



HAYES IS FOR HORSES.COM
Natural Trailer Loading

By Tim Hayes

Along with sitting next to a crying baby on a flight to California, having your horse refuse to go into the trailer ranks right up there on life's top ten list of "Things That Make Us Want To Scream!" There's not too much you can do with someone else's crying baby for 6 hours, but there's a lot you can do to eliminate your trailer loading problem, forever! Natural Horsemanship, teaches us to look at trailer loading from the horse's point of view.

The reason some humans have difficulty getting their horse into their trailer is they don't realize that horses are born genetically hardwired to actually resist going in at all costs. A horse trailer looks like a big metal cave on wheels to a horse. Horses know that predators live in caves. Predators (Mountain Lions, Bob Cats, Wolves) eat Prey (Horses!). It's not natural for a horse to go into a trailer (cave).

Trailer loading problems can occur at different times for different reasons in the life of a horse. Horses who have never gone into a



Natural Trailer loading will not only make your horses love his trailer...

horse trailer or learned to feel safe and comfortable (physically and emotionally) are going to resist. The reason is fear. They are genetically claustrophobic. They naturally know to avoid places that inhibit their ability to run from danger. If they feel forced to go into a trailer they will refuse as is their life depended on it. In their mind it does. They don't understand why their partner/leader/best friend (YOU!) doesn't know this.

Horses who have learned to go into trailers and are not afraid

will sometimes refuse out of disrespect or to challenge the pecking order between themselves and their human.

Whether it's fear, disrespect or a combination of both, the natural principals and methods that are needed and work successfully, are the same...Leadership. (Note: If a horse seems to fluctuate between fear and assertive disrespect, teaching him can become quite tricky and will sometimes require professional assistance).

1. FIRST ESTABLISH YOURSELF AS A RESPECTED LEADER WITH THE HORSE This is accomplished with a series of groundwork exercises. Using body language, touch and feel, you communicate in their natural language (speak horse) to become the leader (better horse) by getting your horse to willingly move his feet with respect. This is accomplished by using levels of discomfort to get your horse to move, then giving him comfort when he moves by allowing him to rest. Learning how to communicate with your horse with these techniques is something that can be taught and that you can learn from a qualified teacher.

2. COMMUNICATE WITH LEVELS OF COMFORT AND DISCOMFORT After you have established yourself as your horses' leader on the ground use the same principles for asking him to move into the trailer. Make the desirable behavior (going into the trailer) comfortable and the undesirable behavior (staying outside) uncomfortable. Learn and use the effective natural methods of varying degrees of direct and rhythmic pressure. This can be accomplished by using your lead rope with various techniques. These will enable you to make your horse uncomfortable without becoming fearful, angry, or resentful. Don't wait until you have to take your horse somewhere. Start practicing months before when there's no pressure. You don't have to complete the whole process in one session. Some horses take longer than others. You can do it over a couple of hours, days, weeks or months. Always stop on a good note and come back when you're ready to begin again.

3. DO NOT USE FORCE, PUNISHMENT OR PAIN When a horse is afraid to go into a trailer, using any type of force (3 people pushing, one pulling, pulling him with a rope behind his butt, etc.) will cause the horse to become more fearful and increase his resistance: (i.e. your friend tells you to jump off the high diving board. You tell him your afraid and you don't want to. He says there's nothing to be afraid of and starts to pull you out to the end. You use all



...you won't be able to keep him out of it! Photos courtesy Tim Hayes

your strength to resist and become angry with your friend for not listening and forcing you).

The worst thing you can do is hit your horse. It convinces him his instinctual fear was correct. Now he's not only fearful about the trailer, he's experiencing pain, which he immediately associates, with the trailer. This then increases his level of fear and resistance to going into the trailer.

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Mares and foals; courtesy of Rita Gambino

OUTLAW ACRES, BELLPORT

Everyone is ready for the show season at Outlaw Acres. Shannon and Jordon received their first Reserve Champion at the Country Farm show. What a nice place to show and their new arena has great potential. Gee won some NBHA money with Geraldo at the NBHA show held at Oakwood. We all had a great time and very nice to have local farms donate their facilities so we can all show.

We are gearing up for all the great shows on LI USEF, NPBA, NBHA and now IBRA along with the local clubs that offer so much. We have sent Romeo to the beach this year and he is now Ranger Romeo, we will post his video on the beach on our site soon. You can volunteer to work one day a week or one day a month, 1/2 hour tops to clean one stall, fly spray or feed Romeo. You get a ferry pass, and the volunteers will get a private beach ride end of the year. After work with Romeo spend the day on the beach, your ferry ride is on the Rangers. Call us at 631 445 2412 as we are done with volunteers for the year, but might have some openings if someone has to take off or vacation or something.

