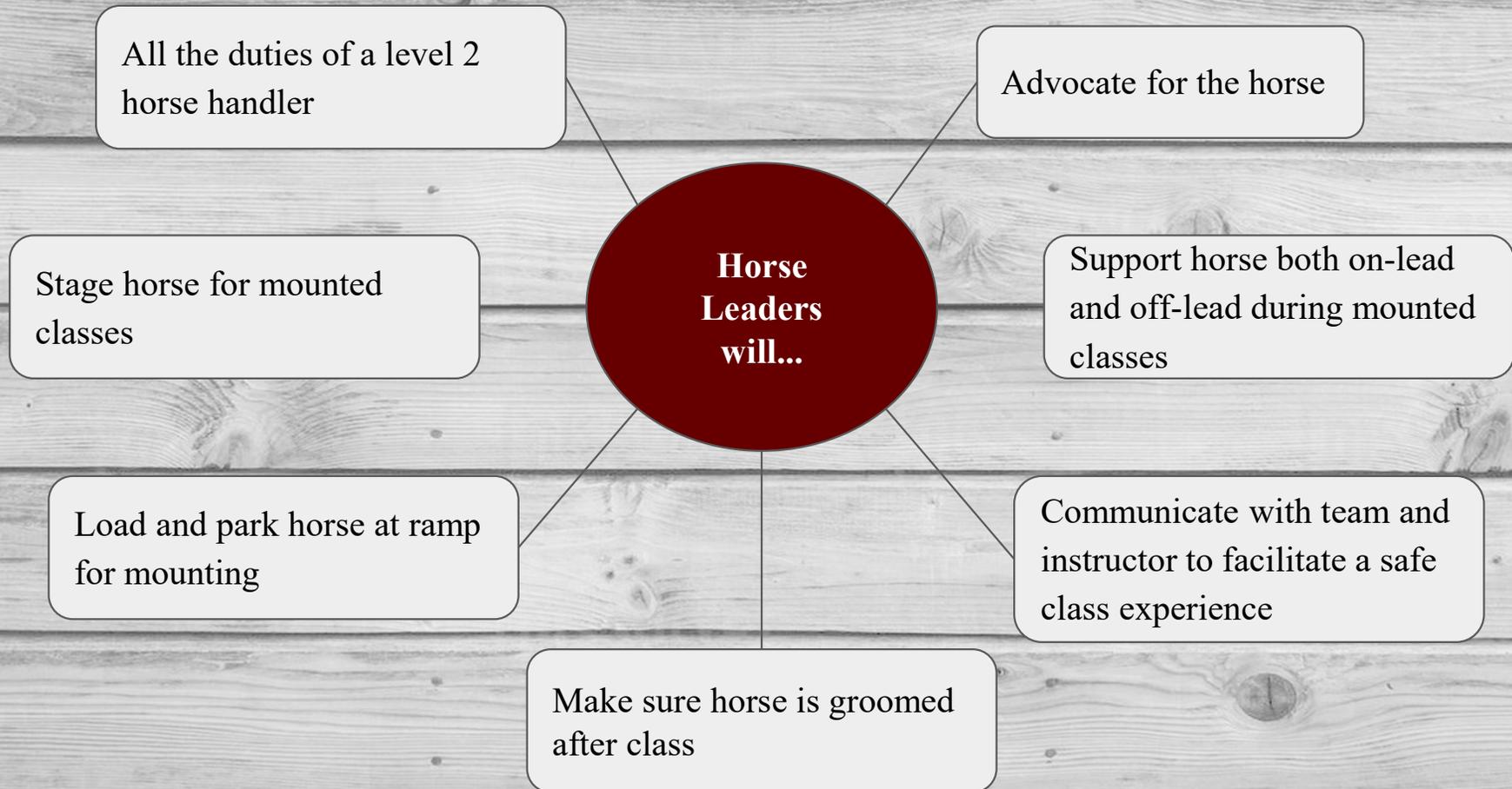




**Welcome to Level 3 Volunteer
Refresher Training!**

The Duties of a Level 3 Horse Leader



What a Level 3 Horse Leader must demonstrate:

All the requirements of a level 2 horse handler

Staging a horse before class, in mounting ramp, and for dismount

Recognizing and interpreting cues from horse and advocating for horse and team



HH handling techniques while leading horse at walk and trot

Execution of common arena patterns, safe spacing, obstacle navigation, backing, and tying off

Safely exiting the arena with both an independent rider and supported rider

First Steps

Where should you check for information about the horses before you start?

On their grooming bucket



On their stall card



On the herd info sheets on the tack room walls



First Steps



The first place I should **always** check is the class schedule on the volunteer table. I'll double check which horses I'm partnered with today.

Mounting

Wait with your horse in the staging area (on the east side of the main ramp). Maintain safe spacing between your horse and the other horses in staging.

If you are the first horse in the staging area, please line up furthest east to allow other horses to 'stack' in safely.



While staged, the horse is in “work mode” and should stand quietly without fussing. Avoid any interactions that would encourage your horse to move around.

