

Breaking And Training Colts

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Introduction

THE VALUE AND USEFULNESS of horses depend to a great extent on how well they are trained.

The horse is taught to do things by the association of ideas. A definite word should always be used for the same command. The word “whoa” means stop to him for the reason that he has been trained to stop when he hears that word.

Begin the training early and later lessons will not be difficult. Handle the colt regularly, as frequent short lessons are of more value than occasional long ones.

The horse does things largely because of habit, and therefore much care should be exercised in establishing good habits.

Kindness is essential to training horses. Few horses are inherently vicious, but many are made vicious by carelessness or brutality. To train horses successfully, a man needs to exercise patience, gentleness, and firmness.

Overloading young horses is apt to cause balkiness. Punishing him for something he cannot do my also have the same result.

The well-trained horse that “walks up on the bit” is demanded by city trade.

This bulletin describes methods of properly breaking and training colts raised on the average farm, and is not intended as a treatise on the training of horses for special purposes, such as trotters, saddle horses, hunters, polo ponies, etc. The training of such horses requires the services of men especially skilled in particular phases of horsemanship and should not be attempted by the novice.

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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

THE breaking and training of colts is of prime importance, because their future value and usefulness depend to a great extent on whether or not they were well broken. By a broken colt is meant one that is safe to handle in the stable or on that road and that will obey the commands of the driver or rider.

Memory and habit are the two main factors with which we have to deal in training horses. A horse usually acts through instinct and habit, associated with the memory of what he has formerly learned. One of the greatest characteristics of a horse is his uniformity of conduct, for what he has once been trained to do he will nearly always do under like conditions.

The first thing in training a horse is to get his attention. The second is to make him understand what is wanted. The education of the horse is based on reward and punishment. The reward, a pat on the neck, etc., should immediately follow the act of obedience. The punishment, to be effective, must immediately follow the act of disobedience.

Few horses are inherently vicious. Many horses are made vicious and unreliable by the carelessness or brutality of their trainers. If a horse kicks because the harness hurts him or shies at something of which he is afraid, punishment is not justifiable. If, however, after being stopped, a horse starts before receiving the command to do so, he should be punished. All horses cannot be treated alike. A high-strung, sensitive horse must be treated gently, the dullard sharply. The same force applied to the sensitive horse that is necessary to make the dullard act would be likely to cause the high-strung horse to rebel, while the gentleness would obtain obedience. Horses are naturally obedient, and when thoroughly trained their conduct is uniformly good.

A horse should be trained so that he thinks that there is no limit to his power to do the things required of him and believes that he has no power to do that which is against the wishes of his master. Above all, never ask of a horse something he is unable to perform and then punish him because it cannot be done. If during the first year of his work a colt is hitched only to loads that he can pull, he will develop into a good work horse, while if he is overloaded a few times he may become balky and worthless.

To train horses successfully a man needs to exercise great patience, gentleness and firmness. If you are training a horse and lose your temper, you had better put the horse into the stable until the next day, for further work at this time will be worse than useless and may undo the work already done.

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SUGGESTIONS

Never work a colt after he is tired. By heeding this precaution you prevent obstinacy and render him a willing and obedient pupil.

Training should be given in a quiet place, where the colt's attention will not be distracted from the work at hand by other horses or strange surroundings.

Whenever two persons are working with a horse they should be on the same side. The horse's attention is then undivided, and if he plunges or kicks he may be controlled with less danger to the trainers.

To harness or unsaddle a horse it is customary to approach his near or left side, also to mount from the left side.

Never approach a horse without first gaining his attention. Always speak to him before attempting to walk into a stall beside him.

MAN IS MASTER

In the following instructions principal emphasis is laid on kindness to the horse. In reality the whip is of equal importance with kindness. To be submissive to a man's will, the horse must fear the consequences of disobedience. There will be clashes, but the horse must be convinced that the man is master. Always, if the horse cannot do or cannot be made to do what is asked of him, make him do something else. So long as he is not allowed to do what he himself chooses he will consider man his superior and master.

AGE TO BREAK

Horses are broken any time from the time they are weanlings until they are old. The instincts in a horse which are opposed to obedience to man increase in strength with age. This accounts for the difficulty encountered in handling range horses that are allowed their freedom until their instinct of independence is so strongly developed that it is proportionately difficult to teach them that it is their duty to obey some force other than their own instinct.

It is a great advantage to begin the education of the colt as early as possible. Handle and pet but never tease or "rough" with the youngster. A good plan is to break the colt to lead before it is weaned, and to harness between the ages of 2 and 3 years. Accustom colts to work gradually and do not use them at heavy work until they are practically mature.

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GENTLING THE COLT

If the foal has been properly handled, it will not be difficult to break him to stand tied and to lead. Before tying the colt handle him enough so that he partially realizes that the halter and ropes are being used for his control. To handle the colt at first, put on a strong halter and supplement it with a three-fourths inch neck rope about 12 feet long. Run one end of the rope through the halter's ring and tie it around the neck with a bowline knot tight enough so that the noose will not slip on the neck. (See fig. 1.) When tying have not more than 2½ or 3 feet of slack. If the first tying is made in a wide stall, the attendant may enter and leave without frightening the colt or danger to himself.

