

# Making Contact Is A Training Exercise

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Did you realise that every contact and interaction you have with your horse is a training exercise? Well it is, so remember that and treat it as such;

Every time you interact with your horse you are training him, regardless of what you are doing and that even covers petting him. It doesn't matter how much you have trained him previously, nor what your horse is used to, each action you take is a training action.

So let's look at how to lead your horse and whatever you do, always consider safety first. Lead him the same way every time, but if your horse is OK with it, lead him from both sides, that way he will get used to you whatever side you approach him from.

And never ever lead him by his halter always use a lead rope. There are various types but I would recommend a nylon lead rope or a nylon or leather lead with a chain, much depends on your horse. When you buy your first one, there is unlikely to be a knot in the end of it, so tie one right at the end. That way, if the horse tries to pull away from you, you have the knot at the end to hold on to.

You should also never hold a lead by the chain. Make sure your hand is about 12 inches away from your horses face and keep a nice bend in your elbow. You also want to get your horses face in front of your body and not have him lagging behind you.

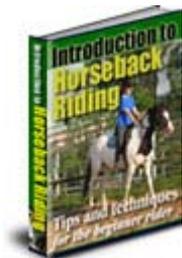
If you are holding the lead in your right hand, take up any excess in a nice loop with your left hand. Don't have it too tight, but equally you don't want it so loose that you can trip over it! Always think of your safety. A horse is a

powerful animal so you don't want to risk getting tangled up in the lead and being dragged away if the horse decides to bolt for whatever reason.

From here, start walking forward without looking at your horse and see if he walks when you do. If not stop and try again and repeat this until he gets the message and walks with you.

The next exercise is to ensure he stops when you do, but if he doesn't pull down hard on the lead rope and start again. He needs to learn to obey your wishes and teaching him how to walk and stop when you are leading him is an important first step.

This exercise should take around 30 minutes, but you need to take these steps every time you lead your horse. And remember don't look at your horse when you are doing this, look at where you are going.



Roger Bourdon is the author of "Introduction to Horseback Riding" and owner of the site [www.anyhorsebackriding.com](http://www.anyhorsebackriding.com). If you are interested in horse riding, then sign up for Roger's free mini course and news letters at [www.anyhorsebackriding.com](http://www.anyhorsebackriding.com)