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## canter help needed please!

Posted by hondagirl - 2007/10/03 17:24

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Hi folks. ive got a lovely little welsh mare who im beginning to ride western, we have a western saddle and an instructor but he is concentrating on parelli stuff at the mo. My question is, how do i train my mare to canter when she wont do it and just gets faster and faster in the trot? The only way to get her to canter round and properly is with a tighter rein. Without it she just looses rythum and impulsion and just gets faster and faster! Im at a loss as to how to get her to canter properly without what feels like compromising my western riding by essentially riding english!

any ideas? Our canter is ropey anyway and needs loads of work so i was thinking of working on the basics using english techniques and when we have that right and she is balanced and responsive then work more on a looser rein.

what does those in the know think??

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## Re:canter help needed please!

Posted by MU5T4N9 - 2007/10/17 18:43

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The only downside to fixing this problem with english aids is that you might find that although your mare obtains a better canter it might not actually be a lope!

I had this problem with my mare when I converted her to western. First I associated voice commands to my english aids and then used the same voice commands but this time with the western aids. It's a slow process but it worked for me and it seems to be fair on the horse who is having to think quite hard about it!

My mare had difficulty doing canter transitions with no contact aswell. I found that using a small amount of contact when I asked for canter (+ voice)then immediatly releasing the contact when she did canter (but keeping my leg on) worked well. I was soon able to reduce the amount of contact needed for the transition until she no longer needed any at all.

You may feel that you are comprising your western riding but the horse needs to understand what you're asking it to do!

I hope this helps

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## Re:canter help needed please!

Posted by Calamity - 2007/10/20 09:54

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I went to a clinic some time ago with American pleasure trainer Dean Hodges. When my mare wouldn't lope off, he said lift your leg up and tap her on the shoulder with it. (ie left shoulder for left lead). He demonstrated and it worked for him and eventually also for me and then all I had to do if she didn't respond to the kiss was lift my leg an inch and she would lope off on the correct lead. It may depend on your type of horse - this mare was quite sensitive. Have you tried getting your horse to respond to the 'kiss' while on the lunge?

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## Re:canter help needed please!

Posted by Shiny Mole - 2007/10/22 12:06

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I had this problem with a little welsh mare I brought on for a friend - this was an english ridden mare and before I discovered western. She would rake along at a silly trot and it took a while to get her to consistently give a nice transition.

I am sure people have said this to you before, but I found it was really important to keep your trot slow when you ask for canter, by showing her you dont want to fast trot, but with your seat that you do want Something - they will often break their gait. If you use your seat in such a way to as mimic the rythm of a lope, you will be giving her every opportunity to understand what you want. As mentioned above, using the vocal aid canter to get a lope initially wont hurt at all!

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## Re:canter help needed please!

Posted by Gem - 2007/10/22 12:27

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You do what works, you have to establish a good transition by any means possible, before you can concerntrate on

getting it more western.

if she sturggles doing a transition with a contact then she sure as hell isnt gonna get it with a very light one is she.

the rushing to me sounds like she is probably on her forehead, and being on her forehead is gonna affect her movement and ability to do anything really so try to get her onto her haunches by doing lots of transitions downwards and circles and rein back.

rein back escpcially, rein her back until you feel her back end drop, stop a seocnd and walk her off, if you feel her fall forward and pull with her front end stop and back her up. it pisses some horses off but eventually she will get the idea.

as for canter at the moment, just making sure you have a god transition is all that matters, regardless of if this is on a loose rein or a tighter contact, just get that real good before trying a slacker contact. if she rushes in, give up asking for canter trot her reestablish a good jog or even go right to a halt i find this worked really well with my friends horse who literally fired its self into a canter, even if by doing this you get one canter in the entire session as long as its a good one then your making progress, always stop on a good note, if you get a fab one i would be tempted to ask no more of her and take her back to the stable.

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## Re:canter help needed please!

Posted by RockyRider - 2007/11/04 15:28

Hi,

Although I am new to the board, I have been riding western for a while. Actually, I never rode English!

The way my teacher showed me and my stallion is to start from a rollback. Once you get the rollback solid, once you get through the rollback, kiss (and make it count). If the horse doesn't respond very well from the kiss, follow up with a lite touch of spur on the outside. This will not only improve your rollback but the horse should start out immediately into a lope and guess what, 9 out of 10 on the correct lead.

Again, this worked very well for my Rocky Mountain stallion. Being a gaited breed, canter isn't necesserally the easiest gait to get solid but it worked like a charm. Now, we can go from standstill to canter by a simple kiss.

On another note, make sure that your mare canters at liberty in the roundpen first. This is a good way to teach the meaning of the kiss. Kiss should always mean 'move something'. Once they understand, the intensity of the kiss can indicate speed. I have developed a specific kiss sound that my horses respond to with a canter.

Again, this worked for me like a charm.

Cheers,

Paul

P.S.: I learned everything I know from Richie Wingfield in KY. He is one of the best horsemanship teachers that I have come across. He is a John Lyons trainer and has a knack for explaining difficult techniques in a simple fashion so that someone like me can understand it.He was so good that I decided to spend 12 weeks with him in KY to go through his Apprenticeship program.