



Danee's Horsemanship Hints

Set Riding Goals

Riding goals (well, all goals, really) should be realistic, measurable, and have a set timeline. I find that most people have a hard time setting goals, so in this article I will give examples. This list is not intended to be for everyone, but is for brainstorming and learning how to measure your progress.

- 1.) To trot for 8 minutes without stopping or breaking by the first day of Spring.
- 2.) To canter over a simple course of 6 ground poles by the end of the week.
- 3.) To mount my horse from the ground somewhat gracefully by the end of the month.
- 4.) To ride my horse 3 times a week or more for the next three months (must ride at least ten minutes to count!)
- 5.) To use the next ten rides to correct my hand position. (Make your hand position be the focus of the entire ride.)
- 6.) To go to 5 or more horse shows this year.
- 7.) To get correct flying lead changes 80% of the time by the end of summer. (Note this goal focuses on quality, not quantity!)
- 8.) To save enough money to take a clinic with Mr. Whatshisname in time for registration.
- 9.) To learn how to tie my rope halter correctly TODAY and to use it every time I get my horse out for the next two months.
- 10.) To practice my dressage test on foot once a day between now and the horse show.
- 11.) To take a longe lesson once a month for the whole year.
- 12.) To desensitize my horse to the tarp so I can lead him over it and put it on his back with him 100% relaxed by a date 3 months from now.
- 13.) To learn how to bend my horse on the circle and in corners properly so we can do it correctly at least 80% of the time by the end of the year. In my weekly lessons I will ask my instructor to gauge my progress.
- 14.) To quit talking negatively about myself and my horse for the whole month.
- 15.) To score a 65% or higher in training level this show season.

Take your goals seriously, but also be flexible. Maybe a family emergency threw your plans off track- set a new completion date instead of throwing out the goal completely. If your horse gets an abscess and you can't ride for a week, set a goal to finish watching those training DVDs, or mentally rehearsing your dressage test daily. Know what keeps you motivated and striving for your best!

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