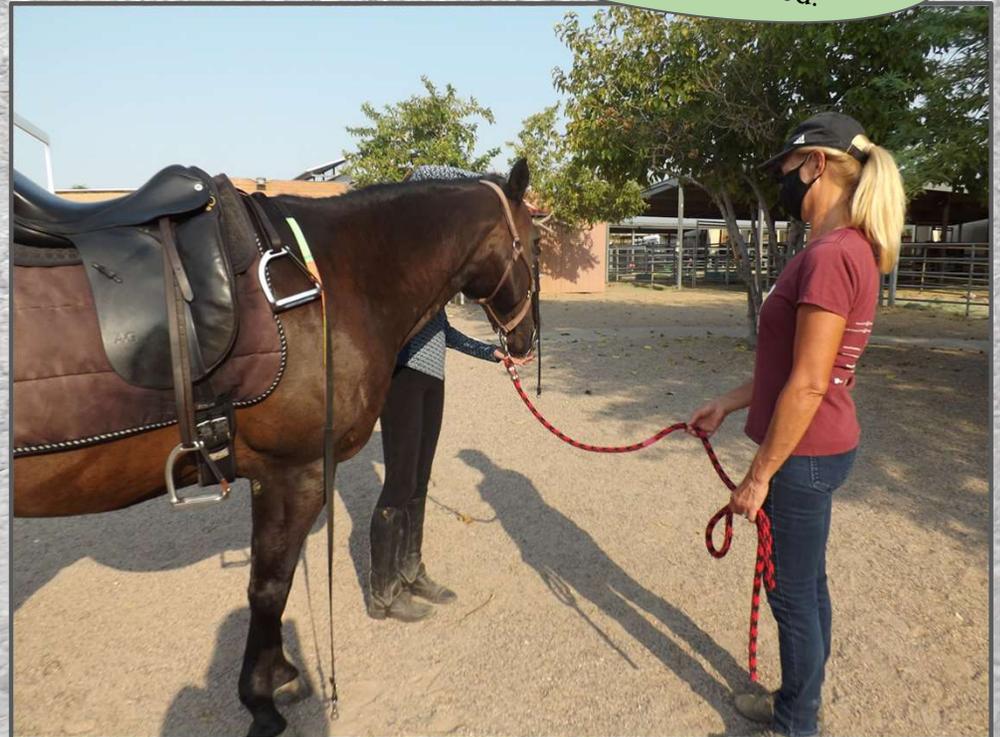
Bridling

Bridles are to be put on and taken off by instructors unless instructed otherwise.

Having multiple people in a horse's personal space (around their head/face) can be overwhelming and may cause frustration in the horse. When the instructor is bridling, please stand out of the horse's bubble on the horse's off side, and hold the lead rope with ample slack.

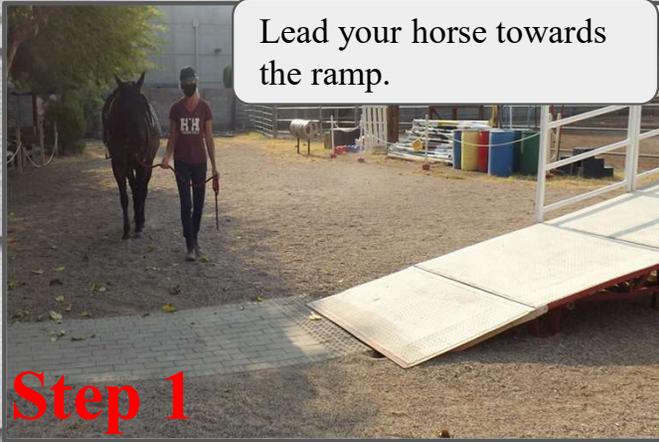
Never tie a horse while their bridle is on.

Don't worry about helping with any of the bridling process unless you're asked.



Mounting

Lead your horse towards the ramp.



At the end of the ramp slowly turn and face your horse.



Walk backwards slowly to lead your horse to ramp platform.



Slowly turn left towards the ramp.



Walk backwards leading your horse into the ramp area.



Step 5

Mounting

Stop your horse in the appropriate place and ask it to square its front feet. The horse above is stopped correctly. You will stand in a parked position on the horse's offside.

