
Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by peachie - 2007/06/12 09:42

Hi All

Thought I would try and start a thread, what are people's opinions on 'Round Pens'?

I have been riding for quite a while and 'playing' western so to speak and have decided to focus on it more. I have just got access to a round pen which is currently sited on grass in a field(it is 50 ft). Apart from loose schooling, what else does everyone feel works well in a round pen?

I would love to hear everyones thoughts and ideas on this subject.

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Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by JellyBean - 2007/06/12 10:46

Hi,

couldn't live without it, as far as schooling is concerned, english or western they are a must, but it seems that only true western enthusiasts see the potential & logic behind them, it is not just about free schooling, it is about building your foundation from the ground up, & truly getting your horse to hook on to you, in a controlled area, I have spoke to many people mostly english riders who have come to our home, saw the round pen & promptly mocked it as some sort of circus gimmick, it seems the in thing to just lunge a horse to death to wear him out prior to riding, we have heaps of fun in ours, sometimes two of us will ride in opposite directions, that keeps the horses awake I can tell you, they are an essential tool in any horse world, purely from the amount of respect that can be gained from them. We had one shipped in from the states 12 years ago, & it is still going strong to this day, then my husband started to make the panels, ours is 50ft also, we wished we had gone for the full 60ft, but it works fine, as a stepping stone with the youngsters, before the big arena.

ENJOY & have fun.

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Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by jjessky - 2007/06/12 17:08

Hi there, umm my thoughts on round pens, make sure they are high enough. When my youngster was away for starting she actually jumped right out of one. The sides were about 4ft.
LOL she hasnt been in one since

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Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by REINMAN - 2007/06/13 05:24

Likewise I would not be without mine either. An absolute essential tool for creating and maintaining a connection with your horse especially youngsters.

I think the ideal size is 50ft and this is echoed across many US trainers that I have spoken to. A roundpen that size is just the size to maintain the horses attention for you to become the alpha horse controlling the mid ground, 50ft creates the correct arc in the horses body for pretty much all of the work we need to do.

My theory is that just as Monty Roberts chased that mustang for 24 hours till it stopped, turned and joined up with him, I think the horse does not actually realise the pen is round...he is just trying to flee away from you but cant, you just stand there controlling the centre and he cant get away rom you, so he has to turn in to you and join up??Just my theory.

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Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by scotty - 2007/06/13 09:51

Like anything else they have to be used judiciously by people who know what they are doing as a roundpen can be quite a threatening environment for a horse that can't escape.

As for 'join up' - personally I'm very against this unless people REALLY understand what is going on with the horse. There have been umpteen disastrous examples of people reading an article or watching a DVD and trying it with their own horses, insisting the horse then joins up.

Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by JellyBean - 2007/06/13 10:46

hi,

I agree aswell, it is not some thing that you can see someone like monty Roberts do, & then think I will have a go with that with my horse (Personally I dont rate him Thats my opinion), but you also have to be able to read the horse when to back off & when to put the pressure on, & should be left to the pro`s if you dont know what you are doing, its not just about getting them to bomb around a 50ft circle, although alot will at first, till they understand, & 4ft in height is not exceptable, way too low, 6ft minimum, but people see good & bad in everything, & what suits one doesnt always work for another, but the rewards from the round pen for starting horses speak for themselves, how many people can drive their horses from behind without any form of line rope, or even headcollar attached, just by pushing on the left eye & right eye, try it, & keeping that horse hooked on at all times, we have done it with all of ours, & it still makes me get goose bumps, just to see how much they trust, & want to be with you, but hey! its whatever floats your boat.

Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by QQH - 2007/06/14 16:03

used to have one 'made' from large straw bales a-la the old richard maxwell videos - worked a treat to give us somewhere safe to work the horses - it became the fodder for a bank holiday bbq bonfire some years back so now we are in limbo until we can afford a proper one. Logic behind them is sound though. Great investment I believe.

J

Re: Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by mejopa - 2007/06/14 19:36

Hi

We use ours a lot - loose schooling, lunging and riding. Saved all our sanity over a wet winter, when everywhere else was a bog, so would recommend some kind of allweather surface. Find it very useful to get the horses used to scary stuff like umbrellas, flapping bags, etc in a safe environment. Some horses just don't get join up though - my baby show pony is so laid back, or lazy, he can't understand why he should have to go away from me. All our horses love to have a roll in the pen after a hose down or bath as a big treat, but then you do have to make sure they understand that rolling isn't part of work!

Re:Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by Gem - 2007/09/05 15:06

Other than to stop you wreking your arena surface with excessive circling that you do when lunging i dont see the point in them at all. i do all my lunging and ground work and riding in my 20x40 sand arena, if i loose school my youngster i can and she has gotten so good off my voice and body language that even if she is at the other end of the arena she still stops, goes, and turns, and thats without ever stepping in a round pen, just with lunging working inhand and some long reining. if i decided i needed a smaller area to work in i have enough jump wings and poles to section off an area of my arena

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Re:Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by RockyRider - 2007/11/04 15:36

Hi,

I was trained using the John Lyons training techniques and as a result, I swear by a round pen.

It is the perfect training environment to start any horse. From about 8 months old, I train my youngsters to give to pressure and respond on the ground. It's amazing what you can achieve with the proper body language.

I do agree, it's almost impossible to learn from a DVD or demo. I spent 10 days training in KY focused on the groundwork (roundpenning, sacking out and bridle work). All of these techniques can only be done properly in a round pen, except perhaps bridle work.

If you want to start training any horse under saddle, ie. start, stop, side pass, flex, etc... a round pen is a perfect training environment since the horse cannot build a lot of speed and it should be built in such a way that it is one of the safest areas to start any horse.

As you can probably imagine, I also have one standing in the field. Mine is 60ft diameter which is perfect for riding and bridle work but a bit too big for good roundpenning. I would say that 50ft is a nice middleground solution.

Cheers,

Paul

Re:Round Pens-your thoughts

Posted by Ellibell - 2007/11/04 18:35

I quite like my round pen, although its not really round anymore. I moved it into more of a rectangle. I was finding the stress on my babies joints could of not been good (not that I use it that often)and I find with them having to straighten and then bend around the corner, its helping to suppe them up more.I have also had a good response when clients have used them in a rectangle shape when they are bringing horses back into work from back issues, lameness etc.

I agree, if in the wrong hands, they, like most stuff with horses, can cause a problem, but used with sense, are fine.

I would also have a all weather surface put in mine when we move as it saves on sooooo much wear and tear on the arena surface, esp with liveries using it for lunging and loose schooling.
