

One Rein Stop Clicker Style
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For the one rein stop, we must teach the horse to soften the jaw, and neck and stop the feet. I start teaching this on the ground. Place your closest to the horse hand on the whither and slide the other hand down the rein and ask for a give. This time, you are not asking for head down. You are asking for the jaw to yield. If the jaw is already soft, you can bring the sliding hand to meet the hand on the whither. You are looking for the whole jaw, and at least the neck to soften to you AND for the feet to stop moving. You may put in baby releases for softening, but you will withhold the click until the feet stop. This becomes your brake.

When you can do this on both sides, and get the feet stopped almost at the same time as you begin to slide down the rein you are ready to try it at the mounting block. Before mounting, we'll ask for head-down and for the "neck bend to a stop". In the early stages, it is simply a neck bend to a stop. If the feet move, go back to the groundwork of following the horse until the feet stop. Repeat on both sides. When the horse can stand still at the mounting block while you ask for head-down AND the neck bend, you are ready to get on. Here is where "no unrequested forward" comes in. When you get on, it's common for the horse to move off. Why shouldn't he? That's what we usually want. But, in this exercise, we want the horse to Wait. It's this waiting for instructions that becomes key. So, when you get on, if he goes forward, you will slide down the rein to a point where you can bring the rein to your hip and lock it there and the horse must yield his nose and stop his feet. Once stopped, immediately drop the rein as if it were on fire and click treat. Then repeat the exercise on the other side.

Not until you can slide down the rein on both sides as many times as you want and the feet remain still are you ready to ask for forward. This is key. These brakes must be solid. I like to explain that anyone can drive a high performance car with great brakes even if that car has no steering wheel. All you have to do is press the gas, go a few inches and stop. And, no one can be afraid of riding a horse whose feet are stopped. It must become an automatic response for you whenever you feel nervous or threatened or you even think he might spook or leave to bend to a stop.

Now you'll ask for forward. Forward in passenger lesson is simply that "go forward". Where you go is the horse's decision. Start at the walk. Walk only as far as you are comfortable. Then bend him to a stop. Once stopped, bend on the other side.

As you are riding along, you may feel tension in your body. Try to relax each and every part of your body. Take note of how he responds. If he offers you something pretty or something you like feel free to click which should also bring him to a stop and treat. Give yourself permission to get off.

Remember, you can bend to a stop or click to a stop any time you want. But, be sure you only click if you like what he's doing. Bend, if you feel you or the horse is at all nervous.

If you have a foot mover, you will most likely get the hips when you bend to a stop. Getting the hips is important. So, when you bend be sure to wait for the hips to step over even if the feet have stopped when you begin to refine this lesson.

As you have surmised, this is your emergency stop as well. By building all of this in, you will learn to ride your horse's spook and be able to diffuse it without thinking.

If you are just starting passenger lesson and your horse feels hot or you nervous the bend to a stop can be just that. Bend that nose around and wait for the feet to stop. As you are panicking in your heart, you don't need to think of anything else. Your horse is probably feeling the same panic. Also, as you are riding along, feel free to hang onto mane, saddle, neck rope whatever you have handy. You'll know you are beginning to relax when you begin to let go of your handle. Feel free to grab onto mane or saddle at any time. Allowing yourself this privilege is especially handy as you are trotting toward the wall and you do not know which way or when your horse will choose to turn. There are no set number of steps that are required. If your stomach jumps into your throat at one step, bend to a stop, click/treat. That's the reset and then off you go again.

Unless it's an emergency, just as you are about to bend to a stop, sit and stop riding for a count of 1001 - 1004. If he stops before 1004, C/T he has just begun to "read" your body language. Now you can begin to refine the bends.

Be sure when you sit to resist the urge to pick up the reins. Just sit. Allow your horse those few seconds to read you and your intent to stop.