

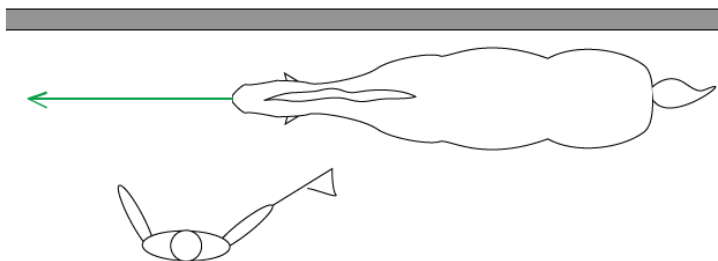
Exercises: Groundwork – Sending

Sending a horse is one of the most useful exercises we can perform from the ground. Indeed, every day we are confronted to situations where pointing a direction and feeling our horse respond at once and without any fear or hesitation would be of great convenience: walking through a gate, getting out of the stall, loading into the trailer, etc.

This exercise is designed to teach a horse to move on a feel, trusting our decision and judgment

Position

You will need to use the fence of the round-pen, the rail of the arena or a wall to proceed with this exercise. Position yourself right in front of the fence, about a couple of meters away maximum. Your horse should be parallel to the fence, head toward you.



Security

Taking into account that you have been through the Fundamentals _ desensitizing, backing up and longeing _, you should not have any problem with your horse at this stage. Yet, I always advise to keep the flag in hand, in case of emergency you can push him away or simply to add extra pressure if your horse hesitates at the beginning.

Tip: Take some time to do nothing with your horse.

Our horses should not think that being with us means working hard from the beginning to the end of the session. They like peace, so do not hesitate to offer them these little moments of calm, just be with the; and pet them.

Process

This exercise is quite similar to lunging: point the direction, let you horse walks through, stop it by yielding its hindquarters.

So, first you point the direction, which is right between you and the fence. Then you should leave some time to your horse to gather its courage and decide to walk through. After a few seconds, if your horse does not move, raise the flag and push it. Finally, once it has crossed that wild area between you and the fence, point toward its hindquarters to make your horse stop and cross the hind legs until it comes back to a position parallel to the fence, head looking at you.

Q&A

What if my horse starts to back up?

Some horses are not at ease with this exercise first, they will be afraid to go through as they are instinctively claustrophobic. Just remain consistent, keep pointing the direction and raise the flag to put an extra pressure, tap gently its shoulder if necessary.

If your horse is really spooky around the fence, process wtep by step: one step forward is enough to release pressure and reward, then two or three steps, etc. until your horse goes through once. You may leave it here, end on a positive note and do it again the day after.

What if my horse keeps moving in circles around me?

Be firm! Remember we cannot teach softness if we never show what is firmness. If your horse does not stop on a feel, pull firmly on its head, that will push the hindquarters away and help them cross until it stops.

What if my horse does not cross correctly its hindquarters?

Do not stop, keep walking your horse in circle and ask again for its yielding the hindlegs. If that is a problem, go back to the full circle and half circle exercises until it gets the right move.

