



Horses Teach me to Find My Way Horse Lunging Technique

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FESTINA LENTE

Overview of Presentation

- ▶ Brief Description of Lunging
- ▶ Safety Considerations
- ▶ Horse Welfare Considerations
- ▶ Basic School Movements
- ▶ Advantages and disadvantages for client, leader, coach and horse
- ▶ Bibliography
- ▶ Tag words/verbal commands

Lunging defined :

.....where a horse is asked to work at the end of a lunge line and respond to commands from a handler on the ground who holds the line and lunging whip. It is also a critical component of the sport of [equestrian vaulting](#).

Longing is performed in a large circle with the horse traveling around the outside edge of a real or imaginary ring with the trainer in the middle.



Safety Considerations



Client

Coach

Leader

Observer

Side
walker

Safety Considerations for the Client

- ▶ That tack is correctly fitted – especially the roller and pad that it does not move



Safety Considerations for the Client

- ▶ That the horse is trained to stand still so client can mount safely and that the horse has been desensitised to excessive movement



Safety Considerations for the Client

- ▶ That either a suitable mounting block is available or that the client can be safely supported to mount



Safety Considerations for the Client

There is somebody on the off side of the horse to support the client

That the transitions are not excessively sudden so as to unbalance the rider



Safety Considerations for the Lunger



Safety Considerations : Lunger

That the lunger understands the principles of learning theory in equitation

- ▶ Take into account the horse's ethology and cognition
- ▶ Use learning theory appropriately Habituation, Sensitisation, Operant conditioning, Shaping and Classical conditioning
- ▶ Train easy-to-discriminate cues
- ▶ Shape responses and movements
- ▶ Elicit responses one-at-a-time
- ▶ Train only one response per signal
- ▶ Form consistent habits
- ▶ Train persistence of responses (self-carriage)
- ▶ Avoid and dissociate flight responses
- ▶ Demonstrate minimum levels of arousal sufficient for training

<https://equitation-science.com/about/ises-training-principles>

Appropriate clothing and footwear



Safety Considerations : Lunging

- ▶ That the lunge line is not wrapped around the lunge's hands



That contact is maintained between the lunge line and the bridle to prevent lunge line being stepped on by the lunger



Safety Considerations: Side Walker

- ▶ That they are sufficiently close to assist in the event of the client needing assistance
- ▶ That they sufficiently distanced from the horse so as not to get stood on

Safety Considerations : Observers

- ▶ That they are outside of the lunging area

Welfare and Safety Considerations: Horse

- ▶ That only lunging tack is used for lunging
- ▶ That the tack is suitably fitted – in particular that the roller has sufficient padding
- ▶ That the side reins are the correct length on both sides
- ▶ That the lunging area is sufficiently large enough for the horses size (minimum 15 meters in diameter)
- ▶ That the horse is lunged on both sides and in different directions
- ▶ That the clients weight is appropriate for the horses size (e.g <https://www.horsesciencenews.com/horseback-riding/how-much-weight-can-a-horse-carry.php>)
- ▶ Arena surface level
- ▶ No dogs, cats etc,



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Basic School Movement: Lunging

- ▶ Circle
- ▶ 15 meters minimum in diameter
- ▶ Walk
- ▶ Trot
- ▶ Canter
- ▶ Halt
- ▶ Variations within each pace

Walk



Trot



Canter



Pre-mounting

- ▶ Exercise the horse
- ▶ Checking all the tack
- ▶ Arena is clear of any objects
- ▶ Rider is suitably dressed
- ▶ Weight limit
- ▶ Footwear

Mounting

- ▶ Mounting block is suitably tall for the rider
- ▶ Assistance is available as may be needed
- ▶ Tack is checked again
- ▶ Assistant to hold horse while rider mounts

During the session

- ▶ Check tack again
- ▶ Side reins: significant variation in practice : no evidence on practices
- ▶ Checking the rider is centered

Downward Transition



Halt



Contact at halt



Advantages for the horse in lunging

- ▶ Foundation Training
- ▶ Bringing a horse back into work
- ▶ Suppleness
- ▶ Balance
- ▶ Rhythm
- ▶ Contact

Disadvantages to lunging

- ▶ Lunging can be very hard on a horse's legs if asked to canter around on a small circle for long periods of time – even more detrimental if done so over time
- ▶ Lunging requires a skilled lungeur with poor lunging potentially doing more harm than good
- ▶ Lunging should only be done on an even and solid surface
- ▶ Can produce boredom for the horse if only asked to go around in circles at the same pace

Go Commands

- ▶ Walk : Lunging wand at horses hocks
- ▶ Trot : Hocks and voice command – increase pressure
- ▶ Canter : up to the hip and voice command: canter
- ▶ Downward transition : wand up right
- ▶ Trot to walk : 45 degree angle
- ▶ Walk to halt: wand in front of horses head

TAG Words

- ▶ Walk on
- ▶ Trot on
- ▶ Canter
- ▶ Woah
- ▶ And walk