

"An Exercise to Practice Sitting Quietly in the Turn"



Written by Cited Author
Friday, 04 November 2011 10:07

Posted By Barbra Schulte On September 11, 2011 (9:50 pm) In [Practice Techniques](#)

A big challenge when you learn to ride a cutting horse is sitting quietly in the turn.



We have a natural tendency to want to go with the cow immediately and move our bodies in different gyrations!

At the very time when we need to be the most quiet, intuitively we want to DO SOMETHING to contribute to the action.

But of course, what we need to do is exactly the opposite.

It's at the precise moment of the turn that we need to allow a horse to turn on his own.

We can collapse deeper. We can keep our eyes on the cow. We can position our feet just right.

But, ultimately our job is to allow our horse to do his job and turn on his own without our interference.

There is an exercise to help you learn how to let your horse do the work in the turn. This exercise is actually done without working a cow.

It's about learning how to turn your horse around smoothly and easily.

I'm not talking about incessantly turning your horse around and around in the back of the arena.

I'm talking about learning how to do a slow pretty turn as a practice for riding your horse on a cow.

The key word here is "slow".

When you have form, rhythm and consistency outside of the herd, you will have the same when you work a cow.

When you learn to turn your horse around slowly and consistently, and you follow the same steps each time, both you and your horse will feel more confident.

I'm not promoting an exact form of turnaround here. But you do need to have certain steps that you do each time.

Here are my suggestions.

First, is ... slow it down. From there you can build speed later if that's important to you.

Next, before you even make a move, see in your mind what you are going to do. This takes only a moment to do.

You might think something like, "Okay, I'm going to walk ... then stop ... then draw back ... set up the turn ... be smooth ... then turn."

Now, walk or trot ... then stop your horse, and draw him back so he has his weight mostly on his hindquarters. This might require just lifting the reins, or backing up several steps.

The next step is the one that often gets neglected.

Pause and prepare your horse to turn.

I often see this sequence instead ... during the walk-stop-draw phase, before there's been a step back, and a pause. ... the horse is already being swirled around.

Sometimes the horse's nose is to the outside. The shoulder is sticking out on the inside, and the rear end is not anchored. It's flipping around in a very unattractive manner.

So instead, get slow and methodical.

Do the mechanics in your mind. Add the feel of the flow and the smoothness before you do the exercise.

As you do the steps, make sure each segment is complete before you move on to the next one.

Stop. Load your horse's rear. Tip the nose in the direction you want to go.

Be patient. Set your horse up to turn. Allow the turn.

You want all to feel smooth and grounded.

You want your horse to feel that way too.

Slowing down and being smooth outside of the herd will help your turns as you work a cow.

Remember to stay slow.

Article taken from Personal Performance Coach for all riders | Cutting Horse Trainer and Educator | Author, Speaker, Clinician - <http://barbraschulte.com>

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