



Tips From A Trainer

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What is the general timetable for training Performance Paso Finos?

This depends on the horse's overall acceptance of training and athletic ability- certainly six months to get a good foundation and then a year or two to get the animal at a level of strong competition.



Developing a nice horse where the mental and physical stages of maturity are together takes time and patience.

How do you work with a hot or nervous Paso Fino?

All horses should do much better when given proper ground training. The horse and human relationship is totally based on trust. Just being on a horse's back does not give them the confidence that is gained by getting their respect one-on-one on the ground. Learning a natural horsemanship technique will pay off with your horse a thousand times and keep you much safer.

What type of training gear do you use to start asking for collection?

Collection begins after the horse is strong enough to start raising his head and has adequate impulsion. I use a bosal that is firm on the nose and chin (I have it either way if I need it). Most of us have heard the saying, "It is not the bit, but the hands that make the difference." To me this also applies with a bosal. A young horse takes months to get where I am able to ask for some collection. If you ask too soon, it could create a head-bobbing problem; they are not strong enough to carry you, and this is usually a sign of needing some relief.

How much training emphasis do you put on the walk versus the corto or the largo?

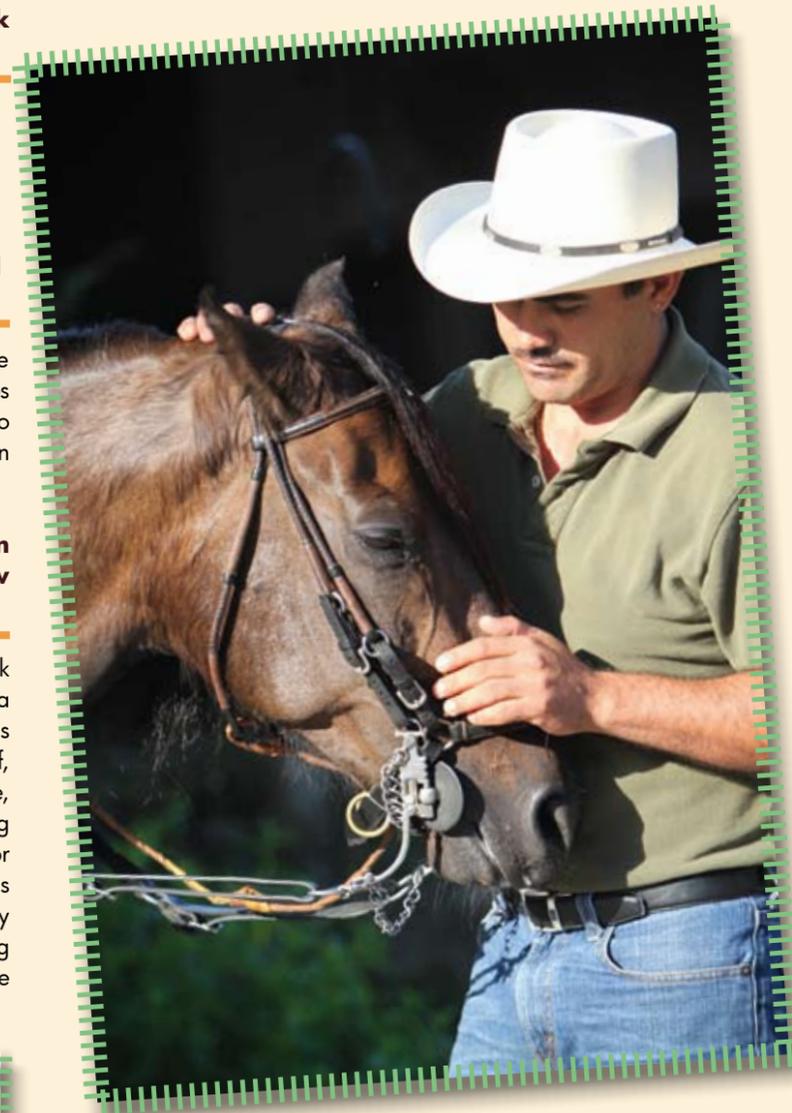
Foundation is critical in any sport, and for the horse, they learn best with a calm mind. A horse is most relaxed at the walk. Lots of repetition at the walk will transfer into understanding at a corto, because he learned it well when relaxed.

What tips do you have for training reverses and figure eights?

Again, work from the ground cannot be overemphasized. A horse can better learn how to keep his shoulder up and kick his hips to the outside without weight on the back. You can use a stick to keep the horse from falling into the circle by letting it touch him in the areas that drop in.

Do you have any special exercises you use to condition a horse for flexibility and endurance in the show ring?

I like ground work (sometimes using the round pen) where I ask the horse to bend – back and forth first, then left and right in a playful manner that asks them to listen to my body language. This way they are pushing harder off the inside hind leg to take off, thereby increasing strength and flexibility. As far as endurance, I like hills – not always cantering up, but also walking and using the corto. If you can let your horse lower his head and look for the ground, whether up a hill or on the flats, it will lengthen his stride and improves the top line. Many horses will trot in this body frame. This is okay, because we have a system that is conditioning for the final result. Graceful, elegant movement does not get there by itself. FOUNDATION GETS RESULTS.



LEFT PAGE:
TOP:
Trainer Juan "Benito" Jumenez walking calmly with a young colt.
BOTTOM:
Trainer Carlos Figueroa adjusts the Bosal on a filly.
RIGHT PAGE:
TOP:
Ruben Ibarra has developed trust with this mare. Her body language shows that she is relaxed in the company of her trainer.
BOTTOM:
Trainer Juan "Benito" Jumenez flexes a young colt to both sides during ground work.

