



Ground Skills – Developing Independent Feet



Playing with your horse on the ground is highly beneficial for the partnership. I often ask people if they do this, especially before riding? Usually the answer is “no” but sometimes the answer is “Yes, I lunge him regularly”. If you only lunge your horse, you are missing a huge teaching opportunity. Everything you want to do in the saddle can be taught to your horse on the ground. When you transition to the saddle, the horse will already have an understanding of the maneuver, and so will you.

As humans, we need to become aware of our body language, our energy and our intent. Horses are primarily non-verbal creatures, they communicate with each other using body language. If we can learn to be clear and concise with our energy and focus our intent on the area of the horse we want to move, we can un-lock a subtle form of communication that is so light it is magic. This awareness of our body language will transfer to how we communicate in the saddle, because how we approach a task on the ground will improve our thinking about how to approach it while riding.

Having skills on the ground, affords you the availability to get off your horse if you are having trouble and fix it. It is much safer to work through issues on your feet rather than in the saddle. You can cause your horse to become mentally and emotionally connected to you, which will allow you to shape the physical. We use different lengths and weights of rope and eventually test our skills and connection with “no strings attached”, liberty.

Imagination is key!

