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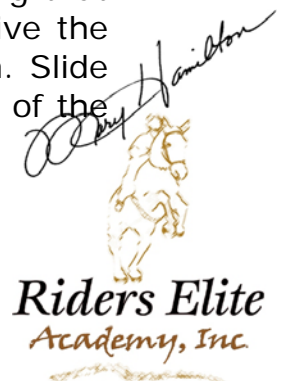
“Train your horse to stand quietly and relax when tied”

This is the second part of a series of articles on training your horse to stand. Last month we taught our horse to stand quietly on cue in the arena. We all know a horse that pulls back or fidgets nervously when tied is a danger to you and himself. Now let's teach our horse to stand tied at a tie ring or trailer.

In order to teach this lesson your horse must have yielding basics down pat. Yielding is nothing more than your horse giving to pressure rather than resisting. When you apply fingertip pressure to the side of your horse to move his hindquarters sideways and he steps away from the pressure that's yielding. When you pull down on the lead rope attached to the halter, your horse feels pressure and yields by dropping his head. Your horse should yield from all six directions 100% of the time. It's an automatic response to yield their head right, left, up, down, forward and back. It's especially important they yield from downward pressure on the poll (*top of head*) as this is where the halter puts pressure when your horse pulls back and resists. Before beginning this method, practice your lesson from last month to refresh his training. Your horse should stand quietly on cue in the arena.

Step 1

Select a safe, clutter free training area for this step. Wear a good pair of gloves to avoid rope burn injuries should a problem develop. Your tie ring should be approximately wither height and secured to a sturdy post or I beam of a wall. Stay away from fence rails or anything that could give way if your horse tries to test it by pulling back. Give the same verbal cue to stand that you used in the previous lesson. Slide the free end of the lead rope through the tie ring. Hold the end of the





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rope with your gloved hand. If your horse stands quietly, praise him with a rub on the shoulder to reinforce this is what you wanted from him. If he moves, reposition his body to exactly where you first put him and repeat the verbal cue to stand. If he moves his head a bit and the rope slides through the ring, that's okay. We don't want your horse to feel claustrophobic at this point and pull back in a panic.

Step 2

After your horse is comfortable and relaxed standing with the lead rope through the ring, slowly move around your horse releasing the end of the untied lead rope. Rub him as you move so standing quietly has a pleasant reward. If he steps or moves, quietly reposition him and repeat the verbal cue to stand. Walk away a few steps and return. The rule is he can look but he can't move his feet from where you placed him. Repeat this step going further and further way before returning.

Step 3

Put a small amount of pressure or pull on the lead rope through the ring. Don't get into a tug of war here. Just a small amount of tension on the rope and wait until your horse gives to the pressure and drops his head. Release immediately when he gives. That's his reward for yielding. Our goal in this step is to teach him when he gives to the pressure on the halter he can find comfort and relief. If you do get in trouble here and your horse reacts by violently pulling back, let go of the rope so you won't be injured. This means his yielding basics aren't confirmed so go back to ground work. Once your horse consistently gives to the pressure and stands quietly where you have placed him, go on to the next step.

Step 4

Give the verbal cue to stand and tie your horse to the ring with a quick release knot. Tie your horse so he can move his head and neck but not so long that he could get a leg over or head under the rope. He needs to find tying comfortable and be able to stretch his neck. When





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training a horse to stand, sometimes I hang a hay bag so he can relax and eat while tied. This makes standing tied a positive experience not a frightening one.

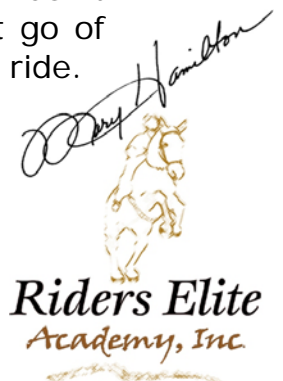
Step 5

Tie your horse for longer and longer periods. Start with five minutes. Always keeping an eye on him to make a correction or watch for signs of trouble. Always end your training session with a horse that's relaxed and standing quietly. It's your job to make him feel safe and comfortable when confined, not nervous and worried. Soon your horse will be standing quietly on cue when you're grooming, bathing or tying to a trailer.

Police Story

When a horse is donated to our police department, we do a series of tests to find any holes in their previous training. "Aulos" was a warm blood donated to our program. No problems surfaced while riding him in the arena. Now it was time to take him out for a "hack" in the park and see how he reacted to unexpected pheasants, deer, bicyclists and in-line skaters in the great outdoors.

We brought along a seasoned veteran police horse, "Donner" to give him the tour. Aulos trailered quietly and walked confidently out into the Spring day. We hung hay bags, tied the horses to the trailer and began to groom them. A car pulled into the parking lot. The driver opened the door and out shot a barking streak of energy. The Jack Russell Terrier ran straight for the horses. He leapt up and grabbed the middle of Aulos's tail. He swung there, back and forth and hung on. In a panic Aulos pulled back violently, breaking his halter. At a lightning speed he galloped through the parking lot and down the gravel road. I was in hot pursuit. The dog owner screamed at the dog which wasn't helping matters. One hundred yards down the road the dog let go of Aulos's tail. I quickly scooped the terrier up which ended his free ride.





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My partner jumped on Donner bareback and caught the loose horse.
Oh the adventures of trail riding !

