

Bombproof Your Horse!  
Overcoming Fear And Spookiness Making Him Safe To Ride!

## **Bombproof Your Horse!**

### **Overcoming Fear And Spookiness Making Him Safe To Ride!**

**16 Secrets Every Horse Owner Should Know!**



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## **Preface**

Many horse owners today are older. The majority are about 42 to 58. And when you're that age sitting on a spooking horse it can be scary because your horse may explode out of control with you on his back.

And when you're over 40 your body breaks easier than normal. So it's important you have control of your horse and that he's calm.

That is the biggest reason I put this book together for you. Above all else, I want you to be safe.

So please follow the instruction here and re-read this several times to get it in your DNA. It will make a world of difference in your horse and your confidence.

This E-book is by no means a comprehensive guide. There is a lot to bomb proofing a horse. This book lays out the basics and gives you a good foundation for what you need to know. So please don't stop here, keep learning.

Now for the final question: Is there "really" such a thing as "bomb-proof"?

Here's the short answer. There will likely be something that'll scare even the calmest horse. So I don't horses becoming totally bombproof. But I do see horses that are so manageable, you could, for the most part, call them bombproof.

**Happy trails.**

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## **The Importance Of Thinking Like A Horse**

When I first began my website on horse training, I received a lot of requests about bombproofing horses.

Most of the emails were cries for help. So,...that's why I wrote this e-book on bombproofing concepts and strategies.

Since there's no time like the present, I'll start now and not beat around the bush.

The first thing is this. The horse owner is going to need two critical skills to get his/her horse bombproof.

What are they?

One: Understanding how the horse thinks.

Two: Techniques and strategies to bombproof your horse.

For now I'll address number one - understanding your horse.

Understanding your horse is absolutely, unequivocally, and undoubtedly the most important part of the equation.

When you understand what gets a horse to do or not do something it's easy to understand why some training methods are effective and some aren't.

First, all horses have the same "basic" instincts. The catch is that some are more prominent in some horses where some are not.

Just like us humans have the same basic instincts we react with different intensities to our instincts.

The first tendency is for horse owners is assuming horses think like humans. But that's not so. For us horse owners to understand our horses, we have to put on our horsey hats.

Thus, if you're riding by your haystack and the tarp covering the hay is flapping in the wind, your horse may side-step away from it.

You of course understand it's simply a hay tarp making noise because the wind makes it move.

Your horse, on the other hand, cannot reason that wind is making this tarp move. He thinks it's getting ready jump him and take him down for the count.

Thus, your horse reacts just as Mother Nature intended. He was protecting himself...getting ready to flee in case he must avoid danger.

The rider, unless he understands horses, is thinking "Dumb horse. It's just a hay tarp flapping in the wind."

So today's lesson is not to convey our thoughts as the horse's thoughts. Our job is to try to understand how our horse thinks and get a feel for how his mind works. Only then can we help our horse.

One of the best ways to understand your horse is to study about him. There are lots of books on the subject and most are good.

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One of the best guides that teach what makes horses tick (and how to train them) is the Prof. Jesse Beery's horse training course. It reveals more eye-opening facts and "how-to" information about horses than most books and tapes I've seen.

If you're interested in learning more about it, you can see it by going to this web address:

<http://www.HorseTrainingResources.com>

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## **What Instincts Influence Your Horse's Behavior And How To Use Them To Create A Great Horse!**

In the previous couple pages, I reminded you of the two critical skills you must know to be good at bomb-proofing your horse.

I spoke about learning the horse's instinctual thinking. After all, if you know what motivates your horse you can get good at using effective training techniques...even if you make 'em up yourself.

Horses have lots of instincts but I want to describe the most common ones.

The first is the flight instinct. This, of course, is where the horse wants to get away from predators by out running them...as he's done

over millions of years through history.

Here's an important note about the flight instinct: It is as much a part of the horse as his head, tail, and legs.

Anytime you work at controlling your horse when he wants to flee he will react with various instinctual behaviors. He may rear. Buck. Shy.

Or take off running like his life depends on it.

Thus, the horse is simply trying to save his own life. He's struggling to be safe.

Once you "really" understand that, you know how to back off the pressure that may be pushing his fear buttons. Also, as you ride him you begin to understand how he needs you for his confidence.