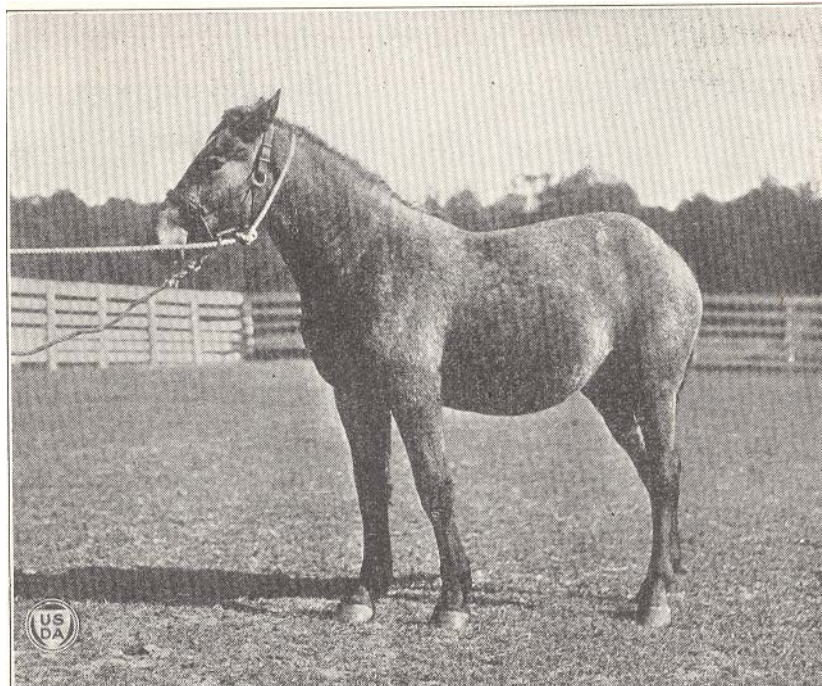


FIG. 1 —Ordinarily only a neck rope is needed to supplement a halter in tying up the colt for the first time.

While tied the colt should be gentled and accustomed to being handled on both sides, on the hind parts, and on the legs. To do this, hold the headstall in one hand and with the other hand gentle—that is, pet and rub—the colt, first on the neck and head, then on the back and sides, and last on the legs. One must be fearless without taking unnecessary chances while working with a colt.

With an older colt the safety tie rope should be long enough to extent through the halter ring, down between the forelegs, and about the body. The body noose is made with a running knot and will tighten up when the colt pulls back. After the colt makes a few pulls this tie will no longer be required.

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BREAKING TO LEAD

The more handling a colt receives the more easily he will be trained to lead. Although precautions are taken to prevent the colt breaking away, it will be well to give the first lessons in a corral or paddock. Use diplomacy rather than force. Do not try to pull the colt straight ahead, but instead step to one side and in front (see fig. 2), give a command, as “Come,” and pull sharply on the rope. A definite word should always be used for the same command. An assistant to emphasize a command with a buggy whip will be valuable at first, but should be released as soon as the colt moves when commanded to do so. Reward the colt with a kind pat when he moves even a little distance. Frequent short lessons are of more value than occasional long ones, and should be continued until the colt leads freely.

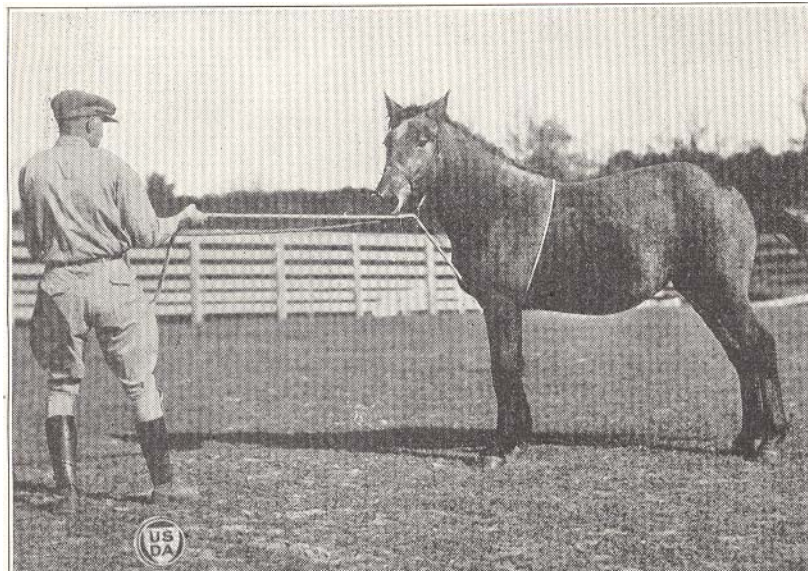


FIG. 2—This tie is used with older or more stubborn colts in breaking them to stand tied or lead.

If the suckling colt is being broken, tie him to the mother's trace when she is worked. The tie is made at about the union of back band and trace and short enough to prevent the colt from getting in front of the team. This will acquaint him with the general conditions and noises pertaining to work, and on account of the mother's being near he will soon become familiar with such surroundings.

This practice should be continued at short interval and only until the colt is broken to lead.

Another arrangement used in breaking older colts is crupper rope. This is made with about 14 feet of rope, bringing the ends together and giving the rope a double twist near the middle, thereby making a small rope to be placed under the tail. The ends come forward at each side of the horse and are tied at the breast. This crupper rope is held up

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by a rope surcingle, while a lead rope is attached at the breast and passed through the halter ring.

A simpler method and one sometimes used when the trainer is working alone is a loop dropped over the hips and allowed to fall to the quarters. Any special rope should be discarded as soon as possible.

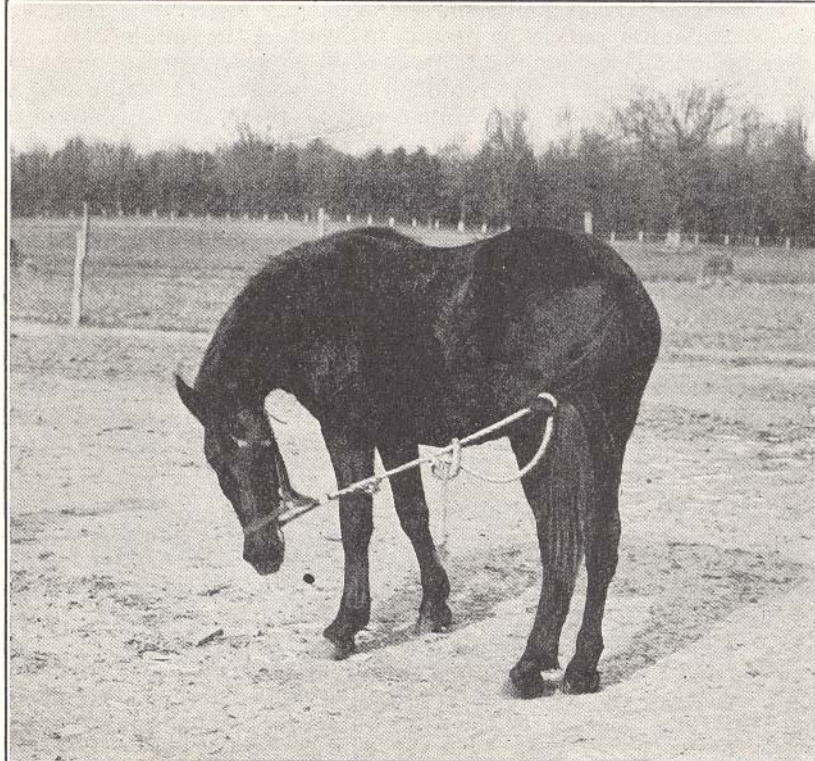


FIG. 3.—One method of gentling a colt.

