

Volunteer Orientation –

October 1st, 2005

ANT's Protocol for handling horses

Horse Anatomy

Parts of a horse:

-mane, tail, forelock, fetlock, forehead, poll, ear, eye, face, nostril, muzzle, cheek, throat, neck, crest, withers, shoulder, chestnut, knee, cannon, pastern, hoof, back, hip, croup, dock, tail, hock, flank, belly

Horse Care and Handling

Approach a tied or loose horse:

- Know your herd*
- Personal space demo*
- Con su permiso (with your permission) Open your heart*
- Approach horse at the shoulder, first start talking to them so they are not startled, not from behind, allow them to sniff back of your hand*
- Blind spot in front of horse and behind*
- Horses are monocular (brain can only register from one eye at a time) and have 20/200 vision*
- Bonding: endorphin release*
- Ask, Response, Release (as soon as you get the response and only when you get the response)*

Methods of tying:

- Use lead rope only...never the reins!!!!***
- Quick release knot*
- Tie horse to hitching rail or fencepost (never railing or gate)*
- Adjust for 2-3 feet of rope from rail to halter (otherwise horse can get tangled in lead rope)*
- Tie at horse's withers level (high) so they don't get feet tangled in lead rope*
- Untie horse before bridling**, leave rope through tie ring or around post but untied in case horse pulls back*

Halter:

- Halter from the left after putting lead rope over horse's neck so horse feels caught*
- Hold nose band in both hands and reach under the neck*
- Buckle loose enough to allow jaw movement. No need to run end through buckle after pin is through hole so it could be removed quickly.*

Lead:

- Lead from the left walking between horse's jaw and shoulder, with your right arm outstretched to clip end of lead rope so her feet do not track where your feet are.*
- Hold lead rope 12-18" from halter with the right hand*
- Rest of rope fan- folded and held in the left hand (Never loops around the hand!)*
- To move forward inhale, click, have soft eyes forward. Start moving your feet.*

- Horse stops with his shoulder behind yours or you back him up. Human always stops horse at gate and goes through gate first, so horse sees that you are the leader, lead horse.

-Practice disengaging the hip (moving the hind over from posterior stirrup position).

Groom:

Your non-dominant hand always on the horse while grooming with dominant hand

1. Rubber or metal curry 1st

2. Stiff body brush

3. Soft dust brush (top to bottom, front to back)

-**Make sure to curry and brush thoroughly where the saddle and cinch sits**

-remove dirt, sweat, etc.

-Clean tools before returning to grooming box

Hoof picking

-Stand with a strong, broad stance

-Tie long hair away from your face

-Place your feet neither behind nor in front of hoof but beside

-Hold hoof pick against the heel of your hand

-Ask the horse to "lift" or "give" foot

- Try to "catch" and hold the foot on horse's first attempt so they know you will be there to support their foot.

- Lean your shoulder and weight into the horse to encourage them to de-weight the foot you are trying to get off the ground.

-Hold the **hoof, not the ankle**, providing full support

-**DO NOT** hyper- flex the joint

-Do not pull hoof to the side but keep in line with body of horse

-Pick away from you

-For hind feet slowly draw the hoof straight back giving the horse time to relax it into your hand. Move your inside leg under the fetlock joint and keep it there to rest the hoof against as you pick it. Again don't hyper flex the hoof but move yourself back a little so you can visualize the sulcuses well to fully clean. Return hoof slowly to the ground and leave cocked if horse allows.

Saddling:

-Parts of the western saddle:

Cantle

Cinch

Fender

Gullet

Horn

Latigo Keeper

Long Latigo

Pommel

Rear Cinch Strap

Saddle Strings

Seat

Short (off) Latigo

Stirrup

- Brush off the underside of saddle pad
- Place saddle pad high on withers
- Start pad too far forward on neck and slide pad back in the direction of the hair until front edge is even with middle line of horse's front leg.
- The latigo (Windsor knot) knot (only the youth Circle Y uses the buckle instead.
- Cinch **slowly**
- Do NOT tighten completely** until you are ready to mount
- Tie up cinch and off latigo when finished on off (far) side of saddle, tie up near latigo with a Windsor knot

Bridling:

-Parts of a bridle:

- Browband
- Cavesson (nose band)
- Cheek piece
- Crown piece
- Curb bit
- Curb strap
- Reins
- Snaffle bit
- Throatlatch
- Hackamore