Soon, you can get him checking with you when fear strikes and you'll get in tune with him and be able to keep him calmer and under control.

The next instinct is the herd instinct. The horse will always want to be with his buddies (other horses that is). If you ever rode a horse with other riders and your horse was always wanting to be with the other horses, that's the herd instinct.

It seems contrary sometimes because horses that meet each other for the first time will begin establishing pecking order. Some may bite. Some kick. Some charge.

As they do these nasty things to each other, they'll also want to be with each other – despite being picked on.

An important distinction about this instinct is this. One horse may have a **STRONG** herd instinct where another doesn't.

I've loaded horses in a trailer that were as quiet as a mouse. Where others will whinny like crazy for reassurance from other horses.

The last trait I want to expound on is what I call the "Odd man out" instinct.

You see, if your horse sees or hears a scary object he doesn't want to be "odd man out" - in other words...the one that gets hurt.

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After all, horses have been preyed upon for millions of years. That passed-on knowledge is built in his DNA through his genes. His survival depended on his ability to see a mountain lion, wolf, etc. before getting jumped.

So, there exists this built-in fear of being preyed upon. It's sort of like the skinny kid who always gets picked on by the bully.

On his way to school, he keeps his eye out for the bully. Always alert. Always looking through the bushes to see if the bully will jump out at him.

You can imagine how stressful that could get.

A horse is much like that. Always on the look out. And when you're dealing with an especially nervous horse the fear is magnified more.

So it's going to be your duty to help understand that the bully is not a big a deal as he "thinks" it is.

And you'll do that through persuasion, love, caressing, and more.

## **How Your Horse's Vision Secrets Affect His Behavior And Why He May Be Scared Of Something YOU Don't See!**

There is definitely disagreement whether or not a horse can see color or simply black and white.

Most experts seem to agree horses see in black in white with different shades of gray.

Also, a horse is not able to recognize three-dimensional details. Because his eyes are placed in his head like they are, he sees two different scenes at once.

Next, contrasts can be a hurdle for horses also.

If you've been horseback riding and your horse steps around something that seems invisible to you, it may be because of a color contrast on the ground.

Often, a horse will step around dried mud holes on the ground because they simply look different than the ground he's been stepping on at the moment - unless he's been educated.

I've had horses that reluctantly stepped from a road to a field because it was such a contrasting visual difference.

Interestingly, you can ride that same horse in a pasture that is multi-colored (ie. lots of contrasting differences in light and dark vegetation and ground) and he'll seem fine.

Thus, when the horse sees contrast, it jumps out at him and can make him uncomfortable because he doesn't perceive it like you and I.

Also remember this. Horses will vary in the intensity of reaction to the contrast they see.

Just like I have a strong reaction to heights, it may have little effect on you. Thus, it depends on the individual.

Okay. I've set up the instincts and info on the horse's vision. That gives us a pretty good foundation to build on as we begin some techniques for bombproofing.

This is where the good stuff starts.

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## **How To Quickly And Easily Find Your Horse's Comfort Zone, Safely Expand It, And Create A Safer, Calmer, Horse!**

As I present these next few areas about bombproofing, I want you to keep the instincts and vision thing in mind.

### **Okay?**

Now...the first thing is the horse's comfort zone.

Your horse has a comfort zone with everything around him. When he calmly walks around a certain set of fence posts he does so because he's been around them enough to know he'll be safe –or better yet...unharmmed.

It's a stimulus he's used to. But when you introduce him to a new stimulus the trick is to find his comfort zone with it and then push him past his zone just enough where he's okay with it but not overwhelmed.

But DO NOT push him to the point of being totally uncomfortable. Then you'll have a wreck for sure.

Another thing to remember is comfort zones will differ among different horses. (Just like the email I sent yesterday about vision and reactions)

### **How do you know where the comfort zone is?**

Here's a great way to determine it.

Just the other day, I had some road base brought to my house because the road was getting bad and desperately needed redone.

I was working with a horse in the round pen when the excavation guys brought in a bull dozer.

Within seconds the horse didn't pay a lick of attention to me. He was too concerned about that bull dozer eating him for lunch.

So, I quit working with him in the round pen. Instead, I decided to take him for a walk and practice some movement exercises with him.

