
HALTERING, LEADING AND TYING

Haltering

Safety

1. *Never* leave a halter on a horse that will be left alone.
2. Leather halters are safer than nylon halters in that they are more likely to break if the horse is accidentally hung up on something by the halter.
3. Halters should fit tight enough that they cannot stick a foot through it and loose enough that breathing and eating is not impaired.
4. Remove all things from the area the horse is in when leaving a halter on the horse for a period of time if you must do so.

Putting a halter on

Weanlings should be introduced to the halter early in their life. Most people place halters on young foals as early as three days old. If this has already happened to your weanling then it will make the first haltering very easy. If your weanling has never had a halter on, you will want to get it used to having a rope on its body and head before you place the halter on it.

Preparation for the first haltering

1. Use a light rope (a cotton shank for example) and touch the foal with the rope over its entire body. Do not scare it, but simply get it to accept having something placed on its body, especially the head area.
2. Wrap the rope around different parts of the head getting the foal used to the pressure around the muzzle, jaw area and behind the ears. *Never* tie the rope anywhere on the weanling. This first introduction to the rope should be done so that the foal accepts and relaxes when touched with the rope.
3. If the weanling moves around as you are placing the rope on its body, just quietly move with it and continue touching it with the rope. If you have been successful in your 'cradling' you should have no problem with this.
4. If your weanling was too large to cradle, you will have to teach it to move away from the pressure of your hands after the halter has been placed on it. But remember, at this point the weanling does not know what the halter means to it, so this will be the first lesson.

Placing the halter on the weanling

1. With the halter in your hand, opened so that it can easily be placed over the nose, stand beside the weanling's near (left) shoulder, and stand facing towards the front.
2. Place the halter in your left hand, reach your right hand around the neck and take the other side of the halter with that hand so that the muzzle opening is held open with both hands.

3. Slide the halter over the muzzle of the foal, moving 'with' the foal quietly if the foal backs up or moves ahead as the halter is coming over its muzzle. Your calm attitude will help calm a worried foal - talk to it in a soothing voice.
4. Place the halter piece behind the poll of the weanling and latch it closed.
5. Once the halter is secured, step back and allow the weanling some time to get used to it. It may shake its head, hold it high or low and try to get it off. Some foals don't have a problem with the constriction of a halter and accept easily.

Halter breaking

When teaching a horse to lead for the first time, it is preferable that you do so in a small area such as a large stall or small corral.

Use a strong halter and lead shank. If the weanling breaks loose from you, it will try to do it again when you try to lead it. Training will take you longer than if you had started with the proper equipment.

The following methods can be used on weanlings as well as more mature horses.

Moving towards you by putting pressure on the halter and body

1. Once the weanling/horse has accepted the halter on its head, you can begin teaching it to 'give' to the pressure of the halter.
2. Stand beside the weanling/horse head, facing it with one hand on the shank but close to the halter. Your other hand is available to touch its body if you need to.
3. Begin by putting pressure on the halter with one hand for the weanling to step towards you, using your other hand to push the hindquarter away. Every time it makes the attempt to step in towards you, release the pressure on the halter immediately (but still maintain a hold on the shank).
4. Using this method, the weanling eventually will step sideways, towards and away from you by using the pressure and release method.
5. Be sure to work from both sides of the weanling. You do not want to get it one-sided. After all horses see two different things from each of their eyes so they must experience life from both sides.

Leading the horse forward

Once the weanling has become used to wearing the halter for a period of time, and is giving to the pressure on the halter, you should teach it to *lead* with forward steps.

There are a number of methods that may be used to do this. You choose the method that makes sense to you and is successful. If one way does not work well, try another.

Method 1: The Butt Rope

1. After the halter is on the horse, snap a long cotton shank to the halter.
2. Using a long rope or lariat, make a loop. Lay this loop over the hips, around the hindquarter and under the tail.
3. Pull the loose end of the butt-rope forward and through the halter.
4. Stand in leading position (between the head and the shoulder), cluck with your tongue, and gently pull on the lead shank, followed by a firm pull on the butt-rope.
5. To escape the pressure, the weanling should move forward. The most important part of this training is that all pressure is *released* immediately as soon as the weanling makes the attempt to step.
6. Do not expect perfection in the beginning. Your goal is to move the weanling around by the pressure and release of the halter and butt-rope. Soon it will understand that the release of pressure comes from a step forward.
7. The butt-rope is only a temporary means of teaching the correct response to the forward pressure on the halter. As soon as the weanling understands how to move forward from your voice, your body position and the pressure on the halter you can quit using a butt-rope.

