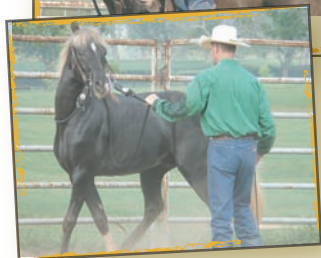
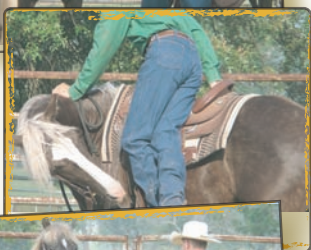


How to Start a Horse

BRIDLING TO 1ST RIDE



- Build your colt's foundation for life
- Learn at your own pace
- Goals & homework assigned, theory explained
- Featuring the proven methods of John Lyons
- By John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

“It's like having your own trainer!”

Horse Training How-To from Horsemanship101.com

How to Start a Horse

Bridling to 1st Ride, Step-by-Step

by John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

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



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John Lyons Certified Trainer Keith Hosman

Preface

Prepping your horse for a first ride requires plenty of ground work. Here are your step-by-step instructions.

This book provides simple and objective training for the unbroke horse, from first-time bridling and saddling to sacking out, bridle work from the ground, pre-mount work, and your (necessarily short) first ride. You'll learn the proven methods of John Lyons, tips to keep you safer, and tricks to save time. Today's the perfect day to get started putting a proper foundation on your horse, a solid start that'll pay big dividends for the rest of his life.

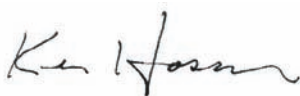
- If you began your training in the round pen, this book outlines the next steps
- If you haven't round penned your horse, you can still begin with this book BUT round penning beforehand is highly recommended.

We'll get you into the saddle for a first ride -- and finish up with a chapter designed to prep you the rider/trainer, for all future rides, demonstrating specifically how to use your reins for quicker, easier results with horses of all ages. A good ninety percent of the issues I see at a typical riding clinic could have been prevented if the rider knew a few simple rules about how to hold (and release!) those reins. Developing a "good feel" for when and how to pick up and drop those reins will

make training easier at all stages of your horse's life -- especially when astride a young and nervous colt when clear communication is most paramount.

Finally, pinned to the tail of this book, you'll find "Cinchy Horses." Should you find yourself training a youngster who's especially goosey at the tightening of the cinch, you'll want this "what to do" fix.

Good luck in your training!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Hosman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keith Hosman
John Lyons Certified Trainer
Utopia, Texas USA

Introduction

When you're gonna be the first to sit in that saddle, you'll want to do everything possible to stack the odds in your favor.

Colt Starting: The good news is, training up your green horse is a simple, methodical and objective business. Start with Step One, nail it, move on to Two. Years later, after the basics have been instilled through miles and miles of wet saddle blankets, you can be more subjective, you can sort of pick and choose what you'd like to concentrate on - "Do I work on speed control today or leads?" - but for now, hey, follow the material I've set out here and know you're building the correct foundation. The bad news is, sooner or later, somebody's gotta get on the horse. And that's when you're gonna find out how well you follow directions.

If you're in good physical shape, a relatively experienced equestrian, and willing to chance ending up being knocked to the ground despite your best intentions and time-spent-training, you can do much, if not all, of the work yourself. Yes, I said it and you read it: Despite everything you do, you still might end up on the ground. Everything we'll cover here is for and about bettering your odds that all rides will be pleasant but it's impossible to guarantee that your horse won't buck, rear, or bolt if you do x, y, or z. They're inherently prey animals with small brains that see velociraptors when we see garbage cans. Know that now and hire a pro if need be; trainers are always

cheaper than the doctors in the E.R. In the end, we do everything we can think of, we do the best we can every step of the way, and then take a deep breath, get on and hope for the best.

Know that the material that follows is invaluable for all equestrians. Certainly you'll need to know it if you're doing the training solo - but even if you simply own the horse and have hired some young trainer (who presumably bounces better than you) to do the riding, you'll need this knowledge as well. You need to understand how "A" leads to "B" which leads to "C" and that if "C" is broken all you have to do is go back and re-teach "B" then "C." Example: Understanding that control of the hips on the ground ultimately gives us control over the shoulders when riding is necessary info because it gives you the knowledge you'll need months from now when you find your horse in need of a little fine tuning. Never mind the pro at that point, you'll know that you simply need to re-visit hip control when the shoulders seem "stuck."

The prescriptions that follow parallel the methods of John Lyons. They do so for two big reasons: One, I've been certified by John (and son Josh) to teach his methods, so that's "what I do." Two, his ways are easy, they're step-by-step, and they really, really work. If I could get wows from folks based on info gleaned from his old training videos years before becoming certified, you can certainly get your young horse started properly with what I've laid out here. Put in the time it takes, keep a business-like demeanor at all times, stay faithful to the exercises, don't cut corners, and pay particular attention to specific points I may call out as common mistakes, traps or just plain "uber important" - and you'll see some pretty terrific results.

It can be incredibly rewarding to start your own horse and then look back on this achievement years later as fellow riders complement what a terrific job you've done. But if you've never done this before, understand that it's going to be a long, tough slog. Finished horses become finished horses only after years of consistent training. You won't read this tonight and have a push button horse by supper tomorrow. Each and every time - for a long time - that you think left - you'll be carried right. You'll have to "set up" your horse's body positioning to get the correct lead rather than simply dropping your leg back to cue. You'll ask for a nice easy jog, but get a bone-jarring 45 mph trot and so on. You'll be training every day, not just "riding." Every improvement is earned.