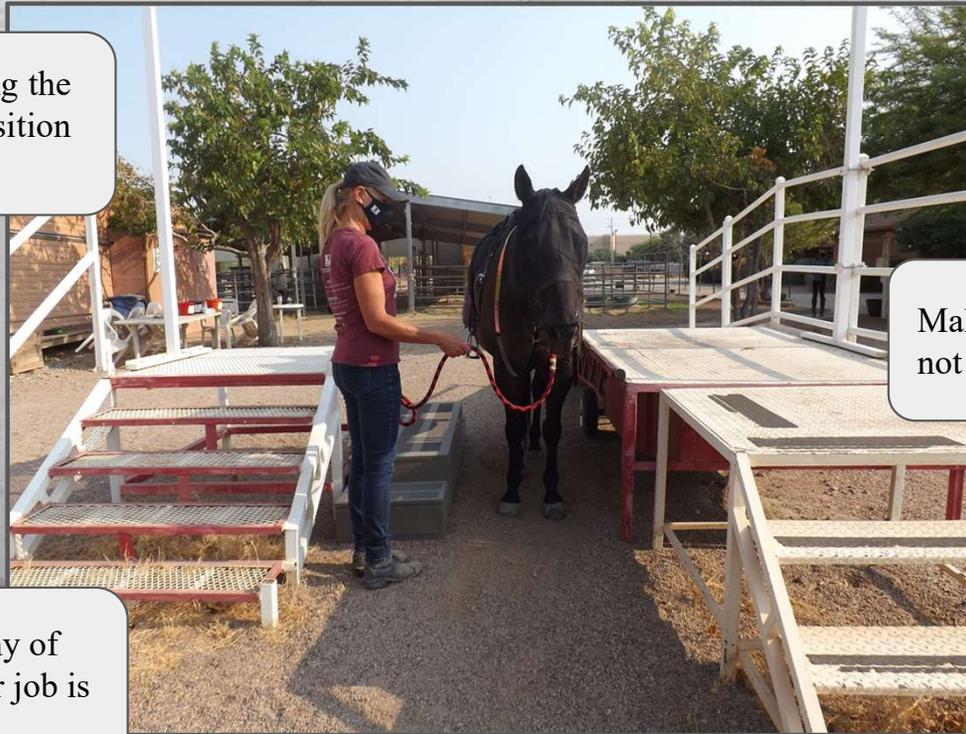


Never back your horse more than one adjustment step when lining up for mount. You can 'reload' the horse if necessary.



Mounting

Stand on the horse's off side facing the horse's shoulder in the parked position during the mount.



Make sure your horse stands still; do not let them wiggle around!

Don't worry about helping with any of the rider's mounting process. Your job is only to focus on the horse.

Mounting

Wait for someone to open the arena gate and for the rider/instructor to say “walk on” before leading out of the ramp

Take a 2-3 steps across the front of your horse to stand on other side and wait for instructor directions.

Clear the stairs/ramp slowly and lead the horse forward in a straight line. The instructor will be walking down with you.



Leading in Class

When to call over the instructor:

- Rider is unbalanced in the saddle
- Rider not feeling well
- Rider attempting to take off helmet
- Rider hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting on, or hair-pulling volunteer or horse
- Rider using inappropriate language or saying mean things about/to volunteers, other participants, or horse
- Rider bouncing/rocking in saddle
- Rider needs to take off or put on jacket
- Rider needs water
- Rider needs to use the bathroom
- Rider struggling with task/directions
- Horse nervous, spooking, anxious, or frustrated

**Please avoid
talking over the
instructor**

- Encourage good listening skills by allowing the rider to focus on their instructor when the instructor is talking.
- Side conversations between team members while instructor is talking will result in team (rider, coach, side-walker, and horse lead) missing key information/directions.

Leading in Class

Stay by your horse's head. Never walk in front of your horse or back by the horse's shoulder.



Leading in Class

Make sure you use gentle turns in class rather than tight ones.

Lengthening your strides when turning right helps you keep up with the horse.

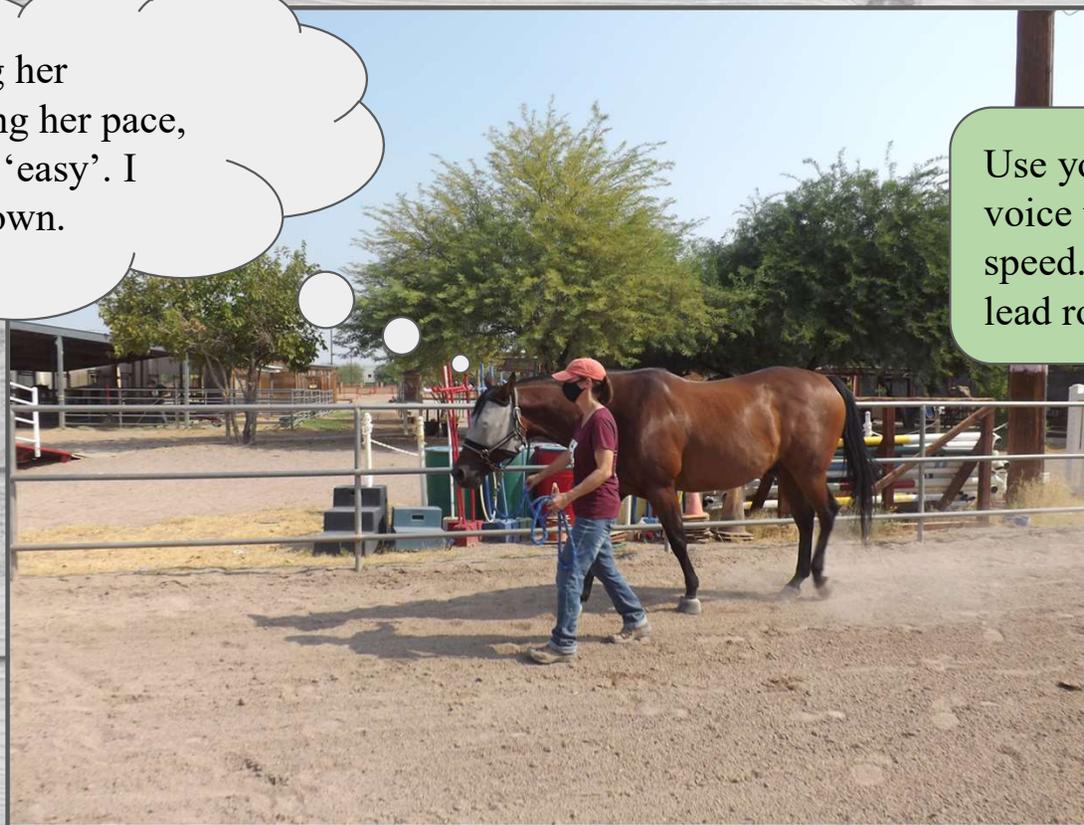
Shortening your strides when turning left helps you stay by the horse's head.

