

SHAPING PLAN & TRAINING LOG

A shaping plan helps you see the situation overall, as well as providing the information and steps you need to achieve your goal. Having a specific goal helps you know when you're successful, and also gives you a way to measure progress and make changes that keep you aligned with what you want to do.

Making a shaping plan and being aware of your goal, prerequisites for you, prerequisites for your horse, variables, constraints, setbacks, and the individual steps you'll need will help you decide where to go with your training in the moment.

The more creative you can be about your training, the more likely it is you will progress somewhat quickly. It's up to you to arrange the environment for success, and to notice when your horse is doing the right thing so you can use that as an opportunity to click/feed. Not only will your observational skills and your feel for your horse develop, but you'll start to see your horse's patterns in more detail, and you'll find ways you can change one small thing and get a different result.

There is a sample plan for teaching a horse to pick up their feet for trimming.

You can start with that behavior to get the feel of breaking things down to very small pieces, or you can erase that information and put in your own.

In the Shaping Plan tab, you'll find the outline to help you define the overall plan for training the behavior you want.

In the Training Log Tab, you'll define each tiny step or movement involved in teaching the behavior from the very beginning to the finished behavior. You can add rows under each heading for more steps. There is no rule about when something is "done," but you can generally check it off when you're able to perform that step 3-5 times in succession without too much behavior you don't want. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it should be pretty reliable.

If you have a very complex behavior, like taking your horse for a walk around the property, you will need to break it down into each component behavior, such as haltering, going through a gate, leaving friends behind, etc. You can copy the Training Log tab for each component behavior you need to teach.

If you have questions, or you get stuck, you can **[click here to contact me](#)** to set up a virtual lesson and we can walk through it together. Short sessions are \$35 for approximately thirty minutes, and include review and commentary/discussion on a video you have pre-recorded and sent prior to the session (not more than five minutes). They work well for very focused lessons and/or tasks, where you just want a second pair of eyes.

SHAPING PLAN OUTLINE

INFORMATION

GOAL

We want the horse to stand comfortably while the farrier picks up each foot to clean, trim, and file it both from underneath and from the top, using a hoof stand to support the hoof.

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR HORSE TO DO?

The cue to pick up each hoof is going to be to start with the hand at the horse's shoulder or hip, move the hand down the limb, and stop at the chestnut, applying light tactile pressure around the chestnut to signal to the horse they should lift that hoof. As the horse lifts the hoof, the farrier will slide their hand down the rest of the leg to the hoof and lift it into the hoof stand. To release the hoof, the farrier will lift it out of the stand, and keep contact with it all the way to the ground to signal to the horse that they're finished with the hoof. The cue is not directly grabbing the horse's leg, or squeezing the tendons or pulling on the feathers.



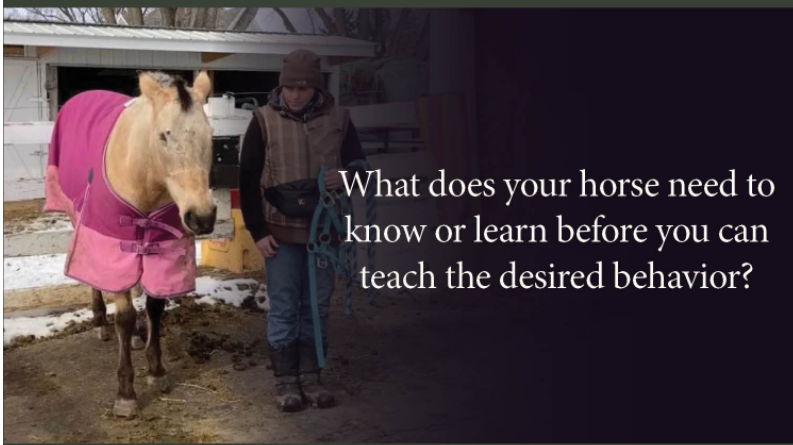
Literally define what your target behavior looks and feels like. What is going to be the cue for the behavior? What is not going to be the cue? How do you know you are successful? The more specific, the better.

We will be successful when the horse stands quietly without pulling away or showing signs of distress such as tension in the face or body, ear pinning, tail swishing, rearing, biting, or any behavior that isn't standing quietly and contentedly.

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PREREQUISITES FOR THE HORSE

WHAT BEHAVIORS DOES THE HORSE NEED?



What does your horse need to know or learn before you can teach the desired behavior?

