

Horse Training How-To from Horsemanship101.com

What I'd Teach Your Horse

Training & Re-Training the Basics

Second Edition

Keith Hosman, John Lyons Certified Trainer

*Part of the "Horse Training How-To" Series from Horsemanship101.com
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John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

Preface

Question: "I just bought a horse. What do I do now?"

Answer: "Buy my book, 'What I'd Teach Your Horse.'"

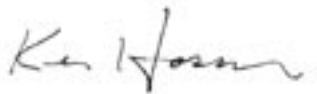
If I had a dollar for every email I get asking "what to do" to make a riding horse out of the mare Uncle Emo just traded for the old RV - or how to retrain a horse that's grown rusty - or some version on either theme, I'd be the world's first gazillionaire. With the publication of this book then, I'm hoping to grab that distinction.

If you broke your horse to saddle and rode it for the first time yesterday, this book (page 1) is where you'd start tomorrow. If you have an older horse and you've taught him everything you know and he still don't know nothin', this book is where you'd start, (page 1). It's a roadmap to building the foundation every horse needs, regardless of age, breed or background, regardless of what you've got ultimately planned for that horse.

Afterwards, when your horse knows this book back to front, go train for barrels, roping, eventing, jumping or dressage. But today, basics are basics.

Section I is the stuff your horse needs to know. Section II is the stuff (the theory) you need to know. Practice the first handful of chapters in order, as written. Beyond that, you should feel free to mix and match depending on your needs or abilities. Some chapters are dependent upon others - but in those cases, I've spelled out necessary prerequisites.

Good luck in your training!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Hosman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keith Hosman
John Lyons Certified Trainer
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Hip Control

The key you'll need to unlock all the "stuff your horse can do."

The ability to control your horse's hips is paramount in any training program. It's where we begin training the green horse, the key you'll need to unlock "stuff your horse can do." Stuff like turning; that's an obvious example. (Turn the hips, turn the horse.) But hip control is also critical to gaining shoulder control in the early stages of training and to more advanced maneuvers later on such as the flying lead change or correcting dropped shoulders. Vital to schooling the young, sometimes-rambunctious green horse, it also lends the ability to shut your bronc down when it gains too much speed or to force a change of direction when he's thinking left and you're thinking right.

We'll begin with a quick ground lesson before getting you into the saddle.

Put a headstall, reins and snaffle bit on your horse. (You don't want to start this work using a halter. The signal to the horse isn't as clear as from the bit and some horses who are especially out of control can drag you from here to eternity if they're simply outfitted in a halter.) You'll also need a dressage whip.

Do this exercise with a friend - you'd be surprised what they can see from their vantage point. Their insight and honesty might speed you through this.

Flip the reins over the horse's neck as if you're going to ride. Stand on his left side, near his shoulder, facing him. Take the rein near his mouth just below the slobber strap so that your thumb is toward the rear of the horse. Raise the dressage whip in your right hand as if conducting the Philharmonic and kiss. If he doesn't move (and he probably won't at first), tap him on the rump. If he still doesn't move, relax, you gotta start somewhere. You can tap a little harder, perhaps quicker in order to "kind of annoy" the horse. Don't smack the horse unless you're willing to chance a quick kick to your ribs. Trust me, you'd be amazed how high and far those back legs can reach.

Keep tapping, annoying the horse till it moves; teach him that your body language (raising the whip, for instance) means move forward.

Apply a little "back" pressure with your left hand on the rein - but ask the horse (with your crop and stance) to move forward. He'll have little choice, if you're persistent, than to bend his neck a little. That's what you're looking for: a little give. Release immediately. Skip this step and you'll find that some horses will simply go straight up on their hindquarters (dragging you with them) as the training progresses. So, don't.

Next step: Without your horse, look down at the ground and slowly spin around, being careful to keep your feet within the same 1 square foot of ground. You should be simply turning around in the same spot like the center of a clock. Put your hands out

like you're conducting again, your baton, sorry, crop, in your right hand. Pretend a horse is there, traveling around you like the Earth around the Sun.

Staying in one spot is important; horses think like this: "I'm the boss if I can make you move - and vice-versa." And we're trying to gain control - so listen up, this is important. Remember that great line in "A League of Their Own" when Jon Lovitz says to the girl "See, how it works is the train moves, not the station." Same thing here: While you may get dragged when you first begin, try your best to stay in one spot as you conduct this training and your horse walks around you.

Now, get your horse and do the same thing: With the rein in the left hand (as before) and your crop at the ready, ask your horse to walk around you in a circle to the left. Look down and watch the horse's front and back feet. What we want is for the horse to travel around you with the back and front feet on the same track even briefly. If the horse's shoulder is too far away and the hips too close (as if the horse is looking/turning to the right and pulling you along) then take a step directly back and pull the horse's head with you. If the shoulder is too close (and the hip too far), take a step directly back and slightly to the right. In either case, try speeding the horse up to bring him more into line, being careful to guide that oncoming shoulder/head/neck away from you and smoothly around to the left.

If the horse turns in to you and tries to stop... don't let him. Immediately get him moving again, in essence saying "That is not what's going to get you a release. Get moving." You may have to do this quite a few times before your horse learns the mechanics. Be firm and quick about it. Your biggest enemy is the horse losing momentum and rocking back.

Books by This Author

Check out these titles from Keith Hosman:

- Get On Your Horse: Curing Mounting Problems
- How to Start a Horse: Bridling to 1st Ride
- Rein In Your Horse's Speed
- Round Penning: First Steps to Starting a Horse
- Stop Bucking
- Trailer Training
- What I'd Teach Your Horse, Training the Basics
- What Is Wrong with My Horse?
- When Your Horse Rears... How to Stop It
- Your Foal: Essential Training

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What I'd Teach Your Horse: Training & Re-Training the Basics

Meet the Author

John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman



Keith Hosman lives just outside of San Antonio, Texas and divides his time between writing how-to training materials and conducting training clinics in most of these United States as well as in Germany and the Czech Republic.

Visit his flagship site horsemanship101.com for more D.I.Y. training and to find a clinic happening soon near you.

How-to articles & trainer listings: horsemanship101.com

