedience by the ways described previously is the best method of getting control. Sometimes, however, you will need additional control methods, especially if the colt has been allowed to develop bad habits.

Before you apply any extreme control methods, make every effort to discover what caused the horse to develop the bad habit; try to do something about the cause. It might be that you are the problem, and not the horse. Many times, if you can remove the cause of the problem, the effect will disappear. Your 4-H leader can also help identify the problem.

Mounting

The young horse should have been longed first and should be under control. Work in a relatively small enclosed area with ample head room, and face it into a corner. Check the cinch. Order the horse to "Whoa" and collect the reins. Slowly ease into the saddle, being careful not to poke it with the toe. A handler should be present when you mount the first few times.

When the horse seems relaxed, gradually and quietly shift weight in the saddle, swing the feet, and drag a leg over the croup. Also mount and dismount from the offside. Stroke the horse and talk quietly to calm it.

Never let the horse walk off before you ask it to do so.

Walk and "Whoa"

Ask the horse to walk, using voice, legs, hands, and weight. If it does not respond, use stronger legs and voice. If it refuses to move, a pull on one rein or the other will make it take a step or two to the side. It will then be easy to keep him moving. It helps to have another rider on hand as a colt will travel more willingly with another horse.

Once the horse is walking, keep it going for a few minutes before asking for a stop. Following the same procedure used in ground

training, give the voice command first, to signal the horse that it is going to be asked to stop. Fix the hands in one position to set up a barrier with the bit. Then push the horse into the bit by using seat and legs. When it feels this immovable barrier, it will stop. Use the stopping aids—voice, legs, hands, weight—in that order, but only split seconds apart. The reins loosen when the horse stops, so the horse will automatically receive a reward. Stroke it, and after a few moments walk again.

It is important to keep training periods short. Twenty to thirty minutes is good, especially for the first few saddlings. Longe the young horse before each ride until it is completely dependable.

As soon as the colt starts walking promptly when the proper aids are used, it is time to urge it to walk faster. Do not let it get in the habit of poking along. It is a difficult habit to break. Use enough voice and leg, and a crop alongside the leg, if needed, to make it walk freely. Using rein ends for punishment is undesirable, because it is hard to avoid jerking the bit. Spurs are not recommended; they may lead to tail switching.

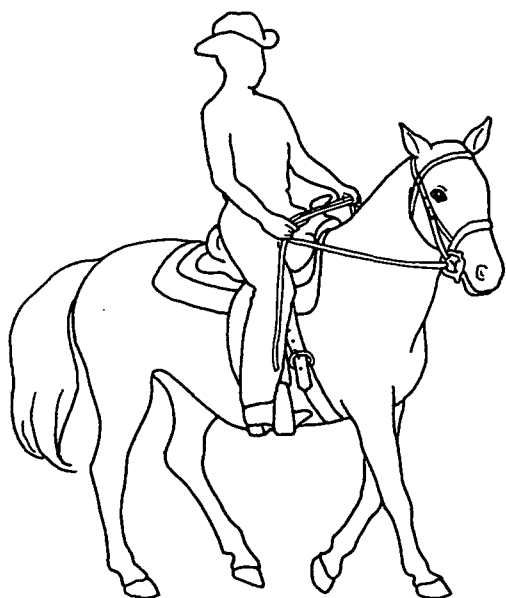
It is usually necessary to use exaggerated aids on an untrained horse. As it learns to respond, these should lighten and eventually become almost unnoticeable. *Do not keep nagging* at it with timid aids, as it will soon learn to ignore them. If it is necessary to correct the horse with a crop or switch, hit just once, sharply. If it is punished more, it will become upset or fight back.

Reining

Wide reins or heavy cotton ropes are good for snaffle bit reining. The horse can feel them on its neck, and they are easy to hold.

To turn right, hold the right rein well out, using a left leg aid to push the horse to the right. This rein is called a “direct” rein, and it actually leads the horse around. Do not pull back on the direct rein. Pull out to the side in order to bend the horse’s whole body. Do not pull the head any further than necessary or ask for sharp turns. The rider’s weight naturally shifts slightly to the right, and the left leg presses against the horse. At the same time, move the left rein to the right against the horse’s neck without pulling on the bit. This is the “bearing” rein. Reverse the aids for turning left.