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- How to stand still in the work area
- How to take food safely without "mugging" or getting anxious
- The marker means they did the right thing and food is coming
- How to touch a target with a leg
- How to lift a hoof
- How to take weight and balance on the other feet
- The cue means there's an upcoming request for a hoof
- How to hold a hoof/leg up off the ground with duration
- How to tolerate different pressures and sounds on their feet

PREREQUISITES FOR YOU

WHAT BEHAVIORS OR SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO KNOW OR LEARN?



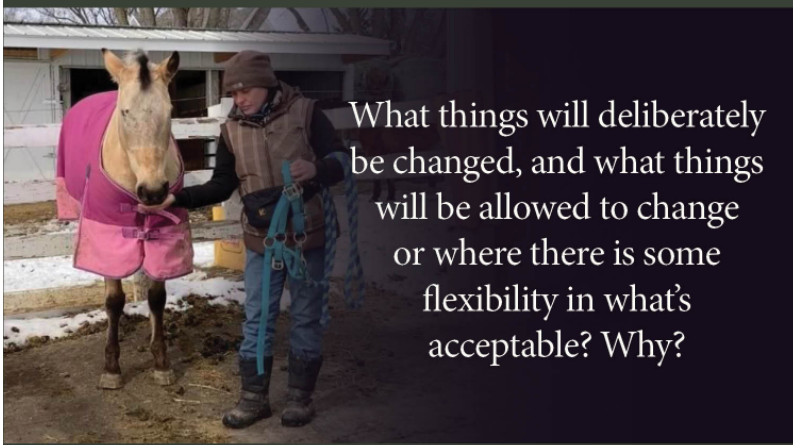
What do you need to know or learn before you can teach the desired behavior? How are you going to learn those things?

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- Mechanics of feeding safely and in the appropriate position relative to the horse
- Timing the marker
- How to use a target to get the horse to move a leg
- How to handle feet safely by being able to read the horse's emotional state without necessarily seeing the whole horse
- How to be able to move away quickly if needed
- How to, and the ability to, use hoofcare tools

VARIABLES

WHAT ARE THE VARIABLES?



What things will deliberately be changed, and what things will be allowed to change or where there is some flexibility in what's acceptable? Why?

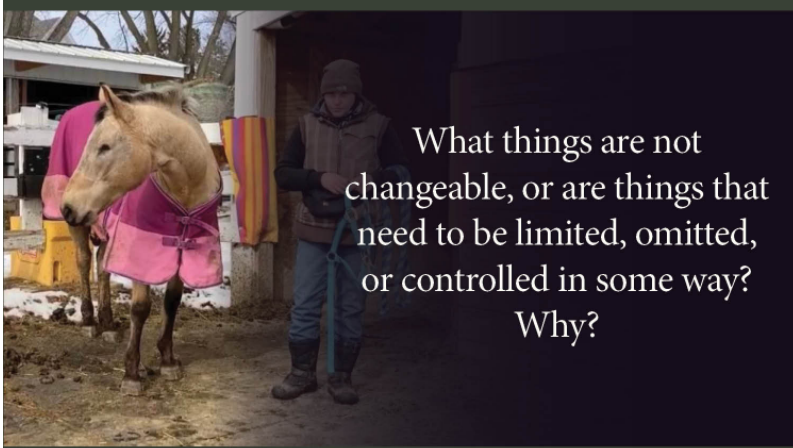
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These elements are going to change based on the individual horse, owner/trainer, facility, and farrier combination.

- Location
- Presence or absence of other horses
- Different people
- Equipment/tack
- Emotions
- Weather conditions
- Reinforcers
- Nearly anything else you can notice

CONSTRAINTS

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS?



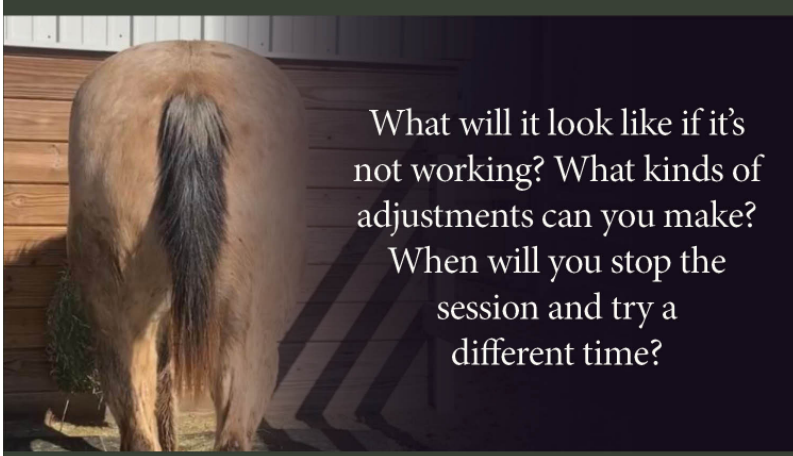
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SETBACKS

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THINGS
AREN'T GOING WELL?



