



ISES-W.O.W. Working on Optimal equine Welfare

10 Ethical guidelines and tools for Practice and Performance



1 Safety First, 2 About horses, 3 Moods & States, 4 Coping & Calming, 5 Brains & Behaviour, 6 Coincidental Learning, 7 Associative Learning, 8 Step by Step, 9 Quality Cues, 10 Keep Going.

Adapted from the First Principles of Horse Training as stated by the International Society for Equitation Science. ISES poster Award Winning Edition in the ISES poster Competition.

Safety First	1	Daydreams 1-1	Be Prepared 1-2	Pain Zones 1-3	Danger Zones 1-4	Match or Mismatch 1-5	Potential Flight Risks 1-6	Horse talk 1-7	Walk your Talk 1-8	Always reward contact 1-9	Rules & Roles 1-10
	ISES 1	If you dream of riding horses, you should know everything about them. WOW explains what horses want, need and how they think.	Look for a coach with basic knowledge of Equitation Science and get dressed for the occasion.	It's easy to hurt a horse by accident. Check equipment and pain zones daily. Make sure you can fit two fingers under the noseband along the horse's face. A saddle should fit both horse and rider.	Horses can be dangerous if you lack understanding. Keep a safe distance. Once bitten, twice shy.	Which horse is yours to ride? Ask your coach for a physical and mental win-win match.	Do not shout, do not wave your arms.	Try to find easy short words, whose sounds clearly differ from each other when interacting with horses. The words in this poster are often used in The Netherlands.	Make the horse think you're fun to be with, look for body language, act calm.	Reward the fact that the horse allows contact by some friendly scratching and/or grooming.	First learn to lead from the ground, walk, halt, backwards... for safety reasons make sure your horse steps back whenever you ask him to do so.
About Horses	2	Social needs 2-1	Food & Drinks 2-2	Current Condition 2-3	Shelter and Sunshine 2-4	To Rug or not to Rug 2-5	Signs of pain 2-6	Signs of conflict and/or stress 2-7	Warning Whiskers 2-8	Ranking 2-9	Get levelled 2-10
	ISES 2	Hear something straight from the horse's mouth? "A single horse is a lonely horse."	The horse's digestive tract is not made to cope with 2 meals a day. Gastric fluids and bile are produced continuously and need to be balanced by chewing roughage.	The amount (or absence) of fat on the horse is not an indication of how much weight it can carry. It does give information of the past feeding management.	Horses like to be able to choose between being out of the sun and/or in the rain. They need to have a dry clean soft spot to take a nap.	Some rugs can create temperatures far beyond comfortable for a horse. A horse's normal body temperature is between a 0 and a 20 degrees.	Horses do show signs of pain, use EPWA, downloaded from your appstore.	Horses do show signs of conflict and stress. Knowing a horse better can be helpful to recognise changes.	Horses, like cats, can't see what's right beneath their nose. Whiskers are needed for exploring and decision making. Ear hair protects against insects, dirt and noise. So don't trim those functional hairs.	There is no scientific proof available for ranking the species. Using dominance and force is not part of a fair play agreement.	Get levelled! Reward desired behaviour! If a horse thinks it's more safe or fun, he will follow your lead.
Moods & States	3	Your Feelings 3-1	Flight, Fight, Freeze 3-2	Do NOT Provoke 3-3	Focus 3-4	Test your Brakes... 3-5	Nervousness 3-6	Avoid all arousal and force 3-7	Suffering 3-8	Absence of friendliness 3-9	Positive Moods 3-10
	ISES 3	When you are angry, sad, aroused, scared, or lonely, will you pay attention when your trainer speaks to the group?	Horses too can be angry, hurt, confused, scared and can be reminded of less pleasant experiences. These horses will then not pay attention to their rider.	A cornered horse is an unpredictable horse. A playful stallion is dangerous to play with.	When horses are suddenly surprised or distracted they are not paying attention to their rider. A distracted horse is in fact dangerous to handle and/or ride.	thus make sure your horse always stops if you ask her to do so.	Act calm, stay consistent and use a calming voice. Use scratching, don't give in/up until the horse gets more relaxed.	Try to keep levels of arousal as low as possible. A horse that experiences stress, fear or a conflict is not able to memorize any desired behaviour.	Do not underestimate a horse's capacity to suffer.	The absence of friendliness or always taking all things serious can have an impact on the wellbeing of the riding-horse.	Encourage positive moods by releasing pressure, wither scratching, use voice rewards if it works for the horse. Give the horse a chance to relax in between exercises.
