

4/23/2010

We had a discouraged, new to Mustangs owner on Pennsylvania.....so our Mustang Family pulled together to assist her.....Thanks guys and gals...YOU ARE TOTALLY AWESOME!

Question 1: Working with Mustangs Feet

As for the farrier, you need to need to instill a strong sense of leadership in Cowboy, before working on this. First, do not tie him up to a post or anything else. Get him used to being haltered and standing at a tie post by using a Tie-Blocker. Go through all the training exercises with this piece of equipment until he is entirely comfortable with it. Then you need to start working on holding his feet up for extended periods of time, starting with just 2 seconds, then release, then pick up for 5 seconds, then release, and so on until you can hold his foot for the length of time that you would expect a farrier to take to trim it. And maybe a bit longer. So, its pick up, hold, release and rub.

Remember, it is the release of pressure that teaches the horse not the application.

Like the Dog Whisperer says, animals can be rehabilitated, its the owners that need training.

I had the same problem with my mustang so I invited my horse friends over to get my horse used to other people picking up his feet. Start by just having them walk up, pet him and walk away. Then increase the handling to rubbing/scratching him all over and down his legs and making it really pleasant for him increasing the contact until they are able to pick up each foot, put it down etc. Do both sides. If your horse is really nervous and tries to move away when they approach they must continue approaching him until he stops his feet and relaxes – then they can stop and walk away – even if they don't pet him at first. If they stop approaching when he moves away he will think that moving away is the right answer to get away from the pressure. He needs to learn that if he is scared and moves away he will not get the relief he is looking for i.e. the relief will only come when he stops moving and relaxes (i.e. signs of relaxation are starts chewing, rests a back foot, lowers his head etc) Also, you mentioned the farrier walked up slowly. The farrier should be relaxed and move normally – not creep up slowly. I found that the slow creep makes my horse nervous – even to this day and I have had him seven years. If you act normal, talking and don't stare him down but just act like he is any other horse – they relax more. If the horse is not used to the farriers tools you may want to get an old rasp from him and practice getting your horse used to that as well.

I would offer your kind farrier an hourly pay in addition to his trimming fee to pay him for the time training... this will allow him to take his time with the horse without losing income. 2. Make sure you have exerised your horse so that it is in a good state of mind before the farrier arrives...

also do some ground work and pick up feet, etc. 3. I think that using something to calm your horse can be very helpful. I have heard however, this can frighten certain individuals more than help, I would pre-test the medication to make sure that is not the case, or be willing to have the farrier come back another time. 4. I would make sure that the horses feet are soft (by soaking or treating with hoof conditioner) before the shoer comes to make it easier for the horse and shoer, that looks like that probably is a non-issue since you are in PA.

I had the exact same problem with my mustang mare that I gentled and did all her groundwork. She would only let me pick up all of her feet so the farrier could only do her front feet and that didn't always go too well. I switched farriers almost three years ago and for some reason, she loved the new one right away and never had a problem letting him pick up all of her feet. However, he once brought a helper who she wouldn't let near her hind feet. I think that largely, it's because mustangs are very careful and want to make sure they're going to get their foot back! Also, a good farrier knows how to relax, be calm and let the horse come up to him and be curious. The first day, he just leaned against the fence and talked to me with his back turned to my horse like she wasn't there until she came up to him and started checking him out like, "Why aren't you paying me any attention?". From that day on, he has never had a problem. (He kisses her on the nose and puts his arm around her neck like he's known her forever so she trusts him).

I would have to say, just keep picking up your horse's feet every day and don't pick them up in the same order all the time. Mix it up and then have someone else do it so he's not so afraid. Sounds like he just needs some understanding and with consistency and patience, you will achieve what you want.

1- Farrier Trims

Ace had a HUGE issue with trusting strangers as he was so attached to me. He had figured out that I would not hurt him but had no trust in strangers and would bolt when they got within 50 feet of them. I would NEVER recommend tying him, as it will only panic him more once he realizes that he is trapped. Simply, what you need to do is get more people around him. If he is comfortable with you picking up his feet, banging on them, putting them between your legs, stretching them out in front of him you have done your homework and are ready to proceed. Depending on how fearful he is of strangers adapt this to his needs. If he is scared of most strangers anywhere close to him have someone new walk in front of him about 10 feet or however close you can get him to them. Follow them. They are much less scary when he is chasing them. Get progressively closer. Have them remain walking away but throw up their hands, clap make noises, flutter paper etc. Proceed until you can walk him right next to them. Keep your self between them if necessary. (Any novice can do this part) Then have them lead the horse around. Do not have them clutching him right under the lead snap where he feels trapped. Let him move as far away as needed and get progressively closer. They might sidestep, walk really far away, snort etc but just keep walking. If needed take back control and revert to where he was comfortable. And then work your way back up. Stay walking next to this person as his security blanket. Dont just walk away and leave him

