

## September 2010 Beyond the Basics

### *Colt to Horsemanship Series – Part VII*

## ***Transitions with Rhythm, Balance, & Timing***

Now that you are atop your nice colt, and he is following your directions with a willing attitude, it is time to review the ancient training progressions of the Master horseman. How did they apply the discipline of bringing a horse along to discover the brilliance in both the horse, and in *themselves*? What skills did they apply to achieve effortless transitions...whether it be on the battle field, fending off a mean-bred fighting bull, or catching a wayward yearling using a hand-made reata. I believe that their success depended upon having a good *attitude*, combined with effortless *movement*, to create willing communication between horse and rider.

The achievement of willing communication is found through employing a combination of training principles, which our dressage friends have encapsulated into the 'Training Scale'. (Review 2008 January – March NWHS articles at: [www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles))

### **For the Horse...**

Rhythm-Movement-Attitude → Suppleness & Relaxation → Contact & Feel  
Straightness & Balance → Impulsion & Schwung → Collection

### **Horseman's Protocol**

- Breathe & Become Present
- Think-Picture & Focus
- Allow
- Reward!

and willing partner at the end of the day. Transitions between gaits, and speed or rating within the gaits, are particularly important. Any change in your picture is a 'transition'. A change from a relaxed standstill to picking up a 'soft feel' at attention, is just as important as the transition between the walk and the trot. What is most important is how you set it up for the colt to be successful that makes for a effortless transition. At this stage, ride lots of transitions, giving your colt *time* to see your picture, and giving yourself the requirement to observe and reward his efforts. Remember the 'Horseman's Protocol' and apply the time it takes to utilize it between each transition, so that in the end, it will take less time! (Review: NWHS Nov. 2006 article at: [www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles))

### **For the Human...**

Attitude-Leadership-Balance → Understanding movement-Relaxed hips  
Understanding & Applying Aids → Understanding Lateral & Flexing  
Finesse of Aids → Achievement of effortless, brilliant, movement!

At this stage of your colt's development the most important gift you can give him is TIME! Quality time and leadership applied with clarity, consistency, and patience will ultimately allow you to spend less time filling in holes at a later date. Taking the time to visualize the maneuver you are requesting, and allowing your colt to find the softness through many transitions, will yield a light



**Landmark,  
a Morgan,  
gives a soft  
feel nicely.**

Here is an important “check list” to incorporate, to help make those transitions effortless, yet full of life and responsive:

Posture Patrol – In most cases, if you are breathing, thinking, picturing, and looking where you want the horse to go, you will most likely have decent posture. However, the more vigilant you can become about checking your posture *before* you accomplish a transition, the more it will become habitual and eventually natural. Good posture will place you in the right place, at the right time, with the right picture. Could I remove the horse and find you balanced easily on the ground? Be ever aware of your posture in order to set it up for your colt to see the picture, and for you to be out of the way of his effort to try.

Rhythm, Balance, Timing – Here is where having a musical background really pays off! The importance of having a clear and consistent rhythm within the gaits, will greatly enhance the colt’s opportunity for staying balanced, and for the human to develop good timing and ‘feel’. In the symphony, it is much easier to play the piece of music with the guidance of the conductor. He sets the tempo, blends and balances the sections to combine and ultimately ‘feel’ for one-another. You are the conductor in the saddle, and the more you can think rhythmically, the more the horse and you will find balance, and ‘feel’ for each other with good timing. Practice putting a metronome in your mind, and see how balance and timing begin to flow.

Soft Feel from the Very Beginning – Developing a ‘Soft Feel’ is so much more than just a yielding of the jaw with a vertical face. It is the ability to carry a light, willing, attitude, in relative self-carriage, through all transitions and situations, by both horse and the rider. (Review articles: NWHHS 2009 Contact Parts I-III) Ask for a few steps of the colt yielding his jaw, picking up the poll, and developing the beginnings of self-carriage...then reward. Soon you will be carrying the ‘soft feel’ longer and as a prerequisite for any transition. It will become the ‘method of operation’ for your colt, that when you develop good posture and self-carriage, he does also.



**Alice & Landmark:** Note the line of the stampede string directly down my back.. Here we are preparing a haunches-in on a little circle.

Planning for 2010 With Alice Trindle

Invest in education and fun in 2010!

Check-out the schedule of clinics, and vacation packages at: [www.tnthorsemanship.com](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com)

September 5 – 10, Six-Day ‘All Women’s Retreat’, Haines, OR

September 15 – 18, Pendleton Round Up ‘100 Years’ 3-Day  
Vacation Package

October 2 & 3, Doma Vaquera & Garrocha Clinic, Haines, OR

October 9 & 10, Driving on the Long Lines Clinic, Emmett, ID

October 12-16, Fall Retreat – Mts., Obstacles, & Fun, Haines, OR

October 18-23, Six-Day Colt to Horsemanship-Colt Starting, Haines, OR

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