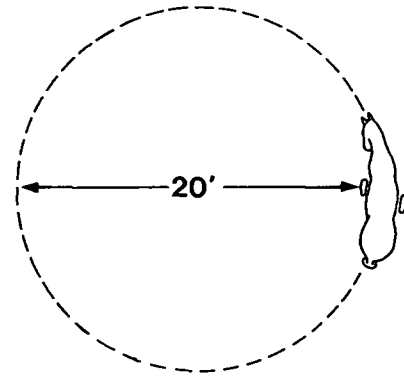
The horse eventually learns to turn when it feels the slight shift of weight, the outer leg pressure, and the pull of the rein. The rider gradually uses the direct rein less and the bearing rein more, always using a leg aid, until the horse is “neck reining.” Do not hurry the neck reining; let it come naturally.



The direct rein is the right rein, bearing rein the left. For a safe grip, cross the reins between hands so that both hands are holding both reins.

Change directions often, being sure to go as much to the left as to the right. Ride in circles, in serpentine, or in circles joined together; do not think of them as “figure 8’s.”

Be sure the horse is bending its body in the direction it is circling. This is important preparation for advanced training in rollbacks and flying changes. The horse should be “following its nose.” A leg aid on the outside of the arc, behind the cinch, will keep the hindquarters in the circle. The horse curves its body around the rider’s inside leg at the cinch. Work at the walk until the horse is bending easily, then advance to the trot, and then to the canter.



A 20-foot circle is ideal. The horse’s body should be curved with the circle.

Backing

Dismount and back the horse until it backs easily. Mount, give the horse the same voice command, “Back,” and squeeze with the legs. When it picks up its foot to move forward, pull back lightly, making the foot move backward. Ask for only one step and reward it. Repeat several times before asking for two steps, etc.

Hold the hands low, keeping the head down in proper position. Control the direction of backing by pressing with either leg; in stubborn cases, use a fence or wall alongside to keep the horse straight.

Trot

When the horse is walking readily, urge it on into a slow trot by increasing the aids. As soon as it breaks into a trot, use only enough aids to keep it from walking. If it should slow to a walk, immediately repeat the commands and keep it trotting slowly for a couple of minutes before pulling it back to a walk. After walking a short while, trot again. Start and stop often.

As the colt becomes used to carrying the added weight of saddle and rider, urge it into a faster trot for brief periods, collecting back to a jog, then down to a walk, and so on. Vary the routine so it does not anticipate or become bored.

Canter

The horse should now be ready to canter or lope. Let the colt ease into this from a fast trot at first, using the legs and voice, but use light rein contact with its mouth. This light contact, together with pressure from the legs, will eventually be all that is needed to signal the trained horse to canter from the walk or trot, or even from a standing position.

Keep it in the canter, using strong leg aids. If the colt rushes ahead, talk to it quietly, release leg pressure, and collect it firmly and smoothly with the reins until it has slowed down but is still cantering. Bring back to a walk after a brief 30 or 40 seconds—long enough for a beginning colt. Walk awhile after each canter to relax, then ease the horse into the canter again. Repeat this several times, then return to familiar work for the balance of the lesson.

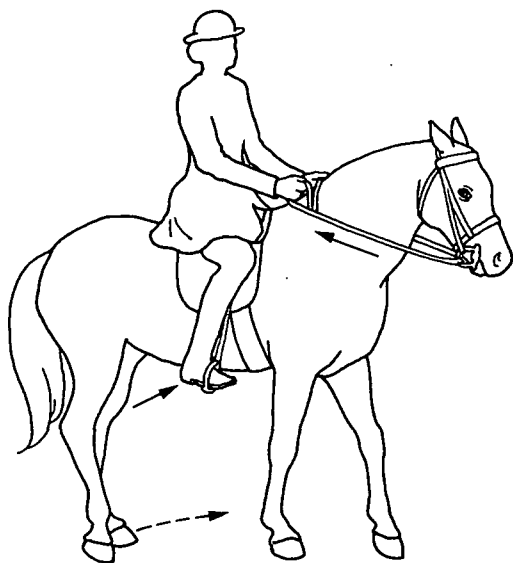
If your horse tries to buck, keep its head up, scold it, and come back to the trot. Try to analyze the reason. Perhaps you are rushing the training, or the colt is too fresh. When you feel the time is right, try again.

Use this procedure for several sessions. There is a difference in the amount of time needed to get various colts to respond well. Do not rush. As training progresses, the young horse will learn that a slight picking up of the reins, coupled with a squeeze of the legs, is a signal to canter. Occasionally work the horse on extension at the canter, letting it move out freely in a gallop before collecting it.

