

Long Lining Instructions

by Becky Delaney

Things You Need:

- Two 25' long lines (I use rope and tie knots in the ends plus put my snaps on the end)
- Bridle (I use a training bridle with full cheek snaffle bit)
- Surcingle

Step 1

First teach your young horse to wear a bit! I will put a bit snapped to a halter first and let them wear it for a few hours a day! Mostly at eating time they seem to get use to it quickly this way!

Step 2

Teach your horse to lunge quietly in a circle with a halter first. Then later after they get use to wearing the bit, (use halter first few times) in a bridle with side reins and surcingle before attempting to ground drive him.

Step 3

I always start in a round pen. Tack your horse up with both (use halter first few times) his bridle and surcingle on. Then attach a 25-foot lunge line to the left side of your horse's bit. Most surcingle has three loops on each side: a top, middle and lower loop. You want to attach the one lunge line to each side of the bit and run the line through the middle loop on each side. Once this is done, calmly lay the excess line from the right side over the surcingle, so the ropes are together on one side as though you were going to lunge your horse tracking left. Hold the lines in both hands.

Step 4

Ask your horse to walk forward. This is where all the practicing and reinforcing voice commands while lunging comes into play. Start out working at a walk on a 20-meter circle as though you were lunging.

Step 5

After your horse has walked a complete circle pull back gently on both lines and ask your horse to halt. Reinforce the motion and pressure on the bit with your voice by saying "WHOA." At first your horse will be responding more to your voice than the pressure on the bit. Repeat the walk-whoa exercise several times.

Step 6

Introduce a few straight lines into your circle by applying pressure to the right side of the bit through your long line. Once your horse gives right, then apply pressure to the inside and bring him back on the circle. The secret is to maintain forward motion. You can also use the rail to help teach your horse to turn. Simply walk the horse along the rail and apply pressure to the inside rein whenever you want to start a turn. This will teach your horse to associate the pressure from the bit with turning.

Step 7

Try changing reins or direction. Develop a good forward walk, and then slowly let your line out leaving ample room to swing yourself around behind the horse. Hold the reins high enough that you can lift them over your horse's back without making a great deal of unnecessary motion with the lines. Apply pressure to the right side and as he begins to turn right, lift both lines over his back and take up a position on his right side. (I will have worked a lot with ropes all over my young horse so this should not bother him at all.) Just ask him to once again walk on and repeat the walk-whoa exercise tracking right. Remember whatever you do on one side do on the other side.

Step 8

Change directions several times until you can do so easily and without your horse fussing or shying from this activity. Bring your horse back onto a 20-meter circle and when he is calmly walking try letting the right line slip down around his rump, so that it rests a few inches above his hocks. With lots of friendly rope preparation this should not be a big deal. If your horse does panic, bolt forward or shy, just ask him to walk quietly and start again. If your horse jigs a little at first that is fine as long as he settles back down. Once your horse is settled, you should be able to take up a driving position several feet behind your horse. Remember to be safe always! Don't leave the round pen until your horse is not shying or jiggling or acting in any way fearful. The key is to try to think ahead and prepare for a calm happy experience for both horse and owner (trainer).

Step 9

Once you are going to move to the arena or large area with straight rails. Start adding some walk-trot transitions into the mix. Start just like you did with the walk, start out on a 20-meter circle. After your horse has performed several walk-trot transitions on a circle, start asking for the trot on a few straight lines and on the rail.

Step 10

Keep your long lining lessons short at first, only 20 to 30 minutes in length. Letting lines move across his back and hindquarter. The key is to be slow and patient, repeating the same exercise over and over again over several weeks. Set up some fun things to do, like over logs, some spooky things to help desensitize your young horse in a safe environment before moving out into a trail setting. Always remember to be safe think ahead of your horse if you can.

Hints:

Also you can pony your young horse out on trail before long lining him out there. I always am looking far ahead to see if something might be up ahead that might spook my horse. Then I prepare for it as best I can. Try to think ahead always! Be Safe is number one priority. So you don't get hurt or your young don't get a bad experience under him.