As we exited the round pen, the site and sound of the bull dozer excited him quite a bit. There was a moment we had to walk within 30 feet or so of the dozer to get by it.

The guy on the dozer saw us coming and he stopped the dozer until we passed. (He obviously understood horse instincts)

Even though he stopped, Mr. Horse was not convinced this enormous, clanking, yellow thingymajig was safe.

Naturally, the farther we moved from it, the safer he felt and the calmer he got.

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I observed where his comfort zone was and made a mental note of it.

That's how you can tell your horse's comfort zone. You can see where he calms down from the spooky object.

Likewise, before approaching the object, stay a good distance away. Then urge your horse towards it and watch his behavior as he gets closer.

You'll see where his ears prick forward, his head'll probably raise up, he'll probably slow down his gait or even stop. When you see that happening, you just found the edge of his comfort zone.

## **Learn One Of The Biggest Secrets Of Teaching Your Horse Obedience To Decrease His Spook Meter**

I briefly stated that we need to expand your horse's comfort zone to get him more used to spooky objects.

When I say "expand his comfort zone" I'm saying to push him slightly beyond what's comfortable for him. We don't want to push so much that he's totally nervous and out of control.

Before we expand his comfort zone there is an important question to ask ourselves. That question is this: When I expand my horse's comfort zone, will it "likely" have a good, positive outcome?

**If the answer to that question is "yes"  
then you have the "key" to successfully  
initiating the bombproofing exercise.**

On the contrary, if the end result is that your horse won't do what you ask and it sabotages his confidence, then getting him bombproof will be harder - especially if the experiences are often negative.

So, for example, if you're riding your horse on a trail and ask him to depart the trail and step in some vegetation that's very different looking from the trail, he may at first resist.

But when you get him to do it and he finds it didn't hurt him (remember the instincts from the previous reading) then he gets more confidence to expand the comfort zone.

And the more times you have success with him expanding his comfort zone, the more he trusts you and your judgment.

The next thing that's important in teaching your horse is using repetition.

This is a major point discussed in my teleseminars. Anyway, repetition is the key to fix the impression of the lesson on the horse's brain.

The first time you get your horse to expand his comfort zone he'll likely be frightened. He may rush through the object in question. He just might think he was lucky to survive such an ordeal.

But the catch is this. Even if you did everything just right, he may not have it fixed in his brain that the object was safe.

### **So the lesson is this:**

You may think your horse is okay to move on to the next thing, but the reality is he may not think the obstacle or object is totally safe....even if he seems to calmly walk by it, over it, on it, or whatever.

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**What does that mean?**

It means some horses will accept walking over a log and transfer that piece of knowledge to walking over other logs. On the other hand, some horses need educated over lots of different logs to drive the point home - thus... the value of repetition.

And once your horse feels safe to step on, over, or by an object without punishment or harm then he's more willing to try it again.

This is a big secret to obedience, by the way. Each time the horse performs a little better his confidence increases and his obedience level expands.

Cool, huh?

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## How To Get Your Horse To Cross Over A Scary Object

The last tip I talked about repetition and how it satisfies your horse that he won't get hurt doing what you're asking him to do.

That's REAL important, by the way. If your horse gets hurt doing things you ask him to do he's not gonna be a very obedient friend. Can you blame him?

Anyway, before you ask your horse to do something remember to pet him as he approaches the object in question.

For instance, if you're teaching him to walk on paper and he eventually walks up to it be sure to pet him because it reassures him.

I've seen too many people get mad at their horse because the horse stopped or wouldn't move once the scary object seized his mind.

Then they'd kick the horse's ribs to try and get 'em going forward or cuss or whatever. Pretty soon, the horse has associated the scary object or task with punishment.

The next time he's asked to do the same thing he remembers pain and punishment. Then things begin to spiral out of control and you have a horse that's easily spooked, tense, and nervous.

Instead, one must pet and reassure him. Give him good feelings about doing what you want.

So like I said a minute ago, if you were teaching your horse to navigate over, say, a ditch then begin with finding his comfort zone preferably while on the ground. Then you can do it from the saddle later.

I like to use a lunge line to do an exercise like this.

Once I've taught my horse to move the direction I point I can then safely send him over obstacles on the ground.

When I taught my horse Blaze how to cross a small ditch she definitely wouldn't do it while in the saddle.