alone with the 'monster'. When he gets comfortable with that have them rub him on his neck or shoulder. When they first move their arm to touch them many will jump and freak. Just keep waving their arm desensitizing the air space around him. If they cannot touch the air around them, how are they supposed to actually touch them? Get closer and closer. Repeat until they stop flinching. Then have them 'accidentally' brush their fingers along their neck and go back to desensitizing the air space. Keep doing it. Then just start rubbing them. Work from shoulder to withers, withers to back, and then neck. This is the least scary order. Work on one area until they relax and then retreat. Then work on the underbelly, front feet, back feet, hind quarters and then face. If you yourself cannot do any of this you need to accomplish that first. They should be able to pet him all over. Do not at any point attempt to make him stand still. Let it be his choice. Ask him to pick up a foot. As soon as he shifts his weight at all or picks it up, release. Then work on holding for one second. Two. Three. 15. 45. a minute. Two minutes. Just work up. Then have them start tapping, slapping, wiggling, moving the leg in general. Progress until they can do all four feet. Then have THEM lead him around for a few minutes really rub on him and love on him. Then THEY put him away. So the last thing they remember is how good they were to him.

Then repeat with a new person. The more people that handle him the quicker each step will be. Pretty soon he just sleeps while people handle him. They need to show him that they wont hurt him.

Then have them do some ground work with him to establish respect. You are the owner and it is your job to prepare him for the farrier. Do not make it your farriers job to train him. Also, unless his feet are really really bad I would not sedate him. It is going to be hard as heck to get the needle in his neck by your vet without putting him in a chute. In two weeks with my mustang stallion Ace, we had taken care of the problem and were able to get him trimmed pretty easy. By all means if he is going lame or sore, or his feet are really bad then trim his feet. But if they can stand another week or two do your training first.

Tip: Have the strangers wear things your farrier might: a cowboy hat, baseball cap flappy jacket etc. Start of easy with them dressing similar to you and then add stuff with each new person. I made the mistake of never working around him with a cowboy hat on, and my farrier refused to take is off (hes a baldy lol) and it was a wreck. Make it as least tramatic for him as possible.

I hate to say it, but if your farrier gets out there and he's not doing well pay him for his time and reschedule. DO NOT push him to the point of panic because its only going to be ingrained deeper that the farrier is the bad guy. My boy now loves my farrier after 6 trims. He knows that he's going to give him a good scratching and he's nothing to fear.

When he first gets there test your horse and have him lead him around. If he cannot even do that you know you need to do more work before he is trimmed.

We had a similar problem with a quarter horse filly and when the farrier suggested to tranq her, my husband said no and he held up the foot for the farrier. Then we got a new farrier. The way you do it and the way a farrier holds it and acts is different. Often, they pull the foot out to the side, and throw an inexperienced horse off. We found a trimmer who actually knelt on the ground

and could even do an old arthritic guy with only picking the hoof up a few inches. By the way, this same seasoned old guy tried to kick the first farrier because of the arthritis when the farrier tried to put the hoof on his knee stretched out. This farrier was pretty good, mind you, but the way one handles a horse and its feet and legs makes a huge difference. The best we have used with the least amount of issues with our herd was a female barefoot trimmer/certified instructor. She approached each horse and each donkey with absolute calm and softness and she took the time that it took. I had a new donkey that had never been trimmed but I had worked with picking up feet for a week and told her exactly how I was doing it and she had me stand right next to him and we double teamed him (a little crowded, but he wasn't deadly with his feet). Piece of cake.

Your other option is to get a set of trimming DVDs and simply do them yourself. I like the Phil Morare (sp?) ones. There is also a \$40 tool out there that fits in the palm of your hand called a Riders Rasp for putting on the beveled / rounded/ mustang edge. With a weekly regular rasping and then the Rider's Rasp to put on the edge, you could do this job yourself. There is a wealth of info out there on the internet on a yahoo group called ABC hoofcare as well as great websites to help you free. I check in with a couple of them on a weekly basis.

