

Training Stages



Evaluating the stage of learning.

Groundwork, riding work and emotional control should be evaluated separately.

Without focused awareness from the rider, it is possible for the horse to advance in one area while falling behind in another. For example, a horse that is learning a lead change may become more sensitive to riding cues... and yet also become overly sensitive in groundwork and emotional control.

1

TEST

Ask the horse a question and observe the answer given.

2

TRAIN

Use a predictable pattern to allow the horse to guess the right answer.

3

THINK

When you leave the barn, replay the training in your mind...from the horses point of view.



Elementary School

Foundation. Set boundaries. Priority on safety.



High School

Improve. Solidify. No safety issues occur.



College

Advance. Unify horse and rider.

Riders often start in the middle...which leaves them questioning the beginning.

Horses always progress from elementary to high school to college. But riders....

Riders often feel confused when they train their own horses because they intuitively sense they are missing some of the pieces.

Until a rider understands the horse's path from the beginning to the current stage of training, it is common for the horse to regress in the 'unknown' areas.

In the broadest sense we are either making the horse more sensitive or more dull. This is true with every interaction we have with our horses. It is also true that both sensitivity and dullness have their place.



“The challenge is knowing what’s missing.”

If your end goal is a well balanced horse you must learn how to balance sensitivity and dullness. Balance exists in the middle.

Examples of sensitivity are: willingness to move forward easily and lightness. Examples of dullness are: calm acceptance of the rider's aids and a willingness to ignore scary objects.

Either of these can be taken too far. A horse can become dangerously light or willing to ignore the rider.

A COMMON MISTAKE

Testing is not the same as training. We take a test to evaluate where we are at. The test does not train. The test evaluates. The test reveals where we understand concepts and where we are lacking.

When we 'test' our horses it is important to remember that taking the same test every day does NOT increase your learning. Teaching increases learning.

The ratio for each horse is different but in general training should occur 3x to 10x more often than testing.

