



Horse&Rider MONTHLY

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STANDING TIED

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MEET
HORSE&RIDER'S
**TRAINER OF
THE YEAR**

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Horse Life



TRAIN / HEALTH

The Lost Art of Standing Tied

★ How and why spending time on a patience pole can help improve your relationship with your horse and make your time in the saddle more successful.



Patience poles with concrete bases can also cut down on a horse's desire to paw

PHOTO COURTESY CHARLIE BROOKS

TEACHING HORSES to stay standing tied is a critical—but often overlooked—part of the horse training process, no matter what you plan to do with your equine partners. Every horse I've got will tie up anywhere, any time, and won't try to pull back. Using patience poles, we've taught ours they need to be there, they don't know how long they'll be there, so they just relax. I'm going to tell you how our patience poles are constructed, why I like to use them, and how patience poles can affect a horse's behavior under saddle.

What is a patience pole?

My preferred method of teaching a horse to stand comfortably tied is with a patience pole—usually made from a metal pipe with a rotating collar at the top, and a chain that attaches to the halter with a bull snap. These poles are usually 12-feet in length, with three feet set into the ground with concrete or a post-pounder for serious stability.

How to use a patience pole

I like to introduce a patience pole early in the training process, tying horses there an hour before and an hour after each ride. If you have a spoiled horse or one that's afraid to be away from their friends, tie a companion somewhere near the horse until he gets used to the post. I've rarely had a horse pull back on a patience pole because they can generally see around it, but use caution as your horse adjusts to the situation.

What standing tied teaches a horse

Patience poles are part of my training process because they separate a horse from the rest of the horses on the property, teaching them to stand patiently and not paw. It takes them out of their stalls to acclimate them to their

surroundings. They see the tractor go by, they see birds flying, and all the activity on the place. Horses treated like house plants, who just stand in their stalls all day and eat, are more challenging to ride because they aren't exposed to the things that they can see tied to a patience pole. Horses who aren't well-acclimated also get themselves into more trouble and are more likely to get hurt because their reactions are amplified and exaggerated.

How patience poles beat barn-sour blues

Tying your horse to a patience pole before and after you ride can help eliminate barn-sour tendencies in horses. A horse is going to want to get back to the barn sooner if he knows he will be done once he gets there, but a horse that knows he will go stand tied to the patience pole after a ride is less likely to get in a hurry to get back to the barn. They're less likely to lean, and they are less likely to anticipate going back to the barn where they do no work. After working a horse, tying them to a post makes them think about it more, not just thinking as soon as they're done they'll go to the barn and get a cookie.

In addition, time on the patience pole cuts down on a horse's desire to nicker and whinny and squeal when separated from their buddies. I had a guy bring a horse over the other day, and we tied him to the patience pole for the first time. The first day he made noise for two hours. The second day, he did it for 5 minutes, then quit all together. Horses get so herd-bound, it's good for them to be separated to get over it. Riding a horse that's herd-bound or barn-sour is tougher, and it affects how they perform. So using a patience pole can nip the problem in the bud before it's an issue. ★

Groom for Health

★ Grooming doesn't just make your horse look gorgeous; it's also a genuine health booster.



Grooming is healthful for your horse and mentally relaxing for you both. A word of caution: Don't share brushes. Many skin diseases are caused by microorganisms that can easily be passed from horse to horse.

PHOTO BY JARI HINDSTROM/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

VIGOROUS GROOMING PROMOTES CIRCULATION, massages muscles, sloughs off dead skin cells, and stimulates the production of beneficial oils. It also enables you to spot emerging lumps, swellings, or skin issues so you can deal with them early for best results. Daily currying can almost completely control some skin conditions, such as cannon bone seborrhea (that thick, grungy skin that can form on the front of the hind legs). Grooming also benefits your horse's mental health.

Tools to Use

Good grooming means more than a quick once-over with a dandy brush. Start by giving your horse's whole body a vigorous currying (using a rubber mitt or soft-rubber curry for his face and legs). If he's shedding, a shedding tool will prove useful to remove large amounts of hair. Then brush with a stiff brush to clear away debris, finishing up with a soft brush or towel. Your hands alone can also play a vital part in your horse's daily grooming.

