# Horse Trainer Encyclopedia Article

## Horse Trainer

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The ancient Irish believed that certain people had the ability to whisper in the ears of horses and magically influence their behavior. Mary Twelveponies, John Lyons, Monty Roberts, and Buck Brannaman are all professional horse trainers who are sometimes described as horse whisperers. These trainers take wild, dangerous, or simply young horses into a round pen and in a matter of hours—without using force or fear—make friends with the horse, acquaint it with a saddle, and place a rider on its back. As Brannaman says, this is a phenomenal act of trust on the horse's part, as their historic enemies leaped on their backs to kill them.

This horse trainer leads her student through an exercise in an outdoor show ring.

The trainers describe what they do with phrases such as: seeing the world from the horse's point of view; turning frightened horses into friends using respect and trust rather than mastery or manhandling; thinking in harmony with the horses; trusting the horse; and treating it with love and understanding.

Though a horse trainer might work with wild mustangs or Olympic competitors, dressage horses or draft horses, cutting horses or jumpers, the basic approach remains the same. Respecting and working with the horse's nature is the most important step. Conveying calmness and deliberation with their movements, trainers allow the natural curiosity, cooperation, and playfulness of the horse to express itself. They teach one thing at a time, reinforcing learned behavior through constant repetition and approval, and remembering that, like any learner, the horse can grow tired and confused and need a break.

To begin a career in horse training, the novice can read books, watch videos, and get first-hand experience in an apprenticeship program or training clinic with a good teacher. It is also helpful to spend as much time as possible immersed in horses—observing them and enjoying their generous, affectionate personalities.

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