

Horses eventually the
animal will become
curious



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Horses are beautiful, graceful, and loving animals. However, people do not realize that our equine friends are still very instinctual animals. In the wild, if something jumped on a horse's back, it was there for only one thing.

That horse was its next meal. Even today, horses have retained the instinctive defense of running away, bucking, and kicking. Because of these instincts, training a horse is a tedious and challenging process.

A trainer must understand the way a horse's mind works and use the information to obtain a goal. The reward for this process is a loving and trusted counterpart. Horse training includes introduction and gaining trust, familiarizing the horse with equipment being used, and finally riding the horse with confidence. The first step in training a horse is the introduction. The wrong introduction can lengthen the training process by months. Horses are curious by nature. The trainer uses this as an asset in the introduction.

Rather than roping the animal and choking it down to touch it, a person needs only to be in the pen with the horse. Eventually the animal will become curious and approach the person. When the horse approaches the trainer, the trainer should blow directly into its nose. A horse will react naturally to this behavior since this is the way horses introduce themselves in the wild. The horse is only getting a scent from the new thing in the area.

The horse should determine at that point that the person is horse-friendly and allow the trainer to lift a hand and apply it to its body. At this point the trainer must just touch and talk to the animal. By the end of the introduction, the trainer should be able to calmly apply a halter. Once the halter is on the

horse, the trainer must teach the animal to lunge. Lunging is the process of putting a long rope on a horse and having the horse walk, trot, or run in a circle around the trainer. Lunging is a useful tool in gaining the horse's trust and teaching it basic word commands.

Lunging and talking to the horse should be done as much as possible. At the end of each workout, the trainer should take extra time to brush out the horse. This has the same therapeutic value to the horse as a massage. While in the process of gaining the horse's trust, the trainer should already have step two in mind. Now the horse is ready to be introduced to its equipment.

The horse should be introduced to its equipment in a safe and secure place, such as where it eats and sleeps. The new equipment should be put into the area before the horse is. It should be at eye level and no loose straps or ropes should be attached to it in any way.

The animal should eat and sleep with this equipment for at least two days before the trainer integrates it into the daily workout. When bringing it to the training enclosure, the trainer should be firm about the goal. The horse may still view the saddle as a wild cat that is looking for a scrumptious equine dinner.

The saddle should become a daily ritual, and it should be used for lunging as often as possible. During the first few work-outs, the saddle should be loose and progress up to a nice tight cinch. At this point, the horse should be trusting of the trainer, familiar with the equipment, and have a good understanding of word commands from the trainer. The animal's confidence should be high in the work area. If the horse is still showing signs of

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insecurity, step one should be repeated until the desired result is obtained. Once the horse is secure with the trainer, area, and equipment, the trainer should prepare to ride it. When the trainer mounts the horse, the horse should be looking directly at the trainer.

The trainer should be very verbal at this point, with a very reconfirming voice. When the trainer is on the horse, the horse should already have a firm grasp of go, stop, and turn due to lunging. Once this process is completed, the trainer will have a trusted counterpart and loving friend. A well-trained horse can bring many hours of joy into the life of a trainer.