



# Lungeing Notes

Milne Feeds State Coaching School 2019



## LUNGEING A HORSE IS A GREAT WAY:

- To build fitness for your horse,
- Improve your horse's movement, balance, and flexibility,
- To provide controlled exercise if short on time,
- If you want to see how your horse is moving,
- Enjoyment for the horse (change is as good as a holiday)
- To develop bend through the combination of the contact in the lunge line, the whip and the handler's posture.
- Can be used to sculpt the horse into the correct alignment,
- Initiates the longitudinal stretch, essential to engagement
- Train Young Horses
- Teach obedience especially to voice aids, acceptance of equipment, train balance, to go forward with even strides stretching muscles
- Retraining
- Calm down a fractious or overly energetic horse
- Introduce one to a new environment
- Horse becoming one sided
- Disobedient horse
- Help the horse learn to move on a circle and help encourage bend.
- Observe the horse's movement (looking for lameness or way of going).
- Assisting in jump training
- Advanced work in hand
- Lunge a rider without reins and/or stirrups

## THINGS NOT TO DO WHEN LUNGEING:

Never, ever, allow the lunge line to become wrapped around any part of your body, including your fingers, hand(s), waist, neck or feet. People have been injured and even killed this way while Lungeing.

- Move the horse away from you if its rear end is facing you.
- Don't crack the whip because the horse might startle and buck out when you are right behind the horse causing injuries.
- Never lunge a lame horse, except to assess lameness under the supervision of a vet.
- Pressure from moving in a circle will irritate the horse's injury.
- Never lunge your horse in only one direction. Lungeing is quite stressful to his joints, and Lungeing in only one direction is a sure-fire way to make your horse go lame.
- Never lunge your horse on too small of a circle. It puts too much stress on his joints and he could be injured.
- Lunge around other loose horses

## LUNGEING EQUIPMENT

**Use a lunge cavesson.** If you do not have one a halter or bridle on the horse can also be used. If using a halter, take care to ensure it does not twist and rub your horse in the eye. Do not just clip the lunge line to one bit ring, this can cause the bit to be pulled through the horse's mouth.

Snap the **lunge rein to the centre ring of the cavesson.**

On the **saddle**, fix the **stirrups** by winding the leathers around and threading through the end to avoid them moving about.

**Remove noseband from bridle, Fix & secure reins on bridle to saddle.**

**Prepare the lunge line, by folding it back and forward over itself, not by coiling around your hand.** Make sure it's not twisted and is comfortable in your hand.

What you need wear in order to lunge a horse:

- Helmet
- Gloves (undone)
- Boots

What not to wear:

- No Spurs
- No Long and baggy jackets (that can flap and stop whip from being put under the arm)

Lunge Area

**Find an enclosed space for Lungeing, preferably a ring or small enclosed yard.** Be sure that the footing is safe for your horse throughout the ring and that you can make a circle that is at least twenty meters in diameter. Do not work the horse on a tight circle for an extended period of time, as it can cause damage to their legs

**Practice using the Lungeing rein and whip until you are comfortable with them and can handle them nimbly.** Any clumsiness will confuse and upset the horse. Take extreme caution to use good body language and avoid using frantic body language. When the horse does poorly, do not yank multiple times on the rope, Apply consistent and escalating pressure. Give the horse the opportunity to answer correctly to the lowest amount of force. When the horse behaves because of your pressure, release it. Continued pressure after this point will only confuse the horse, as its mind is searching to get you to release the pressure it's feeling. Whatever causes you to give less pressure becomes the correct answer to the horse. To reiterate, practicing your body language and the use of your rein and aids will help you to give clear direction to the horse. The ultimate goal of any horse training exercise including Lungeing is to get the horse to understand the "trick" to getting you to leave it alone is to do what you say.

## **PREPERATION FOR LUNGEING**

To lunge safely and effectively, preparation exercises are useful

Lower the horses head to pressure (Exercise 1)

- On the near side
- Use the left hand in a "thumb down" position to hold the lunge rein near the clip on the lunge rein
- Start slowly to avoid panic by the horse
- Using a pressure of 2-3 out of 10, with your left hand ask the horse to lower his head with a downward pressure on the lunge cavesson
- Release pressure immediately when the horse gives
- Or continue pressure and slowly increase if the horse resists.
- Keep asking until horse responds with a light downward pressure
- If the horse reacts badly by pulling up and backing away, allow him to take the rein through the hand without pulling against him and then begin again.

Ask horse to step backwards from nose pressure (Exercise 2)

- Using the left hand on the lunge rein (thumb down) ask with nose pressure in a backward push towards the shoulder.
- Ask for one step at a time and build up as horse responds.
- Aim for one to three steps
- If horse not responding to the pressure use the whip tapping the knees in time with each step
- Some strong horses require holding of the cheek piece of the bridle for extra control when asking for backwards steps
- If the horse raises it head to high, stop the exercise until this evasion is corrected
- To assist in keeping the horse straight position the horse next to the arena fence.

