

## A TALE OF TWO HORSES

As a trainer, I get to see things that most people don't – simply because of the sheer number of horses that I work with and the various issues that I need to help them with.

*Disclaimer: HorseWyse Magazine and Carlos Tabernaberry recommend that our readers always wear the correct safety equipment – including approved safety helmets – when heading out on the trail. Don't forget to seek professional advice if you need assistance with your horse's training and always put your safety first.*



Sometimes, I get two horses with a similar issue but they are at very different points in their 'careers'. That situation arose when I had both a young, 4 1/2-year-old Warmblood mare (who I was starting under saddle) and a 10-year-old Quarter horse gelding (who I was retraining). Both had issues with straightness, balance and suppleness – but for very different reasons.

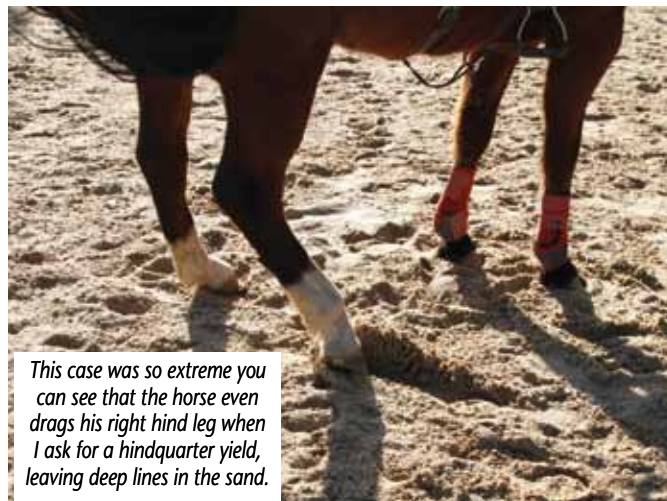
Trust, obedience, respect, calmness, rhythm, contact and impulsion are all essential fundamentals the horse needs to develop straightness and balance.

Underlying that, the horse must also be supple emotionally, mentally and physically and that requires the horse's full confidence and focus. I find that horses who lack this suppleness almost always have a fear of the rider or handler and often cannot understand (and therefore do) what is being asked of them. Instead, they do what they think is right to survive and in turn, we humans often label them as being 'disobedient'.

Emotional suppleness requires the calmness I always talk about; calmness that allows the horse to focus on your requests and develop the understanding to do as you ask.



*You can see how little he lifts his legs with the weight of a rider as well.*



*This case was so extreme you can see that the horse even drags his right hind leg when I ask for a hindquarter yield, leaving deep lines in the sand.*

Physical suppleness means the horse is able to softly and calmly shift his balance forward, backward and laterally. This balance and straightness allows him to move forward with impulsion – but a lack of it often shows up as a reluctance to go forward or being 'dead to the leg'. This was the case with the older Quarter horse I mentioned.

This particular horse had always been ridden with spurs and had become dead in both mind and body to the rider's requests. As a result, he showed a reluctance to lift his legs and to step over things.

In order to help this horse to learn to lift his legs, I first need to get some lateral flexion at the poll; something that can be helped by working on the hindquarter yield, as well as asking for a 'give' as pictured right. Under saddle, I may do a number of things, including using trotting poles, to encourage him to lift his legs and to develop the suppleness of his joints. And don't forget about that calmness and focus. A frightened horse cannot understand what you want and will find it very difficult to do what you ask.

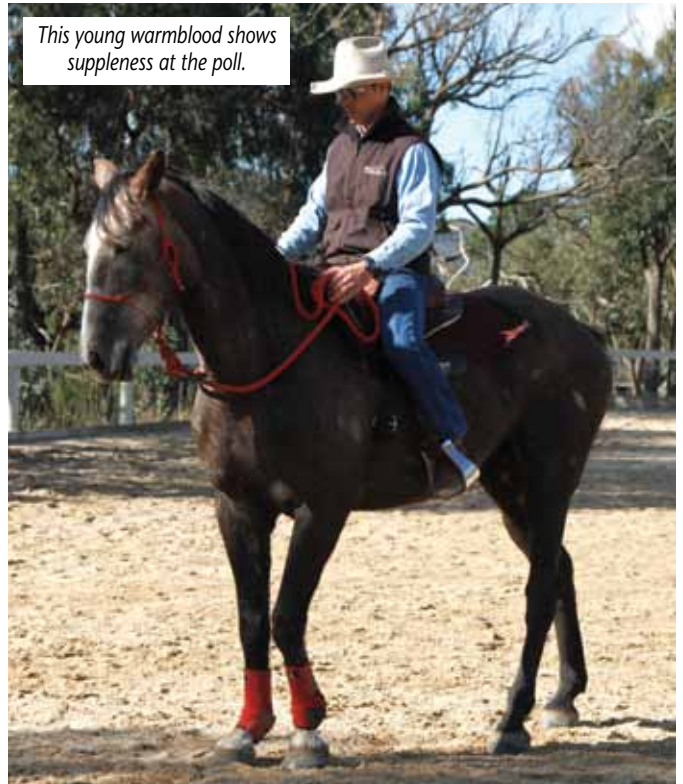
# 'Through the Eyes of the Horse™'



*He is starting to give me that flexion, as you can see from the hindquarter yield.*

To help him build his confidence, as well as to lift his legs, I also used the platform. This required him not only to lift his legs, but also to focus on where his feet were and on his balance on the platform with a rider. Confidence, focus, suppleness, balance and, of course, trust, are all developed within this one simple exercise.

Judging from his face in the picture at the start of this article, you can see he felt good about the lesson. Shortly before that photo was taken, I had decided to just sit with him for a few minutes after he stood on the platform, to let him soak in the lesson. If I hadn't taken that time at the end, I might have missed that important sign of stress relief!



