

Winter is still making riding an adventure, so many are waiting till the weather allows fun, safe, and successful riding of the horse partner.

To give your horse partner the best viewpoint of having a human 'climb aboard', now we will see how the simple physics of our bodies, combined with the cause and effects of gravity, can set the tone of each ride in a better balance of body and mind.

Remember that horses qualify as prey animals...and what may eat them? Predators...who were known to leap onto their backs...OH MY! So respect more aspects that mounting may effect the horse...physical, mental, and emotional.

Let's see how humans could use a plan that would be the least offensive to the body of the horse and more useful function for the rider to use their own body, in the art of riding in harmony.

Even though it seems that mounting is just a 'moment' of time, it really ends up being the initial input to the muscle and neural systems of the horse. So if done poorly and without respect to your partner, you start the 'conversation' of the ride with discomfort, imbalance, disrespect and offense...and so is it any wonder that horses often walk off while you are in mid air, to relieve the pain and stress that mounting brings to them?

Here is the plan Tina has found successful for herself and her clients:

1) USE A MOUNTING BLOCK !

If needed, find other things to substitute that need.

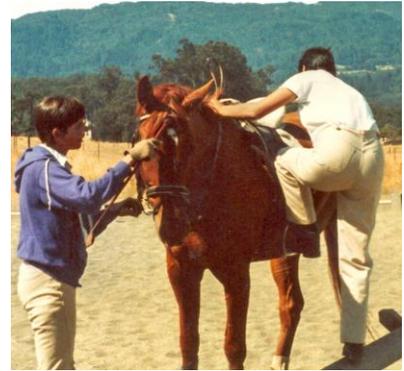


Also, be creative at finding helpful alignment of earth geography to be a helper to you, rather than an enemy...you stand on the high road and let the horse stand on the low road.

2) The direction you face results in the way you'll land.

I can remember the old days of facing the hindquarters, then having to hop and twist around, jabbing the horse with my boot toe, then landing on the saddle with a thump...not a happy moment for our horses. Not too great for my body as well!

Think of facing the far side front shoulder, then the following steps flow together more easily.



3) Find the Flow of body organization and movement to get Gravity to be your Friend. (practice on the Earth/Obstacles before mounting the Horse...even a saddle rack, a bench or a chair may help learn the process first)

4) Learn that the Leader is the Launching Leg on the mounting block, not the stirrup leg. So practice strengthening that leg (both legs) every day, if needed, before you get to the



barn, and improve the flexibility of the hip, knee and ankle. I even find power increases when I use strong mental imagery of my grounded leg sending me upward like a rocket! When you use that plan, you will arrive at the top and able to pause to make the next segment of the mounting even more successful and safe.



5) Location of both Hands either Hurt or Help the process mounting a horse.

Riding English or Western, if you place a hand on the cantle (rear) area, then as you mount, you will add deep pressure to the lower back of the horse, often creating a hollow back before you even 'ride'. I've seen riders miss their timing and land on their arm as well!

Place the non-rein hand on far side of front segment of saddle, and you'll have a great foundation for the next pause moment, and not be jamming the underside of the saddle into the muscles of the horse's lower back, upper shoulder and spinal nerves.

NO



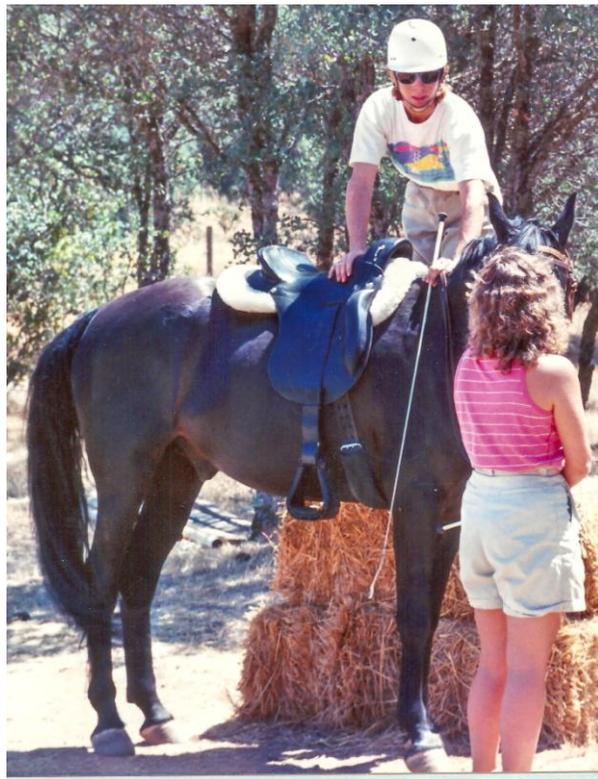
YES





The hand holding the reins has it's own job. I often arrange the reins in a 'bridge' version in my one hand, so that not only can I cue for continuing Halt, but can easily cue a Right or Left correction. You can place the rein hand on the center area of the saddle, though I most often lay in across the crest of the horse for additional stability as I'm mounting up.

This photo is a moment before my right hand is moved to the far side of this young green horse...I always give horses a chance to observe what I'm up to, and I take time to observe their viewpoints, before I finish the mounting moment...keeps both of us more safe!



6) Did you know you were a wonderful See Saw machine? Planet Gravity does, and makes you pay a penalty if you ignore it!

Give yourself a 'pause' moment when you arrive in equal balance at the 'top' of the horse/saddle, then envision how to make the next step easy...from pelvis-to-head, the rider needs to lower downward a distance (look down to the ground rather than off into the horizon) to allow more freedom for the pelvis-to-foot the chance to rise high enough as it moves over the horse, to avoid contact on any area of the horse's haunch area. TIP: watch the elbow...if it bends too much, this plan won't work well and the structure you are handling will collapse! Help the elbow on the far side arm in a find a straighter (though not 'rigid') structure as you come into the diagonal line over the top of

the horse...so the body has two arms offering balanced support as the floating leg glides



happily over the body of the horse.



NO



YES

- 7) Land Like a Snowflake rather than an Avalanche...as you descend your fanny to the saddle, remember to keep flexing the three leg joints (ankle, knee, pelvis) for the FULL duration. Many riders often stop flexion about half way down, and then 'thump' onto the saddle (and the horse's back) while legs tighten, sometimes shooting legs forward in stiffness.

NO



YES



And here are a few more thoughts I've learned about "Mounting Matters" :

- 8) Begin with Breathing, and End with Breathing...and the next chapter of the ride will be much more of what you wished for!!
Read my previous Tina's Tips or the Blog at my website, and you'll see more info about HOW we are breathing matters more than you may realize.
- 9) WAIT...when you mount. Both you and the horse need a Wait moment to find your focuses, then be together to make the next move. Use your mind's eye to project your plan, then use your physical cues gently.
- 10) Remember, both of you have two sides...better learn to mount from either side, first on your own, then help your horse to learn it !
Don't assume that if mounting on his left side is acceptable that the horse will have no worries when you mount from the other side...the horse often sees this as a whole new world and may not find it safe to allow. But if you overlook this part of learning, make no criticisms about a horse being more flexible on one side and less flexible on another.
- 11) Thank the Horse for being so tolerant while you learned a new way to Mount!