

It's a Set Up! Your horse should set up quickly with his legs squarely underneath him and remain in that position until you cue for another maneuver. To begin training, you need to gain control over your horse's feet. There are several systems for this - here's one of them: To ask your horse to move his left hind foot closer to his right, pull the lead rope straight forward if the left leg is behind the right, or straight backward, if the left leg is in front of the right. Continue pressure until he responds by picking up his foot. When he does, immediately release the pressure. Once the foot is set, say "whoa" before you ask for another foot to move. Work on one leg at a time, getting the back legs in control before training for the front. To ask him to move his left front leg forward or backward, gently push his head to the right. This rocks his weight over to his right leg so he'll be more likely to move his left front leg when you pull forward or push backward on the lead rope. With practice, he'll actually set himself up with minimal cueing.

Pivot Power: Your horse should anchor his right hind foot in one spot and pivot around that foot by stepping his left front leg in front of and across his right front leg, completing the pivot for the degrees noted in the pattern. To begin training, face your horse's left side and position yourself across from his throatlatch. Tap his left shoulder as you step and give your cue (a 'kiss' or a 'cluck') and reward one step, as long as the left front crosses over (and not behind) the right. Add steps gradually to reach 90, 180, 270, and 360 degrees, and reward improvement. Do not over-practice - it's hard on the pivot foot.

The Quarter System

Visualize a line drawn down the center of the horse's body, front to rear, and another line at the base of the withers going left to right. During the judge's inspection, as he/she moves into each of these 'quarters', you need to move accordingly (see the diagram below) to stay in the quarter nearest the judge, stepping over with the inside foot moving first, taking a minimal number of steps, and at the same time, smoothly moving your right hand with the lead rope under the horse's chin to the other side (don't "dip!"). Never block the judge's view of the horse. Never block the judge's view of the horse. While in the line up, continue to watch the judge and move to the opposite side the judge is on as he/she walks the line. Your arms should be relaxed and bent slightly, with the lead rope in your right hand and the rest of the rope neatly in your left. Keep your eyes on the judge AND on your horse. Be confident - stand up straight and have a



pleasant look on your face. Continuing showing your horse until your class is placed and has been excused from the ring.

Before your class...

Watch for your Showmanship pattern to be posted. When it is, take the time to memorize it and plan your strategy. Take a picture of it with your cell phone, if you have one.

Before entering the ring, wipe down your horse and make sure your boots are clean, adjust your hat, straighten your clothes, check your number, take a deep breath, smile, and have fun!

