



## 1<sup>st</sup> SADDLING

In this lesson your horse will learn how to be saddled whilst standing still, learn to accept the saddle and the flapping of the stirrups and finally learn how to stand for mounting.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1) A snaffle bridle
- 2) A lariat
- 3) A lunge line
- 4) A long lead rope
- 5) A saddle
- 6) A safe working area, a round pen is ideal

### PREREQUISITES FOR THE HORSE

- 1) "Bridling and Give to the Bit"
- 2) "Round Pen 101"
- 3) "Sacking Out"
- 4) "Long-Reining"
- 5) "Give to the Bit 2 and Shoulder Control"

WHAT – Whole horse to move without bucking or kicking

WHERE – Forward at walk, trot and canter

WHY – sacking out with the saddle and stirrups

HOW – release of emotional pressure and praise when horse accepts and relaxes with the saddle

### STEP 1

Put the horse in the round pen with a snaffle bridle and no reins and practice some turns. Make sure you have his attention and he is turning inside and outside when you ask him. Concentrate on outside turns as these are what you are going to ask for first.

## STEP 2

Your horse should have already done a lot of sacking out and be used to being girthed up. Do some practice with the surcingle putting in on and taking it off a few times just to make sure he is comfortable with that.

**Note:** Do not proceed until you are sure your horse is comfortable with the surcingle and go back to “Sacking Out” if you feel it is necessary.

## STEP 3

If you are fortunate enough to have more than one saddle start the lesson with the lightest saddle as I did with “Harry” in the DVD.

## STEP 4

Clip the long lead rein on to the snaffle bit. While holding the horse loosely, lift the saddle above his withers and lower it again. Repeat this until the horse is comfortable with it (i.e. stops raising his head and does not move his feet).

## STEP 5

Next place the saddle on the horse’s back and remove it again. Do this several times until, once again, the horse stops reacting to it.

## STEP 6

Go around to the other side of the horse to lower the stirrup and the girth so as not to bang the horse on the off side shoulder which may cause him to move in to you.

## STEP 7

Pull the girth up without fastening until you are confident that the horse will stand as he did with the surcingle.

## STEP 8

Fasten the saddle well so that it will not slip around. Do this slowly if your horse is a little ‘girthy’, remembering to praise and rest with each step up.

## STEP 9

Pick up the lariat before unclipping the lead rope and ask the horse to move off. Ideally, the horse should trot around the pen in one direction or the other.

## STEP 10

If the horse rears, push him forward. If the horse bucks also push him forward but keep his attention by outside turning him.

Allow the horse to trot around the pen and outside turn him if he goes too fast or bucks a lot.

## STEP 11

When the horse settles get him to pay more attention to you by asking him to turn both inside and outside. Decide beforehand which turn you are going to ask for and correct the horse until he makes the right turn – just the same way as you did the first time you put him in the round pen.

**Remember:** The horse will be distracted by the saddle so it is important that you continue to work him – you DO NOT want to tire him out, simply keep his attention.

## STEP 12

You will know that the horse is ready to move on with the lesson when he is paying attention to you and turning in the direction you ask when you ask.

## STEP 13

If you have another saddle, such as a western or stock saddle, repeat steps 5 to 12 with the new saddle.

**Note:** Always secure the girth well before sending the horse off as a saddle slipping around can seriously injure the horse.

If your horse is not ignoring the saddle and turning when you ask now then you have not done enough of the earlier work. Go back to step 5 and begin again. If you feel, **even at this stage**, that you really haven't done enough sacking out work then go right back to that otherwise you may end up with a big hole in your training.

## STEP 14

As a general rule, turn the horse at least once each time he goes around the pen. The more time he spends trotting or cantering around the pen, the less time he spends paying attention to you.

Start changing the gait now. Ask for canter and then back to trot and then to walk. Ask your horse to come in to you and send him out again.