Good for You Both

Grooming relaxes your horse plus generates feelings of friendship. Mutual grooming among horses (or

allogrooming) promotes bonding between equine pairs. When you make the effort to groom your horse in ways he finds especially pleasurable, it can promote his bond with you. Three key tips:

Use Your Hands

Let your fingers discover what your horse enjoys most, including those itchy spots on his tailhead and belly that he can't reach on his own. Also seek tight muscles that need relaxing. Tip: Rubber grooming gloves or even latex gloves will protect you from any emerging skin conditions.

Attune to Feedback

As you work, pay close attention to your horse's responses to learn his specific preferences in where and how you groom, rub, and scratch. This mindful "tuning in" is essential to strengthening the connection between you.

Relax Into It

Clear your mind, breathe slowly from your diaphragm, and give yourself over to the task—and it'll serve as a pleasant mental break for you, too. ★

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From forelocks to fetlocks, good grooming is in the details.

Groom to



When you're at home, consistent grooming helps keep your horse's coat looking sleek, healthy, and shiny. At the show, those same habits come in handy for a different purpose all together. When you and your horse look neat, clean, and professional, you're presenting the absolute best version of yourselves to the judge long before you start your pattern or turn to follow the rail.

The way you look in the show pen can be just as important as the way you perform, according to Wendy Huss of Scottsdale, Arizona-based Huss Performance Horses.

"In my experience, it makes a difference to the judge when someone comes into the pen and they're really turned out well," Wendy says. "My theory is that so much can happen when you go through that gate, whether you're running a reiner in or riding a pleasure horse down the rail, that you should control everything you can before you enter the pen. And that includes how you present yourself and your horse. You only have one chance to make a good impression. To do otherwise is a disrespect not only to the judge, but yourself, because you represent yourself and your trainer."

Dan and Wendy Huss train and show reining horses at Smoking Roosters Ranch, and whether she's grooming a horse for a non-pro class or to enter the pen at the World Equestrian Games, Wendy says it's all about the details.

"When our horses go into the reining pen, they're pretty close to how they'd look going into a showmanship class. We're pretty serious about making sure every horse is clipped, oiled, and sprayed," Wendy says.

Adding an extra layer of shine to an already spotlessly groomed horse is part

of trainer Keith McDonough's pre-show grooming routine as well, and with good reason. Along with business partner Mark Jensen, Keith trains and shows all-around horses at Palm Desert Quarter Horses in Palm Desert, California. With years of experience turning out horses for the show pen, Keith knows the value of making the best first impression possible.

"The importance of having your horse impeccably groomed is you only have one chance to make a first impression," Keith explains. "It's vital to make a good



Add an extra layer of shine to impress the judges when you enter the ring.

impression on the judge by catching his or her eye in a positive manner the first time you enter the ring."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The first step to keeping your horse looking his best is stocking your grooming kit with the right tools. From brushes and clippers to oils, sprays, and chinks, find the products that work best for your horses and your program. For Wendy, curry combs and electric horse vacuums are ideal for everyday use.

"Our daily practice isn't that much different than what happens at the horse show," Wendy says. "We curry every horse all over and use vacuums every day."

Brushes. Stock your kit with rubber curry combs, body brushes, soft brushes, hoof picks, and towels. If you travel often, designate one kit for your trailer and one for your barn.

Clippers. For legs, bridle paths, ears, and whiskers invest in the best pair of clippers you can afford, and maintain them on a regular basis. Oil and sharpen clipper blades for best results.

"Before every show, we clip our white legs with a #40 blade," Keith says. "It's a close clip, but it means that white legs look nice and clean without an added product like cornstarch."

Vacuums. Electric equine grooming vacuums can be a lifesaver at home or at the show, especially if you invest in a smaller model that's easier to haul. Before using a vacuum for the first time, take care to desensitize your horse to noise and suction.