Many horsemen prefer using the whip in breaking colts to lead at the side. In this training the attendant stands on the near side about opposite the colt's shoulder. The lead rope is held in the right hand fairly close to the colt's mouth, while an ordinary straight buggy whip is held quietly in the left hand. Tapping the colt upon the hind quarters makes him move forward and at the same time stay slightly away from the attendant. A few lessons will generally teach the colt to stay always in this position.

In handling older unbroken horses, such as the western range animal often shipped to farming sections, more caution, skill, knowledge, and fearlessness are needed. The older horse will recognize the least sign of fear upon the part of the trainer and will seize the first opportunity to be master instead of pupil. The habits of the older horse are firmly fixed, and greater skill is needed to train him without "breaking his spirit." A quite common practice is to rope the horse in the corral or paddock and gradually snub him up close on the off side of a gentle saddle horse. It is best to use a half-hitch rope equipped with a perfect running knot and to keep the double hitch on the saddle horn straight so that it may be released at any time. The halter may be placed upon the unbroken horse with safety by working over the gentle horse. Attach a moderately long lead rope to the halter rope, and swing the saddle horse a step or two to the left. At first the horse will no doubt lie back upon the rope, but it will not be long until he will move

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forward upon command. After a little preliminary work lead the pupil into the stable (still using the saddle horse), put on the body tie rope, and tie him up. In later lessons use only the neck rope and teach him to lead him without special ropes.

Another method of gentling a horse is to tie the halter rope to the tail as shown in Figure 3. This forces him to go in a circle. When he gives in and stands quietly he may be harnessed, saddled mounted, and accustomed to strange sights and sounds. This is a useful aid in use in gaining a stubborn horse's submission.

HANDLING THE COLT'S FEET

If the owner will accustom a colt to having his feet handled and trimmed before he is weaned, much future work and trouble will be avoided. Untrimmed hoofs usually grow long and uneven, and a crooked foot, or worse, a crooked leg, is often the result. Failure to regulate the length and bearing of the foot may make a straight leg crooked, while intelligent care of the feet during the growing period can greatly improve a leg that is crooked at birth. There would be fewer cracked hoofs and badly shaped feet, or interfering and "paddling" horses, if the feet were properly cared for earlier in life.

When picking up a colt's foot teach him to stand on three legs by shifting his weight when the foot is lifted. Begin the lessons with the left front foot. Grasp the foot firmly and shift the colt's weight by pushing against the shoulder with the free hand while quickly lifting the foot at the same time. When the colt responds, reward him by caressing him and then trim and level the hoof. (See fig. 4.) Never lose hold of the foot until you wish to put it down.

To raise a hind foot, work slowly and gently, lifting the foot forward a few times before carrying it backward into the shoeing position. After some handling, trim and level the hoof.

A halter twitch is a great aid in handling the feet of a horse that will not stand. (See fig. 5.) The twitch is easily applied and needs only the ordinary halter and tie rope. Pass the rope over the horse's head just behind the ears; raise the upper lip and put the rope across the gums above the teeth; run the rope through the loop made by passing the rope over the horse's head. The rope should be tight from the halter ring, over the head, under the lip, and through the loop. A few good pulls on this rope should make the horse stand quietly.

For a kicker try the following: Buckle a strap with a 2-inch ring around the hind pastern, run a rope through this ring and carry the end over the horse's back, tie to the opposite foreleg next to the body, and lead the horse forward. When he lifts his foot it may be held up by pulling on the loose end of the rope, as shown in Figure 6.

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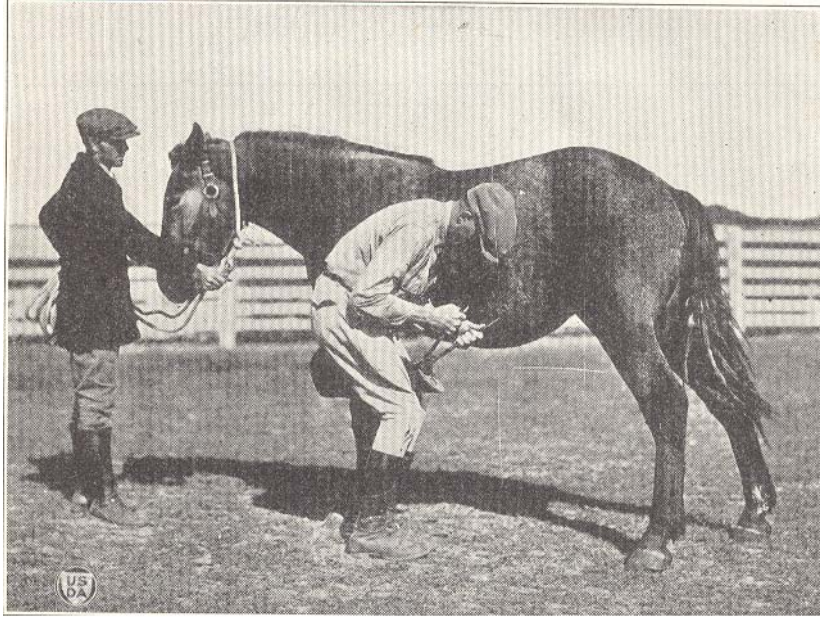


FIG. 4.—The feet should be trimmed regularly.

The foot may be held either forward or backward with this arrangement. (See also fig. 7.) To put this rigging on the kicker or an unbroken horse, tie up a front foot, and have the assistant hold his hand over the eye on the same side as the foot to be lifted. The best time to work on a horse's feet is when he is tired from a drive or other exercise.

