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another, **Day in the Life of Lessons at Coventry...**

**The Three R of Basic Training:
*Relaxed, Rhythmic and Round.***

Relaxed, rhythmic and contact are typically the first three ingredients of training a horse mentioned in most training scales.* I can remember when the training scale was first introduced to me, I thought, how will I ever remember any of this? So to simplify, I came up with calling contact round instead of contact. Thus, I call it relaxed, rhythmic and round. By using three words that begin with the same letter R, I think it is easier to remember. Just like, 'in the day' how we all had to remember the three R's of aRithmetic, Reading and wRiting. (Talk about confusing us kids back then?) Now, using the three R's to remember the first three ingredients of the training scale to train a horse just makes it so much easier.

To establish the basic training of a horse, a rider must first have the three R's: relaxed, rhythmic and round. The first, *relaxation* just makes sense because you cannot train a horse that is not relaxed. You will never have the horse's mind if it is not relaxed and to train the horse you will need its mind, or attention to gain access to its body! So, if your horse is not relaxed, turn it out, change the environment, do what ever is needed to gets its mind relaxed so you can have its body. And/or vice a versa, gets its body relaxed so you can then access its mind! There is no doubt the two work in unison.

The next step is *rhythm*, however, training a horse is not as simple as following a few simple words. Establishing rhythm, as far as training a horse, could take months to develop. You may need to start on the lunge line, or you may already be under saddle. One minute your horse is rushing down the long side, the next minute it is relaxed on a circle. The goal is to have the horse keep the same rhythm through out its training session. A *relaxed* rhythm. As a rider, you want to be in the position that you ask the horse to go forward, not ask the horse to slow down at every corner. Rhythm, rhythm, rhythm is the one of the mantra's during each training session at Coventry

Of course, being capable of establishing rhythm requires skill and equestrian tact from the rider. It is that fine balancing act of driving the horse and receiving its forward motion through the rider's seat and between the leg and hand that helps to create a relaxed rhythm. So, if you are a 'developing' rider, it is best if you let a 'finished' rider establish good basics with your horse. Otherwise, hopefully you already have a horse with good basic training.

**Happy Thanks
Giving... and Black Friday week**

Updates: Coventry had the driveway leveled, the sand in the outdoor redistributed and all the asphalt spread. We also leveled the path leading up to the outdoor arena. Cody, Karen's horse found a new home with owner Missy. And, a new Spanish - Norman horse has arrived from Florida. This bred is half Andalusian and Percheron.



Hi, I am Brock. I am a Spanish Norman horse bred at Sport Horse Canada and I just arrived to Coventry from Florida on Thanks Giving morning at 530 am.

Holistic Happenings
Equine Touch was interesting and we have another event planned for January 16th!

Lisa Hall will be back after January 1st.

The WPDA Banquet was fun as usual. Riders from Coventry did very well. In the WPDA Sanctioned show awards we won with these results. (Next year, lets take some of this talent to the USDF/USET recognized shows!)

WPDA Adult Amateur Division

Training Level Reserve Champion - Robyn Gallimore-Jones

riding FWF PRINCE MIDNIGHT RIDE 66.19%

Performance Certificate Training Level - Amanda Collier riding

SOMERSET 64.55%

First Level Reserve Champion Jane McCartney riding AB-

NER'S OBERON 62.80%

WPDA Junior/Young Rider Division

Training Level Champion Natalie Rocca riding LINNDEN 64.65

Reserve Champion Rosie Amrhein riding ARC ANGEL 64.01%

Performance Certificate Training Level Valerie Mahoney riding
BAMBI'S TWILIGHT 63.74% continued

First Level Champion Valerie Mahoney riding BAMBI'S TWILIGHT 64.00%



Longing in side reins is a great way to develop relaxed, rhythmic and round. This is Alison (new boarder at Coventry) and, her new horse DJ. Thoroughbred off the track...

Once you have a relaxed rhythm where you ask the horse to go forward and it works responsively between your aids, you can then go to the next step which is Contact or, as I say *Round*. The word contact is typically referred to as contact with the bit. However, a rider does have other areas of contact, such as the leg in contact with the horse's barrel and the seat being in contact with the horse's back. Such is the term three points of contact seat, leg and hand, or two point which is two points of contact when in jumping position, leg and hand. Nevertheless, the term contact, is generally referred to as contact with the bit.



Winter rains are here and that means horses do not go out in the mud. If you want your horse lunged, we are at your service. Today they are in and until the ground freezes they will be in. So either get to the barn or email us to see that your horse gets out...

So now with a horse that is *relaxed*, and has found its *rhythm* the rider can now establish contact or *round*. It only makes sense that relaxation and rhythm came first, because 1. if the horse is not relaxed you cannot train it, and 2. the rhythm has to be established before you can have roundness. Just think, if you put contact with the reins on the horse's mouth before you have rhythm then the horse will just interpret it as a signal to whoa or slow down. If you have a good steady rhythm first then you can work on establishing that roundness without interrupting the rhythm...



Kristin riding Brock! Hands together! Ankle under the hip....ugh! Glad it is blurry ☺

Relaxed, rhythmic and round, the three R's to basic training. And, where do we create all this basic training? On the Training Wheel of Gymnastic Training, where we will also discuss Positioning and Bending and more rhythm, rhythm, rhythm...while tracking up and/or under tracking, or as I like to call it, whole horse riding! ☺

"You'll always miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

-- Wayne Gretzky, Hockey Player

