

Troubleshooting Guide

Trailer Loading

Taking the time to practice trailer loading properly is so often overlooked. Too often people wait until right before a show or clinic to load their horse, sometimes for the first time. If you are headed to a show or clinic chances are pretty good that you are on a tight schedule. Not only are you on a schedule, the energy level at your barn is higher than usual due to the excitement. Your patience as well as those around you might be a little thin during a time like this and you would probably agree that this probably wouldn't be the best time to introduce a horse to climbing up into a trailer.

It's a matter of trust and respect

If a horse trusts their handler, chances are pretty good that they will climb into a trailer without too much trouble. If a horse respects their handler they will be less likely to try and push them out of the way to avoid going into a trailer. The most difficult horse to load is one that doesn't respect humans and one that is used to pushing them around.

So where do we start?

The best place to begin establishing trust and respect is by working with the horse while on the ground. After all you will be on the ground when you lead them into the trailer. Chances are if your horse was started properly you or your trainer have already covered the following exercises. If that's not the case it probably wouldn't hurt to review some of these exercises. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this article to go into any great detail on these exercises.

Round Pen Work

In the round pen we emulate how horses communicate with one another in the herd. We call them on rude gestures and reward them for respectful gestures. Educate yourself on what to



look for and how to respond correctly. Unless done in a manner that gains their respect and trust you will merely be chasing a horse around in the pen.

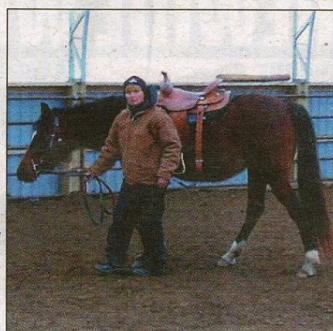
Lunging

Proper lunging techniques bend the horse "into shape". Proper shape gives the horse a sense of well being and keeps their body in a respectable position in relation to ours further developing trust and respect.



In hand work

In hand work is great in teaching them to yield their shoulders and hips. After all when we lead the horse to the trailer and walk them in, it will be "in hand". Doing the work properly will make them level headed and balanced giving them a sense of well being as well. This goes a long way to building the trust needed to guide them into the trailer.

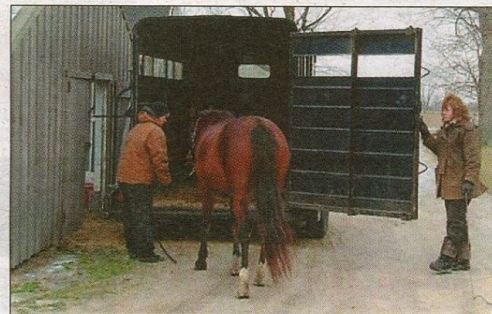


Loading your horse

Whether loading your horse for the first time or retraining a horse to load, plan ahead and set things up for success. Doing the ground work mentioned earlier to earn the horse's trust and respect is the first step to success. The second step is to set aside some time where no one will be rushed while loading the horse. Why not set aside one training session that will be dedicated to loading your horse. The third step is to gather, prepare and position your trailer in such a way that will make it difficult for the horse to evade loading. Take notice of how things are set up in the following photo. Please bear in mind that this set up is for training purposes and will not always be available to you if you are at a show, clinic, trail ride etc. and we understand that. Once your horse is trained you will not need all the physical barriers and you will be able to load them by yourself. Be prepared to take the time it takes, be patient and calm. Being patient, quiet and calm will always work in your favour, reducing the time needed to load your horse.

We have positioned the trailer to set physical boundaries on both sides. On the left side we have a building and on the right side we have the trailer door and my wife Gisela who is holding a lunge whip. A third person positioned behind the horse 10 to 15 ft back

can be helpful as well. Essentially we have created a chute so to speak in order to funnel the horse into the trailer. A horse looking to evade loading will look for a way around the trailer. Physical barriers will help prevent that. The job of Kathy our handler on the left at this point is to keep the horse's head pointed at the trailer, ask for forward motion and disallow backing up. To ask for forward motion she will reach back and touch the horse's flank area with her hand, lead rope or dressage whip quietly asking for forward. Gisela's job on the right is to keep the horse's hind end straight, keep the horse behind the trailer, disallow backing up and encourage forward as well.



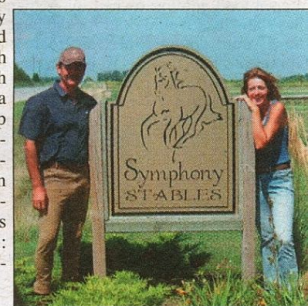
Keep it simple using the following principles:

- Do your groundwork to establish trust and respect
- Be prepared to calmly stand behind the trailer for 1 hr or more if you have to. Might only take 5 minutes but be prepared for more.
- Keep them behind the trailer at all times
- Keep them straight. Adjust their head and hips so that they are always pointed at the open trailer (again making sure they stay behind the trailer)
- Encourage forward motion by tapping their flank or drawing them into the trailer
- Be prepared to take the time it takes, stay calm and quiet
- Disallow backing up
- Once you get them loaded.... unload them and do it five more times.

We have had great success using these principles to load some of the most troublesome horses you could imagine.

Written by Walter Mantler - Symphony Stables

Walter & Gisela Mantler own and operate Symphony Stables, a training facility in south-western Ontario. They have apprenticed directly under Chris Irwin for years and are recognized among his top trainers. They breed, start, train and finish horses for both Western and English disciplines. They run a series of horsemanship and personal development clinics throughout the year. To learn more about their techniques and services please visit: www.symphonystables.com



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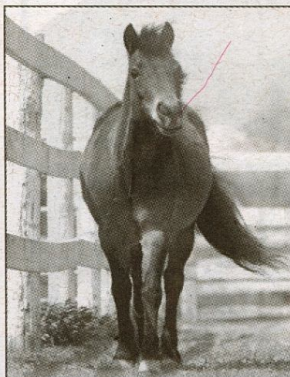
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Mister Big to help Equine Guelph industry education program!

Equine Guelph is proud to announce that Joe Muscara has offered a breeding to Mister Big, standing at Tara Hills Stud,

Port Perry, with funds going to Equine Guelph's education program. "We are 150 years into a grand experiment of developing a horse that can pull a cart real fast. Most

of that time we did what our grandfathers did," says Joe Muscara, owner of Mister Big. "Now with the rapidly accelerating scientific discoveries in all facets of equine endeavors that is not enough to excel, not even enough to survive. You need the tools to evaluate what is new, use what is good and avoid what is not. Equine Guelph can help you develop those tools. Guelph did not teach us how to train Mister Big. But it did give me the tools to evaluate what we were doing and the confidence to stick with the plan over three magical seasons."

The breeding will be part of the stallion breeding auction to be held at the Standardbred Breeders of Ontario Association banquet and awards evening on January

23, 2010 at the Delta Hotel in Guelph, Ont.

"He is such a popular and awesome horse to watch in a race," said Gayle Ecker, Director of Equine Guelph. "It is so wonderful that Joe is offering to help us build the education and training program for the equine industry, and in turn this will bring more youth into the racing industry."

For more information on the banquet please contact Patti Cuning (905) 854-1354.