Method 2: The Whip

1. Place a halter and shank on the weanling.
2. Stand facing the near side of the weanling lined up with its hip, facing slightly forward. (In a lungeing position.)
3. With the left hand on the lead shank and the right hand with the whip, (25-36 inches long) use your voice to cluck to it, then tap its hindquarter with the whip until it steps forward.
4. The moment it attempts to step forward, remove all pressures - voice, halter and whip by discontinuing the aids.
5. At first it might kick out at the whip, stand its ground or back up when you apply the taps of the whip - but position your body safely and continue tapping (sometimes it might need to be quite strong) and eventually it will move forward and you will release the pressure. If the weanling bolts forward when you tap it on the hindquarter, allow it to go forward, trying not to pull hard on the halter - your goal was to go forward so you do not want to punish it just because it was a bit too energetic. You will eventually use pressure on the halter to control how quickly forward it will go.
6. When you have used this method of halter breaking, the horse will understand how to move forward from pressure from the hindquarters rather than being pulled around by the halter. This is a more natural way for a horse to learn to lead in that they tend to push each other around in the pasture by pressuring the hindquarters, not by putting pressure on the head.

7. Once it begins to move forward you can simply put it on a very small circle and practice stopping, then moving forward.
8. Repeat this method for the other side.
9. Once the horse has learned to step forward just by listening to the clucking of your voice, you don't need to apply the whip any more, just stand in leading position and cluck as you step forward. The weanling should step forward with you.
10. You can carry a longer whip with you in case you need to reach behind as you are leading to encourage the weanling to continue forward. Just seeing the whip approach the hindquarter should be enough for the weanling to step ahead.

Tying for the first time

Safety guidelines

1. No horse should be tied until it knows how to respond correctly to the pressure on the halter.
2. Always tie a horse to a strong, solid object. Do not tie to the planks on a fence as they may come loose if the horse struggles.
3. Use a strong halter and lead shank. You do not want either to break if the horse struggles and pulls back.
4. Tie with a quick release knot.
5. Tie the rope short enough that it will not get its feet over it and long enough that it has some room to move.
6. Tie the rope at wither level of the horse. Tying higher is preferable to tying lower.
7. Tying a weanling in a stall or small area that they are familiar with would be safer than out in the open where they may be worried about more than just being tied up.
8. Weanlings are often more reactive than older horses. Care should be taken when tying them for the first time. Test their reaction to being tied first by putting a single wrap around a post and hold the shank yourself while the weanling figures out it cannot go anywhere. This may save it from serious injury to its neck if it begins to panic and pulls back frantically.

You must always teach the horse the correct response to pressure before expecting it to naturally move away from it or give to it.

If you have done this, tying a horse for the first time should not be a problem.

They will try to walk away, feel the pressure and give to it by walking back towards it.

Do not try to 'spook' the horse or tie it to a place where it might be worried.

Have a safe and quiet place to teach the horse to tie.

Do not leave the horse tied for too long in the beginning. Depending on the attention span (and age) of the horse you could start with 10 minutes and increase it to half an hour or more.

The experience should be pleasant and you may begin brushing the horse while they are tied.

Using an inner tube

Horses that are tied 'hard and fast' and have not been taught to move forward to the pressure on the halter, will often go into a frenzied panic when they feel there is no 'give' on the shank.

This why an inner tube is often used for teaching horses to tie for the first time.

The inner tube has enough give in it that the horse should not panic when it feels the pressure because it is a 'giving' pressure.

The horse is less likely to strain its neck if it does pull against the pressure as well.

Method

1. Place the inner tube around the post or object that you are using to tie to.
2. Tie the shank through the loop of the inner tube.
3. If the horse pulls against the tube, there is a bit of 'give' so the horse should not 'panic'.

PICKING UP THE FEET

How old should a horse be?

All horses should be taught how to pick all four feet up.

It is important for proper care of the feet that they be comfortable having them cleaned, trimmed and possibly shod in the future.

Even young foals should be exposed to having their feet picked up, however, be careful if they struggle. Move with them and don't force the leg into position if they are trying to get away. You could cause some damage to the joints because you are able to 'out-muscle' the foal.

Remember, you want the horse to be relaxed and quiet about being handled and having the feet picked up, so be patient and act accordingly.