**Remember:** You are now only half way through the lesson. If your horse is tired stop here and continue another time. A tired horse is not learning anything and you want your horse to be absorbing **everything**.

## PART 2 – Sacking out with the stirrup

## STEP 15

Standing next to the horse, without having it on the lead rope, begin sacking out with the stirrup. Lift and lower the stirrup while the horse stands still. If the horse moves you have probably gone too fast, slow down a little and begin again.

## STEP 16

Every now and then ask the horse to turn and face you. This moves the feet and prevents the horse from 'freezing' in one spot.

Start to make larger movement until the horse is happy with you lifting and dropping the stirrup and banging it down to make a loud noise.

#### STEP 17

Clip your lunge line or long lead rope to the snaffle bit. Run the lariat through the nearside stirrup so that it is looped.

#### STEP 18

**Remember:** This is the bit of the lesson that takes the co-ordination! Try not to rush to make it easier for you and the horse.

Ask the horse to move in a circle around you releasing the lead/lunge rope and the lariat at the same time.

#### STEP 19

When the horse is maintaining a good trot circle around you start to gently raise and lower the stirrup by pulling on the lariat. Once again, if the horse reacts too violently, rushing forwards, you have gone too far too fast. Try going back a little and let the horse get used to small movements before introducing larger ones.

**Note:** If the horse starts to canter or you feel he is over reacting then simply go back to step 15 until he is comfortable with that and begin again.

#### STEP 20

Put a little weight in the lariat to simulate your weight in the saddle. The horse may go a little faster at first. Keep a close eye on your lariat and lead rope as it is easy to get into a tangle.

#### STEP 21

When your horse is comfortable with this side, move on to the other side. You should be able to do this in walk, trot, canter and at a standstill.

### PART 3 – Long-reining and ground work

#### STEP 22

Tie the stirrups together with a piece of bailing twine and long-rein your horse for about 5 minutes each direction as shown with Harry on the DVD.

#### STEP 23

Spend a few minutes on each side of the horse making sure he is giving to the bit, soft in the bridle, you have same-rein-same-foot, reverse arc and brakes (disengage hindquarters).

## PART 4 – 1<sup>st</sup> Mounting

### STEP 24

Ask the horse to stand and get a mounting block next to him. The horse should stand quietly however if you have not done enough sacking out he may be frightened of the mounting block. If this is the case go back to sacking out as the horse is not yet ready to be mounted.

### STEP 25

The horse needs to see you above him. Climb on to the mounting block and lean over the horse without putting all of your weight on him. Then put your foot in the stirrup and remove it again.

Do this from both sides of the horse without actually mounting until he is happy with you above him.

### STEP 26

Move the mounting block away and begin by simply putting your foot in the stirrup. Remember all the horse has to do is to stand still and the more you can break it down for him the easier it will be. With this in mind, put your foot in the stirrup, remove it and praise the horse. Jump up and down a little then praise the horse for standing still. Be sure to do this on both sides of the horse.

### STEP 27

Move his feet occasionally so that he does not 'freeze up'.

Pick up enough left rein to slightly off-set his head and start to get half way on, i.e. both legs on the near side, and sack the horse out with your hand on the off side shoulder, barrel and over his hind quarter.

### STEP 28

Watch the horse's reactions and don't swing your leg over before you are sure that he is completely comfortable with it.

### STEP 29

When you are on ask the horse to give to the bit. Bend his neck to the left and ask him to move his feet a little. If you can get the horse to disengage his hind quarters, like Harry did in the DVD, then this is a good end to the lesson.

**Remember:** the first ride is another lesson. For now you simply want the horse to move his feet a little and you can begin again next time knowing that he will stand for mounting.

## **DISCLAIMER:**

This lesson is a guide for experienced horse people. All tips, techniques, advice and ideas you get and use from this lesson and accompanying DVD are entirely at your own risk.

Kandoo Equine strongly encourages you to get help from professionals as horse training can be a hazardous activity.