
GET 'EM BROKE!

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Reverse Pivot

Using the turn on the forehand

Shaun McBride

Anyone who has ever been to my farm for a lesson quickly learns my philosophy on “correctness.” Whether it’s a turn around or a sliding stop, I would much rather have correctness over speed. You can always build speed in your turn around and get distance in your stop if all of your horse’s body parts are where they are supposed to be.

After my horse is warmed up, I’ll start asking him to do a specific maneuver. I’ll ask for a turn around to the left and then to the right, but I’m not going to ask for his heart right off the bat. I’ll check that he is pivoting on the correct foot and crossing over with good rhythm and cadence. If I like what I feel, that may be all the turn arounds (spins) that I do that day. However, if something needs fixed, I’m not going to fix it by kicking or pulling – that’s just asking for speed. If he’s not holding a pivot foot, I’ll do something that you would probably never expect - I’ll stop asking for the turn around and do a series of turns on the forehand or sidepasses in the same direction of the original turn. These exercises help keep your horse aligned and keep him from pushing against your rein and leg cues. The reverse pivot, or turn on the forehand, helps build control over your horse’s hind end. In order to get your horse to stick a hind pivot foot, you must get control of his hind end. The best way to do this is to teach him to turn around on his front end.

When your horse does a reverse pivot, he must keep his shoulders upright while taking steps around with his hind legs. Don’t expect him to hold a pivot foot on his front end – he will have to move his front feet around a bit to stay balanced. When you ask for this maneuver, start by pushing your leg on your horse behind your back cinch and simultaneously lifting your opposite rein, keeping his

front end from moving. If he wants to back up, which will most likely happen the first few times you ask for this, increase your leg pressure. You want to feel him taking big steps with his hind legs. This is a pretty advanced exercise, so at first he may only be able to make one revolution before getting fatigued. Your horse won’t benefit from this unless you concentrate on keeping the rest of his body straight. You’ll have to make many adjustments throughout the turn to keep him from surging forward or backing up. At first your horse will probably be confused or frustrated, but keep the pressure on his mouth and in his belly. Eventually, he will figure out that the only place he can go is sideways with that hip.

If you do this correctly and frequently, you’ll begin to notice an increase in your horse’s strength and suppleness. He’ll learn to respect your leg and rein cues and become more broke. You should begin to notice a difference in everything from turnarounds to lead departures.

Exercises like this help build “solid citizens” and solid broke horses will make happy riders and win more prizes. Remember, ride correctly and everything else will fall into place.

Until next time – Ride Well!

Be sure to let me know if there is a topic you would like me to cover in future Tips or if you have a training question. – Shaun McBride
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WORKING COW HORSE CLINIC

DATE SATURDAY MAY 5, 2007
PLACE MCBRIDE FARM; MT STERLING, OH
TIME 9 AM – 5 PM

9-12 Reining
12-1 Lunch (provided)
1-5 Cow Work

Details are on our website: www.cowhorseohio.com

WORKING COW HORSE CLINIC

DATE SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2007
PLACE MCBRIDE FARM
TIME 9 AM – 5 PM

POSTAGE