

Training Right From The Start

It's very difficult to undo a horse's initial training, regardless of whether those early lessons were correct or incorrect.

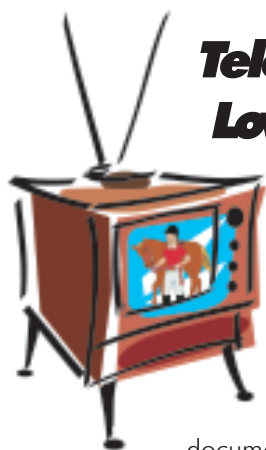
In a 1994 study, which was recently presented in the journal Applied Animal Behavior Science, Scientist taught 17 previously untrained yearlings and 2 year-old horses to discriminate between a black and a white feed bucket for a food reward. Once each horse had figured out which color was correct, The Scientist reversed the correct color to see if he could unlearn what he had been taught and replace it with something completely opposite. In other words, if black had always been correct for that horse, once he developed consistency at choosing the black bucket every time, Scientist stopped giving food for choosing black and instead started giving food only for choosing the white bucket. Only about a third of the horses were able to unlearn the original stimulus color and make the switch to the opposite color.

Think of the implications of the fact that most horses tested were not able to reverse their initial training. Therefore, the importance of getting the training right the first time cannot be overemphasized.

On the other hand, trainers should never consider it too late to repair the damage of a misdirected training attempt. If the training problem has been going on long enough for undesirable habits to be ingrained, it will just take more time and patience to undo the

EVENTING HORSE LOSSES

"Just A Mission", Olympian Mark Todd's eventing horse, was struck and killed by a car in late January this year. Todd rode the horse in his last English three-day event before retiring from the sport. Just A Mission escaped from his paddock in England and wandered out into the road where a driver could not avoid him and crashed into him. In a related story, Sydney Olympic silver medalist horse "Swizzle In", ridden by Australian Andrew Hoy, has been put down after being injured in a truck as he left Sydney.



Television for Horse Lovers

Americans fed up with football, baseball and basketball as the only sport on their TV screen. They developed a 24-hour television equestrian network "HorseTV" providing up to 50 hours or more per week of educational, instructional, veterinary, documentary or show programs devoted to riders, owners, breeders and horse lovers.

All this compared to us - here in Egypt - tired of being able to find any equestrian events on TV. As representatives of the equestrian world in Egypt, we wish we could at least find part of our equestrian world on TV, and share with others our passion. Dreams could come true one day...

"You can tell a horseman by the interior of his car. Boots, mud, horse nuts, straw, items of tack and a screwed up jacket of incredible antiquity".



"Brookie" The World's Largest Horse

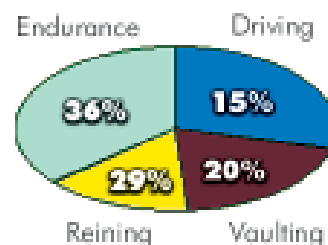
In the 1930s, a Belgian stallion by the name of "Brooklyn Supreme" became known as the world's largest horse at 19.2 hands and 1450 Kg. "Brookie" wore a 1 meter collar and boasted a girth measurement of 3 meters, 5 cm. around. It took 76 cm. of iron for each one of his horseshoes. Foaled in 1928 and died 1948.

ENDURANCE...

is the equestrian sport that you would most like to see added to the Olympics

According to a recent online survey in the USA:

Which discipline would you like to see added to Olympic competition?



Time to Work Out Fitness is the Best Solution

Here's what the top equestrians do, and they think you should, as well.

Steve Archer, Runs about 4 miles, five to six times per week. "When I'm fit, I feel so much better-stronger, with faster reflexes. When I have a major event coming up, I bear down a little to increase my fitness level, because I really believe it gives me a competitive edge".

Patty Carter, Does 200 abdominal crunches every day, and works out at a gym twice per week or so, using cardio machines for 30 minutes, and weights for 30 minutes.

"Crunches keep my back in shape for riding, and going to the gym is a mental break in addition to a fitness boost-it's nice to get away from the barn. When I'm on the road judging, I always take my workout clothes with me, because exercise helps me to stay mentally sharp".

For the amateur rider, strength has so much to do with confidence and balance. If you're strong in the lower body and in your 'stabilizer muscles' -the pelvic girdle-, you're going to be a more confident rider. And stretching is vital, too. For the amateur, we would recommend stretching, abdominal crunches, and strength training for the leg and lower-back muscles-at an absolute minimum.