About on the Forehand

Before working on leads at the canter, the horse must learn to respond easily to leg aids. It has already learned to do an about on the forehand, an about on the haunches, and the sidepass during ground training. It should not be difficult for it to learn these movements under saddle.

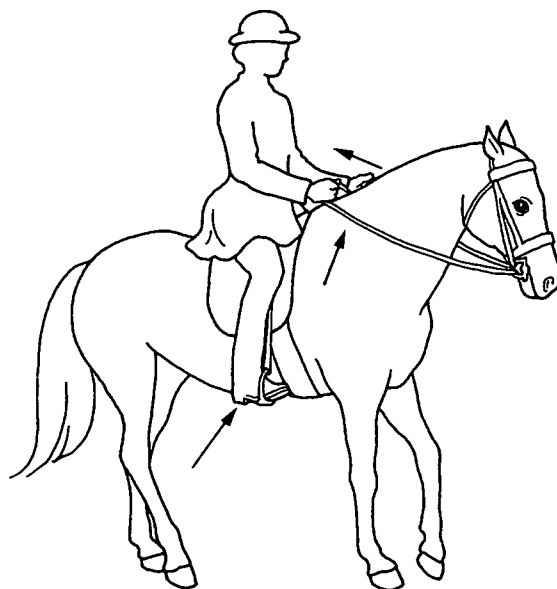
For a turn using the right forefoot as a pivot, use the right rein and right leg. The reins hold the front end of the horse in place and the right leg used behind the girth turns its hindquarters to the left. Keep the horse reasonably collected through the turn.



About on the forehand using the right pivot foot. Use right leg and light right rein.

Turn the head to the right so that you can see only the right eyebrow. The right forefoot remains as a pivot foot while the left forefoot steps around in front of it. Press your left leg at the girth just enough to keep forward movement and to prevent the horse from backing around the pivot foot. Ask for one step at a time at first.

Use the opposite aids for a turn on the left forefoot. Practice both ways equally.



To sidepass to the left, use the right leg, left direct rein, and right bearing rein.

About on the Haunches

Think of the haunch turn as swinging the forehand around the hindquarters. For a turn on the left rear pivot foot, apply pressure with the right leg at or in front of the girth to hold the hindquarters in place. Use a left direct and a right bearing rein, with the horse's head turned to the left just enough so that you can barely see the left eyebrow.

To turn on the right rear pivot foot, rein to the right and use pressure with the left leg behind the girth.

Keep the horse pushed up on the bit at all times. Remember, it is necessary to keep forward motion with the hind leg stepping around in front of the pivot foot.

Sidepass

The sidepass is tracking to the side with no forward or backward movement. The horse will be very slightly bent away from the direction it is traveling. Both the forefeet and hind feet should cross over in front making two parallel lines, but the rear feet may simply come together.

To sidepass to the left, turn the head slightly with the left direct rein, using a right leg aid. Reinforce the direction of travel with the right bearing rein. Gradually straighten the body as the horse becomes more responsive by bringing the left direct rein closer to the withers.

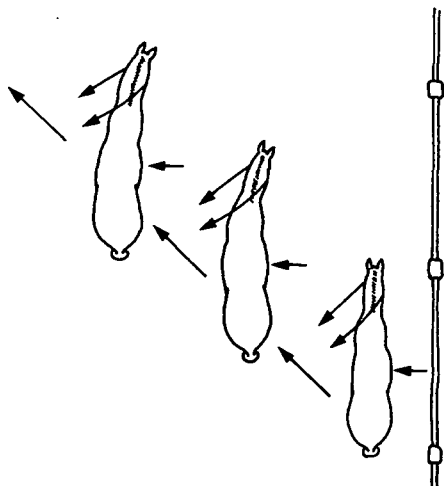
At first, work facing a wall or fence to keep the horse from moving forward. If it tends to back up, face away from the fence. When starting the horse, let the front quarters go slightly ahead of the hindquarters to make it easier for it to cross over properly. As it improves, work toward less body angle until it is traveling directly to the right or left.

Two-Track

In the two-track, the horse's body moves straight ahead, parallel to the fence or wall, while tracking at a 45° angle across the area.

To track left, use the right leg to push the hindquarters to the left, but be sure to avoid leaning to the right. Body weight should be over the center of the horse. Use both the left direct and right bearing reins to push the horse's shoulder slightly toward the left. At first, the head will be bent to the right, but as the horse responds more easily to the leg aid, it should look more and more in the direction of travel.

To track right, reverse the aids.



Two-track left.