BREAKING TO DRIVE

After the colt has been broken to lead he may be accustomed to harness and trained to rein. A horse should never be hitched to a wagon or ridden before he is broken to drive in a harness; that is, trained to go at command, stop when he hears "whoa," rein to the right and left, and to back up.

To familiarize the colt with the bit and harness the "bitting harness," consisting of an open bridle with snaffle bit, check and side reins, and sucringle with crupper, may be used. The biting harness is shown in Figure 8.

Put the rigging on the colt, leaving the side and check reins comparatively loose, and turn him loose in a small paddock for an hour. On the second lesson the reins may be tightened somewhat, but not left on for over an hour. The third day driving lines may be put on. Let the assistant lead the colt till he is not frightened at the driver walking behind. Dismiss the assistant as soon as possible, and drive the colt for half an hour in a quiet paddock or lane where he will not see other horses. All that should be taught in this lesson is to go ahead. Cluck to the colt, or tell him "get up," and use the whip to let him know what is meant.

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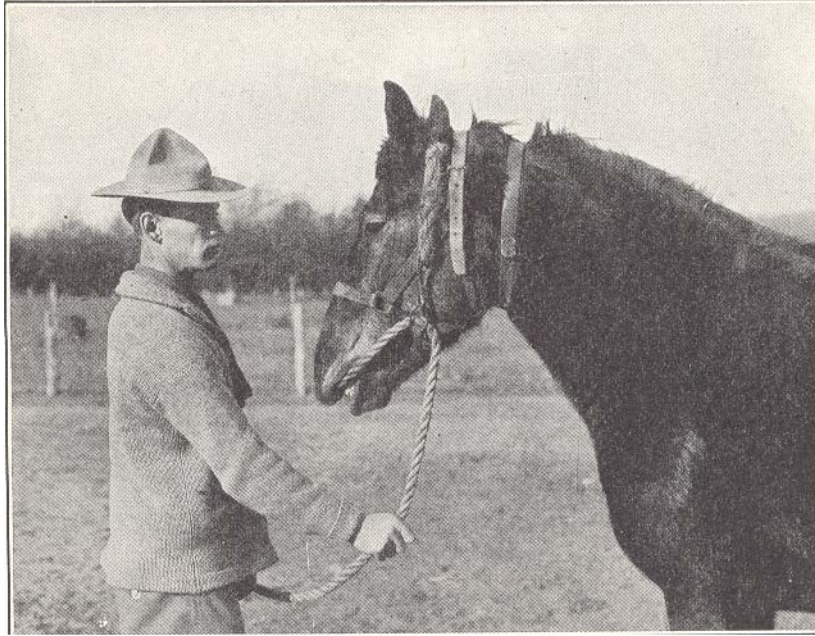


FIG. 5.—Halter twitch.

It is essential to train both sides of a colt. He may become accustomed to objects seen on the near (left) side with the near eye but when the same objects are viewed for the first time on the other side with the off (right) eye he may be badly frightened. Driving in right and left circles will facilitate this training.

TO STOP A HORSE—“WHOA”

The next lesson should be a short review of the previous work and in addition the meaning of “whoa.” “Whoa” in horse training is the big word. It doesn’t mean back or steady, but stop. Train the horse so that when he hears “whoa” he will stop and stay stopped, no matter what is happening.

To stop a horse say “whoa” so that he hears you plainly, and immediately follow the command with a pull on the reins. The most effective use of the reins is to hold one rein just tight and give a good pull on the other one, then relax the pressure. If the horse doesn’t stop, repeat the command and pull. Soon he will stop at the word, and the pull may be eliminated.

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FIG. 6.—Raising the hind foot.

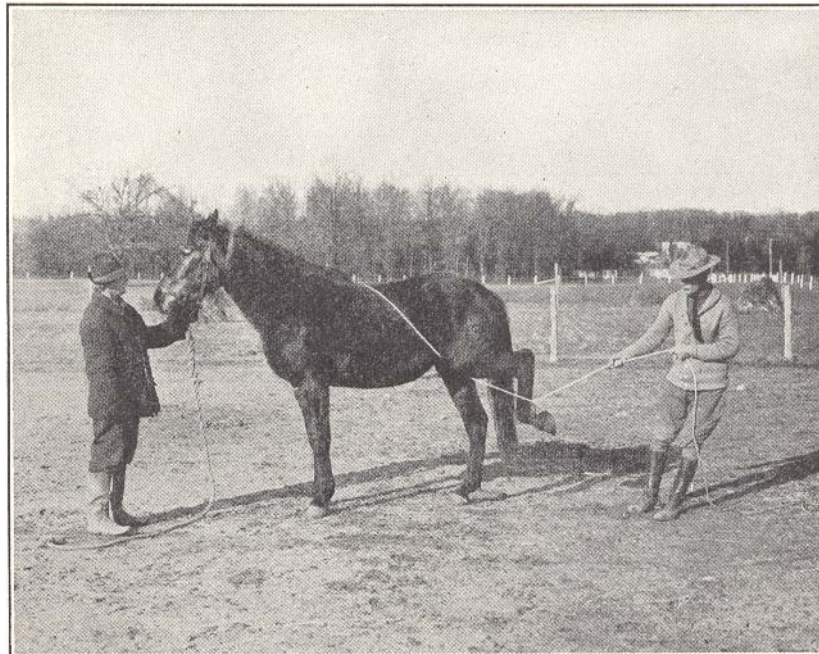


FIG. 7.—Holding foot for shoeing.

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TO BACK A HORSE—"BACK"

The next lesson should review "get up" and "whoa," and the horse should be taught to back. As a horse should be trained to stop on command, so should he back on the word, and pulling on the lines should be unnecessary.

