



The most important ingredient in any training program is consistency. This includes teaching children, dogs, horses or retraining ourselves mentally or physically. Specifically, with horse training, this means going out and doing the same thing with your horse every day until you and your horse master a technique or maneuver. Horse training is all about mastering the small fundamental exercises of body control. Even the most athletic maneuvers are simply a combination of small fundamentals put together seamlessly. The greatest horse trainers have figured this out and have become obsessive about mastering basic body control.

If you're training your own horse or trying to maintain the training your horse has received from a professional you must acquire or take on the mentality of a professional trainer. Horses do not care that you pay the feed bill, mortgage on the barn or even that you brag to your friends about how great or poor they are. We need to love and care for our animals on their terms, not ours. The amount of consistency that it takes to train a horse well is unfathomable to a novice until they have gone through the process themselves. There will be times when you feel you are being too demanding of your horse, but as you gain more experi-

ence and success you will find the balance that works for you. As you create more obedience and responsibility in your horse, you can then give them more freedom.

Having a timeline for training a horse will help you to understand how consistent you need to be. So I'm going to give you a fairly concrete idea of what markers and timelines to look for and progress towards. In three months a horse should have a basic foundation. This means they should be gentle and be mounted without much lunging, as well as walk, trot and lope around relaxed. You should be able to handle them through new situations with little difficulty. Past this point it will take two years to get a horse into the show pen or make them a considerably solid ranch mount. This will take riding five days a week with a week's vacation every six months or so and maybe a Friday off every so often if they've ridden very well Monday through Thursday. If this sounds like a lot of consistency you will need to recalibrate your scale. You may not plan on showing your horse or using them on the ranch everyday but that does not matter to your horse. For him to become the best at what you have in mind, he needs consistency at least four days a week.

Matthew Bohman

Matthew has made his living training horses since he was sixteen years old. After working and learning directly with several well known and respected trainers and horsemen learning cutting, cow horse, roping and reining, Matthew decided to take his experience and years of training young and challenging horses to the next level and is currently starting 2 year olds for NRHA Hall of Famer, Bob Loomis. His willingness to share his knowledge is the driving force behind his new clinic program. He is now available for clinics and lessons as well as a limited number of colt starts and training.



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