

# 7 WAYS TO MOTIVATE HORSES

Motivation is an important part of horse training. Being mindful about what training method we use, and how it motivates our horse, makes a huge difference in the training progress and our relationship with the horse.

## NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Horses seek towards the least amount of pressure. Every time you let go, you push the save button on your horse. It is the release that tells horses they have done the right thing, not the pressure.

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

To ignore unwanted behavior and reward wanted behavior is very effective, specially when teaching new things. It also inspires horses to be creative and try different behaviors to get the reward.

## TIME AND PLAY

Horses are very social animals. Spending time with horses just hanging out or to play with them strengthens the friendship and is very motivating. If we give our time and presence, horses will give the same in return.

## VARIATION

Varying the training by putting up obstacles, playing music or doing unusual tasks like herding, ponying and trail riding builds physical as well as mental strength and motivates horses to become positive towards other work.

## STOP WHEN IT `S GOING GOOD

If you train or ride horses for so long that they experiences exhaustion or pain, they will not be motivated for the next session. A good rule of thumbs is to always end a session when it `s going good.

## GIVE CHOICES

Give choices and make your idea your horse `s idea! Instead of making your horse do stuff you allow the horse to choose. Follow your horse on their idea and make it a less favorable thing to do than your idea.

## THE NUMBER ONE THING THAT DEMOTIVATES HORSES

In our eagerness to keep a dull horse going, or fear of a rushy horse bolting, we tend to ask them to do something they already do. If a rushy horse is held back with the reins, the reins will stop working. If a lazy horse is made go forward with constant leg aid, the leg aid will stop working. If we make a horse follow with a short lead the horse will not follow without lead rope.

