



Proper Lunging

Robin Lippit

[Back to Articles...](#)

While lunging a horse, the handler must utilize proper technique to minimize chance of injury to the horse and to themselves.

Always lunge in a bridle to maximize control, put protective boots on the horse and be keenly aware of the footing.

Lunging in deep, tracked over ground can result in lower leg soft tissue damage. Have the horse 15 feet away from you. A very small circle puts strain on the lower limbs, and the horse could easily injure the handler if it were to strike out. When using too large a circle, handler has minimal control; horse could slip or bolt.

The lunge line should be taught with excess lunge line placed in opposite hand neatly with the whip.

Using the whip as encouragement, guide the horse to push from his hindquarters (hind hoof prints should be "tracking up" to front hoof prints) and the horse should be round using his back.

When using side reins, the horse's nose should not be positioned behind the vertical (nose behind ears). Other lunging aids, i.e. Pessoa or a bungee for example, should only be used by an experienced professional. Used incorrectly, these lunging aids can become incredibly unsafe or cause injury to the horse.

A lunging session should include a warm up and cool down just like a regular ride. However due to the stress of repeated circling the lunging session should only last about half the normal ride time depending on the fitness of the horse.