If you are sure you want to stick with this farrier, just keep picking up your horse's feet every day, holding them for longer and longer, tapping them with a tool, and really getting him used to it. Then have a friend or family member do it to acclimate him to others.

For the lady who's mustang only lets her pick them up. I had the same problem with my mustang then I started having other people come out with me and I would have them start playing with my horse. Always a different person. Then when we started with his feet I would pick them up and they would step in and hold them. I did this a few times. Then when my trimmer came out we would do the same thing and now no problem. Kind of a weird why but he was so scared of the other person near his legs and nothing else worked.

This just takes time, nothing else. It took us 4 months before our horse was ok with getting his feet picked up. The first time we had a farrier to do a trim we had him sedated for everyone's safety. The second time we only needed half a dose and the third time a quarter dose and he was awake by the time the farrier got to his back feet and he wasn't worried. I am not a huge fan of sedation either, but I think it helps immensely at the beginning when they are getting used to so many things.

My farrier also told me about a technique that may help- he and the owner stand close together and the owner picks up the foot and gently hands it off to the farrier to work on while still staying next to the farrier and the horse and petting the horse to help keep him calm. Sort of like the farrier being a shadow of the owner.

For the feet issue, your farrier is gonna need time. my suggestion is to really work your horse, make him hustle and move him around. Then pick up his foot and work on it a little, if he tries to act up or anything, work him again, when he is not reactive and is listening, pick up the foot and continue. This won't cure him in one session, you will need to continue doing this everyday. He will get better.

Most all horses can be trained by one person, when done consistently enough, so others can step in and do the same things without issue. Please be aware that not every person gives off the vibes (walking easy and speaking softly is not always enough), has good timing and uses the psychology, suiting all horses. A person might be competent in their field and be gentle and quiet, but a sensitive or wild horse may require a special person in the field of horse psychology or wild horse gentling.

You may not be judging your horses level of training correctly because he responds to you well, so experiment with other knowledgeable people picking up his feet before the farrier comes again. A farrier is of course a specialist and should be set up for the safest possible job, not have to train your horse which is of course why you have been working with him.

On the other hand just be aware of the energy given off by different people and the sensitivity of some horses. Not all shoers are good horsemen Don't hesitate to change farriers if your horse works well for you and others but your farrier continues to have issues. I know this may meet with scoffs, but time and again over 50 years, we have often used a different farrier for our wild ones, babies or those with issues. I have a shoer who is GREAT, if a bit pricey, for corrective shoeing and my show horses but use another who actually specializes in colts and wild ones or those with issues (and charges less because he doesn't do the " technical, schooled, other stuff" as he calls it). He can calm & handle horses to trim/shoe better than most. He's a funny bird the way he makes conversation with them and he has an odd mannerism but the proof is in the results. This method has saved much stress for owner and horse as well as kept the shoer safe.

I'd say you're on the right track with your training, keep it up and keep an open mind.

Another thing I like to tell students and clients;

In the beginning no one knew everything they now know, no one knows everything and an amatuer may have the next great new training method we all want to use.

Follow your instincts, ask for input as you have been and don't forget, in some respects, you're the "mom" now and those instincts may very well be quite good.

Mustangs tend to get bonded with their humans and become afraid when other humans are around them. It is important to have other people handle your mustang and let him get used to the different sounds, smells, movements, and methods of humans other than yourself. You could have them halter him, lead him, groom him, and start to handle his feet. Make sure the human is going to respect your horse and his issues, so as not to cause more problems for you and your horse. The good news is he is fine with you, so that means he can be fine with others too, once he trusts them. Always make sure your horse is never harmed by strangers. It would be a good thing to discuss ahead of time with the humans what they plan to do to have contact with your

horse. Make sure you feel comfortable with what they plan to do, before you proceed. Lots of short sessions are better than one long session to help him, if that is possible.

I would recommend our newest video Tools, Tips and Trick of the Trade. It covers how to work with their feet, using a humble hobble to tie them up then when he throws a fit with the shoer, just tie it up and let the shoer pet on him for a while then put it down and try again. Then it covers how to teach a horse to stand while mounting. It also has a ton of other great training tricks in it that she may find helpful!