Sometimes picking the foot up can cause fear in a horse as it has lost its ability to run if in danger. Knowing this can help you have more patience and understanding as you teach the horse to accept having one foot taken off the ground. Young horses sometimes panic so be ready to move quickly and carefully.

Begin teaching this in an enclosed area that will not allow the horse to bolt freely away if they try to. However, be sure that you always have the ability to step well out of the way if a horse has a wreck. For example, sometimes horses will panic if they are tied and you pick up a foot - you will need room to step back until they are calm again. For this reason, it is sometimes recommended to simply hold onto the horse for the first lesson, rather than tying them up.

Use your common sense and know your horse well enough to decide which is best.

What if they try to kick?

If you do hold onto them, hold their head high if they are attempting to kick with the back feet. When a horse has their head held high, they cannot easily kick out.

The method used to teach a horse to pick up its feet for the first time would be the same whether you are handling a weanling or an older horse.

First Lessons in picking up the feet

Touching the legs

The goal of the first lesson is to have the horse comfortable with you touching the legs. With a halter and shank on your horse, stand facing the horse's hindquarter while holding onto the shank in the hand nearest to the horse. If your horse ties well, you may do this while it is tied. Simply run your other hand down the length of each leg, talking to it in a

calm voice. This will get the horse used to being touched on its legs.

Is there a specific order?

If you always pick the feet up in a certain order, a horse will become accustomed to the routine and will practically lift their own feet for you as you go around the horse, giving it the cues to pick its feet up. Often a farrier will trim in a particular order. Near front, near hind, off hind and off front. Sometimes they will work on the front feet then the back feet. You decide which order you want to teach and then follow the routine each time you work with the feet.

Steps to pick up the foot

1. Position yourself near the leg to be picked up. Face the hindquarter of the horse. Run your hand down the length of the leg starting at the top of the forearm/gaskin. When you reach the fetlock area, pinch just above the fetlock at the base of the back of the cannon bone. As you pinch, lean your shoulder into the horse's upper leg and body to take the weight off that leg. You might say 'foot' or cluck to your horse as an added cue that you want them to pick the foot up.
2. As the horse makes the attempt to lift the foot, use the other hand to help move it into a bent position.
3. Allow the horse to move the front leg slightly forward as it picks it up, as it is almost impossible to bend the knee without allowing for that forward motion.
4. Hold the foot quietly for just a few seconds at first, then gently set the foot down.
5. Move on to the next foot and continue with this until you have picked up each foot and held it for a few seconds.
6. Go around the horse again, picking up the feet. Hold them for a longer period of time. You may even use a hoof pick to begin picking out the foot.
7. As you feel the horse start to fidget or pull away, hold on for just a moment more, then put it down. Soon the horse will learn that there is nothing to holding the foot up for as long as you need it. They learn to balance themselves on the other three legs.

Position of the leg

Hold the leg in a comfortable position for the horse. Not too far away from the body. The forearm of the front leg should be perpendicular to the ground. The hind leg should be held well behind the horse, not tucked up under the belly when picking it up.

Setting the foot down

Do not 'drop' the foot when you are ready to let the foot down. This might actually cause some pain and not be a very positive learning experience for your horse. Gently place the foot on the ground. A horse will often try to snatch the foot away as you place it. Try to hold on as you allow it to step down to the ground. Be sure your fingers are out of the way.

Problems with picking up the feet

If a horse moves and tries to take its foot away while you are holding it, consider the following:

1. You may be asking it to hold it up for too long. Smaller periods of time may make the horse more successful in the end.
2. Most horses don't try to step down while you hold the knee or hock firmly in a bent position. However, they may move the leg forward or backward in an attempt to get it away. Simply cup your hands around the hoof and move with the horse, putting pressure on the leg to move it back into the desired position. As soon as the leg is where it should be, then release the pressure and simply hold it in position.
3. Words of praise often encourage a horse to stay relaxed and help them to realize when they are correct.
4. If a horse is leaning on you as you hold the foot (you realize that you are holding a lot of its front or back end weight), then take just the toe of the foot and hold it so that the weight of the horse is actually causing the joints of the leg to hold this weight. This should cause enough discomfort to the horse that it regains its own balance on the other three legs that are on the ground.

GROUND MANNERS

When working around the young green horse you have the opportunity to establish the kind of 'ground manners' you want the horse to have.

Ground manners include the way the horse behaves while you are handling it on the ground and not in the saddle riding.

