



Developing Rein Control

Volume 1, No.4

**Foundation
Horsemanship
Level One Series**

Exercise

Develop rein control using bridle and halter on the ground.

Purpose

Develop control of the horse, teaching the horse to give to the bit, drop his head and soften through the neck and shoulders. Develop the horses ability to stop, disengage the hips, follow a direct rein and backup.

Equipment

Bridle and reins or halter and lead rope.

Notes

Step 1 - Looking for the nose to move 3-4 inches to the side.

Step 2 - Poll (level of withers + or - 4 inches)

Step 3 - Long muscle of the neck to bend and relax.

Step 4 - The horse breaks in the poll as the nose comes back towards the shoulder.

1. Introduction

The rein control exercises need to be done in both directions with the horse walking to the left and then repeated again to the right. The objective is to get the horse to walking in a circle around us giving to the bit. If your horse finds this difficult then start by walking straight lines. If you and your horse have mastered the lungeing exercise this exercise should be easier.

2. Go forward cue and connecting the rein to the hip

Hold the rein 4-8" from the bit. Focus on the hip and tap the horse with a dressage whip till it moves forward. Stop tapping the instant the horse makes a forward movement. Walk with the horse as it walks forward positioning yourself opposite and facing the horses shoulder. Stop walking let the horse walk past you and point the hand holding the rein at the horses hip, keep pressure on rein till horse moves hip over, then release. The horse should stop after moving the hind feet over two steps.

3. Four Steps To Giving to the Bit

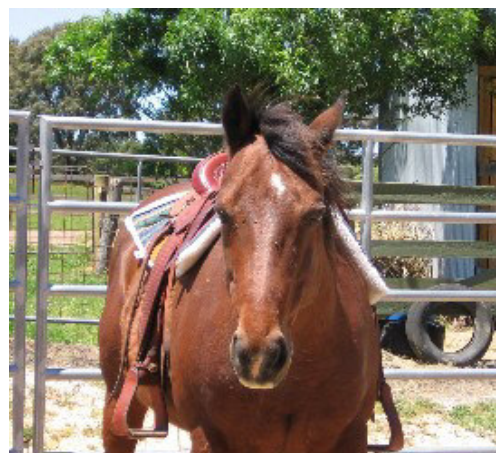
3.1 Step 1

Looking for the head/jaw to move 3-4 inches to the side. Hold rein (pressure) and wait for give (don't pull). We are looking for softness and giving in the jaw and muscles, not just movement towards the pressure. Release and ask again as the horse walks forward. Do this standing still then walking with the horse circling around you.

3.2. Step 2

Step 2 is asking for the head to drop to the point where the poll is level with the withers. Ask for step 1 when the horse gives, release then apply pressure to the rein again with some downward pressure. Maintain some downward pressure till the horse drops his head slightly. Do this step at a walk.

3.3 Step 3



When the horse is giving to steps 1 and 2 ask for more bend in the neck (not the jaw/head). We are looking for the long muscle in the neck to relax and the neck to bend. The long muscle of the neck will start to wobble when the horse relaxes it. Do this step at a walk.



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Tips

3.4 Step 4

When the horse is comfortable with steps 1-3 then ask for more forward movement from the horse into the bit asking with rein pressure for the horse to give to steps 1-3 and now also to start to break in the poll by bringing his nose back towards his shoulder. Remember to release the pressure on the rein when the horse gives.

4. Backup (Hip, shoulder, shoulder)

Walk the horse forward, asking for steps 1– 4, stop and ask for the hip to step over by pointing the rein hand at the horses hips (as you did in 2 on the previous page). The inside shoulder slows and stops, release the rein, apply pressure with the rein again backwards, focus on inside shoulder and ask for the horse to move backwards. Settle for one step initially and build on this. Do not try to force the horse backwards, just maintain the pressure till the horse tries the correct response.

5. Shoulder control - Direct Rein

Giving to steps 1-3 (minimum). Focus your attention on the horses inside shoulder. Ask with constant pressure on the inside rein for the horse to step to the inside (towards you), keep pressure on rein till horse moves inside front foot forward and towards you.

6. Shoulder Control - Indirect Rein

With the horses nose and neck bent away from the direction you want the shoulder to move, eg towards you. Lift the inside rein and point it at the shoulder, ask the horse to take a step away from the inside rein, release, build on this till you can get the horse to do a turn on the quarters. Do not place the rein against the neck as in neck reining. You must do this with the horse walking forward.