So, I went back to the basics and got her to do it from the ground.

While attached to the lead rope, I'd point right and she'd move right.

I inched her closer and closer to the ditch. I watched her eyes watching the ditch. She knew it was there but she didn't want to step over it.

Then I'd change my angle to be more towards the ditch. Then she'd stop just before the ditch. She'd put her head down, snort, contemplate going over it, and so on.

I didn't push her to jump. I didn't yell at her for stopping. I didn't get behind her and make all kinds of noise to get her to leap over the ditch.

Nope.

I just let her check it out. We had all the time in the world.

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She knew I wanted her to cross it but she wasn't quite sure about doing it just yet.

So after she decided not to I lunged her around and made her work a little bit. Then I pointed her back to the ditch.

Same thing.

She snorted, sniffed, and contemplated. I'd talk to her in a pleasant tone and would say, "Go ahead. Let's see it. It won't hurt you."

Just as an aside, those are the words I use while riding a horse and he sees or hears something scary. It's part of building their confidence and getting them understanding that when I say "it's not gonna hurt you" they get more comfortable with the idea that it won't hurt them.

Eventually, she crossed over the ditch. And when she did I made a BIG DEAL out of it. Petted her a lot. Told her what a good girl she was, threw her a birthday party...okay...so I didn't throw her a party. But I let her know she did great.

Each time I asked her to cross after that she did it easier and easier. Pretty soon I was on her and crossing the ditch. In fact, as she was ready

to step over the ditch I'd say "W-a-l-k" and she calmly stepped over the ditch.

She saw she didn't have to rush over it. Plus, I don't want them rushing over it. I want them calmly doing their thing.

It's another secret that when a horse moves fast doing anything, it automatically excites them. Thus, it's good to keep their excitement level at bay.

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## **How To Get Your Horse To Want To Do The Right Thing And Keep You Safer From Spooking**

Now, I want to talk more about reward and punishment - because it's REAL important to know how to do it so your purpose is achieved.

Most people cringe when I say "punishment". I know the word makes lots of people wince.

But what you should know is this. I don't advocate hitting, beating, whipping, or any other insane action. You're merely showing your horse that when he makes a wrong choice then there are "not so pleasant" consequences for it.

Thus, if your horse is acting unfavorably then you definitely won't reward him for it, right?

### **Right!!!**

So the only other thing is punishment. Or if you prefer an easier word, then let's use consequence.

Consequence can be very mild such as no reward period. For instance, if your horse won't do something you're asking him to do, then he doesn't get petted.

One of my most effective consequences to use is "goin' to work."

If my horse doesn't do what I ask...and I know he knows what to do...and I know HE knows that I want him to do it...then it's time to go to work.

We might do some figure eights. We may turn a few small circles one way and then the other. Or perhaps I'll double him.

Whatever the consequence is, the horse needs to know his bad choice results in unpleasantness.

So when your horse is slow to do what you ask of him, it's important he understands that he can do more than one thing - in other words, he has options.

He can decide to do what you ask (walk over the ditch) or he can experience a smidge of unpleasantness (work). (Hey, maybe I'll try that on my kids!)

Now when your horse does what you ask and he finds it a positive experience, then it builds his confidence and trust in you.

If you consequence him from anger, then it leads to cruelty. This is BIG NO NO!!!

If you haven't yet, you'll get frustrated with Mr. Horse at some point.

Hopefully you will dismount and cool off before you do something you'll regret. (I've actually got emails from people who hit their horse over the head with a 2x4. What's worse, the way they told me the story, they felt they were justified. Sigh.)

You see, ultimately, you are changing your horse's behavior. You're turning a negative response into a positive one. If you're gonna have a horse you want to depend on, your horse has to know he can depend on you. And that means being his friend.

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Because a horse is child-like in lots of ways, you gotta make a big deal out of it when he does what you ask...especially if it was hard for him. He needs that praise. Remember to do it immediately after he's done what you ask.

Ways to reward a horse are kind words, A rub just in front of the withers, and a rubbing just above the eyes (this one is magnetizing to a horse).

Likewise, there are ways to reinforce consequences for your horse's wrong decisions. Some of the best ones don't involve touching the horse at all.

