

DECEMBER 1, 2010

## SHERYL LYNDE & RICK HOFFMAN FOUNDATION TO FINISH TRAINING



**RICK AND GYPSY CHIC  
EXCA WORLD FINALS  
FUTURITY NOVEMBER 12-14,**

## Why we do what we do

**How to prepare your horse for a solid foundation – whether you ride trail or compete.**

A year ago I picked up Gypsy Chic out of Idaho and brought her back for a client/friend to start – she was 2 years old at the time and straight out of a pasture with several other

youngsters – very limited handling. The Pre-Purchase Exam was limited at best – she was very frightened and difficult for the Vet to Examine thoroughly.

A year later Rick and Gypsy Chic won the EXCA World Championship in the Futurity Division. He had

to shoot a Winchester rifle off of her at a stand still, shoot a colt 45 at targets while loping, drag a tractor tire, rope a horse, pony a horse, ground tie, strip the saddle and jump barrels and spin and do rollbacks bareback – these were a few of the obstacles in the futurity which took place over 3-days.

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# Where to start - At the beginning - Round Pen

I began by sacking her out to just being touched everywhere – so while standing at her shoulder with her being haltered and with a firm hold onto the lead rope and with one hand I began sacking her out to touch with my other hand on her poll, ears, shoulders, back, flank, legs, feet, hips. If she tried to bolt or spook – I just stayed with her and left my hand at that spot until she was calm – until she showed me just one of the 5 signs I was looking for that signals she is giving me a hint of relaxing – either a blink of an eye, the lowering of her head, a deep breath, licking and chewing or cocking of the leg – then I removed my hand. I repeated this for as long as was necessary for her to stand calm and be handled all over on each side. You really can't rush any of these steps – if you do – you will have a hole in your training that you will have to address somewhere down the road. When I could handle her everywhere and have her completely calm and have a soft eye – then and only then was it time for her to move on to the next step in her foundation.

Then I began sacking her out with the lead rope – her halter was on – and I would again stand at her shoulder and begin flicking the lead rope over her body beginning with the withers until I received the same signs of acceptance. People give up on this too soon – I do it for at least 4 times at each spot – retreating as soon as you get one of the signals from the horse as mentioned above. I always stand at the shoulder – if they try to strike or kick – you are out of harms way.

Then the next step would be plastic bags, tarps and then the flag. I start all these items by standing in the same position, and folding the item up until very small and waving the item at their side – then opening up the bag or tarp until larger and sacking them out to the noise of waving it more vigorously by their side until they are calm – then I go to touching them with it – lightly at first, then more vigorously until they are calm on both sides. I also loop the head rope around their girth and hold it tight to simulate the cinch of

the saddle – I do this several times. Next I use the same technique to sack them out to the saddle blanket. If I have done my job thoroughly with approach and retreat only when they show signs of being calm, then I have prepared them as best as can be for the next step - the saddle. Since horses learn by the release – I would NEVER tie anything to a horse such as a plastic bag or tarp – there must be a release when they are giving you the response you are looking for – and it must be a full release.

If I have done my job thoroughly, then I have prepared the youngster for all the steps appropriately and continue to build on a nice solid foundation.

*Next Week – how to apply everything we have taught from the ground to the saddle.*

## FOUNDATION TO FINISH



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&  
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