The following are ground manners that should be taught to all horses.

The horse respects the handler's space by not stepping into the handler

- Always be prepared to tap (with your hand, lead shank or whip) the horse's body part that is coming into your space so that it moves away from it.
- Horses should not walk on top of the handler. For example, if you are leading a horse and it is crowding you as you walk, you should use your hand, whip or elbow to make the horse move away from your space.
- Do not use large movements and yell at the horse, just quietly but sharply make the horse respond by stepping away.
- Once the horse is in the proper position, resume a pressure free position yourself.

The horse stands quietly while being worked with

- Teach horses patience in standing quietly.
- Start by asking for only a small amount of time (especially for the young horse) and gradually increase the amount of time you ask your horse to stand.
- You might groom the horse while it is standing as this is something that most horses enjoy.
- If a horse has a lot of energy you cannot expect it to stand still for a long period of time.
- Exercise it first by leading it around or lungeing it, then begin the lesson to teach it to stand still.
- You may also begin teaching it to 'square' up as it is standing.
- Allow the hind feet to stop in a natural position and teach the horse to move one front foot at a time by applying pressure on the halter with a slight sideways pull.
- Once the horse begins shifting one foot at a time you can start to work at getting all the feet squarely placed under them.
- This is great preparation for a halter or showmanship class and is also important once you begin riding the horse.
- Horses that place their feet squarely under them are balanced and able to be mounted more easily.

Building confidence and yielding to pressure

Young horses are often in need of confidence building. Even an older one that is nervous or appears scared of things all the time will likely need to be handled in a method that will allow it to feel more secure with its surroundings, its handler and itself.

Understanding 'where' its feet are, help a nervous horse gain confidence.

Knowing how to react to the pressures applied to it, give the horse even more confidence.

All of this work can and should be done from the ground with all horses.

1. Using the halter and lead shank, and pressure from your hands, move your horse around. Front end around hind end, hind end around front and lots of backing up. Teaching a horse 'where' its legs are as they maneuver around will build confidence in it. Having a horse 'yield' to the pressure will gain respect and add to that confidence.
2. Teach your horse to move one step at a time. In the beginning you just want movement. Then you want a specific movement of the legs. The final goal is to have the horse respond to the lightest pressure possible, one step at a time.
3. Make sure that the legs are moving correctly. When moving it sideways, either front or back end, watch that it is crossing one leg over and in front of the other as it moves.

This is a sure sign of a horse that is 'supple' and 'yielding' to the pressure of the handler. Horses that step into the other leg as they move sideways or step behind that leg are actually not yielding, but bracing against the movement.

Backing up on the ground

1. When teaching a horse to back up, stand facing the horse's shoulder from either side.
2. Put a light pressure on the halter for it to step back and say '*baack*'.
3. As soon as it makes the slightest attempt to step backwards, immediately release the pressure.
4. Once the horse understands how to 'yield' back to the slightest pressure then teach it to step back for more and more steps, each time releasing between each step.
5. Teach it to back up in a straight line first. Then you might have it move sideways as it backs up as you apply pressure on the halter and the body with your hands.

Continue these exercises (break it into small lessons) until your horse responds correctly with only a very 'light' feel on the halter.

When you do a good job of the ground work, the effort when in the saddle is made so much easier as the horse understands so much about 'yielding' to the pressures put on it.

LUNGEING THE YOUNG HORSE

Lungeing is a common way to both train a young horse or to exercise a schooled horse. When training a young horse, lungeing allows the handler to introduce many new things to the horse without having to be on its back. You would start out with no equipment on except for the halter or lunge cavesson and progress to where the horse would be lunged with the saddle, bridle and possibly side reins.

How old does a horse have to be?

Lungeing may be taught as early as six months of age, but most horses are not started until they are at least one or two years old. Unless a weanling is being conditioned for halter competition, lungeing is not necessary and may in fact produce some strain on the joints and tendons. Free exercise is better for exercising a young horse. A young horse can get hurt doing too much work, too soon, since excessive lungeing can be hard on the legs.

The goal of lungeing

The goal of lungeing, should be to 'move the horse forward into the bridle or halter with upward and downward transitions in all three gaits, with the horse responding in a relaxed manner to the voice and body aids'. Lungeing improves a horse's balance in both directions and teaches contact with the bit or halter.

Lungeing can also be a safe way to exercise an injured horse that needs to move. Lungeing prepares the horse for being ridden for the first time and can help to introduce the horse to the lines used in ground driving.

