

Horse-Training How-To, Volume #1



Round Penning:

First Steps to Starting a Horse



- Round pen training & essential ground work
- Learn at your own pace
- Goals & homework assigned, theory explained
- Featuring the proven methods of John Lyons
- It's like having your own trainer!

By John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

Horse Training How-To from Horsemanship101.com

Round Penning: First Steps to Starting a Horse

Round Pen Training & Essential Ground Work

*Part of the "Horse Training How-To" Series from Horsemanship101.com
Find step-by-step horse training articles 24/7 at Horsemanship101.com/Articles*



Table of Contents

Section I: Round Penning

Here's your plan, step-by-step.

Day 1: Where Do I Start? 9

"By consistently getting the feet to move – and later getting the feet to move in our chosen direction – we instill in the horse an understanding and partnership."

Day 2: Come to Me..... 25

"It won't take long before the horse will begin following your movements about the pen."

Day 3: Spook in Place 36

Here's how to take the spook out of your horse.

Day 4: Sacking Out..... 41

Progressively desensitize your horse to your touch and scary objects.

Day 5: Picking Up Feet 48

Teaching your horse to lift its feet on command is actually simpler than you might think.

Section II: Beyond the Round Pen

More training to do at this point in your colt's life

Basic Ground Training

How to Halter a Horse..... 57

This chapter specifically addresses haltering problems, but its running theme can be applied to many similar issues.

Leading a Stubborn Horse 63

Learn a quick fix for getting a horse moving again if he freezes up when being led.

Lungeing a Horse.....72
Lungeing your horse can offer great benefits, but you gotta use the time wisely. Here's how, when and why.

Manners & Vices

Biting Horses82
When your horse disrespects you in any way, he's taken the first step toward his own little revolution. Here, we'll act accordingly.

“Whoever Moves First Loses”

How to Get Respect.....88
Here's something you can do to take back (sustain, or solidify) your rightful spot as leader in your “herd of two.”

“I'm Scared of My Horse, Please Help”

The Intimidating Horse96
Is your horse the boss of you? Turn things around by learning to spot the moments when your horse takes control.

Trailer 102

Trailer-Training Your Horse Using the Roundpen
This is an excellent, proven method to teach your horse to proactively load himself.

Tricks to Teach 107

Teach a Horse to Sidepass Toward You on the Ground
This trick, with its huge “wow” factor, is easy to teach! (And it's great for horses that won't stand at the mounting block!)

Keeping a Horse.....117

Is My Horse Hard to Train... Because of His Feet?
Even horses you're not riding (yet) need quality hoof care. Read the following as if you're already riding your youngster. “No feet, no horse” is true regardless of training level.

Preface

Use this how-to manual to get your young horse off “on the right foot.” The time spent will pay big dividends later!

If you're starting a horse or need to turn around an older horse that's proving a challenge, round pen training is your very first step.

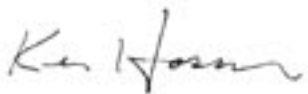
The changes you can make there are amazing - but to make these advances, you'll need to know that there is a tried-and-true system. It's more than simply running a horse around in circles; there are objective and progressive steps. It's easy - but you can't go in without a plan.

Section I of this book, “Round Penning: First Steps to Starting a Horse,” gives you a 5-day, step-by-step set of instructions to take with you to the round pen.

Section II goes on to offer 9 more lessons that you'll need to teach your young horse at this point in his life.

This guide to the proven methods of John Lyons, shows you exactly what to do, in which specific order, and why. Follow this material as written to turn around older horses, those “set in their ways,” as well.

Good luck in your training!



Day 1: Where Do I Start?

“By consistently getting the feet to move – and later getting the feet to move in our chosen direction – we instill in the horse an understanding and partnership.”