Leads

When the horse is responding easily to leg aids and is going into the canter willingly and without rushing, it is time to concentrate on the correct leads. The trainer must have a lot of patience and not expect perfection at first. Do not sour the horse with overwork. If possible, find a good fenced schooling area to work the horse. A wet or grass-covered area is slippery and dangerous, and a horse wary of the footing will not perform well.

Ask for the lead from a trot at first. The correct aids for left lead are: right direct rein toward the rail, right leg aid just behind the cinch, and a lighter left leg aid on the cinch to give forward motion. The right leg will push the hindquarters to the left, forcing the inside rear leg to take the lead. The right rein will offset the forequarters just enough to free the left shoulder to take the inside lead. Shift your weight slightly onto the right hip to lighten the left forequarter. As soon as the horse picks up the lead, straighten the head.

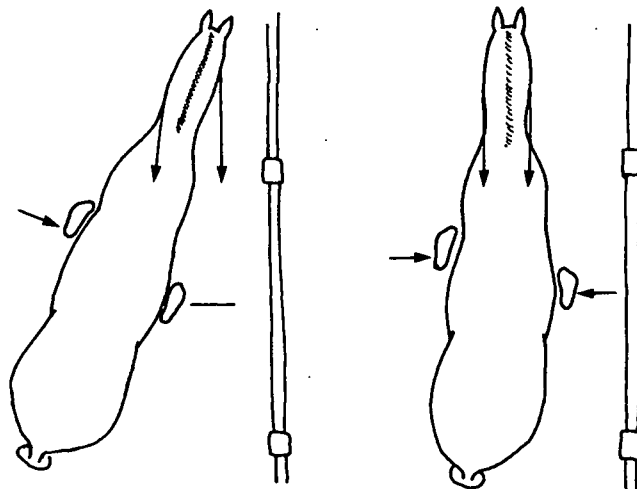
Reverse the aids for the right lead.

Canter several circles, without changing leads, until the horse does them easily. Let it walk or stand and relax before asking it again. Most young horses have a natural preference for one lead over the other and need extra circles on the more difficult lead.

If both front and back leads were not correct, bring the horse back to a trot and carefully repeat the aids. Check the lead merely by glancing down at the withers to see the leading shoulder. Leaning upsets the proper balance of the horse and is a hindrance rather than a help. An experienced assistant can tell instantly whether the lead is correct.

If the young horse has difficulty picking up one lead or the other, try trotting in a 20-foot circle, increasing the speed until it breaks into a canter. Continue on the lead in large circles for several minutes to build confidence. Repeat as often as necessary. It may also help to trot at a 45° angle toward a fence, cueing it into a canter just as it comes to the fence.

Strive for less and less rein aid as it starts, until the horse is looking in the direction of travel. When it becomes responsive to the leg aid, begin to collect it with the reins as the first cue for a canter. Lightly use both reins to "lift" the horse into the canter.



Outside rein aids may be necessary at first.

A finished horse.

After the horse learns to pick up leads beside a fence or wall, start it on simple and interrupted changes.

You accomplish the *SIMPLE* change by dropping the horse from a canter, or lope, to a walk or trot and immediately applying the correct aid for the lope on the opposite lead.

Begin by circling it on the right lead; after a few strides, drop to a walk or trot and start again on the *same* lead, doing this two or three times. Then make a few starts on the left lead, followed by two or three on the right lead, and so on—alternating differently so that the horse cannot possibly anticipate but must obey.

For the *INTERRUPTED* change, bring the horse to a complete stop and immediately apply the correct aid to push it off at a lope on the opposite lead.

Again, *do not overwork the young horse*. After a few exercises, stop on a good note and go for a ride down the road to let it relax. Never put it away when it is upset. When it has done especially well, that is the time to quit for the day.

Collection

When the horse has learned to obey leg aids and voice commands and is responding easily to light rein contact, it should learn to collect itself.

It is easy to assume that since a horse uses the walk, trot, and canter when moving freely in the pasture, it needs little or no training to do them while being ridden. This is not true, because with the addition of a saddle, bridle, and the weight of a rider, natural coordination and balance are changed.

