



Wednesday January 28, 2015

Greetings!

What's the best way to protect your horse's mouth and sensitivity? Read Monty's Answer below to find out.

MONTY ANSWERS

Question:

Does Monty have a formula about how to achieve a light responsive mouth? Does he start riding in a halter, if so how long before he starts introducing a bit and would he still ride with the halter as well as a back up? Which bit does he start with? Which bits does he progress with and how much would he expect of a youngster at each stage of training the stop and turns and what to do if they start to lean on the bit? How much does ground work flexion and long-reining help with lightness and are there negative effects of starting off straight away in a strong bit, such as a Pelham, which would achieve quicker results?

Thanks,
Alice G., UK

Answer:

The process of causing a horse to accept the bit and bridle is known, in most of the horse world, as "mouthing" the horse. I have heard the procedure called "bitting" the horse, "bitting up" the horse and "schooling to the bit and bridle." Whatever term you use for this procedure, it is causing the horse to accept communication from the hands of the rider through the reins, and ultimately the bit.

I call mouthing one of the most important procedures where training the young horse is concerned. It is critical to cause the horse to respond to cues from the reins and bit with the most subtle cues one can accomplish. The tissues over the bars of the horse's mouth in the area of the corners are precious to any horseman. They should be treated with utmost respect as there is no second chance to create sensitivity once this area has been damaged during training.

We all want a sensitive mouth, but we are responsible for creating that sensitivity or destroying it. The bit is our partner in that effort. Regarding your question about 'strong bits' remember my constant admonition that there are no harsh bits. The only things that can be harsh about a bit are the hands that hold it. The well-trained horse with a properly fitted bit can have the reins tied on with fishing line and one should not have to worry about it breaking.

To start the young horse, however, I use the [Dually Halter](#) and teach the horse to respond to light rein pressure off the training rings on the Dually. I am also a proponent of mouthing the horse before saddling or riding. The definition of mouthing is to accustom the horse to bit and bridle (usually a snaffle). It is to cause the horse to be comfortable with wearing this device and responsive to being guided by it. It might seem strange to the reader who has seen my demonstrations to grasp this concept. I do not see the horses used in my demonstrations until the time of the event.

With a few exceptions, I don't even know who owns them or where they come from. I want as much separation between myself and the horse as I can possibly have. This means that I would consider it inappropriate to even give instructions to the owner regarding mouthing.

To be given the chance to mouth a young horse before the start of saddling, bridling and riding is a high priority for me (outside of the parameters of a demonstration). For the past 40 years or so, I have taken every opportunity to acquaint the horse to the bit, bridle and reins before saddling and riding.

I am a strong advocate for using "black iron bits." These were the normal bits for thousands of years before the advent of stainless steel. I find that horses prefer black iron and perform better with it than stainless steel. I further recommend that the black iron bit has copper inlaid in the mouthpiece. The combination of black iron and copper seems to me to be preferred by virtually every horse I work with.

I recommend that you accustom the horse to the surcingle, which can be accomplished in the round pen or even in a box stall. Once the horse can cope with the surcingle comfortably, I begin the process of mouthing. You should always take care not to have protrusions from the walls or fences of the enclosure you use for mouthing.

I will place a black iron snaffle with a brow band headstall appropriately on the horse's head. You don't need to have riding reins on the bit as a pair of side reins are used instead. The bit should sit in the horse's mouth so that it effects a slight smile on the horse. Once the bit is touching the corners of the horse's mouth, the handler should direct it around until it is about one inch to the top of an inch higher than the corner would be in a natural

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Monty's Principles

Tales of Courage and Kindness with Oscar the Horse Hero

Part II ([click here for Part I](#))

Patricia could not believe what she was seeing and decided to ask for me to have a few sessions of horse therapy with her and Oscar over the next few weeks. However in true Ruskin Mill style, 'They' did not give me horse therapy, 'They' gave me a Horse Whisperer! Carol arranged for me to meet a lady called Dawn Oakley-Smith, who keeps a small herd of horses at her Natural Horsemanship stable yard called 'Heartshore Horses'.

