

“Ground Training”

Working In Hand – Yielding Right

By Lynn Palm

We teach the horse to do certain in-hand maneuvers on the ground so that he already will be familiar with them when asked to do them under saddle. This lesson will help you teach your horse yielding to the right.

Outfit your horse with a properly fitting halter with a longe line attached and leg protection. For this lesson, attach the longe line on the halter's side ring on the side from which you are leading. Start in a small, enclosed area. Once your horse is solid in this lesson, you will be able to execute it anywhere.

Key points when teaching yielding:

- Look up at the topline so you can evaluate your horse's body position and responsiveness to your cues.
- Keep the horse forward by extending your arm and moving with him. If you find that you are moving too much sideways, pick a point on the fence or put up a marker in a diagonal line from your starting point. Keep your horse moving forward and laterally as you aim for this point.
- Always face your horse and move with him. If you are asking for yielding to the right, cross your left leg over your right (and vice versa) to help you move with him.
- Watch so his hips don't swing out away from you. This is a telltale sign that you are cueing him incorrectly.

Yielding Right

To properly position the horse for yielding, find a straight fence line that ends in a right hand corner or bend. Stand so that you are leading your horse from his right side with him positioned between you and a fence. You will be moving to the horse's right.

Walk the horse straight along the fence line and turn him through the right hand corner. Continue turning away from the fence, making a half-circle to the right, until you are positioned in the middle of the

paddock and facing in the opposite direction from where you started. Ask him to “whoa,” making sure he is straight and square.

Change the longe line and your position to the horse's left side. You will be working from the left side for yielding right, following a diagonal line back toward the fence. Stand close to your horse, facing him, between the middle of his neck to his shoulder. Hold the excess longe line in your left hand.

Extend your left hand to lightly grasp the halter's side ring at the horse's jaw, with just enough contact to guide the head. Don't steer his head from underneath, but use your hand to encourage him to move forward and very slightly flex his head toward you, away from the direction he will be traveling. When yielding, the head, neck, shoulders, and back should stay in line with the hips.

Extend your right hand to apply the aid, or cue, to move the hindquarters laterally. The target area for the cue is the lower half of the horse's barrel within a zone approximately 10 inches behind his heart girth. This is same place where your lower leg contacts the horse's lower barrel when your foot is in the stirrup and where you will cue for leg yielding under saddle. Apply the cue using a cupped hand with a pulsating pressure; **do not poke the horse with your knuckles or fingers.**

Start the maneuver by extending your left hand and give a “cluck” to ask the horse to walk forward and straight before any lateral movement is requested. When he is moving forward and straight, very slightly bend his head toward you as you apply the cue with your right hand in the target zone. His left front and hind legs should cross over the right front and hind legs while he stays straight in his topline. If he does not stay straight, bring him forward and straighten him using your right hand on his halter before asking again.

When the horse moves laterally, lighten the pressure and follow his movement as he moves diagonally toward the fence. If he

does not respond, vibrate the pressure with the left hand, to keep him moving forward with a slight bend, and with the right hand to ask him to move his hindquarters laterally. When he reaches the fence, finish the maneuver by asking him for a few steps forward and straight alongside the fence. Ask him to “whoa” and praise him.

As you and your horse advance, you will be able to keep his head, neck, shoulders, back, and hips in alignment. The goal is to get the horse moving more forward and laterally, rather than just going sideways. This will help keep his neck more in line with his body.

Common Problems

Teaching this yielding maneuver is as much about learning how to coordinate your actions as a handler, as it is about teaching your horse to move laterally to your commands.

Avoid these common problems:

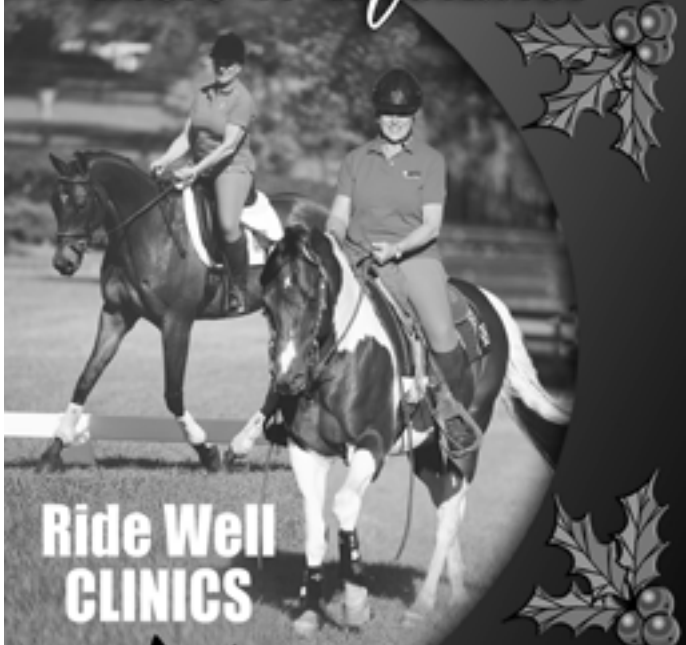
- Standing too far away from the horse and not moving with him.
- Applying the cue in the wrong area. If it is given too far behind the target area or too high on the flank, the horse will have a tendency to swing his hindquarters out or resist, rather than move laterally.
- Looking down at the horse's feet. Instead, use your peripheral vision to monitor the horse's topline to see if he is staying straight, while crossing his front and hind legs properly.

This lesson is based on the training techniques demonstrated in my popular visual series, **Longevity Training**, the section on “**Working In Hand.**” My **Dressage Principles Visual Series, Parts 1 & 2** will teach you how to apply these ground training lessons under saddle. Included are easy-to-follow lesson plans that cover stopping, backing, turns on the forehand and haunches, and yielding under saddle. These teaching tools and much more are available at www.lynnpalm.com or by calling 800-503-2824.

My popular “Longevity Training Visual Series, Working In Hand,” will help you advance the groundwork with your horses that will become the foundation for under-saddle success.

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