Lunging the Program Horse for Fitness, Training and Teaching
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Introduction:
- Lunging program horses can be a beneficial tool for both the horse, handler and student
- Develop responsiveness to voice aids, tune ground manners to make the horse safer and easier to handle, and develop rapport with horse
- We will discuss established components of safe lunging, skills the horse must demonstrate, skills for the lunger, and basic problem solving

Safety when lunging
- Location is key- find a level area with good footing. Prefer an enclosed space/arena
- Prepare- horse and handler
- Choose your equipment with purpose- exercise? Schooling? Checking soundness?
- Horse-protective boots? Halter/bridle/cavesson? Type of line? whip
- Handler-GLOVES, Footwear
- Use as large a circle as you can=less stress on tendons/ligaments/joints

Time Limits and changing directions
- Lunging is harder work than ordinary riding- b/c working on a circle puts more stress on the horse’s legs, muscles, joints and tendons
- Also attention span of the horse is short- so keep sessions short
- Change directions every 5 minutes to avoid over working one side
- Unfit horses- 5-10 mins total
- Fit and accustomed to working on the lunge- 15-20 mins total

Communication
- Voice- vary tone for what you are asking. Quiet for relaxation and down transitions, variation for up transitions or correction

Holding the line
- Traditional- 2 hands, fold the line hold in riding or driving hold
- Vaulting- loops in one hand is acceptable as well- requires much practice to have finess
- Never let the line touch the ground! Safety factor- horse could step on or over it

Rein aids
- Opening or leading
- Direct
- Indirect- hand inward toward opposite hip
- Vibrating the longe- hand shivers in place
- Giving the longe- hand forward- reward, briefly then smoothly takes up slack
Communicating with the whip
- Normal- pointing toward horse (hip)
- Backward- can flick forward with a wrist turn
- Whip under arm and backward- lash rolled up- to walk toward the horse

Body Language
- Control triangle
- Stay even with heart girth
- Forward of heart girth will slow horse down
- Behind heart girth helps drive forward

Changing directions
- Horse should stop straight on the lunge- not turning in.
- Tuck the whip under your arm, facing backwards
- Walk toward horse and fold up line simultaneously
- Turn horse out of the circle to turn around
- Gradually back up and start horse moving in new direction.

Goals
- Good rhythm and relaxation
- Tracking up
- Responsive, but not over responsive to commands

Problem solving-
- the horse cuts in
- horse pulls on the line
- horse darts away!
- horse is sluggish/scampering

audience examples and questions?