

(1) Groundwork Level 1

Modified August 30, 2008 (6:41pm)

- **View “Horsemanship for All Ages, Vol 1 “ and complete question sheet with 80% correct answers.**
- **Can define safety in regard to gates.**
 - ▶ When entering a stall, paddock, or holding pen with a horse inside, open gate just enough for entry, then close the gate. Making sure that the gate will not swing open on it’s own after you take your hand off of it. The gate must be entirely closed until the horse is haltered. If the horse decides to make an exit through a gate that is not wide enough, you could get hurt, the horse could get hurt, or the horse could escape and could set up a whole different set of issues.
 - If a gate opens by swinging the direction which you will be traveling, this is the safest.
 - If a gate only opens by swinging towards the place you are exiting, make sure the gate is ALL the way open. This is very important so there is no chance of the horse getting stuck in an opening not quite wide enough for them. A horse could panic and die if it got stuck.
 - The very best way to take a horse through a gate is to stand with the gate all the way open, one hand on the gate, and send the horse through it so it does not swing in the wind and hit the horse.
 - ▶ When letting a paddock full of horses out onto the pasture or the hay area, always open the gate towards you and stand “behind” the gate. Using the gate as a barrier between the horses and yourself will protect you from a group of spirited horses as they “charge” for the best feeding opportunities or just for the fun of it.
- **Haltering**
 - ▶ Demonstrate putting a halter on a horse.
 - ▶ Handler MUST be standing behind the horses elbow during this entire exercise.
 - lead rope may be used to encourage horse to lower and turn head, but do NOT hold the horses’ head in place. Respect the horses dignity enough to present what it is you’d like them to help you with and then expect them to follow through with the job. All of this respect with expectations and understanding will build through your entire ride. Start it here and you’ll see a nice partnership with your horse. Practice this a bunch to get it working smoothly for you.
 - ▶ Halter must be on with a proper fit
 - a level of looseness that allows placement of 2- 3 fingers - stacked vertically - between the throatlatch on the horse and the throatlatch on the halter.
 - a level of tightness that will keep the halter from slipping over horses nose.
 - halter must have no twists
 - done independently - no help.
 - halter must be tied on properly.
- **Can open, walk through and close gate safely while leading a horse.**
 - ▶ Horse needs to be at least three feet (an arm’s length) back from the handler, not right on top of him or her. Notice if the horse is starting to come towards you and ask them to wait patiently at a distance. This is the only way the handler can be safe from getting stepped on or pushed and crushed.
 - ▶ Gate should swing easily open while handler has a good way to arrange the rope and the horse so this can happen.

- Allowing rope to drape over handlers arm will free up hands for working the gate.
- Having horse stand quietly with plenty of distance between gate and handler allows the handler to think freely about the gate as well as remain safe.
- Make sure rope is not on ground so neither the horse, nor the handler steps on it. This could cause a very uncomfortable situation.

- **Tying and releasing with tact.**

- ▶ Horse must be tied loosely enough to allow for them to drop their poll below the withers, yet tight enough to not be able to step on or get tangled in the rope. 1' to 3' is usually a good length of rope between the horse and the hitching rail.
- ▶ Knot must be a quick release knot with at least one “link” of a “daisy chain.”
 - Releasing must be accomplished by pulling the loose end of the rope gently and firmly. This needs to be done in such a manner to not startle the horse and NEVER allow the loose end of your rope to hit the horse in the nose or face.

- **Able to lead horse with the horse following behind and handler at the end of the lead rope. A “float” of no more than “4” and no less than “1” is maintained in the rope. 3 times around arena with halts performed at two letters within each circuit. Halts are held for at least a “5 count.”**

- ▶ Before testing this, choose which letters you will be stopping at and let tester know.
- ▶ Horse should be encouraged by the handler to stand quietly during the “5 count” at each stop.
- ▶ Handler must present a good feel of partnership during this entire exercise. In other words, always gauge how much of an aide might be too much or too little for communicating with your horse and getting the job done. Again, respect the horses dignity enough to present what it is you’d like them to help you with and then expect them to follow through with the job. All of this respect with expectations and understanding will build through your entire ride. Keep it here and you’ll see a nice partnership with your horse that will give you fantastic rides.

- **Back the horse 6 steps.**

- ▶ This may be accomplished by either having a hand on the chest of horse, hand on the halter knot, or a float in the rope.
- ▶ Handler must not “push” the horse. Direct the horse and allow the horse to freely follow through with what it has been shown.
- ▶ Handler should start to get an understanding of the importance of the release. The release is what allows the horse to do what it has been asked to do. The release can be timed well enough that it can be given as you notice a change in the horse before the horse truly moves. Therefore, the release is what will encourage the horse to follow through with what it has been asked to do.

- **Roundpenning**

- ▶ Can send horse around roundpen at a walk and trot both directions.
 - The butt-end of the lunge whip (if used) must be kept at, near or in the handlers belly button.
 - Any aides must be presented with as much tact and subtlety that can be used for getting the job done.
 - Handler must always keep focus for sending horse forward at or behind the tail of the horse.
 - Horse must walk upon asking (not trot) and trot upon asking (not canter) and be able to be brought back down from trot to walk when asked.
- ▶ Can draw horse from either direction at each gait (walk and trot)

- **Safety Rules regarding treats and petting the horses**

- ▶ Never hand feed any of the horses. Treats must be cut up and placed in a dish for the horse. Hand feeding can encourage a horse to be bitey and pushy.
- ▶ Cut up all horse treats into bite-size chunks before feeding.
- ▶ Never pet any of the horses over the fence. Once you have asked permission of the person in charge of the horse you'd like to pet, you may pet any of the horses while they are out.
- ▶ Always approach a horse behind the elbow or at the hip to pet them. Allow them to give their head to you, the head and muzzle are only for petting once the horse has accepted you into it's presence. This will help a horse realize that you truly respect their dignity. Once you respect a horse and it's dignity, they are more likely to respect yours.
- ▶ Always be aware of where the horses mouth is, any mouthing by the horse, is unacceptable behavior. If they mouth you or bite you they have given you permission to let them know this is inappropriate behaviour. Of course, this only applies if you are following all the safety rules about petting and feeding and expectations of space. Only your consistency in these areas will help a horse be successful and to understand what the rules are.
- ▶ Always keep the safety rules of space and respect between you and the horse the same. If you have different rules all the time, it's the same as charging \$5 for a cookie today, then \$25 tomorrow, then \$2 the next day, then \$5 again. Eventually, you will not have any customers because they never know what to expect and it's too hard to try and be a good customer. The customer (horse) will not believe you or respect you.