

Make Your Horse Stop

by Josh Lyons & Keith Hosman

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Here's a great riding tip: I won't ask my horse to stop. I just quit riding. If he doesn't stop then I go right back to working on something I need to work on. The more excited the horse is, the more important it is for you as a horse trainer to do this. You gotta work hard; you've got to pick up the reins, move the shoulders, soften that nose up, make something happen. You want to make sure that you're aggressive, you're assertive. You know what you're doing and where you want to go.

This is the solution anytime your horse is doing something you don't want him to do: You need to replace the action you don't want with action you do want. Don't discipline, replace. If I don't want my horse to stand here and paw, then I'm going to ask him to practice something we need to practice. If he wants to fight with his head, then I'm going to keep pressure on the reins, waiting (on my release) for him to soften up - all the while practicing a particular step such as consistently stepping the left front foot up and to the right. If he wants to paw, we work more intensely. If he even thinks about laying down, I'm going to ask him to move. If he wants to dance around... you guessed it, I put him to work. I turn the negative into a positive by improving some aspect of that horse's training.

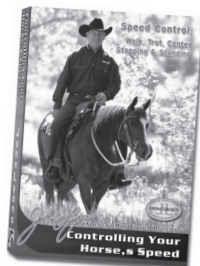
When he decides he wants to stop, then I'm going to stand here and wait. But if he decides to move (or paw or antagonize another nearby horse), I'm not going to stop him. I'm going to ask him to get moving and improve something. I'll become a more assertive trainer; I'll ask more out of my horse. I can't stress that enough: the more nervous, the more excited the horse is, the more important it is for you as a trainer to become more active. Put energy into it and make the horse sweat. Make something happen. Don't wait.

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Horses That Want To Blow Up

by Josh Lyons & John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

Let's say your horse decides he wants to blow up or have a wreck. Well, there's nothing magical about a snaffle bit - it won't keep the wreck from happening - but it will allow you to pick the place where it happens. If your horse says "I'm going to blow up here and buck you off," you can say "Uh, no, the ground here doesn't look soft enough. I thought I saw a softer spot over there." And so you ride over a few feet and your horse says "Okay, now I'm going to buck you off." But I say "Nope, I was wrong, you were right. That spot over there was a whole lot softer. Let's ride back over there."

So I ride back to the other spot and keep changing directions. I keep asking and he keeps saying "Alright, alright, we'll have our wreck over here." I continue moving him around and pretty soon he decides it's too much trouble to blow up. If I had picked up on two reins and tried to control that energy, then I would have been begging him to blow up. No, I tell him to go - and to keep going.

Nothing else matters in those situations. It doesn't matter if other riders are near you or where the horse wants to get to. The more the horse wants to think about something else, the more you'll give him to think about. This is not punishment, don't see it that way. See it as learning: You're learning that you can avoid a wreck - and your horse is learning that acting up is just too much trouble.

Bottom line: If your horse bucks, if he bolts, whatever he does, as soon as you look at the ground at where you think you're going to hit, that's where you're guaranteed to land. So stay on top of your horse, look at your horse, ride your horse. Don't be a passenger. Work. Ask him to do something.

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