

Longeing Worksheet

“Work in hand” means training while leading your pony. For the C level you must refine his work in hand, which lays the foundation for proper longeing.

Parallel Leading: Before your pony can learn to work at the end of a 30 foot longe line, he must learn to move forward, stop, and obey voice commands when several feet away from you. See attached diagram titled Parallel Leading.

To begin parallel leading, start by leading your pony with the lead line in the hand next to the pony. Carry the longe whip with lash wrapped up in the other hand, pointing down and backward. Gradually move out until you are 3-4 feet from the pony's shoulder; at this distance, practice leading, transitions, and voice commands on both sides.

To slow down or stop, use the same hand and rein aids you use while longeing. Repeated short squeezes (backward, toward his chest) act as half halts and ask him to slow down or stop. If he does not stop promptly after a light touch, don't pull backward or sideways. Instead, stop walking, hold your arm and elbow in one place, and give small “vibrations” with your hand. This teaches your pony to pay attention to a light signal instead of a pull.

Next, move out so that you are 4 – 5 feet from the pony's shoulder, and turn toward him. Hold the line in the hand closest to the pony's head, and whip (still pointing backward and down) in the hand closer to his hindquarters, as when longeing. Practice walking, transitions, and voice commands in this position, while you and your pony move in a large circle. As you pony gets better at working this way, you can gradually move farther away- first 6 feet away, then 10 feet, etc. Be sure to practice both directions.

Longeing

Longeing is a way of giving a horse controlled exercise without riding him. The horse works in a 60 feet circle around the trainer, on a longe line about 30 feet long.

Reasons for longeing:

To exercise a horse when he cannot be ridden.

To settle down a horse that is full of energy, before riding him.

To train the horse to pay attention to voice commands and the trainer's body language

To develop the horse's rhythm, balance, suppleness, and way of moving.

Longeing a rider on a trained horse is a way to improve the rider's seat and position.

Where to longe: The best place to longe is in a round longeing ring about 60 feet in diameter. The place should have good footing and for safety no one should be riding in an area where a horse is being longed.

Attire: Gloves are essential when longeing. Safe foot wear, helmet, and a watch.

Equipment:

Longe line: Made of cotton webbing 1-1 ½ inches wide, or ½ inch round spun nylon or dacron line. If the longe line has a loop sewn in the end, cut it off so you cannot catch your hand in it. A longe line must be at least 30 feet long. Do not use a line that has a chain on it.

Longe whip: Has a long handle (about 5 feet long) and a long, light lash used to signal the pony. The whip should be light and well-balanced.

Longe cavesson: Special headstall made of leather or nylon, with a padded metal noseband and rings to attach the longe line. It gives good control without hurting the pony's mouth. You may use it alone or with a snaffle bridle. The longe cavesson must be adjusted properly. The noseband should rest about 4 fingers above the horse's nostrils and be fastened snugly. It must be on the nasal bone, not the cartilage. The jowl strap must be fastened snugly so that the cavesson cannot slip. When used with a snaffle bridle, the longe cavesson is put on over the bridle. The noseband of the longe cavesson goes inside the bridle cheek pieces. The noseband of the bridle must not be caught under the longe cavesson; it is best to remove it.

Snaffle bridle: A pony may be longed in a snaffle bridle without a cavesson. The reins of the bridle may be removed or twisted several times under the throat and the throat lash buckled through them, to keep them from hanging down.

Protective Boots: Should be used on all four legs. Bell boots can be used to protect the heels and splint boots or tendon boots can be used on the front and hind legs. Exercise bandages may be used but need to be applied by and expert. (OPTIONAL AT C3)

Saddle: May be used, but stirrups must be fastened up as in diagram #1.

Surcingle: A band with rings attached, which is buckled around the pony and used instead of a saddle, to attach to side reins.

Side reins: Used on more advanced horses, to encourage correct head carriage and balance. These reins are attached either to the girth or billet straps of the saddle or to a surcingle, and snapped to the rings of a snaffle bit. Side reins are for work in the trot and canter and must be used only after the horse has warmed up without them. They should be adjusted a bit long and gradually shortened to the correct working length.

Time limits and Changing Directions:

When longeing, change directions every five minutes to avoid overworking the muscles on one side. Changing gaits frequently also helps. Longeing is harder work than ordinary riding, because working on a circle puts more stress on the pony's legs, muscles, joints, and tendons. You must consider the horse's age, experience, and fitness when determining how much time he should be longed.

Communication

The aids used to communicate with the horse while longeing are voice, handler's body placement, the whip, and the longe line.

Voice Commands:

To walk on: "Walk ON" or "Wa-a-LK," spoken firmly, raising the tone of voice on the last syllable.

To walk from trot: "WA-a-a-lk" or "A-a-a-nd WALK," spoken slowly and quietly, but firmly, dropping the tone of voice at the end. The work and is used like a half halt to prepare the horse when asking for a downward transition.