Lungeing is used to teach a horse skills that will be needed for manners and balance. This training helps the horse respect the handler. Lungeing taught before ground driving and riding teaches the horse to perform specific skills. The horse learns to associate physical and verbal cues from the handler with their own movement.

How much time do I spend lungeing?

Lungeing for training and manners may be done for 20 to 30 minutes per session. The length of time you work will depend on the amount of energy the horse has and the length of its attention span. Your best results will come from working two to five consecutive days. Working the horse irregularly will be of not much benefit.

Equipment for lungeing

- A strong well fitted halter or lungeing cavesson
- Lunge line or rope (at least 6-8 meters in length) Nylon web lunge lines are lighter and easier to hold than a rope.
- Lunge whip (total length including lash should be at least 3 meters long)

- Splint boots, bell boots or leg wraps for the horse are sometimes used to protect the legs of the horse. When learning a new skill like lungeing often there is a lack of coordination that results in injuries to the legs.

Where do I lunge?

When teaching a horse to lunge for the first time you should use an enclosed area where the size will help the horse to establish a proper lunge circle. You may also position poles or bales to give your horse some boundaries. Do not use objects where the lunge line could become caught if the horse went on the wrong side of the object. Do not lunge a horse in a very small circle as it could cause some strain on its legs and muscles. The circle should be at least 15 meters in diameter, and preferably 18 to 20 meters. A round pen is ideal for lungeing a horse. In fact you could begin by training the horse to move to the commands given without even using a lunge line if you had access to a good round pen.

The footing where you are working the horse is also important. Deep footing or footing that gets slippery when wet, can lead to stress related injuries like bowed tendons or sore muscles. It is easier for the horse to work if the ground is soft, but not deep. The horse can slip if the surface is hard and has little traction.

Position of hands on the lunge line and whip

Allow the lunge line to come from the attachment at the horse's head through your hand in the same manner as you would position a rein if you were riding. The line should come up from the bottom of your hand and out through the top, with your thumb holding on top. The excess lunge line will be held in large folds in the other hand.

When lungeing a horse to the left, you should hold the lunge line that comes from the horse's head in your left hand, with the excess line that is not being used, held in your right hand with the lunge whip. As the horse moves out on the circle you will drop the loops from your right hand and allow the line to slip through the fingers on your left hand. If the horse comes in on the circle, you can then use both hands to loop the excess line onto your right hand.

If you are lungeing to the right, the right hand will control the lunge line as it goes out to the horse, with the excess line being held in your left hand.

This method of holding the lunge line in two hands allows for easier adjustment of length of line, as the horse moves in and out of the circle. It is especially important when teaching a horse to lunge for the first time. Most horses will not feel comfortable moving around you at a steady distance and will change the size of the circle all of the time. You need to get good at coiling the lunge line in and letting it go out so the horse does not become tangled or pulled around. You might practice by getting a friend to pretend they are the horse as you 'lunge' them.

Position of body and whip

The position of your body and whip is very important to the success of a horse's first and future lunge lessons. Your body and shoulders should face the horse's hindquarters as if to drive the horse forward. The whip, held in the same hand as the extra loops of lunge line should point toward the heels of the horse, and be moved upward (but not touching the horse) if you need the horse to step more forward. As soon as the horse responds by stepping forward, you should release the pressure of the whip. Lower it to the ground again.

Be sure that you step forward not backward as you ask the horse to move around you. This is a common problem when teaching a horse to move out in a circle around you. *Step forward!*

If the horse wants to turn and face you as you ask it to move out and away from you, use your leading hand, (the one that holds the line closest to the horse) as a 'block' to prevent the horse from turning in. You should only need to raise it up towards the horse's head as you step toward the hindquarters and cluck to the horse or tell it to 'get up' as you raise the whip.

It is important that pressure from the whip, your body and hand are released momentarily when the horse makes an attempt to do the correct thing. This way the horse will want to be where the pressure is not, and will find it uncomfortable to be wrong.

If the horse trots out on the lunge when first learning, allow it to do this. Moving forward is much better than stopping. Once it relaxes then you can move your body and step more in line with the front end of the horse to get it to slow down as you use a gentle tone of voice and say 'easy'.

It takes patience and consistency to teach a horse to lunge, but horses are quick learners once they understand what is desired. Once the horse has walked around the circle on the lunge, you can attempt to halt it.

