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How To Load A Horse Into A Trailer – Easy As Pie!

By Andy Curry

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by: **Andy Curry**

If there is an art to getting horses to load in a trailer, then this it.

The first thing that must happen is communication between the horse and his handler. The horse must understand what is required of him and the handler must make it easy to understand.

Thus, you must start by getting the horse to move forward in either direction. After a direction is established then get him moving in the opposite direction. A round pen is excellent for this purpose.

When the horse gets good at moving both directions then it's time to hook a lead rope to his halter and lunge him left and right. For instance, when you point left, the horse must know to go to your left. And vice versa for going right.

The final result should look like this. You're holding the lead rope while facing your horse. As you hold the lead rope in your right hand, you hook the middle of the lead rope with your left thumb. Lift it up and point to the left.

Your horse, now knowing what to do, immediately goes to your left. After a circle or two you switch hands and get the horse to go to your right.

When he gets good at that, then send (lunge) him through gate openings, barn door openings, etc. Also, lunge him in smaller spaces to help him deal with his natural claustrophobia. You can do this by lunging him between you and a fence. As he goes back and forth make the space between you and the fence smaller. Be careful not to get stepped on.

Now that he's good at that, you take him by the trailer. You open the door and let him sniff it. Then you step back and face your horse. You lunge him left and right in front of the trailer while he passes back and forth by the opening.

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After all this pointing and sending your horse now knows what you want. You have communicated to him when you point left that he is to move left and so on.

The next step is to face him to the trailer. With his head facing into the trailer and you standing on his left side you then send (point) him into the trailer.

Some horses will simply jump right in the trailer where others may take more work.

If your horse doesn't go in after pointing and coaxing then take him away from the trailer and make him work. Now you want to convey the idea that being in the trailer means he can relax. Being outside the trailer means he has to work hard. Eventually, he'll catch on.

Once you have him in the trailer, pet him and let him relax. Talk to him. Let him know how good he

did.

Obviously, getting a horse to load in a trailer isn't rocket science. But you can do it. It takes patience and work

Andy Curry is a nationally known horse trainer and author of several best selling horse training and horse care books. For information visit his website at

. He is also the

leading expert on Jesse Beery's horse training methods which can be seen at

Do You Make These Mistakes Loading Your Horse Into A Trailer?

By Andy Curry

Mistake #1:

"Here, Kitty Kitty..."

Unless they have been educated, new horse owners often think a horse is like a cat or dog. They figure if they tap their thighs and say, "C'mon,...C'mon,...C'mon..." the horse'll will simply jump right in the trailer like a happy dog or cat.

Mistake #2:

"Using Food As Bait"

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Putting hay, grain, apples, or whatever at the front of the trailer to tempt a horse to step in and eat almost never works. If it did, it would be a fluke. I've seen horses lean forward to try and eat the food but wouldn't step into the trailer if their life depended on it.

Mistake #3:

"Forgetting To Hook The Trailer To The Truck"

Don't forget to hitch the trailer to the truck before getting a horse to go in the trailer. If a horse steps into a trailer that moves around unforgivably, you will have a harder time getting that horse in later. He'll remember it – especially if this is the horse's first time.

Mistake #4:

"The Classic Tug Of War"

Here's the scene. Man (or woman) pulls lead rope to desperately drag their horse into the trailer. Horse weighs 10 times more than man or woman and has far more strength than the man or woman. Final score of this battle is: Human – Zero...Horse – Won

Mistake #5:

"Going Trail Riding Before Horse Is Good At Loading In A Trailer"

I've seen it time and time again. People go trail riding and when the ride is over the horse won't get back in the trailer. Amusingly, the horse owner comments, "Dang horse, he got in their last month". Remember to get your horse to practice this so it gets fixed on his brain.

It seems there will always be at least once a horse owner cannot load his horse into a trailer. But the secret is to teach a horse sending signals so he knows what you want him to do. It's partly how man and horse communicate.

If you ever find yourself frustrated with your horse because he won't get in, here's a quick solution.

Get a long rope and loop it over his rear and let it slide down to about the top of his back legs. Let the rope hit around his back legs and note his reaction. (Be holding this rope in your right hand and hold his halter with your left hand) He may kick at the rope on his back legs or he may not. If he doesn't, it means he's likely okay with the rope being back there.

If he kicks at the rope then he needs to get used to it. Just let the rope kind of hang there and touch his back legs. The horse may get jumpy and try to move from it. He may move forward or in a circle. While holding his halter stiffen your left arm a bit and make him go around you while holding the rope and halter. You, the handler, are acting as an axis.

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Fairly quickly the horse will realize the rope isn't hurting him and you can move to the next step.

Pull on the rope to get the horse to move with you. When he moves forward from your pull, release the pressure. The idea is for him to move when you exert the pressure. He should catch on pretty quickly to what you want.

Now lead him to the trailer and guide his head into the trailer if necessary. With the lead rope attached to his halter, pull on the lead rope while pulling harder on the "butt rope".

Your horse may or may not jump in the trailer but chances are he will. Also, be careful doing this because he may pop in the trailer very quickly and you could get hurt.

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