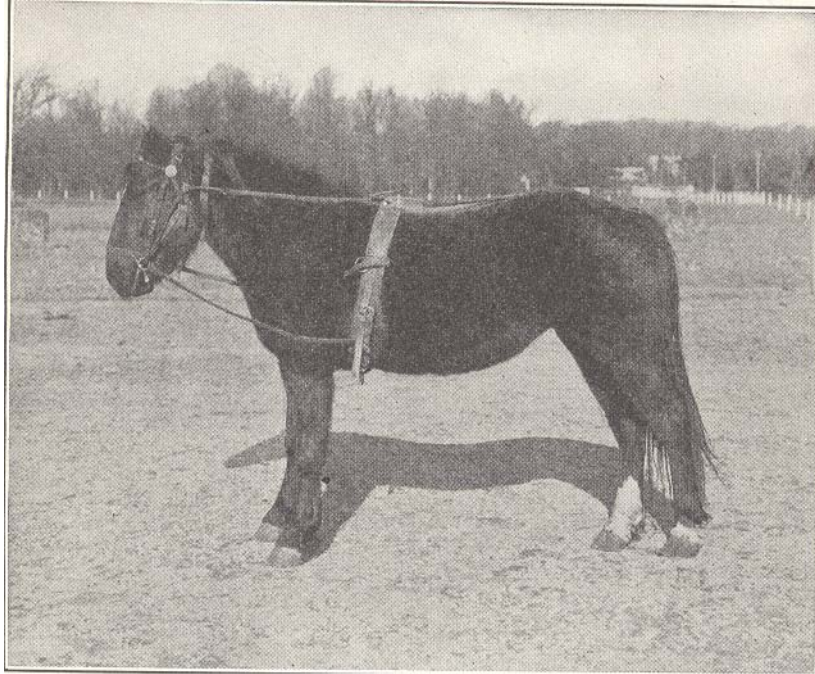


FIG. 8.—Bitting Harness.

Drive the horse a few steps to get his attention, stop him, then give the command "back," following it with a good pull on the reins. If he yields a step, pet him, and then repeat the command with the pull on the reins. Do not exert continuous pressure, for if this is done the horse will take the bit and forge ahead. Do not make the lesson too long. Repeat the next day, and continue the lessons until the horse will back on command.

After the horse goes satisfactorily in bitting rig, the work harness with breeching should be substituted. The traces and breeching should be joined loosely together and gradually tightened as the work progresses. This will familiarize the colt with the sensation of wearing collar and breeching. As soon as he goes well with the harness he is ready to be hitched to the wagon or cart, single or double.

DRIVING DOUBLE

To drive double use a broken, gentle horse for a team mate, preferable one that the colt knows. The colt or green horse should be hitched on the off side of the team. Be sure that all parts of the harness are strong, as during the training of the colt it is particularly important that you have absolute control and that he does not become

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frightened because of breakage. During the first few lessons the use of a jockey stick will assist in keeping the colt from crowding the older horse. (See fig. 9.) This stick is a stout bar, long enough to reach from the outer hame ring of the older horse to the halter ring or bit of the colt, and is provided with a snap at each end or is tied in place. The colt should be tied back with the halter rope to the backband or trace ring of the older horse. During the hitching the assistant stands quietly at the colt's head, and afterward handles the guy rope (about 20 feet long) which runs through the right bit ring and under the jaw and is attaché to the left ring, and is used to restrain the colt when he becomes overfractious. After the horses are hitched together, drive them around without the wagon, stopping, starting, and backing the team. Thirty minutes should suffice for this lesson.

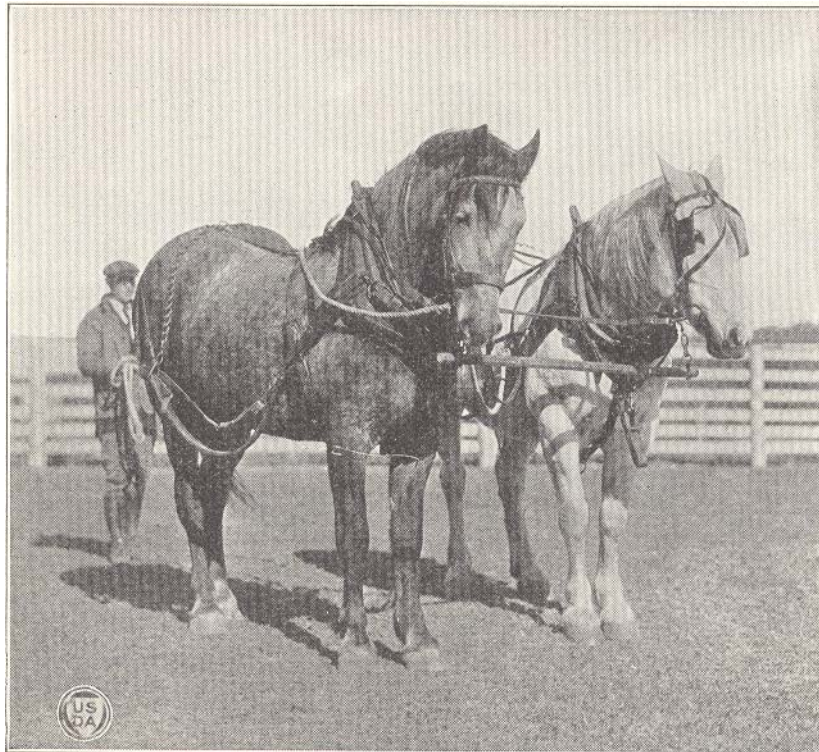


FIG. 9.—A “jockey stick” will assist in keeping the colt in place when being broken with an older horse to drive double.

At the next lesson familiarize the colt with the wagon. If he has been previously led by the side of his dam he will not be likely to become frightened at the rattle of the wagon. Lead the gentle horse up to his place at the tongue, then bring the colt up, hitching them as in the previous lesson. Attach the neck yoke and hook the traces.

Do not hitch the colt too tight at first. Have a short stay chain on the old horse so that if necessary he can start the wagon himself. The driver may get into the wagon, but the assistant should walk to the right and near of the colt with the guy rope. The driver must give all commands and do the driving, while the assistant is as quiet as possible and acts only when absolutely needed. Drive only a short distance at a time, and start and stop frequently, using the brake to prevent the wagon from running up on the team. During

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the stops the assistant may step up carefully to the colt and quiet him if it is thought necessary to reassure him.



FIG. 10.—A field is a good place for the first hitching in a double harness.