Thanks, Kitty www.laumantraining.com

First thing is, these are very basic training issues that can easily be solved. I would strongly suggest that you seek professional help. And quickly, before Cowboy gains the idea that humans are essentially weak. If he does get this idea, he may move quickly to the "dark side" and start attacking you. If this happens he may eventually become irretrievably aggressive. I have seen this happen to a number of mustangs. Weak owners = bad horses. And it is not the fault of the horse or any previous trainer. He is behaving that way because you are letting him.

If you decide that you can help Cowboy, these are symptoms of a larger issue - a lack of respect. You are not in his brain. Go back to the round pen, gain control of his feet. Then do all the ground work including sensitizing and de-sensitizing. Take some air out, and let him get it back with de-sensitizing, such as laying all over him, picking up his feet, saddling, haltering, laying a tarp all over him, and so on. Essentially retrain his mind to see you as the leader. Leadership gets respect, respect gets trust, trust gets rid of the fear.

We got our mustang as a yearling as soon as we got him gentled I started introducing him to others. A year later he still a little nervous about having his hoofs trimmed but stands ok, ok. Our farrier was pretty good with him.

you hit the nail on the head about you being the only one who can pick up his feet. once a mustang trusts you, you can do about anything. have any and all of your friends help you with Cowboy - alone and with you in the pen too. Have them rub his legs and move on, have them pick up a foot and put it down. all of the things that your farrier would do but build up to it with new people handling him. The big thing is to have new people work with Cowboy.

here's what I've found. Most farriers have a schedule they want to keep as well as wanting to be safe so they can continue their livelihood. Because these things are underlying the farrier's work, the horse is picking up on it. Any nervousness on the horse's part is then magnified. So just have your farrier do "bonding" with the horse for the first visits. Same deal, touch the horse, rub on him, have the farrier pick up his feet and then move on to something else. Then try cleaning his feet.

Don't have the agenda of trimming his feet. I know this sounds time consuming but you can do a lot of the work ahead of time with your friends. You can buy your own set of inexpensive tools to get him used to the noise and feelings - have your friends use them too (or you can just use stuff you have to mimic farrier tools)

I've dealt with both your issues with my Mustang in the beginning.

For the problem with the farrier -

We started out the exact same way, with a lead rope and all. You are at the point where he needs to learn he's still safe, even though it isn't you picking up the hoof. I suggest you try to trim the hoof together with the farrier. What I mean is, you pick up the leg and hold it while the farrier does his trim. It may take twice as long, because you'll need to go slow, give him breaks and if he pulls his leg away don't fight him. Getting into a fight with a frightened Mustang (or any horse for that matter) just seems to make things worse. Eventually, he will trust the farrier too.

Try a different blacksmith if Cowboy's problem seems to be solely with that one, and not strangers in general.

Question 2: Mustang Moving while mounting

I used to have a horse that would not stand when mounting. I found a solution and that was to pull his nose around to the mounting side when I mounted and just hold it there. If he moved – he would be chasing his tail. I would then ask him to stop. If he did not stop I would pull his nose to my leg again – I would not ask him to move just pull his nose around and if HE moved he would have to chase his tail some more. He quickly learned to stand still. If your horse does not know how to flex to the left and right while standing still both on the ground and in the saddle then you probably need to teach him this first. Also, once you get on never let him just go without you asking – in fact I would stand a minute and relax after you mount and before asking to move on just to send the point home to him that we don't just ride off – we wait until asked.

If you are mounting from the ground, it is very likely hurting him when you pull yourself up into the saddle. My equine chiropractor sees lots of horses with their withers and shoulders sore from people mounting from the ground. My husband and I, with age and bad knees and many chiropractic bills for ourselves and our horses, don't mount from the ground anymore unless it's really necessary. We teach our horses to line up with a mounting block (or stump or rock or anything we are standing on) by using the cue, "Pick me up" and a treat or scratch. Once we're in the saddle, we make them stand quietly for a bit, then when we do ride off, it is never forward. We always back up, side pass, make a haunch turn, anything to get the horse using his brain and waiting for communication. It collects your horse right away, instead of letting him run off on his forehand with his brain full of go go.

Recently, we were watching a Western, "Last Stand At Saber River" or something like that. Tom Selleck swung up on his horse from the ground (he is much taller and fitter than we are), then immediately gathered him and backed him up before riding off with a nice soft frame. I almost stood up and cheered! It's rare to see some decent horsemanship in a Hollywood production.