"Our vacuum has two motors, so when we're just starting out, we'll start with just one motor so the suction isn't so hard," Wendy says. "Generally speaking, it's like a massage for the horses. They learn to love it."

Mane and tail products. Leave-in conditioners and serums help keep manes and tails silky and tangle-free.

Oils, sprays, and chinks. Finishing oils and sprays give even the shiniest coat an extra layer of gloss. For all-around horses, black spray, chalk, and black hoof polish add a finishing touch to hooves.

Wendy likes to use white livestock chalk to keep white faces and markings extra bright.

"I'll use a #10 blade to clip blazes or bald faces, and then scribble the white chalk over the markings," Wendy says. "Then you can use some of the face oil on your hand to get rid of the excess powder and stay in the lines." →

GLOW BEFORE YOU SHOW

The way your horse looks in the show pen starts months before you ever set foot on the facility grounds. The keys to keeping your horse's coat healthy and shiny are good nutrition and horsekeeping habits.

"We ask our show horses for a lot, but they're also cared for really well," Wendy says. "It's like a spa day every day. We have a host of equine professionals who help us do what we do, including a nutritionist, dentist, and blacksmith."

Supplements. At Palm Desert Quarter Horses, the horses are fed supplements for hair and hoof growth.

"We feed straight biotin as a supplement to make their feet grow faster, so they're always producing healthy feet," Keith says. "Currently, the California-grown hay we feed is so high in starch and sugar that our vet has told us to just feed 'diet grain' formulated for ponies and miniature horses. We are also feeding Equine Mega-Omega oil for their coats and joints. The horses get an ounce of oil on their feed every day and that really helps with their coats."

Dan and Wendy rely on special vitamin blends developed by Caron Haggerty of Equine Health and Performance, an equine vitamin and supplement company in Spring Hill, Tennessee.

"Caron has products for everything, including hoof growth and haircoats, that are all raw, organic, and freshly made," Wendy says. "It's not inexpensive, but it's the best money spent. If your horse feels good from the inside out, he's likely to be easier to train. And we've encountered fewer vet bills."

Lights. Keeping show horses indoors cuts down on sunburned skin and bleached haircoats, but another trick for maintaining a sleek coat is to keep the lights on for 16 hours each day.

"All our horses are under lights from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m.," Keith says. "It simulates that many hours of daylight for the horse and keeps them from getting long coats." →



How to dress your mane and tail varies depending on the event you're competing in.

Clipping. By regularly clipping legs, faces, ears, and bridle paths, it's easier to keep the horses neat and clean for the show pen.

"We clip our horses' legs like a showmanship or pleasure leg because when the hair is shorter, we don't have as much trouble with scratches and fungus," Wendy explains.

Spa day. Just like with human hair, product buildup from shampoos, conditioners, and fly spray can make even healthy horse hair look dull.

"Our facility has a fly system, which means the horses are getting chemicals sprayed on them all the time, so we like to do hot oil treatments once a month," Wendy shares. "I put a little bit of hot oil in warm water, and then upend the bucket right behind the ears and dump it all the way down their back. Then we let the horses drip-dry. It helps to condition their skin and keeps their haircoats looking nice. If you plan to ride outside or turn your horse out, make sure to rinse it off to avoid sunburn."

Even the littlest details matter. "This comes from my showmanship and pleasure days, but I like to put hoof oil on my horses' chestnuts and keep them peeled. So many people don't pay attention to those, but it's an important little detail," Wendy says.

FROM MANE TO TAIL

How to dress manes, tails, and forelocks varies from discipline to discipline, but keeping long manes and tails healthy depends on how you treat them at home.

"At home, we don't like for our grooms to comb the manes and tails every day, because then you end up with no mane and tail," Wendy explains. "The tails are

usually up in a knot to keep them protected. During schooling and just before a class, we'll put the manes in four big bands to keep them from getting snarled up in the reins. Then when the horse is up to show, we take the bands out during our final go-over."