The best place for the first hitching is a big field (see fig. 10.), but after the colt goes well a short drive may be taken on a quiet roadway. Always stop when the colt shows fear of something. Let him look the object over and examine it; never whip him or rush by anything at which he is frightened; otherwise a shying horse will be the result the daily drive may be increases in length until the colt is broken, or he may be used in ordinary light work. During the first year's work is till be well to work the colt with a horse that is a free, fast walker.

DRIVING SINGLE

Skill and care are required to train a colt properly to drive single. A heavy single harness or special breaking harness should be used. A strong cart with extra long shafts is also very valuable for this work. (See fig. 11.) After the colt has become somewhat accustomed to the cart hitch him to it as quietly as possible. A kicking strap, consisting of heavy straps running across the hips and buckled to the shafts. Even though the colt is quiet, some difficulty may be experienced, and the driver should be ready for any emergency that may come up. If the colt is one that may kick, lunge, or try to run, put on the trip ropes. With trip ropes confirmed kickers, runaways, or otherwise unsafe horses may be handled with safety and cured of their bad habits. To put on trip ropes a strong sucringle, five 2-inch iron rings, two straps to go around the pasterns, and a rope about 25 feet long are needed. Fasten three 2-inch rings to the underside of the sucringle and put straps with rings on the front feet. Run one end of the rope through the near (left) ring on the sucringle, through the ring on the near foot, up and through the middle sucringle ring, down through the ring on the off (right) forefoot, up, and attach the off-side sucringle ring. A pull on the rope when the horse steps will bring him to his knees. This appliance may also be used to teach a horse the meaning of "whoa." The single trip-rope

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attachment on the left forefoot, as shown in Figure 12, is often used. Always use knee pads or have the horse on soft ground where he will not injure his knees.



FIG. 11.—Breaking cart and harness with trip ropes and kicking straps.

As with driving double, the colt should know the terms “get up” and “whoa” before the cart is used. When the colt is hitched the assistant may handle the guy rope or trip rope and be in the background as much as possible, so that the colt’s attention may not be divided. The method to be followed in hitching is somewhat similar to that in breaking double, but a longer and more thorough training is required.

Before the colt is driven on busy highways he should be “city broke.” A single driver can not be said to be well broken until he has been carefully tried under every possible condition.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Before the colt is driven in the city or on a road where there is heavy traffic he should be accustomed to such sights and sounds as will be encountered there. If a railroad track is near where trains pass frequently, or a road with automobile traffic, or a traction engine in action, put on the leading ropes and tie the colt. As soon as he loses his fear of such sights and sounds at a distance he should be led up to them, if possible, and allowed to make an examination. When he finds that they do not hurt him he loses his fear and may then be driven on busy roads and streets.

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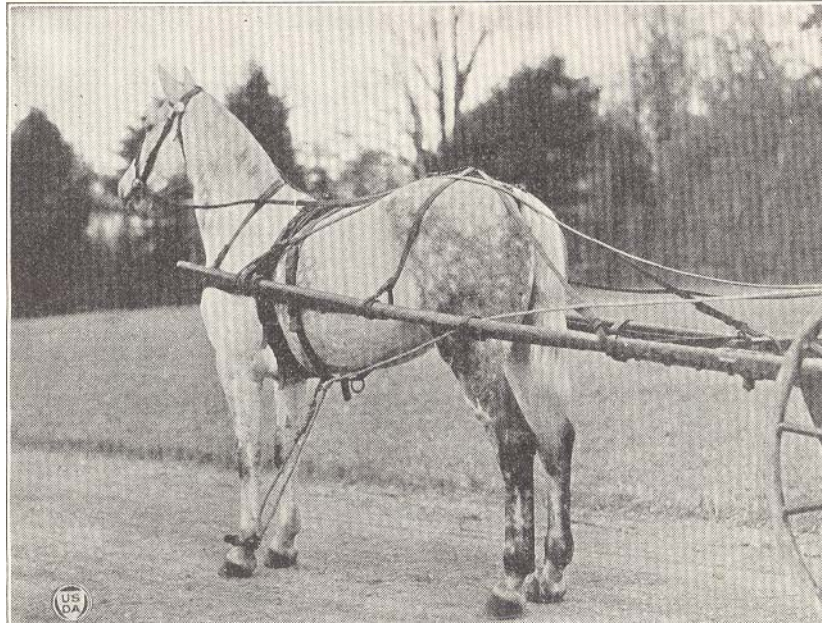


FIG. 12.—Single trip-rope attachment.

BREAKING TO RIDE

When a horse is to be used for riding it is well first to break him to drive single and double. This will make him quieter to ride.

Horses usually buck through fear. In breaking one to ride, take plenty of time and do not frighten him. Put the saddle on and lead him around until he becomes accustomed to it. Do not have the girth too tight. The horse may be tied up for a time and later turned into a paddock with the saddle on.

Next accustom the colt to being mounted, getting on and off a number of times. (See fig. 13.) The assistant should have a lead rope tied around the horse's neck and run through the rings of a snaffle bit. If the horse attempts to play up or shows resistance, punish him with a jerk on the bit. Let the assistant lead the horse with rider around until the horse is familiar with the weight on his back, then dismiss the assistant. If the horse becomes rebellious, pull his head sharply to one side; do not let him get it down. The first few rides should be in a small inclosure.

The gaits should be taught separately. The first few rides should be at a walk; next teach the trot, and then the canter. Spurs should not be used until the horse is well broken.

