

YIELDING TO PRESSURE

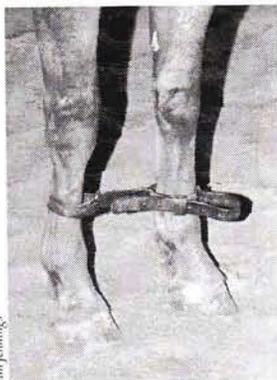
It's the basis for nearly everything

By Joe Wolter

Having a horse that will stand hobbled can sometimes be a big advantage.

Nearly all ranch cowboys hobble their horses, mainly because quite often they are in a situation where there is no place to tie.

Teaching a horse to stand hobbled is not difficult, but like nearly everything else you teach a horse, you have to prepare him to learn. And if you are going to hobble him, he must first learn to stand hobbled.



Jim Jennings

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Initially, you have to get the horse to yield to pressure. Then, when you hobble him, he has some idea of what's going on.

The first thing I'll do is put the horse in somewhat of a confined area – a round pen with soft footing is best – and then place a rope on one of his front feet. I will let the horse wear the rope a while, until he travels with it without worrying.

During this time – with a pair of gloves on to protect my hands – I will occasionally take the slack out and let him feel the tension. He might resist, or he might just look at it like, “What

is this?” When that happens I will try to soften or reward the horse by giving him slack.

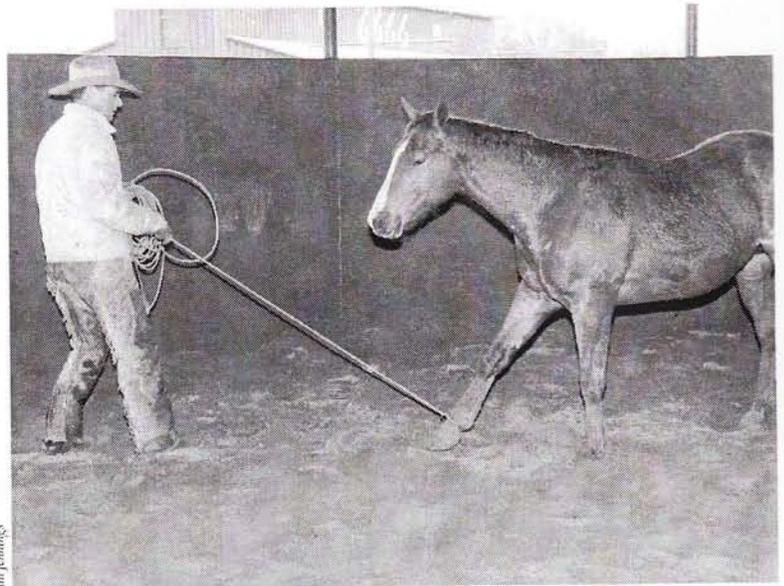
I'll do this on both front feet until I can almost lead him around by each front foot. Then when I put the hobbles on, he will remember that feel and yield to it.

I prefer that method as opposed to putting a set of hobbles on and letting him flounder around and fall down until he learns. However, even when you do your homework, and prepare a horse like I talked about above, he might still struggle and fall. But he's not likely to struggle as much, and many won't struggle at all.

It's a good idea to use the rope and work on responding to pressure

with the hind feet also. If a horse ever gets caught in wire or tangled up in something else, if he's been prepared, he is more likely to yield to the pressure of that wire and wait for someone to get him out, as opposed to panicking and just blowing out of there. It may save him from a bad wire cut.

Yielding to pressure is important, regardless of what you are doing with a horse. Remember in the last issue, when we were talking about loading a horse into the trailer, and I said the first step was to get him to respond to the pressure of the lead rope? This is the exact same thing. He must yield to



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A rope around his foot teaches him to yield to pressure.

pressure, regardless of where it is.

For instance, a horse has to learn to respond to the pressure of the lead rope before you can safely tie him up. If a horse knows how to yield to pressure, you can tie him and he'll stay.

Yielding, that's a big word, and a very important one. ☼

Trainer on tour

Bayer's Best Remuda Tour is hitting the road with three clinics this fall.

Joe Wolter, *America's Horse* columnist and trainer for the 6666 Ranch in Guthrie, Texas, will be the tour clinician. The clinic will be held at Working Ranch Cowboys Association-sanctioned rodeos:

August 6, Santa Fe, New Mexico

August 20, Pine Bluffs, Wyoming

September 23, Medicine Lodge, Kansas

The clinics are open to the public and will focus on improving a horse's performance as well as starting colts on cattle and ranch roping.

Call (806) 376-4811 for more information.

Four Sixes ranch trainer **Joe Wolter** says the basis for nearly all types of training begins with learning to yield to pressure.