As soon as I arrived at Dawn's house with Carol, I was loudly welcomed by Hector (the friendly big black Labrador) who Dawn keeps as her friend and companion.

Dawn took us to Heartshore Horses' main field

where her herd of horses were waiting to be fed with their morning hay. As soon as I saw them I knew that Heartshore was an amazing place where I would learn a very great deal about horses. I feel rather silly now but I asked Dawn if she had heard of my hero Monty Roberts. She replied, "Of course, I am a Horse Whisperer!"

I was totally amazed to hear this. It was the most incredible feeling, to realize exactly what was happening here! This was my destiny; to help Dawn as a Horse Whisperer apprentice. To help to save horses from certain death and to help horses and people understand one

should adjust it upward until it is about one-sixteenth of an inch higher than the corners would be in a natural state.

I suggest that the side reins be adjusted quite loosely at first. I recommend that the handler loose lunge the young horse in the round pen in sessions approximating 15 to 20 minutes in length. You can execute this event using all three natural gaits of the horse. It should be noted that exhaustion is not a part of training and you should be careful to monitor the horse's comfort throughout the procedure.

After the horse has accepted the surcingle and the snaffle bit with loose side reins, the handler should then begin a process of shortening the side reins until the horse is nodding off the bit. Take care not to tighten before the horse is fully comfortable as he could object to the tension and potentially suffer injury by rearing or acting out in another negative fashion.

The side reins should be equipped with elastic to allow the horse a flexible tension and not a solid one. The handler might continue to loose lunge, creating impulsion by simply tossing a light driving line behind the horse to move him forward. Be sure the environment is safe. One should study the footing and the walls closely so as not to create an environment that could be dangerous for your animal.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the rest of Monty's Answer

[GO TO: From From My Hands to Yours, Chapter 3 Building Trust](#)

help horses and people understand one another!

Over the next year as I became more confident, competent and able, it became apparent that more than anything I wanted to have a horse of my own. As this seemed to me to be impossible I waited as long as I could before I finally asked Dawn how expensive they really were to keep. She replied, "We can keep them here very cheaply at Heartshore because we keep all of the horses as naturally as possible"...

It was about this time that I met Monty Roberts the iconic Horse Whisperer, on telling him my plan Monty told me to make my own luck wished me good learning and told me to go for it!

After many weeks of discussions, meetings and anxious waiting for both me and my Ruskin Mill house parents, the news that I was to have a horse of my very own made me cry!

And I had already decided on the name, 'Spirit'!

[Editor's note: Read more about Charlie and Oscar's story in next week's edition of the Ask Monty.]

Monty's Challenge



Test yourself each week as I challenge you to answer the question below. I mean this. Sit down and write an answer. Don't wait for my answer next week. If you have been reading my

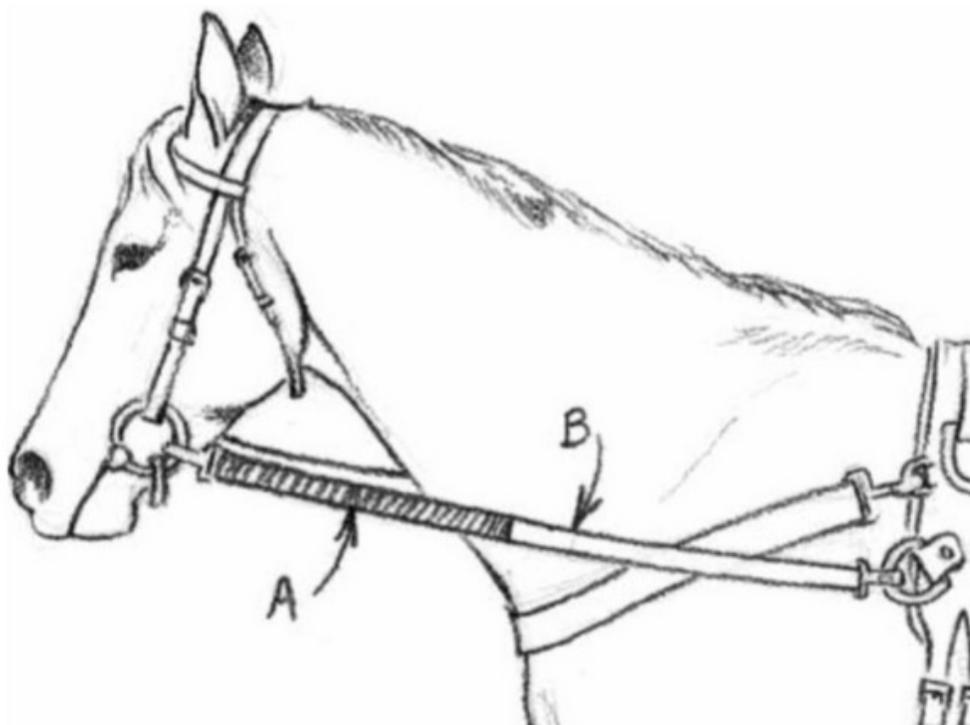
Weekly Questions and Answers for the last six months, you should be in a position to do this. Send your answer to my team at: askmonty@montyroberts.com