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## **Three Effective Ways To Get Your Horse Doing What You Ask - Even When He Won't!**

Now I want to give you some ways to deal with your horse when he won't do what you ask – like when he's misbehaving or won't go down some path you want to explore.

The first is redirecting your horse's attention on something else. If you have a nervous horse, you can usually relax him by getting him to focus on something else.

And getting him to focus on you is the best focus you can get him to do.

The next is letting your horse move. You see, if you make him stand still he builds up nervous energy. Letting him move around decreases the pressure - kind of like taking the cork out of a bottle of champagne.

On the other hand, there are times when your horse won't be able to move. Thus, this guideline doesn't always hold water. But it's good when you can use it.

The third way is changing the direction you go toward the trek or object.

Horse's see things differently and when seen from a different angle, they often find it's no big deal. Once they go at it from that angle, they're likely to try other angles...including the one that scared him most.

Remember, just because you tricked your horse doesn't mean he didn't learn anything from your technique.

Remember, I said in the previous notes to you that you want to end up with a positive experience. Thus, if you got your horse moving toward a scary object because you changed directions then you STILL had a positive outcome.

There are other ways. I just wanted to give you a few so you could put them in your bag of tricks next time you need 'em.

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## **6 Safety Tips You Must Know**

Groundwork safety is big time important while establishing control of your horse.

The first thing to do is to be distant enough from your horse to keep from getting your ears stomped on.

So if you're leading him with reins and he gets close...bend your arm and jab him in the ribs. Usually, horses get the message to keep away.

If you have a lead rope on him you can get more distance. (Remember to always lead your horse from both sides)

The next not-so-obvious safety point is don't get tangled in the lead rope. The longer it is the better you gotta be at keepin' your feet and legs from being tangled up like old fishing line. Getting your legs caught in this could be potentially hazardous to your health. Be careful!

Not only that, if it gets tangled up in your horse's legs it could constrict his movement and he could panic.

Next, DO NOT...repeat...DO N-O-T! wrap any rope around any of your body parts. Not your legs, not your arms, certainly not your torso. It only takes a split-second for the rope to tighten. And when a 1500 pound frightened animal moves he can rip an arm out of the shoulder or a finger off the hand.

I know that's rather graphic but I say it in hopes of driving home safety.

Next, when you're walking your horse you need to walk backward. As you try to get him to walk over an object you can see what he's going to do. But if your back is to him you risk becoming stomped on because you didn't see what was going on.

Just yesterday, I made the mistake of taking a horse into the round pen. Admittedly, my mind was elsewhere and I walked through the gate. As I did the horse rushed past me and thrust me into part of a gate.

Fortunately there was no injury but I was lucky. The horse spooked and bolted into the round pen and bumped me out of the way as if I was a feather.

Next, when you ask your horse to walk over the object he could suddenly jump forward over the obstacle. He may come right to you because he's looking to you for security. (Good reason to have distance between him and you.)

If he comes too close, throw up your arms, palms out towards his face. This almost always stops 'em.

Next, horses typically shy "away" from an object so you must be on the same side of the horse that the object is. Thus he'll shy away from the object and you.

Lastly, if the horse gets excited and comes at you, step to the side...if possible. Stepping backward is cumbersome and slower.

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## **How To Get Your Horse To Cross Over, Step On, Step By, Or Step In The Spooky Thingamajig**

Earlier, I talked at length about safety stuff. Real important if you like staying healthy and injury free. Now, let's discuss some stuff you'll do on the ground.

### **First, we need a plan. What are we gonna do?**

The goal is this: We want Mr. Horse to get so used to a scary object that he gets bored with it.

Whatever the object is, he may have to step on it, in it, over it, or by it.

Start by making the object as least frightful as possible. That means you may have to make it small enough it doesn't scare the holy stuffin's outta him.

So if you're using a sheet, for instance, make it small and increase it's size later on.

I realize you can't do this while out on the trail but there are things you can do that resemble simplifying.

For instance, if you're trying to cross water, find a place that's the least threatening.

The next thing to do is try the object. In other words, try walking him by it, on it, through it, over it...or whatever it requires.

You may have to do one of the following to get your horse to comply:

1. Make him follow another horse.
2. Have him follow you
3. Have him moving forward - don't let him stop
4. Make him cross his legs

On this last point #4, if your horse stops you can get him moving by pulling his head sideways. When you pull him off balance he's got to move and once moving you can again go forward.