You need to see us first and next stop the Rangers. Nina is just back from the Boston Tea Party Reenactment and parade where she was the best behaved and made us very proud. Nina has vision in one eye only slightly and this has never made a difference in her performance. She will be bred this year to Verily Six Bugs, as she has had 5 other foals, has QH hunter and pleasure points but we think her cow sense, and Tee N Tee breeding, will make a great barrel or cow prospect.

Verily Six Bugs had some great foals this year and is spending his days in KY with his broodmare band on rich KY grass. You can see his foals at www.verilysixbugs.com.

In Kentucky we breed for Hunters, Western Pleasure, Cow Events and of course Barrels. We own mares bred to and foals out of Hunting for Chocolate, Chocolu, Good Bar Wrapper, Potential Career, Too Sleepy To Zip, The Invitation, Indian Artifacts, Hot Diggity Joe, Famous Jr., Badger Tivio and their own Verily Six Bugs. Mares by stallions like Zips Chocolate Chip, Dynamic Deluxe, Don't Skip Charlie, Hotrodders Jet Set, Chocolu, Hot Diggity Joe, Hunting for Chocolate, Bugs Alive in 75, Ragtime Jet, First Down Dash, Hot Colours grandsires, Hotrodders Jet Set, Artful Move, Shy Perscription, Boston Mac, Doc Bar, Blondys Dude, Two Eyed Jack, On The Money Red, Packin Sixes, Steakin Six, Te n Te, Go Man Go, Bold Ruler, Go Man Go, Joe Cody, Conquistador Cielo, First Down Dash, Dash to Cash, Rene Dan Jet, Jet Set.

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4. DO NOT TRICK OR BRIBE THE HORSE Using bribes (food, treats) to obtain desirable behavior from a horse is totally counter productive and usually ineffective. Horses do not consider food a reward. In fact when they are afraid, they will not eat in order to have a lighter stomach, enabling them to run further and faster. Natural rewards for horses are rest and reassurance (petting, stroking). Whether it's horses or children; using bribes to get what you want is dishonest, manipulative and destroys the foundation of all healthy relationships; love, trust and respect.

5. USE POSITIVE PATIENT PERSISTENCE AND STAY ON HORSE TIME Horses have no concept of elapsed time. They live in the moment. In order to stay relaxed and calm while being assertive, we must have no schedule and live in that moment too. Both humans and horses learn by: 1.) Advancing outside of their comfort zone, 2.) Remaining there as long as possible 3.) Retreating back inside their comfort zone. When it's time to begin, don't lead your horse into the trailer. Stay outside the trailer and direct him forward ("drive him") into the trailer. It helps your horse become more confident and it's much safer for both of you. Repeatedly ask the horse to advance a little beyond his comfort zone (into the trailer). Allow him to stay as long as he can. Allow him to retreat back into his comfort zone (outside the trailer) reassuring him as he continues. If you patiently persist with no predetermined agenda ("I have to get my horse in the trailer now!") his comfort zone will increase in size until it becomes the whole trailer! (Note. Once he finally goes in, don't put up the butt bar or close the door. Allow him to go in and out many times until he will stay inside totally relaxed without stepping out for at least 60 seconds. Then if he continues to calmly stay when you make noise and rattle the chains, close it up).

6. TEACH YOUR HORSE TO LOAD HIMSELF FOR LIFE Usually the first time you put a saddle on a horse's back he's anxious, suspicious, will often move and buck it off. Not long after, it becomes a non-issue. Saddling your horse becomes as second nature for him as being turned out to pasture. The same is true for Natural trailer loading. Don't teach your horse to trailer load so you can get him to the Show. Teach him so it becomes one of the many things he learns to do in the human world and something he's happy to do for his partner. Natural trailer loading is not about getting your horse into the trailer. It's about your relationship with your horse. The principals of love, trust and respect are more important than the purpose of taking your horse somewhere in a trailer. Your horse knows the difference. You'll see the difference.

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**FOR TRAILER LOADING HELP, CLINICS, CLASSES,
PRIVATE SESSIONS**

**& MORE INFORMATION CONTACT TIM AT:
631-329-5840 OR**

tim@hayesisforhorses.com

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TIM HAYES VISIT:

www.hayesisforhorses.com