*This young warmblood shows suppleness at the poll.*



*She is showing nice flexion in the joints of her hip and legs – there is good knee and hock action, unlike the Quarter Horse.*

The young Warmblood mare (pictured above and left) has only had about three weeks under saddle. Her conformation and long back, compared to a shorter- or medium-backed horse, is not as strong at this early age, so getting used to carrying a rider on her back will be harder.

Even though she is carrying herself nicely, I am not yet looking for collection. She may be in 'self carriage' for a few steps as she learns what that is, but during this early stage, we are first working on her balance with a rider. As she learns to use her hindquarters and we strengthen her back, her collection will come.

To help a youngster like this mare to develop suppleness, I also use some turns, 20-metre circles and wide serpentines. She is not yet ready for more advanced lateral work like shoulder in.

Remember, even though she is beginning to understand how to carry herself nicely in a rounded frame, if I were to push her too hard or too fast, without developing the solid foundations that we've looked



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at in this article, she could easily develop the 'deadness to the rider' that was an issue for the Quarter horse.

Instead, by taking things slowly, she will actually get there more quickly in the end, while maintaining the softness and calmness that will stand her in good stead for a lifetime.

Until next time – safe riding and God Bless!

**Carlos**

*This is the sort of straightness I am looking for – my nose is at the centre of her poll and her nose is at the centre of her chest. The reins are soft and she is holding herself independently of them.*

Photos by Marty Schiel.

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## Carlos comes to your iPad with Finding Common Ground

Check it out on iTunes!

This book is available for download on your iPhone, iPad or iPod touch with iBooks and on your computer with iTunes. Books must be read on an iOS device.

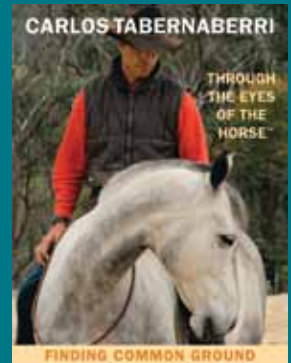
Designed as a must have for riders and horse owners alike Finding Common Ground reveals the methodology and techniques Carlos uses to start and train horses in his clinics, lessons, articles, books and DVDs.

No matter if you own a competition horse, pleasure horse, racehorse or a previously abused horse, Carlos' philosophy can help you forge the loving, trust-based relationship you desire with your horse by finding the common ground in everyday situations.

With step-by-step instructive images and almost two hours of embedded how-to video, Carlos' highly interactive book weaves practical information and instruction with inspiration, always through the eyes of the horse.

"If you really want to know horses, you must love them and have a desire to understand them. If you love and understand them, you will get to know them," says Carlos.

RRP \$19.99. 136 pages (1GB file). Approx. 2 hours video (20 clips). 140 full-colour illustrations (82 step-by-step photos) Fully interactive – highlight, search, notate, bookmark. Requires iBooks 3.0 or later (IOS 5.1 or later)



## Where to catch Carlos

**No matter what type of horse you own and love, Carlos has a gift to help you understand the horse and achieve the results you want. Clinic numbers are purposely kept small, to make sure every person has an opportunity to work directly with Carlos on everything from spookiness on the ground to problem solving on the ground and under saddle. If you have an issue, bring it to a clinic or lesson!**

### 2013 Clinics

#### August

14-18 (Five-day Clinic), Challa Station, Mount Magnet, WA  
**Contact:** Debbie Dowden, [debandash@bigpond.com](mailto:debandash@bigpond.com), 08 9963 5361

23-25 (Clinic) Sunninghill Equestrian Centre, Stoneville, WA (Perth area)  
**Contact:** Lisa Rowe, [nrlmr@primus.com.au](mailto:nrlmr@primus.com.au), 08 9295 5293 or 0419 967 827

28-5 (Clinics/Lessons) Danada Equestrian Centre, Chicago, IL USA  
**Contact:** [efarrell36@rochester.rr.com](mailto:efarrell36@rochester.rr.com)

#### September

6-8 (Two-day Clinic/Lessons), Clunes Show Ground, Clunes VIC  
**Contact:** Leslie Scott, [lesliescott2010@hotmail.com](mailto:lesliescott2010@hotmail.com) or 0418 579 415

13-15 (Clinic/Lessons), Perth WA area (venue TBA)  
**Contact:** Liesl, [lieslsimons@westnet.com.au](mailto:lieslsimons@westnet.com.au) or 0419 919 951

20-22 (Clinic/Lessons), Wilton NSW (Picton area)  
**Contact:** Elizabeth, [budz1305@tpg.com.au](mailto:budz1305@tpg.com.au), 0411 390 432

27-29 (Clinic), Hervey Bay, QLD  
**Contact:** Karen, [kazza56@hotmail.com](mailto:kazza56@hotmail.com)

#### October

4-7 (Clinic/Private lessons), KalEquine Services, Cooranbong, NSW  
**Contact:** Deb, [kalequine@yahoo.com](mailto:kalequine@yahoo.com), 0417 268 884

26-27 (Clinic), Yackandandah VIC  
**Contact:** Jane, [jane@dash.com.au](mailto:jane@dash.com.au)

#### November

2 (Clinic), Whispering Acres, Whittlesea VIC  
**Contact:** Carlos, [carlos@whisperingacres.com.au](mailto:carlos@whisperingacres.com.au) or 0414 380 396

16-18 (Clinic/Lessons), Moggill QLD (SE Qld area)  
**Contact:** Nicole, [firefly2376@yahoo.com.au](mailto:firefly2376@yahoo.com.au) or 0414 320 974



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