So the first thing I would do is get your horse's back fixed. It's quite possible it is hurting from being jumped. Then I would practice with the mounting block, laying on him bareback and giving him lots of rubs and scratches. For the most part, if a horse is not scared or hurt and they understand what you want, they are happy to do it. Don't micro-manage him, get up on the mounting block and expect him to take responsibility for picking you up. Use Buck Brannaman or Clinton Anderson style ground work while you are standing on the mounting block to teach your horse what his job is and where he is supposed to be. Have clear goals and be patient. My well-broke horses don't even need to be led to the block anymore, they just follow me and park the stirrup right in front of my legs. Horses will generally live up or down to your expectations.

We recently got a lovely sweet mare who is broke to ride, but afraid of being mounted. Her last owner, a sack-o-potatoes teenage kid, was trying to mount from the ground, and the badly-fitting saddle went under the mare's belly. She panicked and destroyed it, and pretty soon they sold me the "crazy mustang" cheap. I had my chiropractor work on her a couple of times, then we started our mounting block training. She was very worried when I would raise my foot to the stirrup, so I did it many, many times, letting her sniff my foot and petting her until she got OK with that part. Then I put weight in the stirrup and stepped up and down a bunch of times. Then swung my leg up onto her haunches and off several times. By the time I committed to mounting up for real, she was practically sleeping, and we rode off with no problems at all. A couple more much shorter sessions have pretty much got her past the fear.

When you mount your horse, be sure to have his head turned toward you so he has a hard time taking off on you. Keep it turned until you are on and feel comfortable enough to release the rein. Then do some flexing side to side - gently - don't pull on the rein. If he tries to take off, hold his head to your leg again until he relaxes. My mustang mare took off with me while in training and believe me, those panels were a blur as we raced past them. I kept reaching for more rein to gently pull her to a one rein stop without pulling her down to the ground with me on her. Then we disengaged the hind quarters both directions until I got dizzy! Luckily, I had a good trainer who coached me through it. I didn't want to lope for a bit after that but 2 weeks later, I did and she again took off but this time I stopped her sooner than the first time and again disengaged her hind quarters. She has never run off with me since then and that was almost 2 years ago. I think she was testing me and found out she wasn't going to get away with it. Besides, all that disengaging makes them not want to screw up again! It's a lot of work! These days I take her out on trail rides and even do some nice slow loping which she loves. She has become a wonderful horse for me. It's scary when they do the wrong thing but if you make them work when that happens, you too will have a really cool horse. I agree with you that a mustang is like no other and when you gain his trust, you two will bond and you're going to love him even more!

Teach him to flex his head. Then have him keep his head there while you mount. If he moves off at any point really tighten that rein to put him in a bind. At the most all he can do is move in a circle. Even on my dead broke horses I do this. It just helps their suppleness and control. Don't get all the way in the saddle until he is still. As long as it is safe and he doesn't really get in a storm stay standing in the stirrup. When he stops and relaxes step down. If he has a really big blow up, or anything more than you are capable of riding, step down and really hustle his feet. Make him long trot really fast around you changing directions frequently. Do not stop until he is really huffing and puffing. Then immediately bend him around and try again. Repeat. He will very quickly find out that it is a whole lot easier to stand still. When you get on him flex his head around 100-150 times to enforce that when you get on you are just going to sit there. No moving no nothing. You can decrease this as you go, but I always bend their head at least 10 times each way. That way they never develop that problem. This is the method for a horse that's moving out of disrespect. If it is from fear use the one below.

Note: this could be from fear, but since he has been ridden quiet a bit before it's probably not unless something traumatic has happened. If something did happen desensitize the area above the saddle. They pretend your going to put your foot in the stirrup, flap it all around etc. Break mounting into enough steps that he realizes there is no reason to be afraid. (I had a saddle pinch a horse bad one time while mounting. It took my 4 four solid days (about 1 hour each day) to get him over it. Once he realized he wasn't going to get pinched anymore he was fine. But he was really explosive for awhile if you even stepped into the stirrup or petted him on the other side of the neck when he was bent so he didn't get to see your hand before you touched him. Then stand in the stirrup. Always try to retreat before he gets scared. If you are too slow, try to keep doing what ever it was until he stops moving his feet, AND relaxes so you don't teach him that he can evade you that way.