If I look in the direction of my turns, this will help communicate to my horse that we're turning.



Leading in Class

She's lowering her posture, slowing her pace, and telling me 'easy'. I should slow down.



Use your body language and voice to change your horse's speed. Reinforce with the lead rope as needed.

Leading in Class

Never wrap the lead rope around your hand or set it on your shoulder.



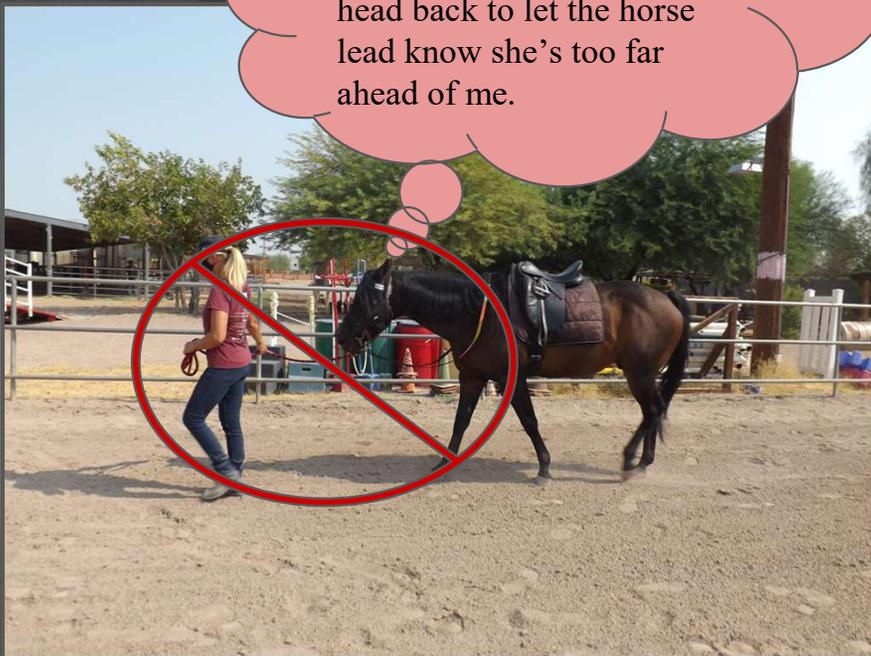
Keep two hands on the lead rope.

Remember to use voice cues!

Stay by your horse's head when leading.

Leading in Class

Hey, I thought we were a team! Maybe I should nibble the rope or pop my head back to let the horse lead know she's too far ahead of me.

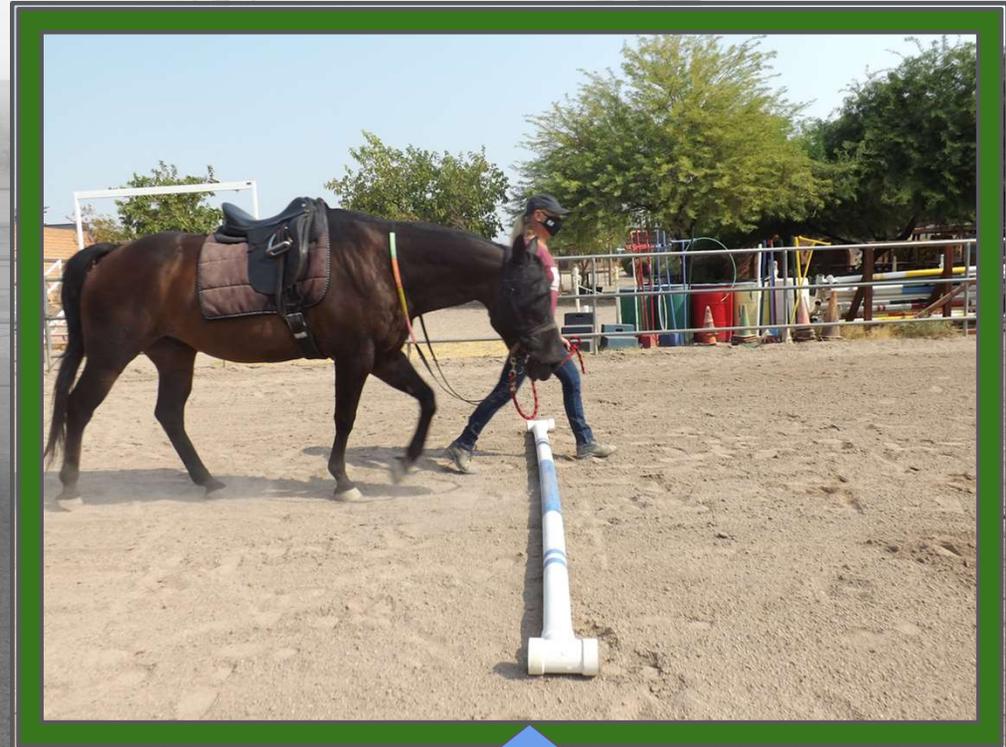


My horse lead is too far behind me to lead the way, so I'm calling the shots now! First stop, grass!