While the material you'll find here is broken into five "days," bear in mind that this segmentation simply serves as a device to break things down into a simple, easy to follow format. The individual exercises found in any particular "day" may take a week or even more to fully accomplish. Our "week" will break down as follows: Day One gets our horse bridled for the first time. Day Two is about developing hip and shoulder control from the ground, (an introduction to our use of the reins, basically). Day Three is sacking out with our saddle blanket plus first saddling. Day Four prepares us to mount up and Day Five is our first ride. Given that, logic alone should tell you that some of those "days" could in fact take "weeks." Don't worry about how long you think it should take or how long it takes your friends or how fast some pro teaches his horse. Each horse and trainer combination is different so move on only when your horse is ready. Don't get in a hurry and cut corners. Remember, the founda-

tion you build in the coming weeks will serve you well for years in the future - while steps skipped today will come back to haunt you.

Prerequisites: Your horse must be (prior to beginning any material here) thoroughly sacked out to the touch of your hands, especially around his head and ears, back legs, belly and cinch area. If he throws his head up when you brush an ear forward or backward or tenses up when something falls near his back legs, you are not ready. If you can't lift and work around all four feet, you are not ready. If your horse looks tense (head up, legs splayed out like a saw horse, the whites of his eyes clearly visible, etc.) as you rub him with a halter or the like... you ain't ready. Spend the time it takes to sack out your horse thoroughly before beginning any material prescribed here.

Regarding round penning: I highly recommend that your horse be "round penned" before beginning the work laid out here. Yes, you can skip it entirely if you have to, but know that your work (and hence advancements) will be made easier if you have first taken the time to correctly round pen your horse. We teach ground control, manners and leading in the round pen - but we like to say you "ride the horse you lead," so there's a whole lot more going on there than simply creating a more polite horse. Round penning is all about teaching your horse to respect your position as boss and instill basic control. It establishes the pattern of request and response. A week or two spent round penning will put you months ahead when it comes time to saddle him the first time because a partnership will have been formed. (Trust my experience when I say there's no way I'd skip it, truthfully.) Borrow a round pen or pay and trailer to one if you have to. You'll be

Day One: Bridling

Today we train your horse to accept the bit, bridle and reins.

Work you do today will make life easier, safer and more rewarding in the coming years so spend the time it takes and be a real perfectionist. Skip a step (or do a half-hearted job) and next year you'll find your horse throwing his head at the sight of the headstall or balking on the trail or acting a fool when being cinched up. The classic example, one we've all seen, is the horse that refuses a bit. The horse may do this because he associates it with work (as he associates a feed bucket with chow time); he may do this because he's had his teeth rattled by a large metal object called a "bit," or he may do this because an older horse told him it's funnier than the devil to see the veins pop out on your head. Regardless, it's something that drives me nuts to see because the whole mess is so easily avoided with simple consistency and knowledgeable training. You'll be miles ahead later if you take the time to develop good training habits today.

Do you consider yourself a trainer? Well, you are. We all are. Every time you're near your horse, he's learning something. Maybe you're on his back, maybe you're feeding, maybe you're just walking past. Maybe it's a good thing, maybe it's a bad thing, but he's learning. If you run a tight ship and expect results, you're gonna build a long, happy partnership. Alternatively, if you

Day Two: Bridle Work from the Ground

In the same way that a hammer and drill can build a doghouse or a penthouse, you can use the tools you'll pick up today to teach your horse virtually anything tomorrow.

You need to know (here's a paragraph to underline and really chew over in your mind) that you're accomplishing more today than simply teaching the horse to move his hips or shoulders when you pick up the rein. You personally, the human, are learning the mechanics necessary for success and seeing firsthand that you actually make things easier or harder for him based on how you set him up at the outset. You will do all these things by taking the exercises I prescribe slowly and repeating them, taking mental pictures of what the horse looks like before he succeeds - and comparing them against those taken before he fails. (For example: "He seems to back better if I first ask for a disengagement of the hips" or "He'll move the shoulders better when the chin is closer in to the chest" or "He always shifts his weight to the left before stepping to the right.") You will experiment, you will accept that mistakes are valid teachers of "what doesn't work" and you will consistently tell yourself "This works when I'm on the ground - I'll need to remember this later when riding."

Beyond how your horse carries himself, there's timing (yours) to work on. From the start you'll want to begin releasing your bit pressure when you think the horse has the correct thought instead of waiting until

Books by This Author

Check out these titles from Keith Hosman:

- Get On Your Horse: Curing Mounting Problems
- How to Start a Horse: Bridling to 1st Ride
- Rein In Your Horse's Speed
- Round Penning: First Steps to Starting a Horse
- Stop Bucking
- Trailer Training
- What Is Wrong with My Horse?
- When Your Horse Rears... How to Stop It
- Your Foal: Essential Training

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How to Start a Horse: Bridling to 1st Ride

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



How to Start a Horse

BRIDLING TO 1ST RIDE

If you're going to be the first person to sit on your colt, don't you want to do everything possible to assure yourself of success? Use the Lyons methods described in this book to build a rock solid foundation! You'll save tons of time and aggravation in the future if you take the time to do it right today.

This book is broken down into five "Days" or sessions:

- Day 1: First-time bridling
- Day 2: Bridle work from the ground (hip and shoulder control)
- Day 3: Sacking out and first saddling
- Day 4: Pre-mount work up
- Day 5: First Ride
- Plus: "The Reins: 5 Tips to Improve Your Use" & "Cinchy Horses"

We'll get you into the saddle for a first ride -- and finish up with a chapter designed to prep you the rider/trainer, for all future rides, demonstrating specifically how to use your reins for quicker, easier results with horses of all ages.

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