



# Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

## Horse Won't Whoa

Hello!

I have a draft/quarter horse, he is about 8 years old and still has no idea that the word 'whoa' means come to a complete stop. To him it means consider stopping but instead slow down. I feel like I have been working on this forever and have tried everything! Can you help me?

Thanks!  
Sarah

Sarah:

I'd suggest riding him right into a wall and he will have to stop, won't he? More importantly, he'll have to learn to give to the bit and bend at the poll when he does stop and you'll have to release him only when he gets soft. A lot of horses do get stopped, but their neck and head are all braced up when they are released. My program reward for softness and giving only. So if you do release before the horse has nodded, softened at the poll, you've rewarded for the wrong thing.

This is well covered in my "[Communication in the Saddle](#)" video and is of utmost importance for attaining a compliant stop. I'd also suggest that when you do finally get him to stop and get soft, back him a step or two. That way he gets in the habit or actually rocking back on his haunches every single time you stop him, instead of waiting to go forward again.

Good luck, happy trails, and safe riding to you!

*Frank R. Bell*