To halt: "Who-o-a-a" or "A-a-a-nd Whoa," spoken slowly and quietly, but firmly, dropping the tone of voice at the end. "Whoa means "Stop and stand still," so to avoid confusion it is best to use another word such as "slowly" or "easy" to slow down without stopping.

To trot from a walk: "Trot ON" or "T-rr-Rot," spoken briskly, raising the tone of voice and stressing the last part of the command.

To canter from a trot: "Ca-a-a-n-TER," spoken briskly, raising the voice on the end of the word.

To trot from a canter: "Tr-o-o-t" or "A-a-a-nd Trot," Spoken slowly and quietly, as in other downward transitions.

"Easy" or Steady" (spoken slowly and quietly" may be used to calm an excited horse. Clucking with the tongue can encourage a lazy horse to move with more effort. To be most effective, a cluck should be used in rhythm with the inside hind leg.

"OU-u-ut," spoken firmly, may be used to ask the horse to move out onto the circle, away from the handler.

"Good Boy," or "Good Girl" can be used as a verbal reward although do not use it only when stopping or he may learn to stop.

"NO!" This is a verbal correction, to be used instantly when required. It should be spoken sharp, and in a displeased tone of voice.

Rein Aids:

Opening or Leading Rein: The longe hand moves outward and sideways, away from your body. This leads the horse forward and asks him to stretch his neck out.

Direct rein: The longe hand gives short squeezes on the rein, toward your elbow. This asks the horse to make the circle smaller, to bend toward you, or stop pulling out away from you.

Indirect rein: the longe hand moves inward and sideways, toward your opposite hip, giving short squeezes. This puts pressure backward on the longe and asks your horse to slow down or stop.

Giving longe: The longe hand moves briefly forward and out toward the horse's head, then smoothly takes up the contact again. This releases pressure on the longe for an instant. It is used to reward the horse, to ask the horse to lower he head, or to allow him to move out onto a larger circle. Don't lose all contact or let the longe line become dangerously slack: the horse could step over it if he turns in.

Vibrating the longe: The longe hand gives tiny "shivers" This calls the horse's attention to a light signal without pulling against him. It is very useful for halting and slowing down without pulling.

Half-Halts on the Longe: A half halt is a brief call for attention; it asks your pony to listen to you, to rebalance himself, and to prepare to do something. To give a half-halt on the longe line, you coordinate all your aids just as you do when riding. Lift the tip of the whip or point it toward the pony's hocks to ask him to engage his hind legs. As you stand taller, give a short lift and squeeze of your hand on the longe line, and give a voice command. A warning word such as "A-a-and" before a command has the effect of a half-halt because it tells the pony that another command is coming.

Communications with the Longe Whip:

The longe whip must be used quietly and tactfully. It can be used in several ways.

*Close to the ground, with a forward rotating motion: This asks the horse to move forward.

*Flicked at the hocks (from back to front): This asks more strongly for forward movement.

*Flicked forward and upward toward the belly so that it lands on the area where the ride's leg is normally used (it takes considerable skill and practice) This asks for forward and outward movement.

*Cracking whip: A sharp call for immediate forward movement. Use this only when all other signals fail, because it may upset the horse. If you crack the whip too often, your horse may learn to ignore all whip signals.

*Pointing the whip toward the horse's shoulder: This asks the horse to move out on a larger circle, or stops him from cutting in toward the handler.

*Moving the whip under the longe line and in front of the horse's head: This asks the horse to slow down and stop. It requires considerable skill, tact, and practice. Poking the horse or waving a whip around his head will surely upset him.

Communication with Body Language:

Body Language is one of the most important aids in longeing. Horses often pay more attention to body language than other aids because it is more like the way they communicate with each other.

The handler should be in a longeing position: See diagram of The Control Position. If you are too far back of the triangle the horse acts as if you were chasing him from behind, and he might rush forward, kick or bolt. If you are too far in front toward his head he acts as if you were getting in front of him and cutting him off. He will slow down or stop. Your body should keep the triangle balanced. A small shift of your body in either direction will either send your pony forward or slow him down.

Horses react to the way you use your body. If you move toward him suddenly and strongly, you appear threatening, and the pony may try to escape by rushing forward if you move toward the rear. If you move toward his head he will suddenly stop or turn around. If you move too timidly, stiffly, too little, or too late he may decide to ignore you.

Successful Longeing results in Rhythm and Relaxation:

Some of the Signs of Rhythm and Relaxation:

- *His strides become even and steady, and his speed stays the same, without rushing or slowing down. You can count in a steady rhythm with his hoof beats.
 - *His hind legs reach well forward under his body.
 - *He stretches his neck and his back, and his back looks "round" instead of flat or hollow.
 - *He breathes evenly and may snort gently while stretching his neck and back.
- **Remember that longeing is hard work for your pony. Don't longe him too long or too hard, and be sure to walk for a least ten minutes to warm his muscles up before work and cool them down afterward. Always end a longeing session on a good note. Ask your pony to do something he usually does easily and well; then halt him, go out to him, and reward him with praise, a pat and perhaps a cookie!