

	Ground	Riding	Advice
<p>RELAXATION means: <i>Soft, supple, agreeable, willing. A relaxed horse is confident and free of tension. He trusts you, feels safe in his environment, learns, and performs better. And is healthier and happier!</i></p> <p>CHECK LIST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be TRUSTWORTHY! • Lower the head strategically • Retreat, release, GIVE. Often. • Frequent breaks • Back up reverses prey animal psychology • Stand Still (<i>Parking Spot</i>) • Maxi and Mini Lateral Flexion • Maxi and Mini Disengagement • BehaviorTYPE BehaviorFIX: MOVERS need to move in order to relax STOPPERS need to stop in order to relax Lower the head and neck PUSHERS need to be pushed. TENSE needs release. 	<p>From the moment you get your horse out of the paddock or stall, be promoting relaxation, ‘fixing’ tension. This is not ‘training’, it is the desired state whenever your horse is with you.</p> <p>Use HORSELOGIX psychology to relax the mind, emotions and body:</p> <p>MOVE the MOVER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trot & canter on longer lines • Circles, spirals • Jumps • etc. <p><i>MOVERS usually need a slightly longer and active warm up.</i></p> <p>STOP or slow the STOPPER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go slow, don’t ask for much or for very long • Walk, stop & rest often. It will make you crazy but it works. • Circles are not a good idea! At least not more than one or two laps. <p><i>STOPPERS usually need a short, relatively slow and inactive warm up.</i></p>	<p>Use the same strategies as on the ground in terms of MOVERS and STOPPERS.</p> <p>Make relaxation more important than the task. FIX it.</p> <p>Bending reduces tension. Mini lateral flexions and mini hind leg disengagements will work wonders to relax a horse.</p> <p>Don’t forcefully lower the head. By slowing down and gently bending the neck to release muscle tension, your horse will lower it as a demonstration of relaxation.</p> <p>MOVE the MOVER.</p> <p>SLOW & STOP the STOPPER</p>	<p>Any time the horse gets tense, FIX IT: slow down, back off, lower the head but don't hold it there.</p> <p>It is tempting to continue despite tension, but the long term (and sometimes short term) consequences are not good.</p> <p>Think about it from the horse’s point of view... have you been around teachers, parents, bosses who add pressure when you’re tense? It’s not helpful and more often is disempowering and stressful. It does not make you trust them more.</p> <p><i>Relaxation is desirable in all interactions, exercises and gaits. Note: Relaxed does not mean unresponsive! It means an absence of tension and resistance</i></p>