Why should you bother? Because it will help you focus. There is probably a comparable question in your life that needs answering - or will be. If you can gain insight into how to go about answering a practical question that is loosely related to your problem, this exercise will help you answer your nagging question. Then read my answer. I want all of my students to learn to be better trainers than me. That's good for you and good for horses!

~ Monty

Next Week's Question:

Mr. Roberts,
I have a 17 yr. old stallion that hits his hoof on the rail of his stall when he thinks it is time to eat. I feed a supplement he obviously really likes and will ignore hay even if he is hungry. He learned this habit from a mule about 5 yrs. ago. He bangs during the night and every morning about 4AM. Needless to say my



A - LEATHER
B - ELASTIC



neighbors have been awake at all hours of the night along with myself. I have tied him with his head up to prevent him from banging and teach patience but it is not effective when he is in his stall. He's pretty smart actually looking for an area he can bang on when he is in the pasture. I really don't want to use hobbles and will use it as a last re-sort. Any suggestions on what I can do to stop this really bad habit?
Thanks
Paula

THIS WEEK IN MONTY'S EQUUS ONLINE UNI

CANADA'S RURAL TV



In Canada, Monty's Backstage Pass show airs Thursday & Saturday-10:30 AM, 4:30 PM, 11 PM (all times are EST) on television on The Rural Channel. More info as to where

The Rural Channel is available:
<http://theruralchannel.com/gallery/monty-roberts-backstage-pass/>

If you have questions or need more info go to info@theruralchannel.com or reach out on any of their Social Media platforms: @TheRuralChannel www.facebook.com/theruralchannel

Horse & Country, UK



Watch Monty Roberts on Horse & Country TV in the UK (Sky channel 253), Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden and Malta. See:

www.horseandcountry.tv/monty for more info.

Monty on HRTV



Watch Monty on HRTV Tuesdays at 6:00 PM ET.

Special Offer for Monty Roberts' Fans! **First month FREE** of HRTV.com when you subscribe now! Just use the **promo code MR13** when you sign up!



Please check local TV directories for your time and channel or the HRTV website where times are in Eastern Standard Time:

www.hrtv.com/MontyRobertsShow/

Please note that Dish TV has moved the HRTV channel position to 398.

SUCCEED: Digestive Health



THIS WEEK ON EQUUS ONLINE...



FOAL EDUCATION WITH LEIGH WILLS
CLASSROOM PRESENTATION:
THE NATURE OF THE FOAL

Monty's Equus Online University lessons FOAL EDUCATION WITH LEIGH WILLS begins this week with The Nature of the Foal. [Watch the video now!](#)

GO STRAIGHT
TO THE VIDEO



JOIN THE ONLINE
UNI TODAY!

Not a student yet? Click on: www.montyrobertsuniversity.com and Join-Up with thousands of horse lovers learning Monty's force-free and fun methods now.