Coping & Calming	4	Getting used to 4-1	Too Much 4-2	No Fuss? 4-3	Clear & Consistent 4-4	Gradual Approach 4-5	Vet & Farrier Proof 4-6	Monster Management 4-7	Reward Curiosity 4-8	Challenging Stimuli 4-9	Calm Down 4-10
	ISES 4	Horses can get used to 'moving monsters', like passing trains, through repeated unharmed repetitions.	Avoid an overload of new scary stimuli.	Do not reward kicking the doors with your attention. Ignore this behaviour like a stubblecat. Reward a moment of silence!	Keep levels of agitation or confusion low and consistent.	Reward the approach of novel objects.	First teach the horse (by rewarding) to touch a target! When a vet or farrier visits, reward the horse when he remains focused on you with help of the 'target game'.	Make the horse think he's pushing a scary object away by letting the horse 'chase' them when they begin to move away.	Train environmental aspects one after another. Obstacles and scary stuff should not be avoided, teach the horse it's fun to be curious by rewarding curiosity!	Reward the horse for staying calm and curious while introducing novel objects, new environments and/or scary people.	Encourage the horse to adopt a relaxing posture as part of the training, in hand and under the saddle in all gaits.
Brains & Behaviour	5	Clean start 5-1	Horses can't... 5-2	Mirror, mirror on the wall... 5-3	Horse ≠ Human 5-4	Lack of interest? 5-5	Character or current State? 5-6	Training overload 5-7	All rewarded behaviour 5-8	Normal behaviour... 5-9	Desired behaviour... 5-10
	ISES 5	'How to behave as a riding horse' has to be learned over several years. These refined skills are not readily available from birth.	pick up phones, keep agendas or plan for future. They also can't be naughtily take revenge nor will hurt you on purpose.	look, my horse sees ALMOST all! The horse has a panoramic vision!	Do agree to differ. Horses do not go to bed on time, eat almost all day and often do not understand the reason for punishment.	Teach the horse it can be fun to work with you, try to find the right environment and the right type of reward that is motivating this horse.	Do not overestimate a horse's understanding. Chronic overload of irrelevant events or happenings can also be a reason for acting oversensitive.	Normally three improved or good repetitions per exercise will do...	Behaviour will be repeated when it is rewarding from the horse's point of view. Behaviour will extinguish when there is no profit to gain.	...from the horse's point of view is not always desired by humans.	...from a human point of view is not always desired by horses.
Coincidental Learning	6	All rewardable species... 6-1	Horses learn... 6-2	Horses do... 6-3	Reward or Ignore 6-4	Train behaviour? 6-5	'Smart' phone? 6-6	New challenges... 6-7	Coincidental Understanding 6-8	Doubling the outcome... 6-9	Riding on Reward... 6-10
	ISES 6	can be trained	with or without us!	...train humans too! If he can send you away or make you pay attention if he can make you do or stop doing something, he is training you!	If possible ask something else, as soon as the horse follows your lead, reward!	Ask for behaviour. Keep asking while you wait for the horse to find the right answer... then REWARD!	That's not fair, reward all desired behaviour at the moment it occurs.	A new exercise perhaps looks like a small step for the rider, but it might seem a giant challenge for the horse.	Pain pressure means slow down! Use clear cues when (re) training a (young) horse. Refine cues with predictable conditioning - always start with a light cue.	Combine all possible rewards (voice, clicker, scratch, release) and/or expand the amount and/or the duration of rewards.	means patiently exploring right from wrong to the horse by excellent timing of releasing pressure cues.
Associative Learning	7	No Maths 7-1	No Multiple Choice 7-2	Associative learning 7-3	So he knows 7-4	HEY?... YES, thank you! 7-5	Gradually turn up the Volume 7-6	Make fair use of the whip! 7-7	Less pressure? 7-8	UH? Oops! Rewarded! 7-9	Predictable Conditioning 7-10
