

Foxhunting Mounted Lesson

Title: Being in Control when Left Behind

Objective: Students will get a sense of how their pony behaves when it is left behind and techniques for staying in control

Level: D2-D3

Length of lesson: 30-45 min, depending on number of riders

Special materials: Large ring or field, additional experienced, quiet horse, ridden by experienced rider, to be a calm buddy for nervous ponies

Introduction

1. Introduce buddy horse and rider, self and ask names of students and ponies.
2. How does your pony feel about being left behind? Why do you think that is? Have you heard of the herd instinct?
3. Today we are going to work on staying in control in a possible hunting situation, like getting left at a gate when the field has moved on.

Body of Lesson

1. Why do ponies not like being alone? How do they react when their herd instinct kicks in? What can we do to make ponies more comfortable when being left?
2. We are going to, with my help and the help of a buddy horse, take each pony away from the group, stand, and gradually get each pony to stand at the opposite end of the ring from the others.
3. Start with 2 ponies or one pony and the buddy, walk or trot away from the group, stand, and walk back. Do this with each pony, then do the reverse, leave one pony with the buddy, have the rest of the group ride away.
4. During the exercise, each rider should stand on a loose rein, holding just a loop, scratch their pony's neck, let them graze if in a field, or walk in a circle around the buddy pony if pony seems too nervous to stand.

Closing

1. Do you understand the difference between your pony being strong in the bridle or bad and just wanting to keep up? Can you see how ponies benefit from the buddy system and finding ways to distract them when they don't want to stand?
2. Ask one or two to explain what they learned about how their pony reacted.
3. Thanks and any other questions.