Leading in Class

Give your horse their head as they go over poles. Pulling upwards on a short lead can make it more challenging for them.



Notice the horse's rounded back and relaxed head and neck. He has slack in the lead and can move easily over the pole.

Leading in Class

I need to tell this coach she's walking too close to me. If she steps on the back of my shoe, I could fall.



Make sure you are communicating with your team and giving them adequate space to move around obstacles.



I keep running into obstacles! I should let my horse lead know so they can give me more space.

Leading in Class

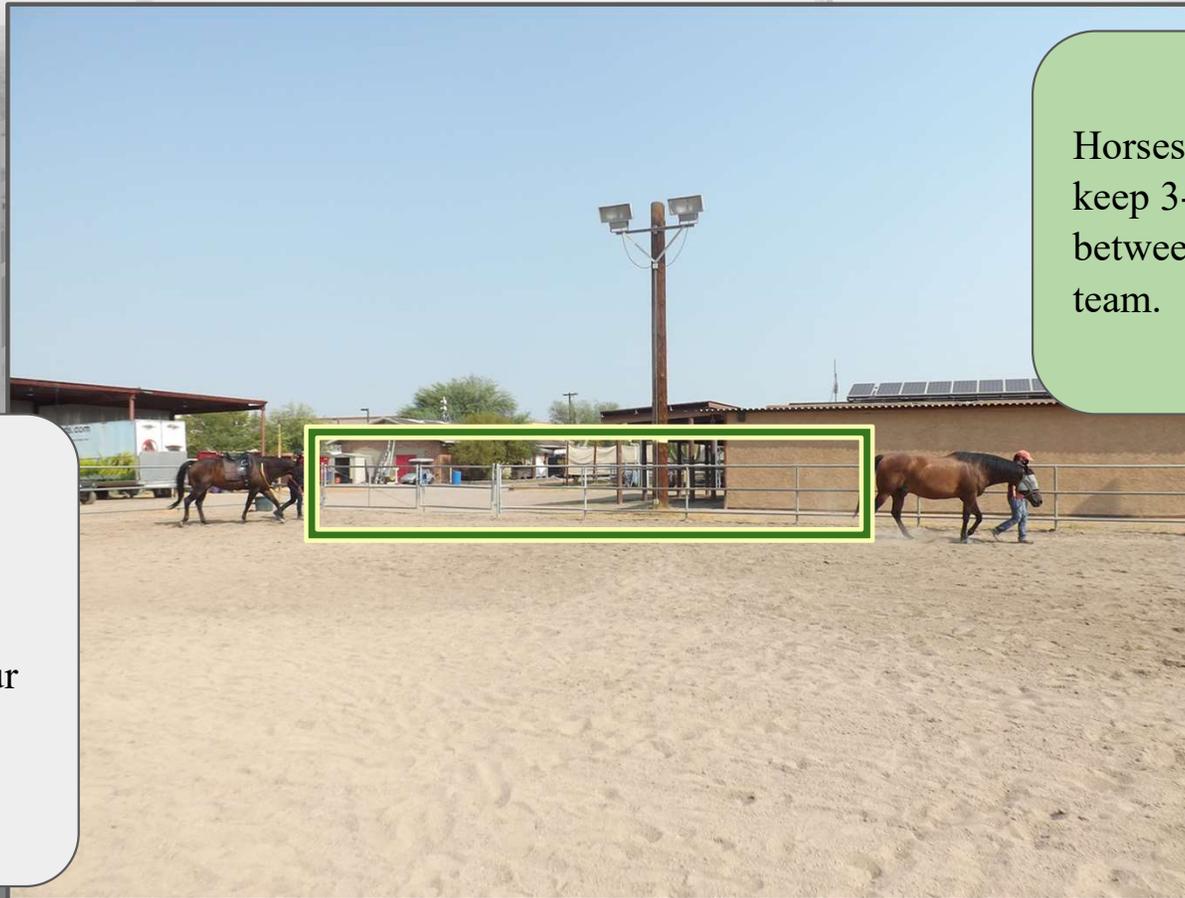
Keep an eye on the rider's reins, too! Make sure they're staying even and not drooping to one side. If they get too long, the horse could trip.



