



## LONG – REINING

In this lesson you will learn how to teach your horse to long-rein.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1) A snaffle bridle.
- 2) A long-lining surcingle
- 3) A well-fitting saddle
- 4) 2 x lunge lines
- 5) Lunge whip
- 6) A safe working area

### PREREQUISITES FOR THE HORSE

- 1) “Bridling and Give to the Bit”. It is important that the horse fully understands the bridle and give to the bit. This exercise differs from the ‘give to the bit’ lesson in that you are further away from the horse and the horse is now on two reins.
- 2) Saddle. The horse must be comfortable wearing a saddle or surcingle. For the young horse make sure you have already done a ‘First Saddling’ lesson.

WHAT – the horse to follow his nose around and stay in frame and be light in the bridle

WHERE – around in a circle and change direction

WHY – rein pressure and lunge whip for forward movement

HOW – release of the rein pressure and praise the horse

### STEP 1

Have the horse in a snaffle bridle and the lunging surcingle. Put the 2 lunge lines through the highest loops in the surcingle.

### STEP 2

Using the lunge whip, ask the horse to walk forward around you in a circle.

**Note:** Keep the horse 'in frame' but putting pressure on the bit and releasing the pressure when the horse is in frame. Do this in the same way as you did the initial "Give to the Bit" Lesson.

### STEP 3

Staying in walk and do small figure of eights to keep changing direction. Make sure you lift the lines over the rump of the horse when you change direction.

**Note:** Watch out for the horse turning in to face you. If the horse has lunged a lot he may already be familiar with this 'trick'. If this is a problem skip to STEP 6 and continue.

Try to stay 'behind' the horse, i.e. keep focused on his hindquarters to move him forward. The whip should be held in the hand that is holding the outside rein and facing behind the horse.

### STEP 4

Once you are comfortable with changing direction, make your circle larger and ask the horse up to trot. If your horse rushes at this point he may be a little frightened, meaning he doesn't fully understand the exercise, in which case you can either allow him to settle himself and talk reassuringly to him or you might want to try doing transitions from trot to walk and back again.

I would not try to practice halting at this stage if your horse is a little forward now. It would be better to try this at the end of the lesson when the horse fully understands the lesson and is therefore calmer and more likely to want to halt.

### STEP 5

During these early stages of learning always bring the horse back to walk to change direction and remember to lift the reins over the rump carefully so that they do not get jammed under the horse's tail.

### STEP 6

When both you and the horse are confident with steps 1 – 5 it is time to sack the horse out with the lines around his hindquarters.

Follow the demonstration on the DVD of Apollo, the big bay horse, remembering to do everything from both sides. Make sure you walk the horse around you with the rope tight above his hocks until he is completely comfortable with that feeling.

**Note:** If you feel that this may be particularly problematic for your horse then I suggest that you take the time now to do a more thorough sacking out than demonstrated on this DVD. The Kandoo Equine “Sacking Out” or “Spook Control” DVDs would not only help you with this exercise but they would go a long way to making a calmer and more reliable equine partner for you.

#### STEP 7

Put the lines through the lower rings of the surcingle or tie the stirrups of your saddle together, as shown on Harry, and attach them to the snaffle bit.

Start the horse off slowly in a small walk circle around you so that you are close enough to get to the horse if you discover now that you have not done enough sacking out.

#### STEP 8

Do small figures of eight in walk until you are sure that the horse is completely comfortable with the lines around his rump. Concentrate here on getting your hands right as shown on the DVD with Harry. When you change direction – place both reins in one hand, change the whip over, shorten up the old outside rein and let the new outside rein slide through your hand so as to avoid jabbing the horse in the mouth.

**Note:** change direction in walk until you are confident with the rein change as it is easier for both you and the horse and it gives you the opportunity to practise transitions.

#### STEP 9

Make your circle larger and start working walk and trot in both directions but still changing direction through walk.

#### STEP 10

When your horse is doing this well, introduce the canter.

This is a good time to instil verbal cues for changes in gait. I always teach a ‘kiss’ to canter, double cluck for trot and single cluck for walk. Try to keep your verbal cue consistent, i.e. if

you want the horse to trot faster and he is already trotting then cluck twice or if you want the horse to canter faster 'kiss' at him again. However, **remember:** try not to constantly cue the horse if he is already travelling in the requested gait as doing this will render your cues meaningless.

## STEP 11

When you are ready to stop ask the horse to halt on the circle and go to the horse. As you approach, move the lines through your hands so that you are still holding the horse and unclip them when you get to the horse.

**Remember:** get both reins completely off the horse before you begin to tidy them up as this way the horse is free to leave if he gets a fright and is not in danger of getting himself tangled in the lines.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE LONG-REINING:

- It is a terrific educational tool for almost all horses.
- Your horse is not too old to learn to long-rein.
- Your horse must have completed and understood the "Give to the Bit" lesson first. The better the horse understands this lesson the more success you will have with long-reining.
- It is a very useful exercise for a horse that has been out of work for a period.
- Remember to keep your sessions short when you are starting out and the horse is learning.
- Change direction often – this also gives the horse's neck a rest.
- You are only building the horse's top line when the horse is working in frame. If the horse is going around with his head in the air and a hollow back you are only making him fit not educating him.
- Long-reining takes practise for both you and the horse but probably more for you. Don't get disheartened and remember – horses are wonderfully forgiving animals!
- Long-reining is good for: keeping your horse's attention, building the muscles necessary for the horse to carry you, solving problems such as not going forward or bucking, helping the horse get his hindquarters underneath him and elevate his shoulders, being flexible and supple, being in frame and light in the bridle, balance, canter work and so much more.

