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## Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/03 20:39

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I wondered what kind of lunging/groundwork people did with their western horses? when i had an english horse i long lined or lunged using a pessa or harbridge type aid. All of which were geared to help my horse learn from the ground - what i also required on board.

I wondered if there was a way western horses are worked from the ground if you are too tired/stiff to ride? what tack do you use and what things do you do?

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by amanda - 2008/01/04 08:41

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Hi Dingbat - yes, lots of western riders lunge their horses - commonly you will see the horse being lunged with the western saddle on, very useful as there are lots of places on the saddle where you can fix the reins, depending on what you need to work on.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/04 13:04

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Ok. Where (and how) would you fix the reins and for what different purposes? Would you use anything else (i.e martingale etc) either?

I'm just curious.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by amanda - 2008/01/04 16:14

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hello again! you can simply fix the reins to the saddle horn, or down through the front legs and back up to the horn - good for a horse that needs to learn to yield to the rein, or if you have a horse that is very stiff and ungiving on one side, you can fix one rein to one of the metal pieces on the side of the saddle, or even the stirrup which will have some movement. As long as you start gently, and gradually increase the bend/stretch, you'll be able to do all sorts of things!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/05 20:13

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mine isnt keen on it to be honest! i was shown how to attach them down under the front legs but despite having them loose (cant tie them any looser!) he goes ok and then suddenly slams his head high up and then starts going back and being daft. the reins wont do anything with his head in neutral - they only come into play if he puts his head like a giraffe but he insists on suddenly doing it?!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by westernsaddler - 2008/01/06 10:22

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This is the problem with fixed reins. I know alot of the main training of horses is about the front end - if you look back to old classical texts (which is supposed to be very similar to good western riding) it is about building the back up properly (lunging, long reining and groundwork including shoulder-in, sidepassing from the ground). There is so much research showing that artificially tying the head down does nothing but build the wrong muscles. I guess your horse Dingbat is just showing you how hard it is for him to do. I think we would be the same if someone strapped our heads down, after a

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while our muscles would feel tired, go into spasm, etc. We can say - the horse cannot. :(

There is a good website that explains things relatively clearly:

[http://www.sustainabledressage.net/collection/false\\_collection.php](http://www.sustainabledressage.net/collection/false_collection.php)

If you scroll down the page she shows the effect of pulling in the neck when the rest of the horse is not ready. I understand that a horse will naturally do this, without force or gadget once it is physically ready.

At the top and bottom of the webpage she also has links linking to other topics to do with collection. I know the site is mainly about dressage it is also about good horsemanship - which is what we are all trying to aim for. :)

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/06 13:33

Thanks for the link, i'll have a look.

I do have the same opinion really - my english horse went into an outline and it took time and work but I am proud to say that there were no gadgets used along the way. I see people on my yard trying to hold down their heads and it's madness. you can't HOLD a horse anywhere. plus they don't use their legs/seat.

I see what you are saying about fixed reins and tying them down. the daft thing is, he wasn't tied down and could get his head pretty much anywhere but giraffe like (and he goes with it level anyway he doesn't usually stick it up there) so I found it odd he kept slamming on and doing it. but I have got the message and won't rush to do it again. he was then really backing off the bit when I got on and today I was hacking and was going to mount and another girl went to hold his reins for me as he was going to move and he really freaked that she'd got hold of him. he seems sensitive in the mouth department (is sensitive anyway).

I used to longline my english horse (Monty Roberts style) but it doesn't really work with western horses - which is why I was wondering what other people did.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Roland - 2008/01/06 19:05

Been told only experts should use gadgets draw reins tiedowns etc, but that experts don't need them :)

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by hunterrookie - 2008/01/07 08:40

I mainly lunge our horse in a roller - tho as she's now rather fit, will have to change that until I can get a breastplate! I use side reins with the elastic doughnuts from low-ish d-rings on the roller onto a snaffle bit and it gives her a contact which is a bit flexible to work into. She generally stretches down and works softly over her back, so it is a good exercise for her. You really want to encourage them to stretch down, rather than be held down - remember to warm them up with their heads free to start with (side reins clipped on roller or saddle, split reins tied to the saddle horn, just tight enough not to get their legs caught if they strike out. Also repeat this at the end of the session at the walk - they will really stretch and relax.

On the rare occasions that she's a bit fresh

I will lunge her in the western saddle with the reins thru the stirrups. Again they should be just tight enough to avoid getting tangled up.

I have lunged her in draw reins and a bungee but found that she tended to back off in these.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by amanda - 2008/01/07 09:07

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Hi Dingbat, the horse does need to feel a certain amount of freedom whilst being directed - if they feel restricted and they haven't got space to move into they will exhibit all these sorts of things. If you are near a decent western trainer, or can take your horse to a clinic, they will be able to show you exactly what will work for you. It's one of those things that we owners can struggle with, then you get a pro to help and it all looks so smooth and easy!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by zenithqhorses - 2008/01/07 12:17

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I still use a Pessoa on my western horse. I ensure it gives her the freedom she needs in front and she will learn naturally where to hold her head.