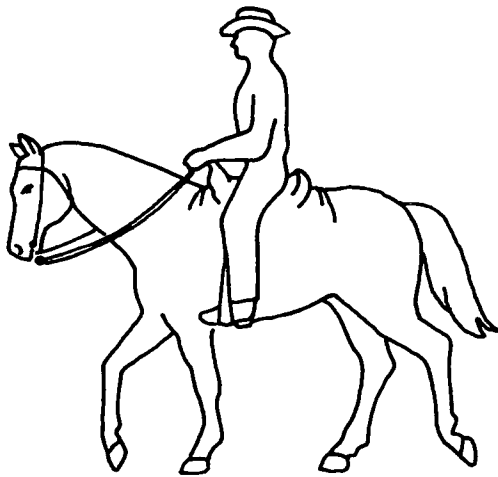
It is not only necessary for it to learn how to handle the unaccustomed weight, but it must be taught to walk out briskly, trot smoothly at a collected jog or an extended trot, and canter calmly. "Collection" may be defined this way: to gather, to get the horse in hand, to bring the horse to attention, or to put it on the bit.

Ask your horse to travel in a collected way by driving it into the bit with leg pressure and at the same time keeping *light* contact on the bit to arch its neck at the poll. The horse then travels with a shorter, lighter stride, or "collected." Its legs should be well under itself, not "strung out" behind. Good concentration is required for the correct balance of rein contact and leg pressure. Try 10 or 15 steps at first, letting the horse relax a few minutes before the next attempt. Do not expect perfection at all gaits for several weeks.

You must use your legs when asking for collection. *Do not think that collection means simply pulling the horse's head into its chest.*

The horse can be "extended" by relaxing the contact on the bit to allow it to extend its neck, which permits it to move ahead with more freedom.

A "finished" or trained pleasure horse should allow itself to be collected or extended in each of the three gaits and move from one gait to another with no resistance.



A nicely collected horse with light contact of the reins is not an overnight accomplishment.

Flying Changes

When the horse understands aids well; can travel comfortably in either lead; makes smooth, simple changes with only one trotting step; and readily sidepasses and two-tracks, it should be ready for the flying change of leads. This is a complete change, both front and rear, to the opposite lead at the canter without dropping to the trot or walk. The flying change is by far the most difficult lead change to teach the horse.

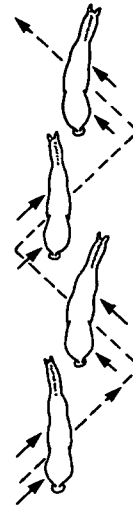
For seniors, the show committee or judge may ask for junior or intermediate moves, plus any Dad Potter movements. The execution of flying lead change is preferred for senior 4-H members in both western equitation and hunt seat equitation. When compared to an equal pattern using an alternative change, credit will be given for a good flying change. A simple or interrupted change with no mistakes is better than a flying lead change done poorly. Exhibitors in a state-level medallion class can be asked any of the movements required for the Dad Potter Horsemanship Award.

Suppling Exercises

Spend time preparing the horse for flying changes to help avoid problems such as charging (speeding up), tail switching, throwing the head up, hopping, or cross-leading.

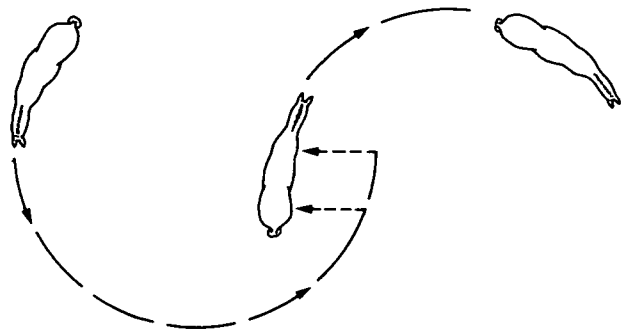
Try this exercise to sharpen a horse's response in yielding its hindquarters to the leg aid. Starting at the walk, two-track to the left about 10 steps. Without a pause, switch cues and track right 10 steps. Continue making changes of direction three or four times, then relax the horse with straight work before trying again. When this is done smoothly at the walk, move up to a trot. Remember, do not let the horse stop on the changes! You may do this exercise at the canter, to teach a horse to do flying changes in a straight line later in the training.

The two-track is a *KEY* to the flying change. The hindquarters *must* yield before changing direction.



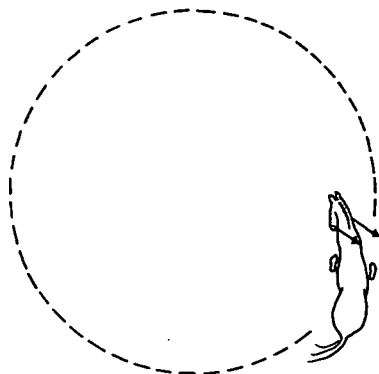
The two-track exercise.