Lastly, have someone get behind him with a whip. When your horse sees someone behind him with a whip that may be enough motivation to make him move. If not, have the person tap his rear with the whip. Don't tap hard but rather increase the pressure of the tapping until he responds.

A word of caution: Whoever does the whip tapping needs to stand clear of the horse's back legs in case Mr. Horse wants to kick.

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## **How To Make Your Horse More And More Spook-Proof**

Now that you got your horse moving through the obstacle, there are a couple things you need to do.

### **First: Repetition.**

Just because you got him stepping over the obstacle once doesn't mean he's "got it". It needs done several times.

Remember, you want to get him where he's bored with it. How can you tell he's not fearful of the object anymore? He'll take on the object in a calm manner.

Remember, it may take him just a few times or it may take 50 times. It takes whatever it takes.

At this point, you can end the day's lessons or up the ante a bit by making it more of a challenge.

The next day, you should try the same exercise again...even if your horse did great the day before. Often, the lesson needs to be repeated for the horse to really "get it".

One last word about making the obstacle more challenging.

Remember I said in several of my previous bombproofing tips that you want to have a positive outcome for your horse (and you).

So if you make the obstacle harder, try to be sure your horse will successfully do it.

If his (and your) nerves are raw already, it may not be good to go on for the day. Rather, end on a good session and start the new day tomorrow.

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One other thing I want you to be aware of. That is an exercise called poling.

Once done, you will be surprised at the effect this has on your horse. He will be calmer and much less sensitive to touch. As far as spooking goes, this is a BIG secret.

Essentially, you take a pole and touch over your horse's body with it. You keep doing it until he's indifferent to being touched.

If you have never done it before, I urge you to read how to do it because you simply don't walk up to your horse and start touching him with it. There is a process that's safe and proven.

If you'd like to know more about it, you read about through the Jesse Beery horse training manual. (Beery was a famous horse trainer from the late 1800's whose methods are still used today!)

To read about Beery and his methods go to this website address:

<http://www.HorseTrainingResources.com>

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## **Your Horse's Bad Habits And What To Do About Them**

Next, I wanna talk about the not so pleasant stuff with horses. Things like bad habits, for instance.

When working the bombproofing system with horses you will most likely come across a situation with your horse that'll stump you. Make you scream. Make you...well...wanna yell at your significant other :)

With that in mind, it's important you first answer some questions about what's going on with your horse.

The first thing to ask yourself, when your horse gives you a bit of trouble, is: "Can I fix this? Do I have the necessary skill or knowledge?"

Remember, a rider with little experience can make the problem worse...much worse.

The next question is: Does this horse really have this bad habit, or did he just wake up on the wrong side of haystack today?

### **How do you tell?**

Well, if your horse does some undesirable behavior while he's feelin' stressed out (like you or me)...but typically not any other time...then it's

likely not a habit.

If your horse doesn't scare you and you feel confident you can handle him, then you need to know ways to offset the problems.

A common problem is rearing.

If you've been with me these past years you'd know my solutions for rearing.

But I'll say it again.

First, a horse rears because he simply doesn't wanna move. Rearing is dangerous because he can come back over on top of you.

If the horse rears, DO NOT pull on the reins. Doing so will only pull him over on top of you.

Instead, lean forward if you can. If you need to hold onto something, then grab the mane...but don't pull back.

When the horse comes back down to the ground then boot him forward. Do it the second his feet touch the ground.

A great way to stop the horse rearing in the first place is to drive him forward when you feel him getting light in the front. The more swiftly he goes forward the harder it is for him to rear.

But if your horse won't go forward, then put him in a circle. It's STILL going forward albeit in a straight line.

Sure the horse didn't go forward to where you originally wanted him to, but he still did what you wanted by going in a circle. In other words, you got him to be obedient.

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When moving your horse in a circle, increase the pace. As he does, take him out of the circle and drive him straight ahead.

If you sense him about to rear again, then circle him again. It teaches him that rearing is a no-no.

Do that enough and Mr. Horse will finally decide that it's not worth it. Better to go forward than work and work and work.

It's a great trick.

The next one to cover is when a horse backs up.

Although this isn't a terrifically common problem, it happens.

