



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Teach a Horse to Give to the Bit

Dear Frank,

I have, I believe, a 12 year old paint mare. I have had her for almost 2 years now, I rescued her from a back yard full of trash, living on weeds and walking over old chain link gates, wood planks, etc. It looks as though she had been roped hard because she has rope cuts under her jaw and has all four bowed tendons (old). Her tail looks as though it had been broken as it is crooked from the dock. But I love her anyway. She does just about everything I ask her to. I have yet to find anything she won't do if I coax her enough. She has learned to trust me. However, when I ride she does not give to the bit. When I first got her she would thrust her tongue over the bit. I tried many different bits and finally found a tom thumb that she seems to work well with (long shank) as she really does not have a great whoa. I have qualified her into the Sheriff's equestrian patrol, and she does great although we are working on flares!

My question is what video would help me in working with her to give to the bit and on her whoa? A friend has told me she is very stiff in her back also...??? Can you help me??? Just found your website from watching Horse TV on DirecTV and love your website. I plan on buying one video at a time. Your website has become top of my list for the favorites!!! Found your segment on Horse TV very informative.

Thank you,
Stephanie

Dear Stephanie,

Please allow me to make several suggestions. For the tongue over the bit, tie a piece of 1/4" parachute cord to the middle of the snaffle or tom thumb, then run an end out each side of the corner of the mouth then tie together above the nose, forming a triangle. Tie the single end to the forelock or above onto the piece of leather in front of the ear (headstall). This usually works. Don't get it too tight however.

Giving to the bit is well covered in my "[Communication in the Saddle](#)" video and is about teaching the horse to bend at the poll. There is a hinge that allows the horse to nod. Humans are the same. Try nodding, then lowering your head. Two completely different motions. Your horse needs to learn to nod and is taught by asking with constant pressure on the rein until the horse gives on iota, then a huge release and praise and let it sink in then begin again.



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Before long your horse will understand how to get soft in the jaw. It's far too difficult to explain this in written form. Get the video.

Finally (and most important) you need to teach your horse (all horses) the one-rein stop which could easily save your life someday on a run-away. This is what my foundation work, "[Discover the Horse You Never Knew](#)" is all about. Without a one-rein stop, you are in a speeding car on black ice! It is that dangerous! So, get the "Discover the Horse You Never Knew" video and consider the package deals that also include the 12' halter/lead combo, laminated pocket card, and wand. We can help you to 'Get There Now' safely.

In Spirit,

Frank R. Bell