Another exercise is a circle at the canter, stop, and sidepass. After about six steps sideways, pick up the canter on the opposite lead. The object is to properly arc the horse for the change of lead. The sidepass is another *KEY* to the flying change. The hindquarters are bent to the direction of change.



Canter on left lead, stop, sidepass six steps left, canter on right lead.

Shoulder-suppling exercises such as the “shoulder out” also help prepare a horse for flying changes. Start walking circles about 25 to 30 feet in diameter. Push the horse’s shoulders to the outside of the circle by using an “indirect” rein on the inside. To do this, raise up your inside hand and pull the rein slightly back and across the withers. At the same time, cue with the inside leg at the cinch, and use enough outside leg to keep the hindquarters from swinging completely out of the circle. Ask for only a few strides at first. Teach the horse to do this both ways at a walk before trying a trot and canter.

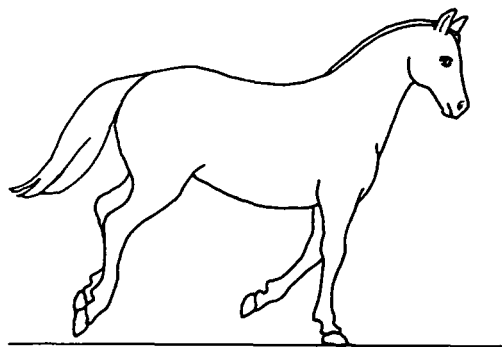


The “shoulder out” exercise.

The “counter canter,” which is cantering in a large circle on the outside lead, is another good shoulder-suppling exercise. It has two purposes: to give the rider control over the shoulders and to lengthen the stride. This makes the horse change its lead closer to the ground, and helps prevent hopping into the lead.

Cues for the Flying Change

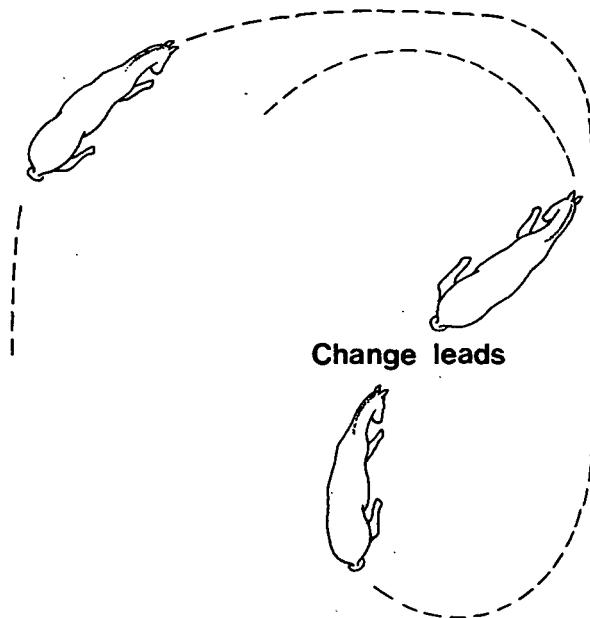
When the horse seems to be responding well, and is in a good mood, try the flying change. With the horse collected, start on the right lead by pressing the left leg slightly behind the cinch. After circling the arena in a clockwise direction, begin a 20-foot-diameter circle off the rail. Instead of completing the circle, angle back to the rail in the opposite direction. As the horse straightens out, lightly collect it by picking up the reins, and push its hindquarters to the left by cueing with the right leg. Apply the leg pressure just as the right lead leg hits the ground. At this moment the other three legs are in midair, in ideal position to begin the change.



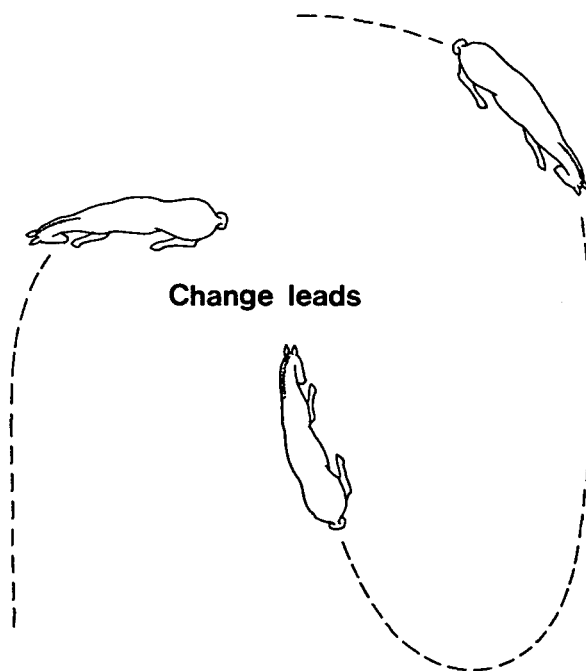
A smooth lead can be made only when three feet are off the ground.