GLOBE GALLOPING WITH MONTY ROBERTS

Have some fun with Monty, go to: www.facebook.com/MontyRoberts

Monty in California

February 14, 2015 Night of Inspiration on Valentine's Day at Flag Is Up Farms, email admin@montyroberts.com or call +1-805-688-6288 for registration details. Individuals and groups are welcome to register! More information here: <http://www.montyroberts.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MPRI-Night-of-Inspiration.pdf> USA

February 21-22, 2015 Riding with Respect Clinic with Monty. Click here for more information: http://www.montyroberts.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/RespectClinic_web2.pdf USA

Monty in Arizona

March 14, 2015 Monty demonstration at Camp Verde in Arizona. [Click here!](#) USA

Monty in the UK

March 24, 2015 [Hadlow College](#), Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0AL UK

March 26, 2015 [Norton Heath Equestrian Centre Limited](#), Fingrith Hall Lane, Blackmore, Essex, CM4 0JP UK

March 28, 2015 [West Wilts Equestrian Centre](#), Melksham Road, Holt, North Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 6QT UK

Monty in Australia

April 25 & 26, 2015 Demos in Melbourne, tickets: <http://www.montyrobertslive.com/> Australia

April 29, 2015 Demo in Shepparton, tickets: <http://www.montyrobertslive.com/> Australia

May 2 & 3, 2015 Demos in Canberra, tickets: <http://www.montyrobertslive.com/> Australia

If you are in Australia and would like to register your horse for Horse Selection at one of Monty's demonstrations, please learn about the process here: <http://www.montyrobertslive.com/take-part/horse-application/>



For information about Monty's worldwide demos and the courses held at Monty's farm in California go to: http://www.montyroberts.com/ab_about_monty_calendar/see-monty/

"I have believed for years that digestive health has a major impact on a horse's happiness, performance and overall well-being. Just by owning and riding horses, we take them out of their natural environment. We keep them in stalls, we feed them grain, and we exercise them. All of this works against the horse's digestive health.

I also believe there is something you can do to care for your horse's digestive system. I've been using a product called SUCCEED® on my performance horses for many years now, with tremendous results." ~ Monty

See more

<http://www.montyroberts.com/shop/horse-health-care-products/>

CORIGEM: Honey Power



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- Monty Roberts.

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<http://www.montyroberts.com/corigem/>

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Photo Credits

Christopher Dydyk

Now Playing: Trainer Chris Morris and Horse Sense for Leaders author Dr. Sue Cain



[The Horsemanship Radio Show](#) is an online radio show (podcast) dedicated to the exploration of good horsemanship throughout the world. Hosted by Debbie Loucks (Monty Roberts' daughter), the show includes segments, tips and interviews exploring good horsemanship.

English trainer Chris Morris talks about how he helps remedial horses and author Dr. Sue Cain talks about her new book *Horse Sense for Leaders* based on Monty Roberts' concepts of Trust-based Leadership. This week's tip features Lyndsey White with 10 Facts about this important piece of riding gear.

Listen in...

<http://www.horsemanshipradio.com/2015/01/14/horsemanship-radio-epi-sode-32-by-index-fund-advisors-ifa-com-trainer-chris-morris-horse-sense-for-leaders-author-dr-sue-cain/>

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Recent interviews:

Christiane Schwagrzinna, Equine Alternative Therapy, Germany

Angie Sheer, Equine Alternative Therapy for Veterans

Alan Hill Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA)

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HORSE SENSE FOR LEADERS



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Giving Back to Veterans



Please remember to support our war veterans and first responders. One easy way is by shopping online: When you do your holiday shopping at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Monty's nonprofit, Join-Up International. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/77-0459889>

and support us every time you shop. You will be helping Monty's horse rescue efforts, free clinics for war veterans, and more!

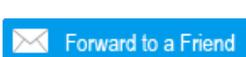
You can also an make a year-end donation directly to Join-Up International here:

<http://www.join-up.org/donation-faqs.html>

KEEP IN TOUCH

Let us know what you are looking for in content from these emails. Send your comments and requests to askmonty@montyroberts.com.

Never miss an e-mail from Monty: To ensure you receive this email in the future, add askmonty@montyroberts.com to your list of approved senders or select the Add/Save to Address Book function in your email browser and follow the appropriate instructions.



Sincerely,
Monty Roberts

