

Becoming A Leader

What we'll be doing

We will be working on getting our horses to back up by using the lead rope. Start by standing in front of your horse. Take the lead in your hand and wiggle it from side to side just a little bit (pretty light). You want to start light to give your horse a chance to respond. If he does not back up or respond, give him a reason to. You will do this by wiggling the rope from side to side harder. Once he moves back, stop. Start again with the light touch by wiggling the rope lightly and see if he moves off of that. Once your horse gets good at backing to a light touch, you can start getting him to back off to the end of the lead rope, which is the end goal. Remember, whatever level your horse is at, you want to start there!

Why we're doing it

This exercise does a lot for fixing an inattentive horse in the long run. It will do a lot to help cure spookiness and anxiety. It is immediately effective for horses that have a tendency to crowd a human on the ground. When paired with other maneuvers (like lunging), it can really help clean them up. More than anything else, this task is one more thing that you can do to clearly communicate with your horse, which is key to getting your horse to view you as a confident leader that they can trust, respect, and follow.

Common Mistakes

The first one is that they are really hesitant to get really big and really wide with the lead rope. And with a horse that is heavier, it will take going to that amount of pressure to get a foot to move so you can reward him and start getting him lighter and lighter. The second common mistake that people do is keep all the extra lead balled up in their hands. This will get in your way. The best thing is to just throw it and let it hang on the ground.

I would also like to mention that sometimes I see people wiggling the lead rope all over the place, and it is not in synch with the horse backing. Just keep the rope right in front and lightly start moving the lead to the left and to the right until you get a step back. If that still does not get him to take that step back, you don't have to do it faster, just do it wider.

One other thing that I would like to add is that some horses may start to go forward, move sideways, look to the left, look to the right, or even rear up when they are in the process of trying to understand what you are asking of them. Just do the same thing for all of those. Remember: make the right thing easy and the wrong thing difficult.

What it should look like

You should be able to wiggle the lead rope lightly and your horse begin to back up. Your horse's feet should come to life and flow right back without it taking a lot of work.

Recap

The goal is to get your horse to back up just barely wiggling the lead rope. Start off small with the left/right motions. If he still does not move a foot back, then you can make those left/right motions wider. Remember to make the right thing easy and the wrong thing difficult.

Conclusion

Alright! Now it is time for you to go out and do this task with your horse. Remember, keep the lead rope moving in a smooth left, right, left, right motion until you get a step back. If you start moving the lead rope all over the place, it can make it hard to stay in synch with your horse's feet.

Horses, horse activities and horse training can all be extremely dangerous. Although horses can appear to be calm and passive animals, they can be unpredictable and dangerous at times. Do not attempt the training demonstrations or advice received from this document or any other of CarsonJames.com LLC products or services without proper supervision, safety equipment and proper facilities. Neither CarsonJames.com LLC, its employees, agents, sponsors, or producers of the horse training videos, articles, and other visual or written material are liable or responsible for any injury, injuries, or loss that may be sustained based on use of the exercises, demonstrations, or advice for horse and horse training activities contained in any visual or written material produced by CarsonJames.com LLC. If you are not comfortable with any of the exercises, demonstrations, advice, or activities contained in this document or in any of CarsonJames.com LLC products or services, then do not attempt it.