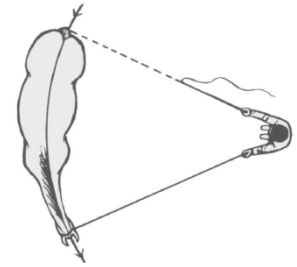


HF&F

Lunging & Round Penning Clinic

Equipment

- Gloves
- Specialty equipment (as needed)
- Lunge line
- Lunge whip



*Note: This was written to address those working with horses who are already somewhat familiar with lunging. This article does not include the fundamental steps to introduce lunging/round penning to a horse.

The Driving Line (ok...not a technical, by the book term but this is what I call it)

The Driving Line has three different positions. This can be used when line lunging or round penning.

Think of driving your car. There are different things you have to do to make your car go, stop, turn, and reverse....you can't just sit there and think about it and hope your car does it. You have to move your foot to a different pedal, apply a certain amount of pressure, look where you're going, use the wheel to direct the car, etc. Same thing with a horse...you can't just wish and hope your horse does what you want you need to communicate with them.

Neutral- This is the main driving line that all of your movement should be based off of. The neutral position is when you are facing the horses shoulder. If you are in this position your horse should not be moving. Your shoulders should be parallel with the horses shoulder.

Go Forward (Gas)- You are in the go forward position when you step 'behind' the horses shoulder (the neutral position) and move parallel towards the horses hind end. In addition to moving your body towards the hind end be sure to turn your shoulders slightly so that they are 'open' to the direction you want your horses to go.

Slow/Whoa (Break)- You are in the slow/whoa position when you step 'in front of' the horses shoulder (the neutral position) and move parallel towards the horses head. Remember to turn your shoulders so that they are 'closing' off the forward movement of the horse and are directing the horse slow down or stop.

Applying 'Pressure'

Going back to the car analogy again, think of when you step on the gas. The harder you step on it the faster you go. The further back you move towards the hind end...the more go the horse should have. Same is true when you apply pressure to the brake pedal. If you apply gentle pressure then your car slows; if you move in front of the horses shoulder slightly then they should slow. If you stomp on the break your car screeches to a halt; if you drastically step in front of your horses shoulder they will stop.

On this same note of applying pressure through body language and voice commands be sure to give your horse what you want to get back. If you calmly ask your horse to slow down, speed up, whoa, change directions, etc then they will (most likely) respond calmly. If you frantically scramble and yell for your horse to whoa because you notice his bell boot is coming of...your horse is probably going to scramble away from you. Ask calm, reinforce calm, get calm. Ask frantically, reinforce inconstantly, get crazy. Remember that if your horse does what you ask you should release the pressure as a reward.

A note on lunge whips

A lunge whip is an artificial aid (along with spurs, crops, etc) and should only be used to reinforce your natural aids (voice and body language when on the ground...hands, seat, legs, voice when riding). If your horse is listening well to your voice and body language don't use the lunge whip! Keep it in a neutral position until you need it to reinforce a command that received no response. If you use the lunge whip when you don't need it your horse will start to ignore it and then you could be really stuck if you need it to reinforce. Just like applying pressure with your body language, if you ask calm with a lunge whip you get calm...if you over ask you get a big response.

Voice commands and tone of voice

When lunging or round penning at [CENTER NAME] please use voice commands as it helps our horses stay tuned up so our riders and instructors can use voice commands in lessons. Voice Commands: Walk (paired with a *cluck*), Trot (paired with a *cluck*), and Canter (paired with a *smooch*). When you ask your horse to go faster use an assertive tone and speak the word

clearly. You can add in the gaits 'sound' (*cluck* or *smooch*) to add emphasis to your command. When asking your horse to slow down use a gentler tone of voice and be prepared to stretch out the word (ex: Walk. (faster) waaaaallllk (slower)). Do not use a *cluck* or *smooch* when asking a horse to slow down as they are associated with going faster.

How to line lunge

1. Make sure halter is snug enough so it cannot rotate and poke into the horses eye. If the halter is not snug enough try attaching the lunge line to the ring on the side instead of under the horses chin or get a better fitting halter. Lunge with a bridle (never attach the lunge line to the bit) or lunging cavesson only if you know how to safely do so.
2. Prepare your lunge line before putting it on your horse. If you are going to the left...wrap the line in your right hand and vice versa for starting to the right. You can either fold or circle the line (personal preference)
3. Tuck the lunge whip under your arm. Attach the lunge line to your horse and remove the lead line. Store the lead line outside of the area you are working in so it is not a hazard.
4. Hold the line in two hands. To the Left- the line should be stretched from the horse to your left hand then over to your right hand which is holding the extra line and the lunge whip. When not using the lunge to reinforce cues it should be relaxed down and pointing behind the hindquarters of the horse. (form a triangle where you are the point and your horse is the base). Keep a bend in your elbows and stay relaxed but do not let your arm become extended when the horse pulls. Keeping a bent, flexible elbow can help eliminate injuries.
5. Send the horse out at a walk by moving behind the shoulder (apply gas) and saying 'Out'. The horse should work its way out away from you until most of the line is stretched out between the two of you.
6. When line lunging you can either stay in one spot or move in a circle with the horse (helps to create a larger circle). If you choose to move in a circle make sure you are not changing the angle of your Driving Line as you move.
7. Once the horse is warmed up at a walk you can work in the other gaits. Make sure the horse does what you ask it to do. If it is supposed to be cantering but gets lazy and drops into a trot, immediately correct the horse by moving them back into a canter.
8. Changing direction: ask the horse to walk then whoa and tuck the lunge whip under your arm. The horse should ideally stay out away from you when you ask for a whoa and change of direction. If you are changing direction to the right you will be wrapping up the lunge line in your left hand. Send the horse back out and lunge the second direction. Remember to work both sides equally (unless you are working on strengthening one side).

Round Penning

Round penning is very similar to line lunging except you do not have a line attached to your horse. It is personal preference whether you leave the halter on the horse or take it off when round penning. My theory is to leave the halter on because halter= work and no halter= free/play time. Others prefer the halter to come off so it cannot get caught on anything. Remember your Drive Lines, body language, and voice cues. Be careful not to get too close to the horses hind end when you are driving them forward or changing direction. Even the most well trained horse can throw a playful buck because they are happy and can accidentally get you.

Exercising

If you are lunging/round penning a horse for exercise purposes, spend most of your time at the trot (the trot builds muscle and works the lungs, the canter mostly works the lungs). Just like when humans work out you can do 'circuit' training with a horse. After you have warmed the horse up in all three gaits you can ask the horse to do a jog for a couple minutes then ask them to trot out for a minute then bring them down to a jog again for the rest period then repeat.

Cool Down

After lunging or round penning always cool down the horse by hand walking them (our policy). Check the horse's nose, chest, and between their hind legs to see if they are cooled down.