The round pen is where you start – or “re-start” – a horse. It’s where you begin training babies and green horses; it’s where you begin with an older horse with lousy ground manners or flawed “riding training;” it’s the place where you first take control. If you’ll recall, Helen Keller was a (now famous) deaf, dumb and blind girl who had exasperated all who had tried to work with her. She was completely out of control, throwing temper tantrums and the like – until they found a small and simple way to begin communicating with her. They poured water over her palm and began pressing on her hand, spelling out the word “water,” or so the story goes. The round pen offers us the same beginning. By beginning to control the horse’s feet in the simplest fashion, we begin to gain control. By consistently getting the feet to move – and later getting the feet to move in our chosen direction – we instill in the horse an understanding and partnership. The horse’s nature is such that “somebody’s gotta be in control.” It’s either you, your horse, or another horse (for instance, when they charge off with their buddies on the trail, ignoring your requests to slow down). Some horses naturally believe it’s their job, others will assume the top spot only if they feel you to be weak. Either way, you have two options: Be the boss or get bossed.

The round pen is all about building a better riding horse, so being the boss means that when you ask to stop or turn, your horse stops or turns. Not later. Now. Being the boss means that when something spooky happens, you're in control of those feet. It means that when his buddies take off he doesn't charge off with them. By contrast, you're "getting bossed" when your horse continually drifts to the arena exit, when he bolts at the sight of the neighbor's dog or when he takes off with his buddies on the trail. Same difference while leading your horse. John Lyons says "You ride the horse you lead" and truer words have never been spoken. The horse that bowls you over as he lunges for his feed is going to be a real handful on the trail the next time something spooks him or he gets it in his mind to run back to the stall.

If you've got a green horse, one that you're prepping to ride, then round penning is an absolute must. If you don't have one, bear in mind that most, if not all, of the exercises covered here can be done with you attached to the horse via lunge line – but it's far simpler to make use of a pen. Spending one week or even one day in a round pen will jump your training forward – so much so that if you don't have one, I'd say it's worth your time to locate one nearby and make arrangements to trailer to it. The changes you'll make in your horse's mind are so profound and so rapid using the round pen, that you'll find yourself far ahead (later) by doing what it takes to begin there. You can skip it, sure. It's been skipped countless times. But consider this analogy: You're hiking through the woods and come upon a stream. You can take one hour to build a bridge using an old tree, vines and the knife in your pocket – or you can spend six hours to hike around. Which would you choose? Same thing with

the round pen – you’ll get to a trained horse whether you begin there or skip it entirely – but a little extra work now puts you miles ahead later.

Before beginning, you and I must stipulate that you (and your vet) have decided that your horse is healthy, mature, and capable of some good, healthy exercise. It goes without saying that a horse with “leg issues” is not a candidate for round penning. Those of you with younger horses will want to dial back what you read here, taking more breaks, asking for less speed. Babies, for instance, can be worked through much of this material at a walk (never any faster) but require other special considerations, beyond the scope of this piece. Never push young horses as you would their older, more mature mates. Their lungs and legs can’t handle it and you can do permanent damage. I highly suggest that you pick up material specifically designed for foal training. If you have any doubts, read this document and discuss the work with your vet.

The round pen is not about running your horse into the ground. Use common sense and always err on the side of caution. Never, ever “tag team your horse,” allowing another trainer to work the horse while you take a break. If you get a break, the horse gets a break. Period. End of story.

You’ll want to offer the horse plenty of breaks, for “airing up,” water, and to get out of the sun. True, we’ll sometimes motivate the horse to find a specific answer by “getting his feet to move,” but our job is to help the horse find the correct answer (and a break) sooner rather than later. The average horse is not going to be particularly keen to burn any more calories than he absolutely has to; we’ll use that to our advantage. Those of you with the Duracell Bunny horse (hello,

Round Penning: First Steps to Starting a Horse

Meet the Author

John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman



Keith Hosman lives just outside of San Antonio, Texas and divides his time between writing how-to training materials and conducting training clinics in most of these United States as well as in Germany and the Czech Republic.

Visit his flagship site horsemanship101.com for more D.I.Y. training and to find a clinic happening soon near you.

How-to articles & trainer listings: horsemanship101.com

