



You have just been sold

As exciting as it is for us to buy a new horse, I often wonder what the horse must experience.

First there are the unknown people that come to their home to handle and work them. These people come with questions and demands that the horse might or might not understand and bring strange smells with their excitement. Can you jump? Will you be good to my kid? Are you going to stay sound? Will you get along with my horses? Can you get me to this level?

When a person comes along and decides they are the right horse, often they are then put through a series of tests (called a pre-purchase veterinary exam) that are a bit rigorous and performed by a doctor the horse does not know.

When purchased, there is a trip in a trailer that smells like others, the arrival at the new stables, and a new routine that needs to be figured out all without the support or friendship of people and horses they know.

Good horse people work hard to minimize the stress of the sale by understanding the daily routine, feed schedule, work schedule, and other bits of information for the horse purchased but no matter how hard we try, they, like us, are individuals that need time, empathy, and support during the transition.

STRIDE

A complete rotation of the legs.

The beat happens when the hoof hits the ground. The phase includes the beat and the transition between beats.

WALK

A pure walk has 4 beats per stride and 8 phases of equal length. The sequence of footfalls goes inside hind, inside front, outside hind, outside front.

TROT

A pure trot has 2 beats per stride and four phases of equal length.

The legs move in diagonal pairs. For example, inside hind & outside front.

CANTER

A pure canter has 3 beats per stride and six phases. The outside hind starts the stride, the inside hind and outside front move together, then the inside front.

Calendar

Camp dates are up on the website for those who like to plan. Camps will open in March for lesson students

Next Littles Day

May 5, 2024

1:00-4:00

Ages 3-8

15 minutes for \$15

30 minutes for \$30

After School Programs are winding down.

Keep an eye on the website for spring dates

Strafford Saddlery is closing their doors as a retail space. Shop soon for bargain prices

Barn Notes

Little's Day

We had a very successful first Little's Day on Sunday December 3rd. The afternoon was geared towards kids between the ages of 3 and 8 for an introduction to ponies at a pace the child chose. Some groomed and rode, others cleaned hooves, some wanted their parents to lead while they watched, and others only wanted to ride. It's so much fun to help them explore what might be of interest as they move into different programs.



Then next Little's day will be May 5th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Spread the word about this wonderful opportunity for an individual experience with a pony.

Noodle - aka San Miguel

We have a new horse and his name is Noodle. Jill is very excited. He is a 5 yo Oldenburg Sport

Horse that has been used as a trail mount. What an excellent start for a young horse. The current plan is for Noodle to be put in full work this winter and explore what might be of interest to him through groundwork as well as under saddle. Stay tuned.

Peanut and Freeze

The boys have gone out to pasture for the winter. Peanut finished up the year with some solid walk, trot, and canter work as well as trail riding. Peanut generously offered to teach Freeze about the ditch during some grazing time. Freeze was a bit hesitant with the ditch so I was grateful that Peanut took this on. As well as his education with Peanut, Freeze continued with introductory in-hand work with us keeping in mind that he will not be 2 until January!



Wishing you the very best moving into the New Year!

Monthly Challenge - Picking up hooves

Purpose - To be able to have your horse pick up their hoof on demand. This skill is needed for cleaning hooves, trimming or shoeing, and to move their hoof off of or on to something.

Set-up - A quiet place where the horse can focus on you.

Ideal - Tap the horse on the inside of the fetlock joint once and they pick up their hoof. This can be done from either side.

Training Tip - Start with however you ask them to pick up their hooves for cleaning. Pay attention to the direction you travel when cleaning hooves. Is it front hoof hind hoof or both front hooves then both hind hooves. Ask your normal way with the first hoof then modify slightly towards the tap on the next hoof, then a little more with the third hoof, until, over time, you can just tap the fetlock joint for hoof cleaning. When this is easy, ask them to do the same from the other side - pick up the right front hoof while you stand on the left side of their body.

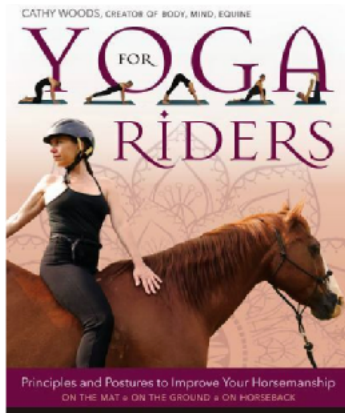


Whatcha Reading?

By Laurie Hausler

Woods, Cathy. Yoga for Riders - Principles and Postures to Improve Your Horsemanship. North Pomfret, Vermont. Trafalgar Square Books. 2020.

As a life-long learner and a twice a week rider, I enjoy seeking out information to support my learning in the arena. It's a bonus when I find a book that combines activities that I enjoy both at the



barn and at home. I recently came across the book *Yoga for Riders - Principles and Postures to Improve Your Horsemanship* by Cathy Woods. The book is beautifully illustrated and guides the reader through yoga postures to strengthen the body while discussing yogic principles and how they can be applied to riding.

Woods illustrates many parallels between yoga and horsemanship via the principles of being present in the moment, breathing through the challenges, moving with grace even if it feels difficult, staying balanced, and bringing consciousness to everything. As she writes, "One of the beautiful things about both yoga and horsemanship is they are never-ending journeys, allowing us to continue to grow, learn and expand - isn't that what life is about?"

While this book offers much to the rider interested in yoga to support their horsemanship, Woods reminds readers that "applying a yogic approach to horsemanship does not negate good horsemanship." She recommends combining self-learning with skilled-learning. An understanding of yogic principles and practices can enhance many areas of your life - to include riding and

time with horses.

Laurie Hausler is a serious student of riding and the secretary of the DS Club.

The Peanut Gallery

"How often do you shoe horses?"

The simple answer is that the feet are trimmed and maybe shod every 5 to 8 weeks.

The longer answer is that horses' hooves grow year round similar to people's fingernails. The amount of growth depends on the season, nutritional intake, age, environment, and energy expenditures.

Hooves grow more in the spring, slowing in growth through the year into the winter. The average growth is between $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch per month. It takes about a year for the hoof to grow completely.

Horses that are active, well fed, and kept in a comfortable environment, have the energy, resources, and proper stimulation to grow more hooves. Hoof growth can then be either worn off (unshod horses) and shaped with regular trimming, or trimmed off then reshod.

Young horses grow more hooves than old horses. There are some theories out there that this has to do with heart rate as the heart rate of younger horses is higher than that of older horses.

Hooves or shoes are worn down over time depending on the surfaces the horses travel over. Softer surfaces wear less; harder surfaces wear more. Exercise in and of itself helps circulation and increases heart rate which promote hoof growth.

This question is often asked then followed up with, "so-and-so told me that you don't have to trim in the winter if they are not working." Unfortunately, many people feel not trimming in the slower growing months is a good way to save money. However, if the horses' hooves are left to grow uneven, it will affect their whole skeletal structure causing problems in other areas.