

## Teaching the Stop

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I start by walking my horse forward, and then I pick up the left rein, start taking the slack out of this rein while actually turning my body to look at the horse's left hip. I continue to add pressure on the rein until I see the left hip move to the right. As soon as it moves I release all pressure on the rein. It's important to release when the hip starts to move then I immediately change my focus from the left hip to the left shoulder and start to take the slack out of my left rein increasing pressure slowly until the left shoulder stops. When I can achieve these first two steps, I proceed to step three, which is to ask the horse's right shoulder to move back. So now I ask for the following all with the left rein;

1. Move left hip to the right, release rein
2. Immediately ask left shoulder to stop moving forward, release rein
3. Ask right shoulder to move backward, release rein on any backward movement from that shoulder
4. Pet horse

When we practice these movements enough, the horse will eventually put the three movements together. When you pick up the left rein and ask the horse's left hip to move to the right, the horse will automatically stop his left shoulder and move the right shoulder back.

Now we have to teach the horse everything from the right side. Remember to go through all the steps using the right rein. When this has been accomplished, you can eliminate step number one (disengaging the hip). Go directly to asking the left shoulder to stop and the right shoulder to move backward with the left rein. Then ask the right shoulder to stop and the left shoulder to move backward with the right rein. The next step would be to just stop the left shoulder with the left rein and immediately stop the right shoulder with the right rein and then with both reins ask both shoulder points to move back.

Eventually we can simply use both reins simultaneously to ask the shoulders to stop and move backward. As the horse starts to anticipate backing after each stop, he will bring his hindquarters further up underneath himself in the stop, creating a lighter, more balanced stop.

Remember when you start teaching this lesson, at first the horse will have no idea what you're asking him to do. That's why it's important to actually look at the horse's hip when you first ask it to move. That way you will not only feel the movement but you will also see it, which allows you to release your rein pressure immediately. The release tells the horse he did what you asked.

Good Luck and Safe Stopping. -Bob Jefferies