If your horse backs away from something it's because he wants to avoid it.

The best way to reverse this problem is to get him to go forward. (Hmnnnn...just like the rearing solution)

If you can't get him going forward, then you can get him to move his butt around - and you can do that by getting him to turn on the forehand.

He can't keep backing as long as you're moving his butt around.

Another is to try turning your horse's head left or right. Yeah...it's simple but it can (and often does) create a positive result.

Remember, a positive result is what we're always striving for.

Turning your horse's head isn't as effective as getting his butt to move and crossing over his legs, but it's still pretty good.

Although there are many things a horse can do that cause you trouble (such as backing) the next and last one I want to talk about is bucking.

We all know what bucking is - so I don't feel like I need to explain it. But it might help a little if I describe how a horse does it.

It's more or less the opposite of rearing. In rearing the weight shifts to his rear and the body front rises - where in bucking the opposite occurs but at times in a more violent fashion.

Bucking occurs for various reasons. One is because the horse is simply feeling good and is excited. Another is the horse's trouble in dealing with pressure. Another is perhaps his back hurts.

Fortunately, bucking can be "switched off" by moving your horse forward. (Remember I said earlier how making a horse move forward is BIG training secret!)

To buck, a horse needs to lower his head and neck when he gives a hard-thumping buck. He does that to balance his rear end movements.

Sometimes a horse's behavior is hard to predict and you may not see the bucking coming. But if it does, here are some instructions for you.

First, you'll likely feel his back come up and his head dive downwards. When you see or feel that happening, you MUST simultaneously boot him forward and pull his head up. Sit deep in the saddle and drop your heels too.

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May you never have to worry about a bucking horse.

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## **Killer Bomb Proof Methods**

Let's talk about bombproofing methods.

The first thing to do is don't do this alone. I'd prefer you have a friend with you...especially if you're not familiar with horses like you should be.

Next, decide what you'll use to do some bombproofing. In other words, what objects and/or situations will you use to teach your horse to be a calm, manageable horse.

Use your imagination because the sky is the limit. It's always good to use things you think you'll encounter with your horse.

For instance, my horse training friend Rudy has Clydesdales. He likes to show 'em off in our hometown parades with his homemade wagon (which, by the way, is a work of art!)

One of the things he did to desensitize them was have kids run out in front of them and towards them.

Before you raise an eyebrow at that, Rudy was very careful and instructive with the kids and safety was the big issue - thus, no one came close to getting hurt.

The reason he had kids run out towards the Clydes was you see that in parades now and then. Thus Rudy was simulating what his horses may experience.

I've been in every parade with Rudy and his Clydes and I can tell you he did a fantastic job with them. Their behavior during the parade was absolutely impeccable.

You'll find that a lot of what your horse learns from one bombproofing session will overflow to the next session and he'll get better and better. Once he learns he can handle the problem he'll more willingly take on more.

Remember the key is to make sure he and you have a positive outcome when working on the problem.

Here's another bombproofing exercise you might wanna try.

Take a tarp and put it on the ground. (You should buy a tough, durable one so your horse won't puncture it, get it caught on his feet and drag it around. That'd kill your purpose because it'd likely scare the eye balls outta him!)

Fold it such that it's approximately a foot wide by however long it is.

Weight each end down so it doesn't move much if it's breezy out or the horse steps on it.

Now, simply walk your horse over it. As you see him getting plenty comfortable with it, go ahead and unfold the tarp to double its width. Thus, now it's about two feet wide.

Repeat, working through your horse's comfort zone. Remember, your horse needs pushed just beyond his comfort zone to make this work - but do it gradually. There's no

Don't forget that some horses will act like the tarp is a piece of cake where others will act like it's the end of the world if they attempt walking over it.

## What To Do If Your Horse Doesn't Want To Move

Without further ado...

### Q. What if my horse just won't budge?

A. If he wants to stop, that's okay. Let him. He needs to look over the situation. Let him sniff it if he wants. (When a horse checks things out with his muzzle it's just like us using our fingers)

Often you can get him going forward using your aids you've already read about. Remember, we want to s-t-r-e-t-c-h his comfort zone so we don't want to let him "NOT" do it.

If he won't go forward then you can make him go in circles.

The trick is to keep him moving. Moving in a circle is still moving forward although he didn't go across the tarp.