- Demonstrate the ability to take apart bridle and put back together
- Bit should create 1 wrinkle in corner of horse's mouth
- Browband should lie just below the ears (ears free to move easily)
- Throat latch should leave a 3 finger width after tightening
- When undoing the bridle, release the throatlatch only**

Horse First Aid

Cuts below knee or hock:

- Clean with water and antibacterial soap
- Put on Shreiner's or antibiotic ointment
- Most likely to get infected

Colic: (could be flies for Sundance)

- Symptoms:-Turning head to bite at belly
- Kicking at belly
 - Stomach hard

Treatment: -Move energy along and fling off

Riding Skills

Mounting:

- Safety check: (first done by volunteer then instructor)**
- saddle is in the right position (cinch neither pinching front legs nor more than 3" behind front legs)
- cinch is snug not tight, check with 2 fingers under belly (not on side)
- no straps tucked under saddle
- no twisted straps on saddle or bridle (bridle, cinch, latigo, throat latch)

- stirrups are the correct length (approx. 2 fingers under rider's seat when rider standing in stirrups...Measure with finger tip at top of stirrup strap with stirrup reaching to armpit when client standing on ground)
- helmet is properly fitting (snug with two finger distance above eyebrows)
- boots or safety stirrups
- gates shut
- To mount: (with NARHA instructor attending)
 - Left foot in stirrup
 - Left hand holding reins and mane
 - Right hand on right side of pommel
 - Swing right leg over, and sit down gently

Basic Seat:

- Draw a line from the head to shoulders, to hips, to heels
- Sit tall and straight in the saddle
- **EYES FORWARD!**
- Heels down
- Hands relaxed, positioned near horse's neck
- Reins almost a straight line from mouth to your hands (in an arena)
- Reins are too long if you have to pull back past your waist
- To shorten reins, put both reins in one hand and slide free hand down the rein toward horse's head. Put both reins in the other hand and slide free hand.
-
- At a walk, horse uses head and neck, hands need to follow or have loose enough rein so that there is not a tug at each step.
- At a trot, horse's head and neck are more stationary, hands remain soft or with slight contact.
- At a lope, horse uses head and neck and hands need to follow or have loose enough rein so that there is not a tug with each stride.

Direct-(English) reins: (used with snaffle bits)

- Reins coming from horse's mouth go into hands between the first and third fingers
- Reins come up out of hands between thumb and index finger
- Thumbs face forward, tilted in slightly toward horse's neck
- Reins cross over so both held by both hands

Neck (Western) reins: (used with a curb bit –Babes-or hackamore)

- Reins come out of the top of the non-dominant fist (like holding an ice-cream cone)
- Dominant hand lies loosely on leg holding excess rein, "helper hand" to take up or give out slack.

Five Natural Aids:

- Voice (click or cluck, whoa, walk, trot)
- Weight (inhale, exhale as sit deep, direct course with belly button)
- Hands (Forward to go forward, back to slow or stop)
- Legs (squeeze, pressure on sides...otherwise still, open and close the doors.)
- Eyes (soft and looking toward horizon where you are headed, not at ground or horse's head!)

Basic Control: "V" thinking (ask in the nicest way possible)

To walk:

- eyes forward, think forward
- weight rising as client inhales
- reins forward
- cluck with your mouth (some may voice command “walk on” in an animated voice.)
- squeeze with your legs if needed

To slow down:

- say “easy” with a long soothing voice
- long exhale with your mouth

To stop:

- Plan where you want to stop and think “stop” in your mind
- take a deep breath then a long exhale, sinking into seat, weight back
- say “whoa” with a long deep voice
- shorten reins
- check... and release reins as soon as get result

To turn right:

- Direct rein
 - turn belly button toward where you want to go, shift weight slightly to right, step into right stirrup
 - left hand forward to give the horse room to turn head
 - guide their head to the right, moving your right hand toward your right hip
 - push with your outside (left) leg slightly forward and inside leg slightly back (being the imaginary post horse is turning around)

To turn left:

- Direct rein
 - turn belly button toward where you want to go, , shift weight slightly to left, step into left stirrup
 - right hand forward to give the horse room to turn head.
 - guide their head to the left moving your left hand toward hip
 - legs opposite of above