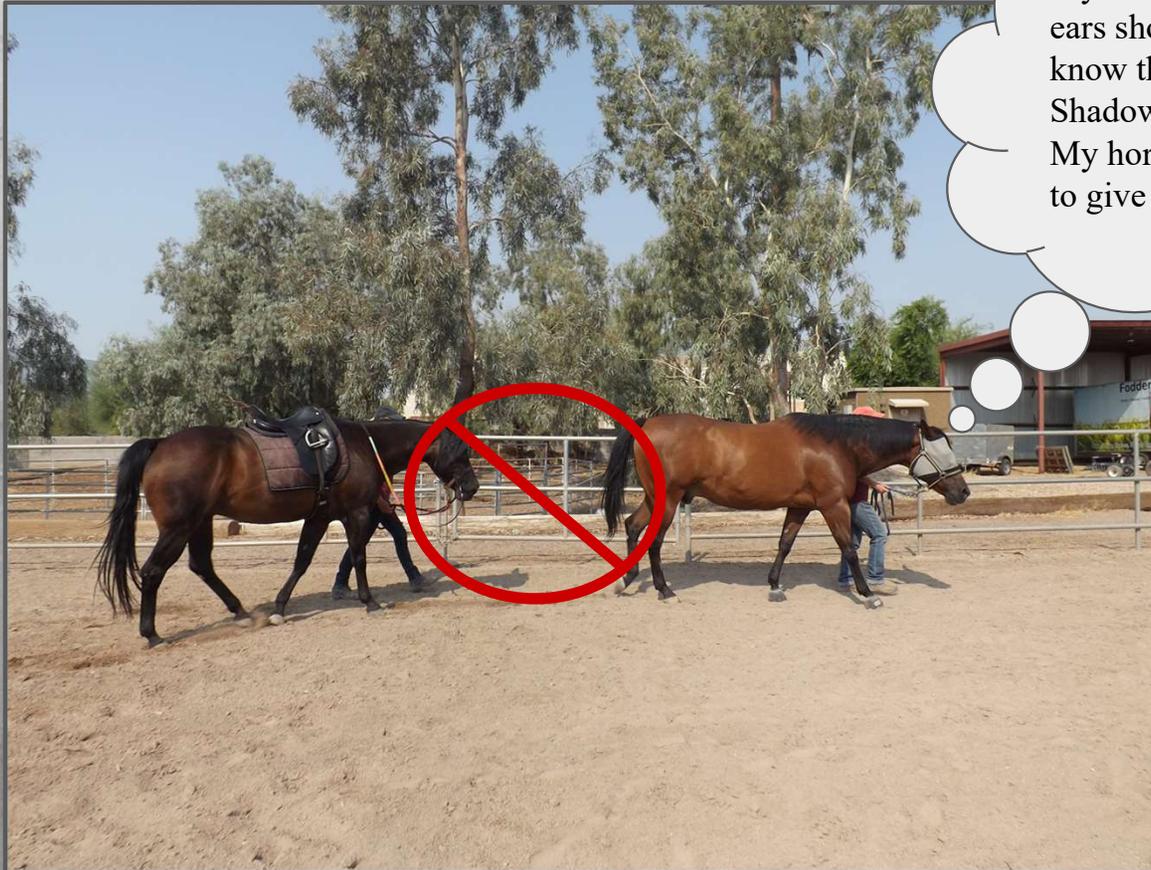
Leading in Class

Horses Help asks that you keep 3-4 horse lengths between you and another team.

Maintain appropriate distance between your team and other teams.



Leading in Class



My swishing tail and pinned ears should let everyone know that I don't like Shadow so close behind me. My horse lead will ask them to give us space.

Leading in Class

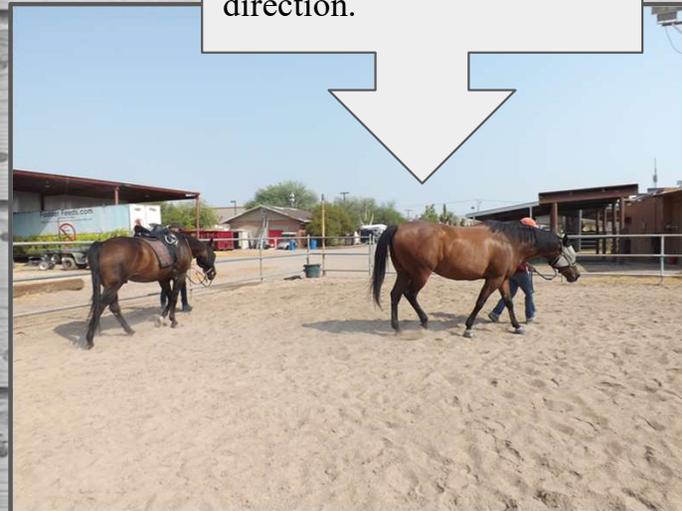
Pass 'left to left' when passing a team going the opposite direction.

Faster horses take the inside track when passing going the same direction.

Pass safely to the inside when passing a horse traveling in the same direction.

Stay along the rail and lead deep into the arena corners to create space up ahead.

Circling back or cutting across the arena is also a good way to create space.



Leading in Class

Use the least amount of pressure necessary to communicate your request.

Give the horse the chance to process and comply with verbal and postural cues before using your lead rope.

Look forward in the direction you want to go. Your horse wants to follow you! If you look back at them, they can get confused.

Make sure your lead rope isn't dragging on the ground so it doesn't trip you or the horse.



Trotting - Upward Transition

Choose a focal point to look at straight ahead. This will help you move on a straight path.

Elevate your posture and walk with purpose. Use an upward inflection in your voice when cueing "Trot!". Reinforce with a cluck if needed.

Begin jogging as your horse transitions into the trot.