As he comes out of the circle facing the tarp try to get him to step through it.

If he doesn't, keep makin' him work until he does. Set up a choice for him that when he crosses that tarp the circles stop and he can relax AND get rewarded with words of genuine kindness.

Often, when a horse finally decides to travel over the obstacle you can look for him to jump over it...at least...expect that he will.

It's like a kid having to walk past a scary closet in his bedroom at night. He musters the courage but the ONLY way he'll do it is zooming past it. But hey!...at least he did it.

Besides, if you've read all my bombproofing stuff you'd know it's not exactly the horse's nature to relax and calmly walk by, over, or through something that's inspiring fear in him.

Remember, a horse can suddenly spurt over the obstacle and catch you off guard - so be ready. I've seen people do a white-knuckle death grip on the reins and keep unnecessary pressure on their horse's mouth because they're nervous.

That only makes the horse more excitable. Excitable is what you DON'T want at this point.

Thus, it's important to be aware you're not exciting your horse.

Now...if your horse jumps the obstacle then it's important he turns around that instant and traverses it again.

Don't turn circles, don't dilly-daddle around. Make him go over the obstacle again. When I say make him go over the obstacle that instant that means don't wait. Do it now.

Plus, don't get too far from it because it gives him an excuse to not have to go back over it.

For every time you go through, by, or over the obstacle your horse should become more and more bored with it.

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**That's a good thing!**

You want your horse to think it's no big deal...and you do that by repetition of the positive outcome.

So what if you can't get your horse to cross the obstacle at all? That's our next section.

## Horse Won't Budge When Trying To Cross An Object? Try This!

Last time, I asked the question:

“Whaddya do if the horse just won't budge when you're tryin' to get him to cross an object?”

That's today's topic.

Although there are several ways I'm gonna reveal two.

The first is to pony your horse across the obstacle. When you pony a horse you are simply leading him like you would from the ground only you're on the back of a horse doing it.

I think the safest method for the rider leading the horse is to hold the cheek strap of the horse being led. The rider on the horse being led can then hold the reins.

Note there are times you may have to grab the horse's reins to lead her through. Just be ready to release the reins if you need to.

The other way is to use one of your horse's natural instincts. This instinct is so powerful that lots of people see it as a glass half empty thing when it's actually a glass half full.

It's caused many a rider problems but it actually has colossal advantages.

Here's what you do.

Get the bravest horse (or horses) to traverse the spooky object first with the other horses following just behind.

The lead horse should not out pace the followers. Sometimes the person guiding the lead horse has to come to an almost complete stop to get the follower horse to play follow the leader.

So whoever's on the follower horse needs to speak up when they're getting left too far behind. And the lead horse rider needs to slow down to keep the pace just right.

As they all begin to move around and the brave horses navigate the object then others will follow.

What you're taking advantage of here is your horse's natural desire to be with his buddies. It's also known as “The Herd Instinct”.

In human terms, it's kinda like holding your 5 year old child's hand and going to the closet to prove there's no monsters in there.

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## **What A Good Horse Should Know To Be A Good Horse!**

The last thing I wanna say about the bombproofing process is what your horse should know.

First, your horse should know how to cross water. You can use the series where I talked about teaching your horse to cross a tarp to help you with crossing water.

Next, your horse should be able to tolerate loud noises.

Third, your horse should be able to deal with foreign odors. Although I didn't cover how to do that...you can do it much the same way you bombproof him to other things. And that is to first minimize it and then start stretching his comfort zone.

Fourth, your horse should be able to trailer load easily. Nope..I didn't cover that. But it is essential as part of his education.

Fifth, your horse should behave riding amongst other horses. No biting, no attacking.

Six, your horse should be able to deal with different environments. Remember to get your horse to focus on you when he gets nervous about various things.

Seventh, if you're gonna ride in a town and by highways (and, really, even if you're not) your horse should be comfortable around traffic.

There are others but these are the main ones. Be sure you get your horse accustom to them.

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## **Recommended Reading List:**

### **Prof. Jesse Beery's Illustrated Course In Horse Training**

**World renowned. Over 300,000 students of this course sold all around the world. Most of today's professional horse trainers worth their salt "cut their teeth" using Beery's methods.**

**See it here:**

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