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**The Top 3 Tricks Horse Owners Can Use To Unspoil A Barn Spoiled Horse**

By **Andy Curry**

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It's been weeks since you went riding. Now you have time to ride this afternoon and there ain't no one gonna stop you. Excited, you saddle up your horse and get on him. You get about 50 feet from the barn and your horse turns around and goes back - and you can't stop him. Why? You have a barn spoiled horse. This is a common scenario for novice horse owners.

Here are the top three tricks to solve the barn sour problem.

Teach your horse that you have control over him. Once your horse gets it in his mind that you can make him do what you want him to do, you have control over him and can thus make him leave the barn. One way to get control over him is to use a training technique called doubling. When you double your horse you teach him you can control him.

It doesn't take long before your horse will know you can control him. Be careful when doubling though. If you do it too much at a time you can over do it. Your horse could get so sensitive to you doing it that he may try to anticipate it. If he sees your hands making the slightest movement that looks like you're about to double him, he may double himself. Thus, just double him four to six times a day on both sides. He'll quickly learn you have control.

The next thing you can try is this: Make it dang hard to do the wrong thing - and make it real easy to do the right thing. Here's what I mean. A while back my horse didn't want to leave her buddies or the barn. We'd get about 100 feet away and she'd turn around and bolt back. She'd stop in front of the barn expecting me to get off, remove the saddle and tack, and put her back into the corrals.

By my barn is two hay stacks. There is a space between them big enough to go through and do figure eights around the hay stacks. So every time she'd go back I would make her work, and work, and work at running figure eights around those hay stacks. Then I would test her to see if she had enough and would leave the area.

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The first seven times she ran back. Each time we came back to the barn we'd run more laps around the hay stacks. I could tell she was getting tired. But the eighth time I walked her away from the hay stacks I noticed she went quite a ways before turning to go back.

When we went back again we ran more figure eights. Only this time I could tell we didn't have to do too many. I walked her out and away from doing the figure eights and I suddenly had a horse who decided that it was sooo much nicer going for a walk away from the barn rather than doing a bunch of crummy ol' figure eights. We had a nice ride that day and she was in no hurry to get home.

The last thing to do is this: Ride. Ride a lot. Don't wait for weeks or months in between riding. Try to ride at least once per week for three or four hours. Preferably, try to ride at least twice a week for a few hours at a time. (Ideally, you should ride everyday. But that's hard to do with today's time constraints) Doing that your horse will get in his brain that you're going to ride and he's going to leave

the barn and there will be no argument. In fact, if you want to have a great horse the biggest secret is this: Ride the heck out him!

So if your horse is barn spoiled you can try doubling him to show you are in control. The next thing you can try is making the wrong thing difficult and the right thing easy. Make it dang hard for him to go the wrong thing and very pleasant to do the right thing. And lastly, ride your horse often. Two to three times a week if possible.

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

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

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### **The TOP 7 Mistakes Horse Owners Make**

**By Andy Curry**

Mistake #7 - Assuming You Can Get On Any Horse And Simply Ride

Not all horses are the same. Some you can get on and easily ride. Some are so green that you could be easily injured if you have little or no riding experience. The ones easy to ride are typically older horses. They have been ridden the most and will be the most forgiving of a beginning rider's mistakes. The younger horses will be the hardest to ride unless they have been thoroughly broke.

Mistake #6 - Assuming A Horse Trainer's Technique Is The Only Way To Train A Horse

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When novice horse owners begin to experience problems with their horse, they go looking for answers. The first place they look is in books. When the author of the book explains a training technique, the reader assumes that's how it's done by everyone. But when they can't train their horse with that technique, they assume a dumb or untrainable horse. What novice horse owners need to know is that there are typically lots of ways to train a horse to do one thing. If you try something and it doesn't work, try something else.

### Mistake #5 - Not Riding A Horse Enough

New horse owners experience problems with horses not because the horse suddenly went sour, but because they don't ride their horses enough. About the best thing you can do to have a good horse is to ride it and ride it and ride it. Don't ride him just once every couple weeks. Horses need to be ridden a lot to make them a good riding horse.

### Mistake #4 - Thinking A Problem With The Horse Is The Horse's Fault

Although a horse may have some problems, they are typically a result of the horse's owner. There are rarely horse problems - it's more likely there are problem riders. For instance, if you can't get your horse to ride away from home (this is called "Barn Sour") it's likely because you don't have control over him. You can establish control with various techniques such as Doubling.

### Mistake #3 - Not Understanding How Horses Think

Horses do not think like dogs or cats. Horses are a prey animal which means they run from scary things. They have thousands of years of the "flight instinct" built in their brains. To successfully train them takes patience and understanding that they are naturally fearful and cynical.

### Mistake #2 - Not Knowing That Every Interaction With A Horse Is A Training Exercise

Every time you interact with your horse you are training him. Even if your horse is well trained with the lead rope, you are training him every time you use the lead rope. Even when you pet your horse, you are training him. Novice horse owners must think through what they do when working with their horse

because they can easily and unknowingly affect a horse's behavior.

### Mistake #1 - Riding A Horse With Little Or No Understanding Of Horsemanship

A typical novice horse owner will ride their new horse not knowing horse-riding skills. It is important to have an understanding of riding techniques because horses react to leg pressure, how you sit in the saddle, whether or not the rider is tense, and a whole host of other things.

Let's face it. Horses need to be understood for a horse owner to be successful with his horse. The best thing novice horse owners can do is learn how to ride, learn how horses think, learn what works good to shape horses' behavior, and understand that constantly riding a horse is just about the best thing you can do to have a good horse.

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