The 'smile' in my lead rope helps me move into a trot without restriction. Thanks, horse leader!



Trotting - Downward Transition

Let your posture 'sink' and shoulders drop. Use a downward inflection as you say "and walk" to encourage the horse to slow down.

Stay facing forward and slow your pace in sync with the horse for a smooth, gradual transition.

Reinforce by applying lead rope pressure to the center of the horse's chest if needed.



Backing

To back your horse, turn to face them. Tell your horse 'back' as you step towards them.



My horse lead's posture and verbal cues are great! I won't even need lead rope pressure to back up.



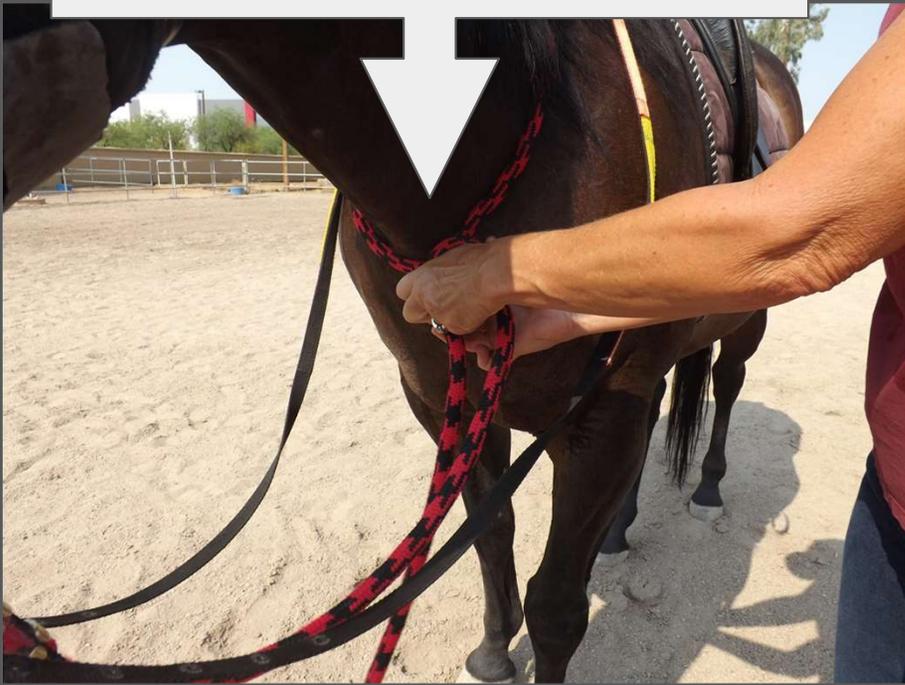
Backing

Asking your horse to back up while you're still facing ahead could be confusing for them.



Off-Leading

Tie the leadrope around the horse's neck when riders go 'off lead'. Horses may be tied off with a quick release knot or a bowline knot.



Make sure the lead rope is tied securely and not dangling below the horse's chest where they could trip on it.



For horses wearing a bitless (crossunder) bridle: unclip the Y-strap (with lead rope attached) from the bridle and carry it in your hands while your rider is off lead.



Off-Leading

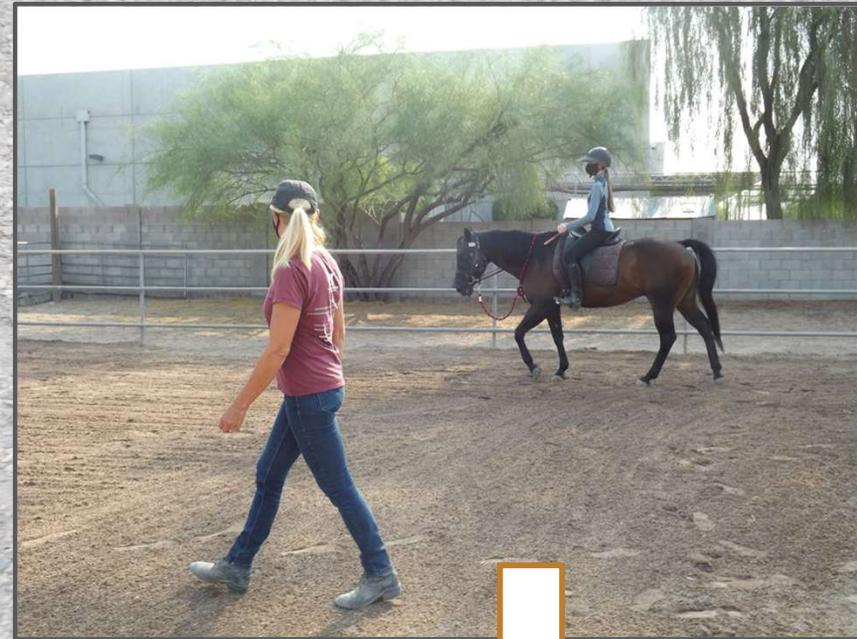


In the case of an emergency, grab the lead rope, not the reins.

If there is no lead rope, you can pull both reins evenly towards the horse's chest for an emergency whoa.

Off-Leading

When walking with an off-lead horse, you may be asked to stay by the horse's head in the same position as when you were leading.



