

Horse Training How-To from Horsemanship101.com

Trailer Training Horses

Simple Steps to Loading Your Horse

by John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

*Part of the "Horse Training How-To" Series from Horsemanship101.com
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The following note was sent to me by a reader. She had specific questions about some of the material found in the book. I've included the Q&A here, figuring that others might wonder the same.

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John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

Preface

Don't wait till the morning you're leaving to find out whether your horse loads!

Is there anything more aggravating than spending an hour you don't have coaxing a stubborn 1 ton animal into a box on wheels that's not much bigger than the 1 ton animal?

The book you're holding, "Trailer Training Horses: Simple Steps to Loading Your Horse" will get your horse trailer-trained for good. You'll find it broken down into five "Days" or segments:

- Day 1: Easy trailer loading begins with solidifying good ground manners.

- Day 2: Set yourself up for success; work to gain fine control over your horse's individual body parts

- Day 3: Two different ways to get your horse into the trailer

- Day 4: Exercises for "hard-luck" cases, training tips for everybody

- Day 5: Do's, Don'ts and What-To-Do-Ifs, plus notes on tying, horses that won't unload, horses who "thrash" and more...

And, finally... I've included a chapter explaining how to use a round pen to teach your horse to actually look for open trailers. It really works: With diligence, you can actually train your horse to load up - into trailers some distance away - when you simply point!

I call the individual segments "days" but you should take this work at your own speed. Some "days," will be easier than others. And, while you can breeze through everything in hours, you might want to split it up over days or weeks. It's completely up to you.

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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Day One

Prep work: Teaching “go forward”

Is this you? On a good day your horse will get in the trailer after a few minutes of cajoling. More often than not, it's about fifteen. Today you're headed to a riding club event and the group leaves at 10am sharp. You're running a bit late, but as you lead your horse to the trailer, you're figuring you'll make it fine if the horse is having a “good-to-medium day.” If he loads by 9:15; you can drive the speed limit and stop for coffee. If not, you gotta do 80 - past Starbucks. You “like” your horse at this point. Problem is, your horse has gotten up on the wrong side of the manger and he's thinking “I'll die first and take you with me.” Insert your own worst nightmare here. Forty minutes later you're thinking things like “It's just a stupid trailer,” “I'll drag your butt in” and “Your (expletive deleted) mother was the same way.”

Horses either get in smoothly or they balk. If your horse balks, he doesn't load. Period. Trained horses simply walk into the trailer. Not after 10 minutes of begging. They just walk in. That's lesson one and our ultimate goal. If your horse has become a hard-luck case then it's going to take time, consistency and work from you to get this straight - but you will. The good news is, horses are actually easier to teach to trailer than you'd think, the bad news is, it takes the patience of

an oyster. Not so much time, as patience. Horses that “should trailer but don’t” have had some steps skipped in their trailer training. No big deal. We’ll cover A to Z here; you’ll take it one step at a time and we’ll get that (expletive deleted) horse in the trailer together!

Now, I know, we’ve all seen some of the big-name trainers work with a horse for 10 or 15 minutes and get the most belligerent horse into a trailer - but I’ve also seen bronc riders win millions by staying on horses called “Nightmare.” You won’t see me at the Calgary Stampede practicing my “head-down” cue in the chutes any time soon nor will I be seen rushing any horse into a trailer. I’m an average guy who gets results because I practice patience - and the methods of John Lyons. I became one of his trainers because the methods are simple, objective - and guarantee results. Follow this course, make sure you get every step nailed to perfection and your horse will load like a champ. It usually takes under four hours. Your results, as they say, will vary.

The straight poop here is that your horse will begin entering your trailer without a fight when he’s learned a few things: 1) It’s not going to kill him and 2) You’re more stubborn than he is.

Yes, there are ways to speed up the process, to “more quickly motivate” our horses to get their rears into the trailer. We’ll cover those things. But in the end, we as humans are as different from each other as horses are from each other. What works for one horse owner may not for another - and what works for this horse may not work for that one. Quick story to illustrate my point: The easiest horse I’ve ever “taught to trailer” was the youngest mare in my own little herd. I’d been working with her pasture pals that day, refreshing each on the art of trailering (they were going off to be bred

in the coming weeks). I'd spent the better part of the morning putting four of them on and off, on and off. My 3 year-old had been watching. I broke for lunch. When I returned I found the 3 y-o standing in the trailer. All the way inside the trailer. She'd never even seen an open trailer before. It had taken days to teach her sister but this one was standing inside looking at me like "What?" Every horse is different. You'll need to shove as many tricks up your sleeve as possible.

Today we'll work on "prepping" your horse (you don't even need a trailer). Tomorrow we'll cover "speeding things up." Day Three covers getting your horse into the trailer. Day Four will include exercises for "hard-luck" cases and offer tips to further simplify training for both you and your equine friend. While the exercises included in that segment will make the entire trailering process smoother for all horse/owner teams, it's particularly designed for horses known (or forecast) to be trailering pains. We'll cover Do's, Don'ts and What-To-Do-Ifs, plus notes on tying on Day Five. In that section you'll also find hints on what to do with a horse that won't unload, the horse who thrashes about when the trailer moves and more. Be aware that I call them "days" but you should take this work at your own speed. Some segments, or "days," will be easier than others. And, while you can breeze through everything in hours, you might want to split it up over days or weeks. It's completely up to you. I would strongly advise that you read through the entire "week" before getting started, as you might find tips in one segment or another that might help in a slightly different order than initially presented. (The "Dos and Don'ts found in the fifth segment will certainly come into play earlier, for instance.)

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 Is Wrong with My Horse?
- When Your Horse Rears... How to Stop It
- Your Foal: Essential Training

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“Trailer Training Horses”

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