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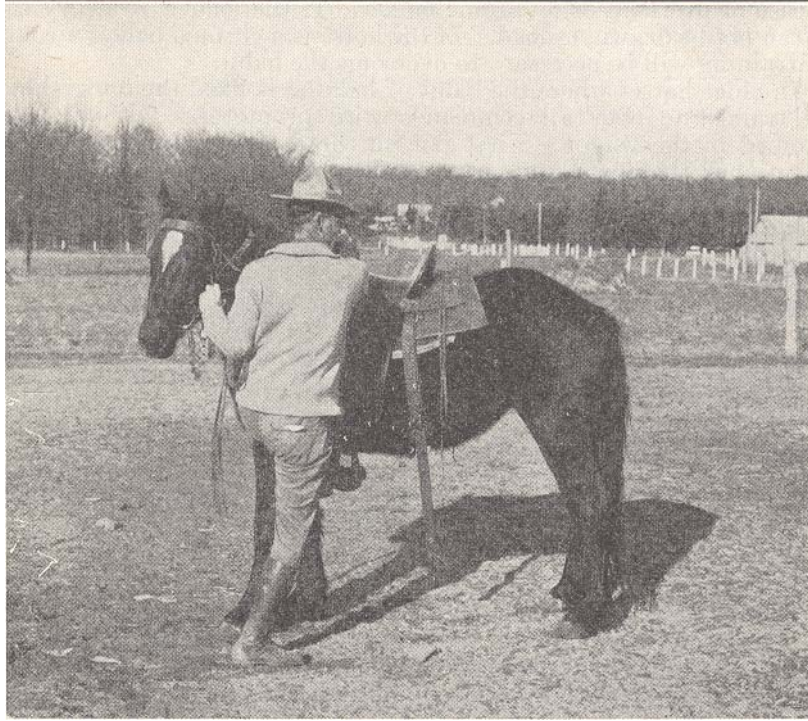


FIG. 13.—Mounting a colt.

CORRECTING BAD HABITS

Colts that have been properly handled and trained do not develop bad habits, such as balkiness or kicking. When horses with bad habits are encountered a careful study of each case should be made in order to ascertain the cause, and, if possible, to remove it.

BALKINESS

The most common cause of balkiness among horses is punishment to make them do something that they can not do or that they do not understand how to do. Another common cause is forcing horses to draw heavy loads without allowing them to stop occasionally and to rest and regain their breath. The use of the whip or the spur in such instances should be avoided, as the pain inflicted will be very likely to provoke further and more stubborn rebellion.

If a horse balks the bearing of the harness should be examined to see if it is hurting him. If a heavy load is being drawn and the horse is not allowed to rest and regain his breath and strength he may become sulky and refuse to pull. Give him a short rest, and while he is resting rub his nose, pick up a front foot and tap the hoof a few times, or adjust the harness, and he may forget his grievance. Take the lines and give the command to go ahead, turning slightly to the left or right to start. If the horse does not

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start it is either a case of overload or a chronic balker. If the load is so heavy that it can not be drawn, unload. If the horse is a chronic balker a course of training will be necessary to overcome the habit.

In older horses where the habit of balking is fixed the horse should be trained to obey all commands with promptness without being hitched to the wagon. First put on the double trip ropes and use them until the horse stops and stands when he hears "whoa." Next put on the guy line, which should be managed by an assistant, while you drive and attend the trip ropes. The guy line is a rope fastened around the horse's neck and a half hitch over the lower jaw. It is very severe and should not be used to excess. If the horse shows any tendency to balk, give the command "whoa" before he stops of his own accord. When ready to start, the assistant should take a position in front of the horse and smartly jerk him forward with the guy line at the same time you give the command "get up." Repeat the process of stopping and starting until the horse shows no sign of self will. Use a guy line, and use it severely, on the slightest intimation that the horse is going to balk. After a few of these lessons the horse may be hitched to the wagon. The trip ropes and guy line should be kept on until he is well broken of the habit.

KICKING

A horse that kicks when something touches his heels is dangerous to drive. To overcome the habit put on the harness and the trip ropes. Take a stick about 4 feet long, wrap a gunny sack around one end and tie it. allow the horse to examine it with his nose. Then rub it over his body and legs. After he becomes submissive to the pole, tie sacks of hay to the traces and breeching, and continue the lesson until he pays no attention to them.

Fasten a long pole on each side with one end to drag on the ground, the other end to be fastened to the shaft carrier. Drive him around with these, and if he attempts to kick command "steady" and pull him to his knees. The lessons should be continued until he submits to the poles dragging between his legs and all around him. This is a good lesson to give before driving single.

TO THROW A HORSE

To throw a horse put on him a sucringle with crupper, with a 2-inch ring fastened in the top of the sucringle. The sucringle and crupper may be made with one piece of rope. Double a 15-foot rope at about one-third its length and slip a 2-inch iron ring over this double portion. Tie a knot in the doubled rope to hold the ring. The loop should be put under the horse's tail for a crupper and the ends of the rope form a sucringle. The sucringle should fit tight.

When the sucringle and crupper are adjusted, take a 20- or 30-foot rope, pass one end through the ring in the back band of the sucringle along the side of the horse's neck, through the ring in the halter, back to the backband, and tie: tie up the front leg on the side on which you desire the horse to fall, the rope from the backband to the halter being

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on the opposite side. The noseband of the halter should be well down on the horse's nose and fit fairly tight.

Allow the horse to stand for a few minutes and then with the pulley rope draw his head to one side; he will drop to the knee that is tied up and may be easily thrown over on his side. When he tries to get up pull his head to the backband. Figures 14,15, and 16 show the arrangement of ropes and this method of throwing a horse and holding him down.

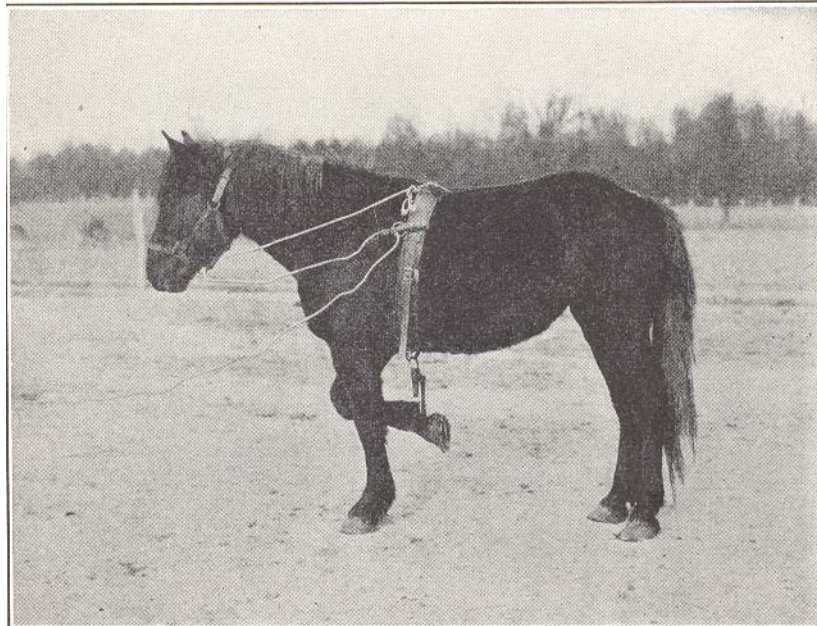


FIG. 14.—Arrangement of ropes to throw a horse.