What will it look like if it's
not working? What kinds of
adjustments can you make?
When will you stop the
session and try a
different time?

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Things will not be going well if:

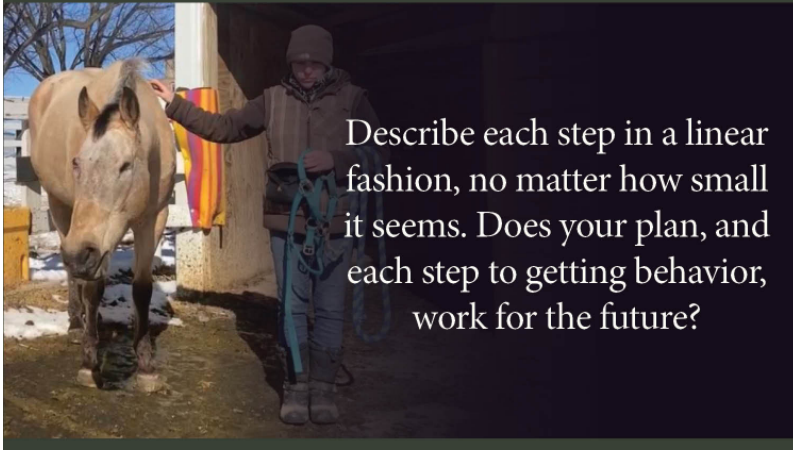
- We're not able to move on to the next step or be successful with enough trials of the current step
- The horse is moving around too much - pulling feet/legs away, moving away
- Won't take food
- Showing tension in body language

We can reset by:

- Taking a break
- Larger handful of food
- Leave the training area entirely
- Go back a step from what we were working on
- Higher rate of reinforcement by using smaller handfuls of food

STEPS

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TEACH
THE BEHAVIORS?



Describe each step in a linear fashion, no matter how small it seems. Does your plan, and each step to getting behavior, work for the future?

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This information will go in the Training Log tab.

DONE	CURRENT FOCUS AREA	CLICKABLE MOMENT	NOTES
	Stand still/face forward		
	Stand next to horse's shoulder, facing forward	When the horse is standing still, and their head is in line with their chest	Feed in the desired position. Build duration.
	Move outward away from horse, horse stays in place	When you can step away from the horse	Go to horse to feed.
	Place hand on horse's shoulder, move all the way around, maintaining contact with hand	When you can walk all the way around the horse	Done incrementally, depending on horse's reaction. Goal is immobile feet.
	Foot handling		
	touch a target with fetlock	When the horse will lift their foot to touch target on back of fetlock	Start with several repetitions of touching the target to the horse's fetlock to give them the idea of targeting the fetlock to the target
	hand at the horse's shoulder or hip	When you can touch the horse's shoulder or hip	
	move the hand down the limb	When you are in the process of moving your hand down the limb	
	stop at the chestnut	When your hand touches the chestnut	
	light tactile pressure around the chestnut	Not clickable, but part of the cue sequence	Also apply target at the horse's moment to cue foot to lift
	horse lifts the hoof	Starting with weight shift, progressing to hoof off ground	Okay to spend more time on this step if that's what it takes to make it really solid.
	slide hand down the rest of the leg to the hoof	When you're moving your hand down the horse's leg and he's picking up the horse's foot to meet you	Start with any movement in the horse's direction, progressing to cooperative hoof-in-hand result. Again, spend lots of time here. Build duration slowly. If horse pulls away, let go and try again. Do less than you want to.
	pick out feet	When you're able to hold foot long enough to just get a start on picking it out with hoof pick	Again, build slowly over many reps. Do less than you want to.
	have a stranger do it	same process as above	You'll probably have to lower your expectations quite a bit and start from the beginning
	Trimming		
	lift it into the hoof stand	Starting with hoof toward stand, progressing to resting in/on stand	
	Duration of hoof in stand	Starting with instant mark, progressing to several minutes	
	Introduce tools to hoof	Starting with very brief contact, progressing to actual use of tool	Each tool introduced separately. Frequent breaks and short sessions.