



# IN HAND HORSE LEADING

# HORSE LEADING TECHNIQUE

Using body language and the Linda Tellington chain and wand

## DESCRIPTION

Using body language, a chain shank and wand, sensitivity and awareness, you can teach the horse your and his position, while at the same time establishing a good partnership with him without using force.

Often horses are led in such a way that they are out of balance, not paying attention, leaning on the lead rope, lunging forward, so that they're out ahead of you and out of control if they decide to take off. So it is important to learn how to lead a horse in a way that encourages balance and collaboration.

The leader's position is about half a metre away from the horse, between the head and shoulder, always keeping eye contact with the horse. The wand is an extension of our left arm and helps the leader use his body more evidently, thus giving very clear indications to the horse.



# EQUIPMENT

An ordinary head collar, a flat lead rope (ca 1,20 mt) with 80 cm of chain threaded through the head collar, across the noseband, and a 1 mt wand, which is initially stroked over the horse's body to accustom him to its non-threatening touch.

Once the horse understands, you can use the lightest touch possible.

You seek understanding and collaboration, not fear.

The wand, which can be thought of as an extension of your arm, will have many uses:

- Keep a specific distance from you
- Slow down, come forward, stay back or stop
- Take a half step
- Turn on the forehand
- Move laterally (side pass)
- Become more aware of his balance and his body
- Caress the horse on his chest and shoo away flies!

The objective is to make signals clearer, not harsher.



# GROUNDWORK

Using the Tellington chain, wand and body language is a safe way to learn how to lead a horse, easily transmittable to other people. A lot of groundwork has to be done to exercise together with the horse using cones, pole etc.

Taking a few steps at a time, we will guide the horse through the poles. At the first bend, we will stop the horse, let him look at the layout, then by "leading" with the wand, using our body to indicate the direction as well as gently suggest with the lead rope, we will lead the horse around the turns. We now have a horse who walks quietly on the lead and who is aware of where we are and what we are doing.

This exercise is also important to teach the horse to move in and out of the ramp.

## GROUNDWORK



**GROUNDWORK**





**GROUNDWORK**



# Horse welfare considerations

When using the Tellington chain and wand in the correct way during exercises our goals are to teach the horse:

- Collaboration without fear
- Self control and, as a result, improved coordination
- To wait for our signals
- To accept the wand as a cue, without fear
- Response to our most subtle movements, ‘mirroring’ us
- Accelerated ability to learn new skills
- A new confidence and willingness to learn

When we then use the same method in leading the horse during the therapeutic session, we have the same aims creating a trustful relationship between the leader and the horse.

# SAFETY CONSIDERATION

**Horse:** we put the horse on the first place because if we feel safe with him we feel the other actors are most likely to be safe as well! The chain is a guarantee in emergency moments. The gentle use does not in any way disturb the horse, but when necessary, a stronger use gives a major control of the horse. He has been trained with this method so he knows what it means and will most likely respect the message.

**Client:** the well trained horse will respond very carefully to the use of the chain and wand by the leader thus guaranteeing the maximum safety possible. The chain and wand allow us to work very precisely in changing directions, speed and reacting to the clients requests, as well as approaching the client on the ground, whether in wheelchair or not.



**Leader:** the leader finds himself in a safe position between the head and shoulder of the horse at ca. 50 cm. His feet will never get too near to the hoofs and thanks to the wand he can keep the horse's head at a distance, keeping him in perfect position.

**Sidewalker:** sidewalkers have space on the opposite side of the leader and are instructed how to walk near the horse and how to behave during the session.



## **Advantages:**

- using the Tellington chain and wand correctly gives good control of the horse
- it is a safe way of leading in all circumstances
- it is also easy to teach and for new leaders to learn
- it is very precise and horse friendly

## **Disadvantages:**

- the leader has to be sensitive so as not to hang on the rope and disturb the horse on his nose
- it is more complicated to change from left side leading to the right side in case this should be absolutely necessary
- some people find holding the wand and rope in one hand uncomfortable and therefore do not use the wand

Linda Tellington has experienced working with this method for more than 50 years obtaining very positive results during training and when working regularly with horses. We have been using the chain and wand method for more than 25 years and taking the above mentioned considerations into account, we still believe it to very useful in our field.