

Training & Management



SUE TODD – NONI SEAGRIM



The Young Horse

- There are no set programs – every horse and situation is unique
- Nothing can be achieved without a strong foundation – start slowly
- Begin with short rides a few times per week and build towards longer rides less often
- From the start – teach your horse to be efficient in everything he does
- Expose your horse to as many different types of terrain as you can
- It takes at least a year for the horse's body to adapt and harden to be safely ready for more strenuous competition
- Be aware not only of the horse's body but also his mind
- Give a day off after work – two or more days after a long session

The First 40km

- Try to allow for a minimum of 6 – 10 weeks of training before your horses first 40km - straight from the paddock
- Aim to be completing around 20km *total* per week
- If you have the means, try for a longer distance at home prior to the ride – 15 - 30km in one session
- Remember your horse doesn't need to be super fit for a ride of this distance but the rider always needs to listen to their horse
- Ensure your horse is ready for the vetting process – including after he has been worked!
- Use every ride as a training tool – not just for fitness but as the building block towards an elite and professional athlete

The Novice 80kms

- Try to allow a minimum of around 10-12+ weeks of training from the paddock to 80km
- Aim for around 40km per week *total*
- Try to include at least one longer (20 - 30km) ride every week or two – last long ride no closer than 8 days before
- Remember a day of rest after a day of work
- Remember the horses mind needs to be as fit and fresh as his body
- Ensure your horses nutritional requirements are being met
- Is my horse ready? - easily coping with the work
 - recovering well after longer rides
 - no soreness or niggling issues

Building a horse from amateur - elite

- Takes time - must be done gradually
- Mental fitness plays part more than ever
- Slowly increase the intensity of ONE training session per week
- If ever the horse is feeling tired or sour on his work – it is time for a good holiday
- Increase in speed/intensity = an increased risk of injury

Unridden work

- Lunging with a pessoa
- Water / land walker
- Swimming
- Treadmill
- Leading from another horse

When you put the saddle on

- Warm up is critical – every time
- Pay attention to your horse – sweat, breathing, soundness, feeling good or not
- Teach them to drink and eat while being ridden
- Teach them patience – no rushing up hills etc
- No extended gaits until they are well seasoned – even then, rarely
- Consistent rhythm

Things to watch out for

- Soreness – anywhere: muscles, poor saddle fit, gear rubs, interference on legs etc
- Lameness – prevention is better than cure, after each training session check tendons for heat or swelling and the major muscle groups
- Stomach ulcers and other digestive issues – know the symptoms
- Tying Up – most common in highly strung horses or those on very rich feed, ie short green grass with excess starch and sugar etc
 - Learn the signs and learn how to manage it
- Mental weariness – unwillingness to work, grumpy behaviour etc
 - Check first for other causes – if none, its time for a holiday.

Management of the body

- Bodywork / Chiropractor / Massage – a good bodyworker is imperative
- Hoof care – no hoof no horse!
- Saddle fit – not just a sore back
- Clipping – decide if your horse needs it - what clip pattern you need

Things to Remember

- Less is most often more!
- Every horse needs a healthy amount of 'me' time!
- Efficiency – strong, supple, balanced...
- Everything is a partnership
- Ride and train within your horses capabilities
- Every time you put the saddle on it is a stepping stone to the future.