Mane events. For reiners, loose, natural manes are usually the order of the day, while Keith's all-around, trail, and Western pleasure horses get banded regularly for shows.

"Once the horses' manes are banded, the banders cut them to the proper length,"

Keith says. "We also put bands in their forelocks, but only on the day of the show and then we take those out every night."

For skimpy forelocks, Keith likes to add forelock extensions.

"The fake forelocks have a little knob just like the fake tails, so you can just tuck the knob under the horse's natural forelock and keep banding on like normal. It can be hard to do it yourself, so having someone else hold the forelock and hair still while you put the bands on can really help," Keith says.

For extra comfort under saddle, Wendy will braid the last few inches of mane in front of the horse's withers so that loose hairs don't get caught under the saddle blanket.

"If the horse isn't happy doing his job, then nobody wins," Wendy explains. "If the horse is unhappy, the rider is unhappy, the owner is unhappy, and then that makes our job just a little bit harder as trainers, so we try to eliminate all those little potential problems that can cause the horse to be unhappy."

Tail ends. For horses with thin tails, lush tail extensions can add an extra flourish. Learn to fasten your horse's

fake tail correctly and at the right height. If the tail is hung too low, you risk your horse stepping on it while backing or doing maneuvers. If a fake tail is hung too high, it'll stick out like a sore thumb.

Keith likes to keep his all-around horses' fake tails hung level with the fetlocks, while Wendy's reiners typically have fake tails hung a little higher for safety.

"We'll bang the tails so they're square, but we bang them at the top of the skid boots to be safe," Wendy says.

Matching the color of a fake tail with a horse's real tail is important, so many fake tail vendors like to look at a horse's tail in person to get the colors right. If that's not an option, many tail vendors ask that you send in a snippet of your horse's tail hair with your order.

"All horses have very different colors in their tails," Keith says. "We had a horse once who was very plain chestnut, and when Barb Delf of Custom Tails made his tail, she put a handful of silver hair in the middle. That way when he was going down the rail and the hair blew a little, you could see the color. When a horse has no white on his legs or anywhere else, it just gives the horse a little bit of extra flash."

FINISHING TOUCHES

Budget time right before your class for a final check of you and your horse.

"Right before our people go in the ring, we'll do a quick once-over," Wendy says. "We use a cloth to wipe the nostrils out and clean around the eyes, then add a final touch of face grease or spray. If the saddle's dusty, we wipe it off and then they should be good to go."

When you and your horse look your best, you'll ride your best—and it'll be clear to everyone at the show, from the audience to the judges, that you came prepared to win.

"Everything we can do to make our horses look fancy, that's what we need to do," Wendy says. "This is a show. You're representing yourself, so respect yourself because your appearance is the one thing you can control." ★

Just like with human hair, product buildup from shampoos, conditioners, and fly spray can make even healthy horse hair look dull.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

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Congratulations to Shauna Brown





GET
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TRAINER
OF
THE
YEAR
**SHAUNA
BROWN**

Learn more
about the 2022
Horse&Rider
Trainer of the Year
and top NRyHA
and YEDA coach
Shauna Brown
in this Q&A.

Shauna Brown is a top NRHA youth and non-pro trainer and Youth Equestrian Development Association (YEDA) coach in Union City, Pennsylvania. She was awarded Horse&Rider's Trainer of the Year and we thought our readers would love to learn more about Shauna. Here is a Q&A that tells you a little bit more about Shauna and why she was picked for this very special award.

H&R: How did you get started with horses?

Shauna: My dad, Rick Brown, had horses as a kid on his father's dairy farm. He became interested in showing in his early twenties and built a small barn on the family property. By the time I was born, he was raising quality Quarter horses. We have a small barn in Northwestern, Pennsylvania, and though it's grown since he built it in the 1970s, it's where I train out of today.

I don't remember a life without horses. Like most horse-crazy little girls I wanted to live in the barn. My most vivid memories were of riding milestones. I can see very clearly in my head the day that I had my first solo ride on one of my dad's horses. I remember, at five years old, the day we went to pick up my fist pony, Lightning.