	ISES 7	Horses have no mathematical brain space.	Horses do not understand multiple choice questions. So present just one exclusive cue for each and every task.	Horses easily discover consistent associations. When a simple sound is always followed by another event, the sound predicts something is going to happen. The sound becomes the 'cue'.	Do not underestimate a horse's understanding, sensitivity and observational skills.	Horses learn from rewards, not from the cue which was given just before HEY = pressure = a cue or an aid. 1 Please = light cue. 2 Do it = increased cue. 3 That's it, thank you = release.	Even when riding an experienced horse, ALL cues should always start with the lightest or smallest cues possible. 1 Please = light cue. 2 Do it = increased cue. 3 That's it, thank you = release.	The whip is for pointing and tapping (not hurting).	Gradually increasing pressure, 1, 2, 3, gives the horse an opportunity to make an impact on the amount of pressure used.	Every behaviour you (accidentally) reward you will see more often.	For example, use seat before reins. If B always follows A, A will become the cue.
Step by Step	8	Shaping the gemstone 8-1	Babysteps 8-2	From Kindergarten 8-3	The smallest initiative 8-4	Horse school 8-5	1,2,3... Thanks 8-6	Nano-steps... 8-7	Reward focus 8-8	The next step... 8-9	Repetitions, repetitions... 8-10
	ISES 8	A safe environment, low noise, no interference, a familiar horse in sight. When starting a (young) horse only add one step or change one detail each training.	Making baby steps means making each step obvious and rewards very easy to achieve.	Teach the basic rules of play 'in hand' first: walk, halt, stay, come, go and keep a respectful distance. What is allowed will always be allowed. What is not allowed will never be allowed.	All steps in the right direction should always be rewarded.	When starting a (young) horse only add one novelty or change one detail, at a time.	Use the timeframe 1, 2, 3, or and with a smaller or the same amount of footfalls. Make sure locomotory signals are applied in timing with the beginning of limb movements.	The smaller and more obvious the steps, the easier for the horse to answer correctly. The more often the rider can reward the right answer, the steeper the learning curve.	Reward the horse when he stays or becomes focused on you.	...only after previous steps are confirmed.	'go slow' leads to the fastest progression! Patience polishes small details into great art!
Quality Cues	9	One cue, one meaning 9-1	THE Quiet Seat 9-2	Systematic Cue Copying 9-3	YES always means... 9-4	NO always means... 9-5	HEY is a cue = a question... 9-6	Be Clear! 9-7	Teambuilding 9-8	Wait a moment! 9-9	More complex exercises 9-10
	ISES 9	A cue means whatever two or more individuals together decide that it means.	The rider is either with or in all other options, against the movement. Educate yourself in the dots and dents of an independent (not-disturbing) seat.	Every unique cue is always a clear copy of its original. When needed will always be allowed. What is not allowed will never be allowed.	...YES! But also... continue... just KEEP going! WOW!	...NO STOP this action... WHOA or slow down! When all are safe, it can be followed by YES, and a reward will follow!	...not a habit. Horses easily habituate to a lot of meaningless events such as repetitive 'cues', umbrellas and/or restless human limbs.	If you were your own horse, would you figure out the meaning of all your cues? Talk less, mean more. If you use voice cues, accentuate vowel sounds so your cue stands out from normal chatter.	Particularly horses ridden by two or more riders can get confused when differing cues for tasks are used.	A reward (a release) is overthrown when a new cue is presented too soon.	It's like playing the piano, one key fluently follows the other.
Keep Going	10	Daily basics 10-1	Absence of force... 10-2	Self-carriage... 10-3	Keeping the rhythm... 10-4	Absence of repetitive cues... 10-5	Absence of repetitive stimuli... 10-6	Absence of prolonged cues... 10-7	No need to remind the horse... 10-8	A Winner is Working on... 10-9	Optimal equine Welfare 10-10
	ISES 10	Warming-up means systematically repeating known exercises and responses to confirm and relax the horse mentally and physically.	If force is used, the outcome of this story becomes unpredictable! Please see next picture.	self-carriage means the horse has learned to fulfill a task without the rider repetitively repeating the initial cue.	the horse is able to maintain stride length without the rider repeating the initial cue.	the horse shows he is able to maintain gait without the repetitive or artificial aids (whips, spurs and/or leadropes).	the horse is able to maintain speed without being reminded by its rider.	the horse is able to maintain posture. Postures should not compromise mental or physical horse needs.	the horse shows he is able to maintain an exercise without being reminded by its rider repetitively.	equine wellbeing and is able to maintain a relaxed attitude and posture and is initiating positive moods during all training and competition!	Find more tools or print this poster on www.equitationscience.com www.thewelfare.com