Another method is to put straps with rings on the pasterns of the hind feet, tie a loop in the middle of a 40-foot rope, fit the loop on as a collar, running the ends through straps on pasterns, back and through the rope collar and out to the side; tie up one front foot. As the horse is backed up, his hind feet may be pulled forward with these ropes and he can then be easily thrown on his side.

HARNESS

Harness should be kept clean and well oiled. It will then be less liable to cause sores on the horses and will last longer. All parts of the harness should be strong.

Every horse should have his own collar, which should fit snugly to the neck from top to bottom. Most sore necks are caused by large collars or by draft being too low on the point of the shoulder. To fit a new or an old collar to a horse, soak the collar overnight in water, wipe it off in the morning, fit it on the horse, and adjust the hames carefully. Work moderately through the day. The collars should be examined every morning and the bearing surface kept clean and smooth. The horse's neck should be kept

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clean. A good plan in hot weather is to wash it every night with a weak solution of salt water. Keep the collar and hames buckled tight.



FIG. 15.—Throwing a horse.

When hitching to a wagon be sure that the neck yoke is safe and the traces will not become unfastened.

IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD MOUTH

When we say that a horse has a good mouth we mean that he readily obeys the signals conveyed to him by the reins and bit and that he will also “go up on the bit” in his work without lugging. A horse is held steady and true in his gait and at all times is under better control when he is “up on the bit.”

Always see to it that the bridle on the colt is properly adjusted and never use a sever bit. The bit should be adjusted in the mouth tight enough so that the rings will not be pulled in but loose enough so that the corners of the mouth will not be pulled or stretched up. The bit should rest on the bar above the tushes.

Always train the colt to walk rapidly. There is no gait so valuable and useful in a horse as a rapid walk. It is not difficult to train the average colt to walk fast. From the very beginning keep him walking up to his limit and he will get into the habit.

When a horse trots make him trot “up on the bit”; he will have a better head and neck carriage, will be less liable to stumble, and will give his attention to the driver.

A colt’s mouth may be spoiled by severe bits, by a too tight adjustment of the reins of the biting harness, by tight checkreins, by unnecessary jerking or tension on the lines, or by a poor driver.

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The training of horses for special purposes, such as trotters, saddle horses, hunters, polo ponies, etc., requires the service of men especially skilled in particular phases of horsemanship and should not be attempted by a novice.

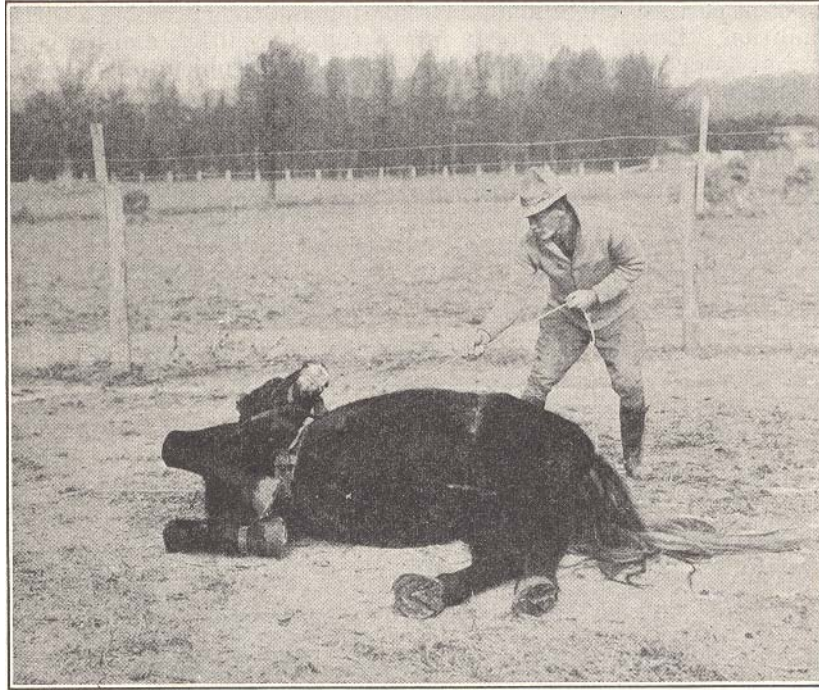


FIG. 16.—Holding a horse down.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GO TOGETHER

The preceding pages have suggested methods of teaching the colt to submit to the will of man and training him as a useful, obedient servant. The ultimate value of the colt when mature depends not only on the manner in which he is broken and trained but also on the way he has been physically developed. This involves the factors of feeding and management, which are not discussed in this bulletin. The owner should bear in mind, however, that the training of the colt is supplementary to and not the main requirement in the development of a good work horse that will sell readily on the market.

The principal requirements of the growing colt are proper feeding, pure water, stabling, exercise, and careful grooming. A pasture where the colt not only obtains nutritious grass but can also run and play, developing the strength and suppleness of his muscles, is of primary importance. Moderate, regular exercise also strengthens and develops weak points. Many horses that are only average animals, poorly developed, ungainly, and awkward might have been outstanding individuals under proper care and management. Many persons think that “roughing” the colt results in a big, strong frame, but the fact is well established that the feeding of a well-balanced ration, so as to keep the colt in thrifty, frowning condition, will result in the maximum development of bone and muscle. Grooming regularly when the colt is not in pasture will stimulate circulation and

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thus promote a thrifty condition. Developing a colt into a sound, healthy, mature horse, as well as properly breaking him, should be the object of every real horseman.