Sometimes you might be asked to 'float' at a distance from the rider. Be sure to stay slightly ahead of the horse so you can stop them as needed.

Emergencies

Keep calm!

Let your team and/or instructor know if you feel like the horse might spook.

Turn horse's hind end away from a fallen rider.

If any other team has a 'fallen rider', turn your horse to face them, whoa, and wait for directions from the instructor.

Call for an emergency dismount if necessary!

Stay a safe distance from another horse that is spooking.



Dismounting

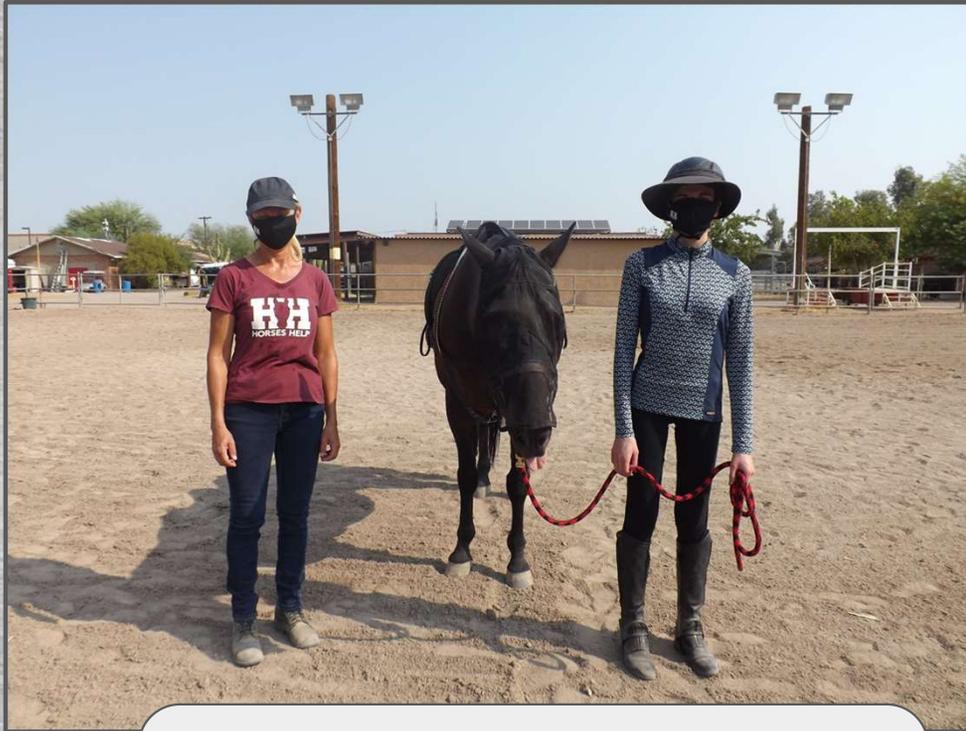
Most riders dismount in the arena. Occasionally riders dismount on the ramp or outside the arena.

Your only job is to focus on the horse. Don't worry about assisting with your rider's dismount.



Once your team has stopped to dismount, turn and stand to the side with your horse in the parked position.

Exiting the Arena



For independent riders, the rider leads the horse from the horse's near side (typically left), and the horse leader walks next to the horse's head on the horse's off side (typically right).

Make sure you're close enough to help lead the horse if needed.



Exiting the Arena



Remember to pay attention to your horse and rider!

Make sure the rider holds the lead rope correctly and doesn't loop it around their hands.

If your rider becomes distracted, remind them to focus back on the horse.

Hey, wait up! I was watching a lovebird fly by and didn't see my horse and rider walk off without me.

My horse lead should have been paying attention.



Exiting the Arena

Leaving the arena is typically done in the 'rider sandwich' method. Your instructor might change this depending on the rider's needs.



Horse
lead

Rider

Coach



Here we go! I'll make sure the horse has space to move through the gate and isn't going too slow or too fast.





This is a good way to leave the arena!

This team is walking out correctly. They stay beside each other and are engaged with their rider.

The rider didn't need their side-walkers assistance, so they are holding the gate open. It is held open wide and is swung away from the horse.



Did you watch that episode of X Files last night where they didn't give the horse enough space to fit through the arena gate?

I saw that episode, too. So weird!

Better check out TikTok real quick. They'll fit through the gate if they squeeze. #horseshelp #gates #fyp

This is a bad way to leave the arena.

I'm going to run ahead to tell my parents how my ride went! I don't think my team will notice.

Petting the Horse after Class



Volunteers are not supervising the rider

Rider is touching horse's face

Lead rope is around the rider

Volunteer is assisting the rider

Horse leader is holding lead rope safely

Volunteer has a foot between the horse and rider in case they need to move



After Class Duties

**After class,
you
should...**

Groom down the horse to clean off any dried sweat or dust

Clean out the horse's hooves to check for rocks or packed dirt

Follow up with the instructor about any challenges the horse or team may have had during class

If flies are out, be sure to put the horse's fly mask on when they are returned to their stall

If you used any equipment, like a crosstie, make sure it goes back to its clipped position.



Next Steps

Take the 'Level 3 Quiz' and pass with at least an 80%

This is an open note quiz and retakes are permitted.