I also long rein and do ground work such as shoulder in as my classical dressage instructor has taught me.

I hate the weight of the western saddles so I don't use the saddle unless I have to and if I want to use one to lunge in then I would use a light weight treeless one.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/07 13:02

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I would have thought a Pessoa was creating a different outline to the one that you are trying to achieve with a western horse?

I did try long lining once but he was completely confused. so I decided not to push that in case I would be doing more harm than good. I do have a hackbridge that I've borrowed so if lunging with a roller I can use that - which effectively does the same thing as tying the reins under the legs and back up - but it has much more give in it.

I guess I'll also try and just do it with him free for now and see if he'll learn to take himself longer and stretch once he realises going in the school isn't horrible!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by zenithqhorses - 2008/01/07 13:17

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A Pessoa can be used in a number of different ways. I use mine to help build the back muscles and teach my horse to work through properly and ensure it has the top line to enable it to take a saddle and rider comfortably, not to change its outline from western to English. It's a useful tool to have (along with other ways of working), especially as I'm injured and can't ride at the moment. We still lunge using western paces, and then sometimes I get her to do a good trot and canter to open her up (and ensure I keep my options open for hunter under saddle classes)

It took my mare a couple of goes to get used to being long reined, but she was great on it (we started off with one using long reins and one person leading at her head to give confidence) and I could happily take her around the village on long reins which proved useful with traffic training. I intend doing it again next month when I bring her back into work.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Shiny Mole - 2008/01/08 13:06

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I have found the following forms of groundworking really useful with my young horse...backing up, turns on the forehand and rollback, going up through walk and jog on the lead, circling and changing direction. He has got to the stage now where he will do these things from hand signals and voice commands, or just following me, with no pressure, which will

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hopefully be really useful when I come to ride him.

I also find (because I cant ride him yet!) leading him out alone around the lanes really useful. Getting him working nice and relaxed with minimum pressure and maximum concentration is great for bonding and again reinforces voice commands.

Although I do occasionally lunge him dont really enjoy it, so tactile groundwork suits me best!

You could also try looking at the pat parelli 7 games

<http://www.todayshorse.com/Articles/LanguageofHorses.htm> as something different to do when you dont ride - variety is the spice of life!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/08 19:22

thanks!

i'd have no idea how to go about getting him to do roll backs etc fromt he ground? esp using hand signals!?

i agree lunging can become a bit boring and i am therefore happy to vary groundwork with a few ideas! thanks for the link.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by zenithqhorses - 2008/01/08 23:34

Hi,

Is there any chance you can describe how to teach roll backs on hand? I'd love to gve that a try but wouldn't know how to start it.

Thanks

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Shiny Mole - 2008/01/09 11:23

You need to start with the Parelli games 1-3. They will teach your horse to move away from pressure, and hopefully eventually to move from your signal of forthcoming pressure, so that you dont actually need to touch the horse.

I started with backing up, then coming forward, and turns on the forehand as they seem to find this easier. For a turn on the hind hand stand at the shoulder facing the horse, look at and point to his hind end. If he does not move swing the rope, still no movement, pressue on the hind, as soon as his hind quarters move - pressure off good boy!! It can help to ask for a slight turn of the head towards you as this naturally helps the quarters to move around..

For a roll back I would stand at the head, to one side facing his head, keeping his neck straight and his nose pointing forwards. Then using your finger tips pressure onto the top of the front leg, asking him to move away from the pressure but not to turn his head. Again as soon as he moves pressure off ,lots of fuss and smile! Take it slow, one step, two steps, and eventually all the way round!

Your aim is for them to anticipate the pressure when you give the first signal - pointing at and looking at the part of the body you want them to move, and move onthat signal.

Then you have to build up to pressure from your hand, which you may have to do if its totally new to both of you, always use fingertips, or I make like a claw, and use all my finger tips to initiate a movement off pressure - try to not use the same hand shape and type of touch you use to make a fuss of them or be affectionate with, as you need to make sure there is a distinction - you dont want them side passing away from you everytime you try to stroke or groom them!!

As said though, these things become a lot easier if you can master the parelli games, which are, in his own words "the words which make up the language" when communicating with your horse. I recommend his books.

I dont follow him, or Monty Roberts methods religiously, but I take from them what works for me.

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Shiny Mole - 2008/01/09 11:26

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sorry in the second paragrah I meant for a turn on the forehand point to the quarters - teach me for not reading back through it before I posted!!

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## Re:Western style lunging?

Posted by Dingbat - 2008/01/09 12:53

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Oooh thanks. I read the website (That you sent the link to). it does all kind of make sense in theory so i will start trying to find time to have in the school just to do groundwork. i'm sure this is a good way of getting to know my new horse and also teaches them invaluable things!

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