

SNMU TRAINING PLAN FOR NEW HORSES

PROSPECT _____ BEGIN DATE _____
TRAINER _____ END DATE _____

Training is based on the assumption that prospective horses meet criteria set forth in the SNMU Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual. This training plan is a guideline to be used by an SNMU rider when training a prospective new mount. It is organized in 12 lessons that must be completed within a 90-day window.

Each lesson may take as long as one week of consistent practice, at 4-6 sessions per week. After each lesson, note what needs work. Continue working on each lesson until mastered before moving on. Continue reinforcing each past lesson as you make progress on new lessons.

For example: tasks started in Lesson 1 (i.e. sitting with your horse and grooming) should continue throughout the training program. Leg cues started in lesson 5 should continue until lesson 12 and so on. The finished product of the training program will hopefully be a working mounted unit horse.

Self-evaluations on prospective mounts are to be done each day the horse receives training. Any prospective horse that reacts violently to any stimulant after 90 days will be deemed unsatisfactory. Violent reactions include kicking, biting or blowing out of an 8'x 8' box. Extensions on 90 day trials will be executed at the discretion of the Director of Operations.

Any prospective mount who cannot be safely ridden on the street in an urban or rural environment, in and amongst a crowd of citizens, will be deemed unsatisfactory. An unfit mount can cause serious injuries to riders, ground crew, citizens and other horses, as well as expensive property damage. The Board of Directors will make the final determination on the success of a prospective mount.

You do not need to do this alone! Use any experienced riders and resources available to you. We want you and your horse to be successful and we support you in this program!

Lesson 1 Familiarization

Define the horse's temperament and personality. Look for what the horse likes or dislikes. Groom the horse. Find where they like to get scratched. Introduce your personality to the horse, and how you walk, talk, gesture, smell. Do not do any groundwork or riding work.

Lesson 2 Round Pen

Groom and tack up. Walk horse to round pen or arena. Take note of horse's respect for personal space, manners, calmness, or anxieties. Loose or free lunge the horse slowly to see how they respect you, latch on to you, respond to your cues, or not.

Lesson 3 Basics Groundwork

Groom, tack up, walk to the round pen or arena. Begin basic commands from the ground on a lead line, lunge line, or loose. Commands include walk, trot, canter, in either direction; halt, back; disengaging head, shoulder, haunch.

Lesson 4 Basics Under Saddle

In the round pen or arena, work the same basic commands while under saddle: walk, trot, canter, in either direction; halt, back; disengaging head, shoulder, haunch. Perform all commands in both directions, changing directions frequently.

Lesson 5 Patterns

Ride the horse to the round pen or arena. Set up cones or objects to ride around. Perform figure eights, tight circles, backing, side-passing, two-tracking, turning on the fore and hinds. Note the horse's willingness, flexibility, learning curve, or resistance.

Lesson 6 Bareback

This lesson builds the rider's trust, balance, and confidence. Perform Lessons 4 and 5 while bareback, with reins. If you are confident in your horse, challenge yourself by performing the commands bareback and also bitless, using a hackamore or halter lead. ONLY challenge yourself if you can safely direct the horse.

Lesson 7 Sensory Basics

Review the SNMU Horse Evaluation, which also serves as a sensory training checklist. Begin introducing your horse to the Basic sensory stimulants. Be patient. It is your responsibility to introduce the stimulant safely for you and the horse. If the horse is anxious or resistant, it is not the horse's fault or bad behavior. You need to change the way you're handling the stimulant or accept the horse's limits.

Lesson 8 Sensory Mastery

Continue Sensory Basics if needed and begin Sensory Mastery on the checklist. Make progress according to the horse's ability, either by introducing master stimulants or intensifying the experiences with Sensory Basics, e.g. moving closer, exposing longer.

Lesson 9 Sensory Pre-Evaluation

Arrange for an evaluation with the Director of Operations or their approved delegate. Focus training on those stimulants that are flagged as needing Work or Failing.

Lesson 10 Street Basics

Begin street training, riding with at least one other confident and experienced horse on quiet neighborhood streets. Gear sensory objects towards sights and sounds of the street (e.g. horns, sirens, cars, flares, whistles, manhole covers, sidewalks, road cones, water in gutters, puddles, etc.). Challenge horses on moderately busy streets, such as Adams Boulevard, Georgia Avenue or Utah Street.

Lesson 11 Street Mastery

Ride on Arizona Street or otherwise near downtown, riding with at least one other confident and experienced horse, at least once in daylight and once in the dark. Arrange or locate crowds of people to ride near, maintaining a safe distance at all times. Ride boot to boot with other horses near a crowd willing to make noise and wave objects. Ride through Veterans Park at least once in daylight and once in the dark.

Lesson 12 Desert

Ride along with a confident, experienced horse through varying desert areas. Include the powerline roads, railroad tracks, Bootleg Canyon, off trails, across rocks and deep sand, and through shrubs.