

## ROUND PEN CLINIC WITH RON NORDIN - FEB/ 8, 2009

Summary notes by Vicki Lawrence, proofed by Roger Marvin

Pen: prefers 50 foot diameter, 5 feet high, one that horse can see out

On hand: 50 foot ranch rope (extension of arm), rope halter and lead, lunge whip, flag (bag) on shorter stock whip, wears chaps & high boots to protect legs when slapping rope/whip/bridle, saddle pad/blanket, saddle, bridle (O ring snaffle), lunge line.

**All these steps do not necessarily happen in the first session. The horse sets the pace.**

### MOVING AROUND PEN

1. Starting: Horse (h) has no halter. Use rope (making noise by smacking leg, or tossing end of rope towards back end of h) to move horse away and onto rail to circle. Position body behind shoulder to drive forward. Step more towards front of h for stop and direction change. H will turn into fence, away from you. If h looks like he'd like to jump out, you're putting too much pressure on him.
2. Next, move h around but when reversing directions get h to turn to inside (harder to do). Must get h's attention-looking at you or slightly facing you. Position body (angle between h and rail) to move h in correct direction.
3. Don't go too far, too fast until responses are consistent. Keep h's attention on you. Work enough on each side to keep h 'equal sided'.
4. Work on getting h to stop at a particular place and stay there - move back and forth so body acts as a block to forward direction. (Rest time and reward for both of you).

**H SHOULD NOW KNOW HOW TO MOVE, HOW TO TURN, HOW TO STAND**

### HOOK UP

1. H should soon want to come forward to you, and follow you as you walk, make turns. Stop and pat h frequently (especially on the head, where h is most sensitive) before moving on again. Create and keep a space between you and h.
2. During walkabout, step into h, h should move away (h should yield to you). Step away, h should follow. May need to repeat lots, important to remain calm.

**If at any time things don't work, back up, start again and repeat all the steps.**

### SACKING OUT

- 1..Touch with coiled rope-all over. If h leaves, work h so that h realizes being away is a lot of work. Work any spots that seem touchy over and over until they are not sensitive. Especially put some pressure under where cinch is going to go.
- 2..Jump up and down beside and around h (like you are going to mount). May need to give more time to nervous side. Go for walks in between sessions. Always work so both sides of h get no reaction.
3. Jump up with hands on h and increasing pressure/weight bearing before sliding down.
4. Jump up and lay across back, slide off. Increase time while leaning across, then try swinging body/legs.
5. If h calm, get on and straddle h, but get off quite soon. Repeat many times from both sides.
6. Work each step with breaks of walking around. H's head should be dropping more, should be 'mouthing' (relaxing) more. Good time to teach picking up feet and generally learn more about h.

**Don't stay on any one thing too long, h may get bored or angry.**

7. Sack out with blanket/pad. Work from both sides, touching h everywhere with blanket/pad.
8. Flag whip - Start away from h, keeping flag low to get h used to it. Walk around shaking flag. Move towards h as long as h stands quietly. Always give room for h to leave if h chooses. H may start to follow you as you walk around. Gradually raise flag and work higher.
9. Gradually touch/rub h all over with flag. Should be able to shake flag above back (riders make noises up there) and under belly.

#### HALTER & LEAD ROPE

1. Gently put on halter. H should be able to do all the things on lead that he did when 'hooked up' and free. Remove lead line for next step.

#### SADDLE

1. If you have an old saddle, bring it close to h and dump it on the ground. Keep picking it up and repeating this, going around h and gradually getting closer, then right beside h.
2. Gently swing saddle on to h's back and pull off (about 10 times per side) until h relaxed with it. Always face the back of h for your safety.
3. Snug up cinch. 2 wraps work, 3 wraps will hold saddle if h leaves or starts to buck. (Try to pull on latigo as h leaves so cinch will be even tighter for bucks.)
4. Attach breast collar. Keep off to one side in case h moves forward. Back cinch should just touch belly. Anything lower could catch on something, tighter could cause bucking.
5. Work moving around pen again, stopping to pat h and tighten cinch.

#### BRIDLE

1. Bridle h gently. Tie the reins up safely and securely or remove.
2. Work around ring.
3. Lunge h using the inside snaffle ring. Draw h in and release to move out (teaches h to respond to future rein pressure). Change snap to other ring to work other direction.
4. Ron suggests using 2 lines and drive h, using the stirrups as rein guides. (not demonstrated)
5. Remove lunge line, take 1 rein under stirrup leather to slightly bend head around. Use half hitch of the rein around cantle to hold head, but allows release if necessary. Allow h to move around in the pen with head in this position, to let h get used to it.
6. Tighten rein more, walk into h to help him turn. Walk from other side so h turns himself to see you. H's forelegs should be crossing in front. Repeat on other side.

#### MOUNTING

1. Mount, sit quietly. If h moves off, let him wander around with no pressure.
2. If h doesn't move, bend head around, let go when h moves his foot. Keep repeating until h moves around on own.
3. Try a bit of gentle pulling on one rein at a time to ask for direction adjustments/changes.
4. Repeat all this round pen work several days in a row. H should be able to move through steps more quickly and confidently each day - but never rush. Always go back and repeat if necessary.
5. More riding than this is usually done in an arena.

**The more you prepare, the less chance of the horse bucking. BUT -**

**if you are going to be the one to start a new horse, you should be able to sit a buck.**

Ron usually works a horse for 2 weeks in a round pen, 2 weeks in the arena, then out to work in a field. Each h is different so the amount of time varies. His horses are worked 4/5 days a week.