The straightaway allows the horse to two-track into the change with its hindquarters properly arced for the new direction—again, this is the **KEY**. If it doesn’t pick it up on this first try, it will be in a

“counter canter,” or outside lead in the corner. Cue again at this point. This is uncomfortable for a horse, and it may be ready and willing to change. (Method #1)



Method 1



Alternate Method 2

Ask for the change in a different place each time. A variation might be Method #2, but be careful to plan a wide circle after the lead change. A common mistake is to canter to a fence or wall and yank the horse into a change of direction. Usually the rider leans into the change, which is also wrong. The horse may catch the front lead, but

with the shoulder thrown into the change first, and the hindquarters swing out of the circle, it seldom picks up the rear lead. This is called cross-leading, crossfiring, or disunited.

Try to recognize the correct lead as quickly as possible in order to reward the horse or correct it. An experienced observer can be helpful. If the horse did not change correctly, reevaluate the technique. If the method was not at fault, it may be necessary to go back to repeated simple changes, with only one trotting step, before trying again.

Do not punish the horse or it will begin to get excited when asked to change.

After the horse has changed correctly, reward it. Walk around to relax it, then start off on the left lead, using opposite cues. Do not make more changes the first day. On the following day, ask for changes, but do not ask for more than four. A burst of speed or a switching tail are warnings that the horse is being rushed.

Again, vary the routine by changing in different places in the arena. Make simple or interrupted changes, or drop to a trot occasionally. Ride several circles in each direction before changing. If the horse seems to be anticipating a change, hold it in the circle another time or two until it relaxes. If it is still anticipating, return to some of the basic maneuvers and come back to changing in circles later, or on another day.

You may attempt figure 8's when the horse is changing well in a variety of places. You must make the changes on the straightaway between circles, not on the corner. Do not "pattern" the horse by practicing the figure 8 over and over.

Another technique to use on a horse that will not change, or that cross-leads repeatedly, is to ask for the change as it crosses a 6-inch jump or pole on the ground. Give the rein and leg cues just as the horse is coming down with the lead foot extended. Vary the routine and location.

Work diligently every day but do not tire or sour the horse. When it begins to change successfully, go on to another maneuver. The flying change is not easy, and it takes time to develop smoothness. Do not be discouraged if the first attempts fail. Be patient!

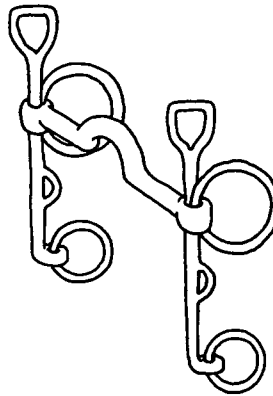
Introducing the Curb Bit

You may need several months of training to produce a horse that yields to light pressure from the snaffle bit. It is a mistake to think that a more severe bit will do the job faster or correct a horse that will not slow down. The results will be temporary, because the mistakes that caused the problem will not have been corrected.

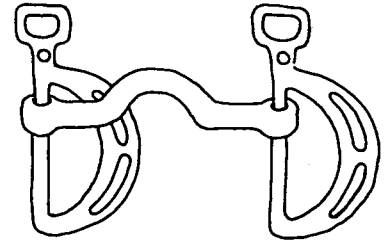
When the horse has become totally responsive, introduce the curb bit with a solid bar mouthpiece.

A short pelham is good for the transition, because it has direct snaffle rein rings, plus curb rein rings to apply leverage. Use the curb reins gradually, and more and more as the horse relaxes its jaw.

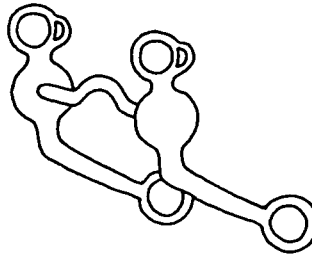
A grazing bit or a Tom Thumb bit has very little leverage. Either one is a good choice for the first curb bit.