Ask horse to come forward from both lunge rein and whip (Exercise 3)

- The rein hand asks the horse forward with a clear and firm feel.
- The rein weight should be at least a 3-5 out of 10.
- If the horse resists use the whip handle in a tapping rhythm behind the girth to ask the horse to move forward
- As the horse follows the contact and becomes more forward and light asking aids must be softer

Stop the horse with a blocking rein and whip position (exercise 4)

- The rein hand (without coming behind the horses' head or bit) now blocks the forward movement.
- The handlers' arm is bent with the forearm above the elbow
- Use the whip in front of the horse's chest as a barrier
- If the halt is poor & heavy, then rein the horse back as in Exercise 2
- Repeat both reins

All exercises to be performed on both sides of the horse.

Each exercise should have no resistance before progressing to the next.

Steps of Turn on The Forehand from the halt (Exercise 5)

- Stand in front of horse with rein in left hand
- Left Hand holding lunge rein near clip
- Arm is bent with hand above the elbow to start exercise with no pressure against horses' nose
- Tip horses head left (left flexion), ask with voice "over" and whip positioned near side shoulder
- Ask for one step over with hind legs crossing moving around you the "handler", horse to be straight facing you squarely.
- Build up steps to 3-4 steps,
- If horse pushes forward or you have a lot of weight in the rein. Cease the exercise.
- Repeat until able to perform hind legs sideways with crossing with no contact on rein on both reins.

Transition from Turn on Forehand to beginnings of Lungeing (Exercise 6)

- Once the horse will move away from the whip correctly (crossing the left in front of the other) and without pushing or resisting the rein hand, then we ask for the horse forward with a leading hand on a short length of rein.
- The handler moves alongside the horse on a short length of rein both sides, assessing for true rein connection
- Repeat on both sides

## HOW TO LUNGE

**Position yourself in the centre of the round yard or small fence arena, and, if you're Lungeing to the left, hold the lunge rein in your left hand and your whip in your right hand.**

**Always watch the lunge rope does NOT go slack and touch the ground.**

### Positioning

The handlers rein hand should be opposite or slightly ahead of the horse's nose to allow the horse to be SENT to the contact.

When a correction is given to the horse on the lunge, the arm and hand must still be facing the horse's nose to keep the minimum 90-degree angle between the horse and lunge line.

Keep your wrists, arms and shoulders relaxed and supple, the same as you would for riding.

**Carry the whip pointing slightly at the front of the horse and pointing down under the arm facing backwards when not using it.** The whip forms the third side of a smaller triangle and is towards the horses' shoulder or front feet.

Handler to remain positioned opposite the “V” and slightly towards the horse’s head. Always begin with the handle of the whip towards the horse’s shoulder and NEVER ever step backwards.

Control the horse's speed and pace with voice aids or clicking your tongue, using commands such as "stand", "walk on", "trot on", "canter", "steady" and "halt".

Always shorten the rein and walk towards the horse rather than let the lunge rein go slack.

### **Contact**

Think of the contact (connection from horse on the lunge rein) weighing something between 0-10. Zero being no contact 5 and above a little heavy.

Aim to maintain a contact between 1-3, to give you something in hand when making a correction and then soften when horse responds.

Ask for more forward action by bringing the lunge rein slightly forward and ‘squeezing’ the horse with the whip by bringing it up and closer to the hind quarters.

**To slow the horse, bring the lunge rein back slightly, let the whip point down and slightly away.**

You can shorten the lunge rein towards the horse just add more contact and release immediately when your horse obeys.

**Control the rhythm of your horse's pace with your own feet.**

Keep your feet moving. In the same way, you can control your horse's pace with your seat when riding; your horse will follow the pace of your feet.

**Flick or crack the whip to back up your aids only when necessary.**

Be ready if the horse reacts and wait for the horse to relax and listen to you again.

**Send the horse out on the circle by asking for walk or "move out" and letting the lunge rein slip through your fingers.** Important: Never Let the lunge rein get too slack or the horse may step on it and injure himself or you. When the horse is on the line you want, take up a contact. A twenty-meter circle is normal.

**Keep the horse from turning in or falling in on the circle by pointing the whip at the horse’s shoulder.**

**To lunge the horse in the other direction (called 'changing the rein'), first halt the horse.** Take the lunge rein in your right hand and whip under your left arm putting backwards. Wait until the horse has turned and then ask for walk.

### **Requirements for “C\* & K” Certificates**

- Lunge an experienced, quiet horse at walk & trot
- Fit gear correctly
- Horse in a snaffle bridle, reins correctly secured (no noseband)
- Correctly fitted lunge cavesson with jowl strap
- “C\*” Candidate may use a lungeing roller
- Saddle with stirrups secured correctly
- Horse leg boots or bandages
- Lunge whip in good condition
- Lunge rein suitable length and condition
- Side reins are not permitted for C\* & K
- Have leg protection either boots or bandages
- Identify four reasons for lungeing
- Know the principles; benefits and potential dangers of lungeing
- Know correct equipment for horse and handler