

Name _____ **Organization of Text**



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Like training any animal, training horse to jump requires time and patience. Begin by getting your horse used to walking over a pole laid on the ground. If he appears nervous, dismount and walk him over the poles, leading him by the reign. When he gets comfortable walking over the poles, you can ride him over them at a walk. Do this for several weeks.

The next step is to get the horse comfortable trotting over three or four poles, spaced five feet apart. Adjust the distance between poles to fit your horse's stride. Ride your horse at a trot straight up to the middle of the poles. Encourage a hesitant horse with your legs, and always be very positive. When your horse has gotten the hang of picking up his feet to avoid the poles while still trotting at a consistent pace, lay down a few more poles and trot him over five or six.

The next challenge for your horse should be a cross rail. Set up a 9-foot cross-rail after the last pole on the ground. Your horse will naturally gravitate towards the middle of the jump (the middle of the x, where the rails "cross") since it is the point lowest to the ground. If he stops instead of continuing over, give him a minute to look it over, then encourage him to step over it. If he is still hesitant, dismount and lead him over. Do this multiple times, making it a little different every time (approaching from the left, from the right, straight on, etc.), so that your horse will get used to approaching the jump in different ways. When you are able to get back onto your horse and let him jump over it, get into the two-point position and hold onto your horse's mane as he jumps. An inexperienced horse is likely to take unnecessarily large leaps the first few times, so be prepared.

The next step is to get your horse used to taking more than one jump in a row. Set up two cross-rail jumps with about ten feet between them (adjusted for your horse's stride). Trot your horse towards the first jump. He will soon understand that he should "bounce" between the rails, rather than taking a stride in between. This exercise will naturally ease your horse into the correct form. As he gets comfortable, add more jumps, of different types. As long as you are not tugging at your horse's mouth or bouncing up and down in the saddle when he lands, he will soon start to enjoy jumping.

At this point it is time to take your horse around a course. The goal here is to keep your horse going at a controlled pace after each jump. If he approaches each jump too quickly, make him halt after each jump until he learns to control his pace. If he is sluggish approaching the jumps, encourage him to continue cantering between them.

It can take up to a year to properly train a horse to jump, so go slowly and be patient. It is important that he learn properly, as it is easier and faster to teach a horse good habits than it is to retrain out bad ones.

Explain how the article is organized and why this is the best possible organization for this material.
