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Hi folks!

In this week's Winter Horsemanship we had a range of skill level. Richard and Helen came back for a second time this winter. Both of them had improved immensely since the last time we saw them.

Richard rarely missed a lead on Dandy this week and had phenomenal turns. Helen told me she has been having trouble loping her mare at home. She said the mare takes off when she initiates the lope. At first, when Helen was riding Jesse, the horse would rate beautifully at a walk, a trot and then the first few loping strides. As we loped more, Helen started having trouble with Jesse taking off!

I told Helen the main reason why her horse at home runs off at the lope is because she rides faster when she lopes instead just initiating for the gate without speeding the horse up. We worked on rating Jesse back by backing and leg yielding to keep him on



Richard doing some nice groundwork with Dandy



Roxanne on Donald!

course again. By the time Helen was done, Jesse was back to following her body better. I felt like this was a perfect set up for Helen to take what she had learned on Jesse home to her mare.

Barbara and Michael came together. Barbara has been an avid rider while Michael

had never ridden before. By the end of the week Michael was jumping Buster Malone out of his tracks, stopping, backing and turning all with a soft feel. Barbara (similar to Helen) found value in trying to lope with out speeding up. I told her that she could get any horse alive, but needed to get more rhythm in her seat. She rose to the challenge and by the end had Cahill looking pretty sharp when she showed how hard she could stop him with just her body.

Chad and Roxanne also came together in the same fashion. Chad hadn't ridden a whole lot while Roxanne had. They both got on to riding with their bodies instead of their hands. Roxanne performed nearly a whole trotting exercise, which involves lots of change in direction, without picking up on her reins. Chad was able to hold multiple circles in the walk without his reins as well. As a result neither of them missed a lead when asked to lope their horses Romeo and Donald Trump.

Cheryle joined us again and rode Lucy. Cheryle learned a lot about elevating a horse and how it changes the weight distribution. I think what most people took away this week was how much lateral you can put in a horse at the walk. Most of the week comprised of groundwork progressions and one rein walk/trot progressions with lots of lateral. I heard one guest say that she would never get on and ride her horse straight away ever again!

Have a good week,

Roby

Roby
demonstrating
some groundwork
with Hickory