Halting a horse on the lunge for the first time

When you teach the horse to halt on the lunge, first, take advantage of a time that the horse wants to stop anyway. If you can tell that the horse is ready to halt, you can simply lower the whip to the ground, step more in line with the head of the horse and say in a low soothing voice 'whoa'. If the horse halts, let it relax for a few moments, and if it turns and faces you, praise it with your voice as you walk slowly toward its nearest shoulder as you fold the excess line in your hand. The whip should be tucked under your armpit so that you have both hands free.

Using a fence

You may also use a fence or some barrier to help you get the horse to halt by walking slowly toward that natural obstacle (fence) with the horse.

While you are asking the horse to halt, you will use gentle tugs and releases on the lunge line, while saying 'whoa' in a deep voice. You might also slowly fold the excess lunge line in as you walk closer and closer to the horse, all the time asking it to 'whoa'. Once halted you should praise the horse with your voice, walk up slowly, rub its wither, then let it settle for a while before either changing direction or asking it to move out again.

Changing direction

When changing direction on the lunge for the first time, a horse will likely be quite confused. They may have seemingly mastered lungeing in the first direction, but now they have to relearn the method in the new direction.

Continue to 'teach' the horse as you did with the first direction. Be patient and reward any correct movement. Before changing direction, and with the horse halted out on the circle, change the position of your hands on the lunge line and whip. Snap the lunge line onto the opposite side of the cavesson or side of the halter that it is closest to you on the new direction of circle. Get everything organized first so that the loops drop off your hand easily. Nothing should get tangled as the horse attempts to move out. It takes practice to get efficient and smooth in the use of the lunge line and whip, and is important to successful lungeing lessons.

How much tension on the lunge line?

The amount of tension on the lunge line is important. Once the horse understands where it should be positioned on the circle around you, you should teach the horse to accept a certain amount of contact either through the halter, or through the ring on the bit, once it is well schooled in lungeing. Be sure to 'hold', then 'release' to teach the horse the kind of contact that you want. Just pulling all the time will make for a heavy contact, and a loose line will not teach the horse what contact is. Be sure to push the horse forward into your hand contact by using your body and whip. Keep your hand soft and giving, but firm enough to keep the size of the circle correct to your liking.

What if the horse wants to leave the circle as you lunge?

If necessary, use the weight of your whole body weight to firmly pull the horse back onto the track if it is attempting to leave the circle. Do not 'jerk' the horse's head. Once it comes in, release the tension on the line to let the horse know that this is where you want it. Sometimes placing poles on the ground on the open side of a circle (if your using one end of an enclosed area) will help the horse stay on the lunge 'track'. There is a correct timing to applying pressure on the horse's head to bring it in. Watch the movement of the horse's front legs. A horse will move its head to balance so that it is over the front foot that is on the ground. If a horse is leaving the circle and its head is trying to pull away you must apply the pressure when the outside front leg is on the ground. This causes a slight upset in the balance of the horse and it is discouraged from leaving the circle.

What if the horse wants to come in on the circle?

If a horse wants to come in to you and make the circle smaller all the time, then you will use your body language and the whip to 'push' it out onto the circle. Step forward towards the barrel of your horse with your shoulders square to the horse's side as you say 'get out'. You may need to point with the whip at the girth area to encourage the horse to step away and out. Any time the horse makes the correct movement out of the circle, you should momentarily release the pressure of your body and whip to ensure it is rewarded for moving correctly. Resume the use of pressure and release until the horse is out on the circle where you want it. Sometimes moving a horse in a more forward gait will help it go out on the circle. You should avoid actually hitting the horse with the lunge whip as most horses will respond to simply lowering and raising the whip. If a horse is particularly lazy or unwilling to go forward you may use the lash of the whip on the heels of your horse. They will usually respond favorably to this by stepping more forward. Remember to release that pressure when the horse does respond. This will ensure continued success as you teach the horse to lunge correctly.

Should your horse face you when it halts?

In the beginning, when a horse faces you it is a sign of respect and is desired. If you have used any round pen methods of training, this is important. However, as you begin lunging the horse, it should eventually be taught to halt facing the direction that it was traveling. This is necessary if you are going to 'ground drive' your horse. Remember however, that this change should be developed over time. Give a signal to the horse so it understands to stay facing straight rather than step in towards you. Use the fence as a guide and bring your hand up to the horse as it tries to step in. This will help guide the horse to the desired position at the halt. Be patient and realize that the halt asked for in the ground driving will also be aided with the use of the bit, so you can control the movement of the horse somewhat through rein pressure.