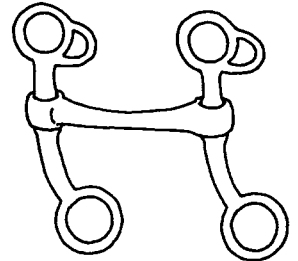
Pelham



Kimberwicke



Grazing



Tom Thumb

The cowboy snaffle, or snaffle with shanks, is a very severe bit that combines leverage by the curb strap on the jaw with a nutcracker effect on the bars of the mouth. It is not recommended.

The horse discovers two changes from the snaffle: the solid bar across the tongue and the action of the curb strap. Choose a low to medium port, depending on the tongue relief it requires.

Let the horse wear the reinless bit in the stall for 30-minute periods until it quits playing with it. Leave the curb strap loose.

Begin riding with a very loose curb strap to make the bit's action similar to that of a snaffle, on the corners of the mouth without leverage on the jaw. As the jaw relaxes, gradually tighten the curb strap.

The transition from snaffle to curb bit may take 2 days or 2 months, depending on the horse. Do not rush. Strive for a closed mouth during stops and reining. Many good horsemen use the snaffle on "finished" horses most of the time outside the show ring. It keeps the horse's mouth soft and allows the rider to position the head exactly where it is wanted.

Do not hesitate to return to the snaffle for retraining or exercising the horse.

Glossary

Aids—The hands (reins), legs, weight, and voice, used as signals to control the horse.

Balk—To stop short and stand still; to refuse to move.

Bearing rein—Rein pushed against the neck toward the direction of turn; neck rein.

Bitting—Teaching the horse to give (yield) to the bit before riding.

Bosal hackamore—Bitless bridle with a braided noseband (bosal) that controls the horse with leverage and pressure on the nose and jaw.

Bowline knot—Nonslip knot that will not tighten under pressure.

Cavesson, longeing—Heavy halter with stiff noseband used for exercise or training on longe line.

Collection—Shortening the horse's stride, but not slowing it, for smoother gaits and quicker response to aids.

Counter canter—Cantering on the outside lead in a circle.

Crossfiring—Cantering with the forehand and hindquarters on opposite leads; disunited, cross-leading.

Cross-leading—See crossfiring.

Crupper—Strap ending in leather loop under tail to keep harness from being pulled forward.

Curb bit—Bit with cheekpieces (shanks) and curb strap to apply leverage on jaw and bars of mouth.

Direct rein—Rein pulled to the side in the direction of the turn.

Disunited—See crossfiring.

Draw reins—Reins attached to cinch rings, run through snaffle bit rings to rider's hands.

Extended gaits—Lengthening the stride, with or without increased speed.

Gaits—Pattern of foot movement; basic gaits are walk, trot, canter, and gallop.

Haunches—Hindquarters.

Heart girth—Circumference of horse where cinch lies behind forequarters.

Hobbles—Joined leather loops fastened around horse's front legs to limit movement.

Indirect rein—Inside rein is raised and moves back and to the outside of the turn across the withers.

Lead—The leading legs, front or back, at the canter.

Longe—To train or exercise a horse in a circle on a long line.

Near side—The left side of a horse.

Off side—The right side of a horse.

Pivot foot—The front or back leg on which the horse turns.

Poll—The top of a horse's head just behind the ears.

Pose—To stand a horse with all four feet square or in a balanced position to show horse's conformation to best advantage.

Rollback—Reverse at lope; turn over hocks, coming out on either lead.

Running "W"—A system of ropes tied to the horse's front legs in order to throw him to the ground.

Serpentine—Series of half circles forming a line of S's to each side of straight line.

Shoulder out—Horse is bent with its shoulder toward the outside of the circle.

Slip knot—A quick-release knot used to tie the horse safely.

Snaffle bit—A gentle bit with a light pull (without curb leverage), usually with a jointed mouthpiece.

Splint boots—Leg shields designed to help prevent injury to the inside of the front legs by the opposite hoof.

Standing martingale—Strap from the cinch to a noseband used to prevent the head from raising too high.

Surcingle, training—A broad strap around the heart girth with rings to support or fasten lines for bitting or driving training.

Tack collar—A leather strap around the neck with sharp tacks used to make the horse stop.

Transition—The change from one gait to another.

Two-track—A sideways movement of the horse with forward motion at the walk, trot or canter. The body moves at a 45° angle to the direction of travel, leaving two lines of tracks from the front and hind feet.

War bridle—A rope looped through the horse's mouth and over the poll, which will slip and tighten when pulled.

Wolf teeth—Small, unnecessary teeth located in front of the top molars; may be sensitive to bit.

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