Cecilia Kurkowski

05-08-2020

Training Plan

**Step 1** Decide what you want the animal to learn to do: My goal is to get my horse to bow when I apply pressure to her left shoulder and say “bow.”

**Step 2** Determine your starting point: My horse responds very well to pressure under saddle, but I need to make sure she responds to pressure when I am on the ground and to the places I want for this new trick.

**Step 3** Plan the steps needed to reach your goal:

* I will need her to first pick up her left hoof when I tap it with a crop. She will then need to be able to take at least one step back when I apply pressure to her left point of shoulder. After she understands these moves individually, I will ask her to pick up her hoof and, while I hold it, ask her to move back like she was moving her front left leg back.
* If she does not understand leaning back rather than trying to step back, I will have to approach this differently. I would still ask her to respond to the pressure to pick up her hoof. I would then use treats, as she is very food motivated, to get her to lean back from reaching her neck down near her legs. I will then combine her picking up her hoof, and while I hold it, guide her head back so she leans into the bow position for the treat. Once she understands to keep her hoof up or rather her cannon bone flat on the ground, I will apply pressure to her shoulder as I guide her with the treat. I hope that she learns to associate the pressure of the shoulder being released as she does the task and gets the treat. I want her to be able to not rely on my guidance so when I apply the pressure on the point of her shoulder and she leans back, I will immediately release the pressure and then give her the treat. Whenever she is about to complete the full bow I will say “bow” and then reward her in hopes of associating the term with the move because she is great with voice commands.

**Step 4** Decide how you will reinforce or respond to the responses you may get from your training subject: My main form of reinforcement is to release the pressure as soon as she does what I am asking for. This is negative because I am taking something away. I could use both types of reinforcement; I would use the negative reinforcement as soon as she responds to the pressure by backing off and could also use positive reinforcement by giving her a treat directly after as she is bowing. If she does not give me what I want I will continue giving the same amount of pressure until she responds, or I will most likely reevaluate if what I am asking her to do is clear enough. For example, if she is not responding to any pressure I will try to get her to respond to the pressure on other areas of her body in case she forgot what the pressure means or try starting the trick on her right side. I did make many adjustments to my plan in case she needs more guidance or my teachings are not clear to her.

**Step 5** How will you evaluate your success: I will evaluate my success at each step that she is making progression to our final goal. Although I have taught her things in the past, this trick is being taught with my new knowledge. As bowing is a more difficult trick, I really just want her and I to have a greater understanding of her learning.