H&R: Tell us about your first horse.

Shauna: There have been a few horses that have been especially special to me. My first pony was 19 years old when we got him. He was my best friend. He got me through leadline classes, made me a walk-trot superstar, and then as soon as I was old enough to balance better, he challenged me every single ride. We went everywhere together, bareback with a halter on.

My first horse was a sorrel gelding by the name of Squaw Slides Again. He was out of the last foal crop of Squaw Leo. After Squaw I started showing a bay gelding named Vindicator Cajun. It was a struggle, but we eventually learned to be partners. I learned to ride hunt seat on him. Locally, we showed every class I could put him in. We tried our very best to be competitive at the NRHA reining. For seven years I showed him and then he became my first school horse. He's 31 today.

H&R: Do you have a horse that impacted your career the most?

Shauna: Those horses impacted me in ways I can't even explain but a big, red mare name MSLILREDRIDER was the horse that absolutely changed my career. We originally bought her as a 4-year-old for one of my very dear clients, Bobbi Mancuso. Ed Trueman sold her to us, and I was very upset that he sold a 70-year-old lady a 4-year-old mare. But she did not disappoint. Up until "Red" came into my program I was mostly coaching. I spent so much time schooling clients' horses in the pen that



Shauna spends most of her time coaching riders, but she also competes in the open division.

I had really forgotten how to be a showman. I had won a very small amount of NRHA money. She changed all that.

Red was the kind of mare that I could take in the open division and lay down a screaming 73 run and then she'd slow right back down for her 72-year-old owner to lope through a pattern. She got me a Congress Top 10 medallion, won me tons of money, and helped me to be Top 5 in the Nation in 3 classes in 2 seasons. →



Shauna's job is to make good riders, but she also tries to make even better horsemen and -women.

Oh yeah, she also carried a 10-year-old to a Congress Short Stirrup title in 2018. That mare is truly special.

H&R: Do you have a mentor that impacted your career?

Shauna: My dad. There are no words to describe what an impact he's had on my life. As a little girl, he helped me get through so much fear. He inspired me through actions to keep going when things were the toughest. He taught me that if you wanted something bad enough, you could find a way to have it. I could write an entire book on how special he is.

He is an NRHA non pro and he is the backbone of my entire operation. Part of what makes this barn so special is because it is a small, humble place. As a kid, we didn't have a lot of money and my dad still figured out a way to show reining horses and be successful at it. He has bred, raised, and trained every single horse he has ever made money on. He always figured out a way to get to the horse shows. My dad also did his own farrier work. Once upon a time he even built his own horse trailer. We went to horse shows and ate ham and Swiss sandwiches in the trailer while everyone else went out to dinner. He did what it took to get the job done.

The other person that can't go without mentioning is my dear friend, Ed Trueman. Ed passed a few years ago but he came into my life when I was very near quitting. He sold my clients some wonderful horses and he spent a remarkable amount of time with me without asking for anything in return. He and his partner, Lorie Shaw, taught me about the business of reining horses. They changed my career completely and I miss him every day.

H&R: Tell us about your program and some important lessons you teach.

Shauna: I try to teach everyone here, no matter your age, financial situation, or ability, that if they work hard enough, they can have anything they want. Any dream is attainable. Just like my dad taught me. I'm also big on responsibility and work ethic. This barn and this program are based around horses but I'm trying to teach young people about life in general. Nothing worth having comes easy.

I also have a fantastic Youth Equestrian Development Association (YEDA) program, which is a high school riding team. I have a group of about 45 kids from various states and we compete through the winter "catch riding" horses. It gives young riders the opportunity to show without a horse and offers amazing scholarship opportunities.

I truly never believed that I would be living this life. But little by little I've worked my way towards something more. We are winning at some of the biggest shows in the nation. I have wanted to give up hundreds of times. Maybe I should have. My life would have been much easier doing a normal job. But let me tell you, I'm so glad I didn't. And we aren't done yet. ★