Voice commands and lunging

You should teach walk, trot and canter on the lunge. For upward transitions use voice commands that increase in pitch a tone. Voice commands for the downward transitions decrease in tone and settle the horse in their movement. Speak loudly enough for the horse to hear you and firmly reinforce your voice with body and whip to teach the horse to eventually respond only to the the voice commands. Be sure each command is different from the other so that the horse does not get confused. For example 'walk' and 'whoa' are similar enough that it might be confusing to a horse. You might say 'easy' for walk and 'whoa' for halt. Remember however, that it is the tone of your voice that is really important during the upward and downward transitions. Some examples of voice commands that can be easily taught to horses when lunging.

Voice Commands

Upward transitions - increase the tone of the syllable (bold)

Walk from halt Get - up!

Trot from walk Ter - rot!

Canter from walk Can - ter!

('lope' sounds to close to 'whoa' for a horse)

Downward transitions - decrease the tone of the syllable (bold)

Trot from canter ter - rot

walk from trot eas - y

halt from any gait whoa or 'ho'

Progression of lungeing

1. Halter and lead rope or lunge line

Teach horse to move around you in a circle in both directions, maintaining contact with the halter at a walk.

2. Halter/cavesson/lunge line

Teach horse to move out on a larger circle at walk and trot in both directions maintaining light contact with horse. Teach horse to halt.

3. Halter/cavesson/lunge line

Teach horse to respond to voice commands for walk, trot and halt. Horse becomes steady and rhythmic in each gait. Begin teaching horse to stay balanced in the canter. Don't stay in canter for too long. Take your time to work up to doing 5 or so canter circles at one time. Horse does not try to leave the circle or come in.

4. Halter/cavesson/saddle/lunge line

Teach horse to accept movement of saddle as it moves at walk and trot around circle in both directions. Don't expect the horse to necessarily listen to you if it is preoccupied with figuring out what a saddle it. Just keep it under control and soothe it with your voice.

5. Halter/cavesson/saddle/lunge line

Teach horse to move to voice commands at walk / trot / canter maintaining a steady rhythm and focus on you as the handler. Start getting horse to listen to voice commands only - lessen the use of the whip. Canter work will be likely rushed and unbalanced in beginning. Do not overdo it - remember that a horse needs time to be conditioned and regain balance when there is a saddle on its back.

6. Saddle/bridle/lunge line

Horse has been 'bitted up' (become accustomed to the bridle and bit - is relaxed wearing it and knows how to give to the pressure on the bit).

Attaching the lunge line to the bridle

The lunge line may be attached to the bit in various ways, depending on the sensitivity of the horse's mouth and the handlers hands.

1. Snapped directly to the bit
2. Through the bit ring on the inside, over the poll behind the ears and snapped onto the bit on the outside.
3. Snapped on the cinch ring on the inside through the snaffle ring on the bit on the inside and out to the hand.

When attaching the lunge line to the bit when lungeing, it is very important that the horse already understands how to give to the pressure on the bit. Otherwise you will surprise it and possibly damage the horse's mouth if you need to apply some pressure to control the size of the circle or the speed of the gait.

SACKING THE HORSE

Sacking out

The term 'sacking out' is used when you teach the horse to accept things being placed on its body.

Originally a 'sack' was used, but you can use a variety of items that will increase your horse's ability to handle anything and become more 'spook proof'.

A saddle blanket, feed sack, or jacket are common items used. A plastic bag tied to the end of a whip can also be used to sack a horse.

Because the bag makes a sound as it is being rubbed over the body, it is often more frightening for a horse.

However, after being sacked with a blanket, the whip and bag would be an important part of total sacking.

The goal of the process is have the horse accept having an item such as a sack or blanket touched over its entire body, including the face and legs.

Do not make your horse frightened with the method, simply teach it that it can handle a variety of sensations over its entire body.

It must develop trust in you as a handler and an acceptance of these things being used to sack it out.

Two methods of sacking out

You will have a choice to make before you begin sacking your horse.

One method requires the horse to be held either by the handler, another person or to be tied while it is being sacked out. This method means the horse is not free to get away from the sack.

The other method allows the horse to move freely around an enclosed area while being introduced to the 'sacking out'.

The method you choose may depend on the amount of experience you have as a handler and/or the type of area you have to use.