

Lunging for Respect – Stage One

I. GOAL

To be able to send the horse out onto the circle by just pointing and have him trot energetically around you without pulling on the lead rope. Then, when you look toward his hindquarters, the horse should yield and face you with two eyes.

II. WHY

Notice that it's called Lunging for Respect. It's not called Lunging to Get the Buck Out of the Horse or Lunging to Tire Him Out. It's called Lunging for Respect. You earn a horse's respect by moving his feet forward, backwards, left and right and always rewarding the slightest try. So the more you can get his feet to move and change direction, the more respectful the horse will get, and the more he'll use the thinking

side of his brain, which will make him safer and more trainable. This exercise really focuses on using your body language to send the horse away from you and then getting him to face you with two eyes again. It teaches the horse to yield his hindquarters from a distance, so it's important that he already have the foundation of Yielding the Hindquarters Stage One and Stage Two.

Time frame

It usually takes four or five days of consistent practice for the horse to get good at this exercise. Once the horse does understand the exercise, it's not something that you'll want to do every single day because it'll just bore him to death. In order to keep the horse interested in his work, you have to add variety to your training sessions. While consistency is how the horse learns, variety keeps him looking forward to working with you and engaged in the lesson.

III. TEACHING STAGE

1 Remove the string from the Handy Stick and tie it loosely around the base of the horse's neck.

The string will be a guideline for you [Photo A]. When you stand behind the string, you are behind the drive line. Any



energy you create behind the drive line does one of two things. It causes the horse either to go forward or to yield his hindquarters. When you stand in front of the string you are in front of the horse's drive line. Any energy you create in front of the drive line tells the horse to slow down, stop or change direction. To make it simple, behind the drive line are the gas pedal and clutch, and in front of the drive line are the steering wheel and brakes.

I recommend taking the sting off in the beginning because it not only shows where the drive line is, but it's also much easier for people to use the stick without the string. It seems like the more tools you give people in the beginning, the more they get wrapped up in the string, trip over the stick and fumble around in general. Once they get some coordination skills with just the stick, then they can add the string and they're quite proficient.

2 Face the horse, standing directly in front of him. If necessary, back him out of your personal hula hoop space [Photo B].

Remember, there's a 4-foot circle that surrounds you and serves as your personal hula hoop space and safety zone. Unless you invite the horse into that space, he must stay out of it.



3 To hold the rope correctly, first make the OK sign at your horse [Photo C].

Then put the lead rope in your OK sign so that you're holding the lead rope between your thumb and index finger [Photo D].

Fold all of your fingers around the rope so that your knuckles are on top. Your thumb should be pointing toward your chest and your little finger should be the closest finger to the horse's head [Photo E].

This position allows you to easily point and tell the horse which direction to go. It also makes it easy for the rope to slide through your hand when the horse goes out to the circle. If you hold it incorrectly, with your hand underneath the rope, you'll have a tendency to grip it too tightly.

