

Training and Riding Advice

As it is a time of year horses can be more rambunctious, they need to recognize our leadership capabilities even more than usual. Being firm - yet benevolent is a must. Understanding how to re-direct their feet and actions, as oppose to trying to pull on reins or use brute force to stop them in a panic or hard-headed fit, is paramount in safety knowledge.

Rather than trying to use brute force on reins, it is much more effective to be able to use a single rein (including use of pressure release) for turning a horse in a circle as a basic requirement for re-directing and stopping them against their instinct or willful behavior. Knowing how and when to disengage the hind-quarters as well as how large or small a circle that is appropriate is important. When to delay the turning move (ie speed being one main factor) is also important. Controlling / re-directing them when bolting from a stop or slow gait is one thing. Whereas, working from high speed requires a completely different approach for getting into a good position for accomplishing an effective turn, whether it is a tight or large turn.

Proper use of single rein in controlling bolting horses----I have listened to multiple discussions that prompted me to write about this as so very much is misunderstood. It is doubtful that an average strength person could ever force turn a speeding horse so tightly as to cause a fall. However, for the few that are strong enough to do so it is a good warning not to do so to early and to only turn in a larger sweeping turn until speed is reduced sufficiently to then make a sufficiently tight turn in order to disengage the hindquarters and stop safely.

In cases where the riding track is too constrained and there is no chance to make a wide turn to begin with, then a cavalry lift is an effective and safe way to reduce speed, although it can require some distance forward in order to get the horses attention. Otherwise, there is little choice but to bail out and most riders have not learned how to do that safely. Bailing out "can" be done relatively safely, although when moving at speed the inevitable fall forward into a roll will surely result in scrapes, bruised but not usually anything more serious if done correctly.

Connection between Ground Work and Saddle Work :

Whether riding at home, at other UK locations or away on holiday, it is extremely important that you "know" a horse can firstly bend laterally to each side as well as disengage their hocks when required. To discover this, the standard leadership exercise should be done from the ground before mounting (this takes less than a minute) then again once mounted. If the horse is not able to follow your request and do these basic exercises, you are

likely putting yourself in great danger to ride on. There is no horse alive that cannot bolt or try to bolt under extreme circumstances. Horses have millions of years of DNA learning in place and they are never going to lose that instinctive behavior. At least not in our lifetimes.

Hoof Health: Lameness --- a common problem:

Most Horses suffer from some sort of lameness due to hard ground, i.e.: sore shins/legs, muscle, tendons, ligaments and more common from soft or over hard frogs developing a crack in the centre of the frog "Sulcus" allowing moisture, dirt and bacterial infection to take hold. Causes can arise from dirty beds, wet muddy field conditions, injury or just poor hoof condition (Farrier needed). These are just some of the known reasons. A serious crack or split in the frog centre Sulcus allows thrush bacteria to take hold.

Basic Symptoms of Thrush:

- Foul smell from the bottom of the hoof.
- Black pus-like substance oozing from the frog area.
- Frog substances appear to be atrophying and decaying.
- Lameness & obvious discomfort when thumb pressure is applied on frog.

Treatment normally starts with hygiene, keeping all frogs totally dry and dragging cotton wool through the crack with a hoof pick until clean and letting the air kill the bacteria **before applying treatments**. A good product now available here (from the USA) is a dry powder. More information is can be found at <http://www.ntdry.co.uk>, as putting a wet treatment on a wet condition helps the bacteria thrive.

As in all lameness issues please consult your VET: to obtain the correct diagnosis before treatment.

Closing tip:

A common flaw in taking up rein slack (in an effort to even up their reins) is to look down whilst sliding a loop of the reins up though one hand (assuming there is a connection between reins). If you must use this method, then you must learn to do it without looking down to begin and accomplish the movement. As whenever you are not focused on the ground being covered by your horse - even for just a few seconds can be very dangerous.

Ya'll ride safely and Aware.

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