The best way we have found to stop a horse from moving while being saddled is to let him move. It took me 40 years to learn this. (Horses learn it in a few tries!) Before, we always bopped them to a stop. Once you have the groundwork done, including disengaging hips and shoulders, and flexing laterally with the neck, put your foot in the stirrup from the front of the horse, not the side. Your toe will point to the rear. If he moves at all, hop, hop, hop with him until he stops. During this time, you have the head and neck to the left (we use a halter and lead), so that the horse is moving in a small circle so you can keep up with him. If he really gets going too fast for you, pull your foot out of the stirrup and have him do mini circles around you until he stops. That's the relief. You can also put him into reverse and back, back, back. But we find the mini circles seem to fix the problem faster. Here's what you are doing: you are telling him that when I put weight in the stirrup, you can move, but I will direct your feet with some speed. This seems to be counterintuitive, I know, but soon he will figure out on his own that the relief is standing still. It is imperative that as soon as he takes a step while you are trying to mount, you get his feet moving rapidly. Then you never get on until those feet are planted. It is almost comical to watch them sort through this and think about moving when you go to mount and then change their mind. Then you get on, pet them profusely, and sit quietly for a few seconds. This is the Dorrance method of training: make the wrong thing difficult and the right thing easy. It is so neat to watch a horse figure things out on their own if you offer them the right answer as a choice.

Repeat as needed from the off side too.

Since the last time you mounted him he took off with you, the groundwork is essential. Both of you have to understand how to disengage. If you watch the guys who are doing colt startings, they actually want that horse to move out. He's scared, you are scared and he knows it. Just go with him. Once he has circled a time or two, disengage to get a slow down and stop.

Tough to do when your heart is pounding and you are fighting your legs not to clamp down, I know.

The disengagement can be done to help you circle or control a bucking runaway. If he is not running amuck with you and not trying to buck you off, I'd ride him out. This often happens with green horses.

The mustang trainers from different states are listed on the Mustang Heritage Foundation website, I think, or the BLM site. There is a super one in TN who specializes in mustangs and even donates his time at BLM auctions to ride the 3 strikers to make them adoptable. His name is Mike Branch. He has a website too called Mike Branch Horsemanship, I think. There is another one in TN that won an extreme makeover, but I don't know if he takes on outside horses.

As for the running off while mounting, very dangerous indeed.

You need to do some groundwork with him. I wouldn't even think about getting on him to ride. If he tries to take off with you just lifting your foot to the stirrup then you work him hard and again when he's listening, and quiet, lift your foot up to the stirrup to get on, if he even thinks of moving, work him again. and continue. When he's quiet with that, try touching your foot to the stirrup, then follow

the same method, and continue till he stands till you almost get on, continue to work him hard if he even thinks of moving.

This will also take time to fix, but it will work.

Also a big thing I would like to have you do is pull his nose toward you while you are mounting. He his head is bent and you do get on, he will only be able to go in a circle and not run off.

I hope this is helpful Take care and keep us updated

Easy to correct, don't stress. You will likely get many responses of different ways and most if not all will work. Just remember not every way suits best, every horse, but if you want to try any of the methods you hear about you must be consistent and do it long enough to give it a chance to work.

I begin with all horses I train (broke or not) the same way. I hold the headstall in my left hand pulling his head around as far as I need to restrict forward movement and mount. I keep his head in that position with the rein on that side after mounting until I'm settled, then gradually release, restricting again if he moves off. If he gets pushy I just add outside leg and turn in very small circles until he stands. Then again release gradually to stand unrestricted. Repeat until you get the desired results.

Do this every time you get on, for a dozen or a hundred mounts depending on the horse. He should be quite happy to stand in a relaxed position while you mount in the future. For more problematic horses an added step to make your request better understood by your horse and for extra safety to the person mounting, you can face your horse into a fence or corner while mounting. I do this only during the early part of the training process.

Your goal is to break what has become the "habit" of moving out while you are mounting. You must put him in a position where he CANNOT move out when you are mounting, multiple times, to break the habit, then continue with the complete training technique described above until his response meets your expectations.

We repeat this on green to older schooled horses when ever they start to walk off during mounting.

Having someone hold him is okay in an emergency situation but doesn't teach him to stand without human assistance, doesn't really TEACH him to stand at all. It MAKES him stand. The other method makes him uncomfortable if he doesn't stand and the fence or corner is restricting but control still comes from the rider. We begin all horses mounted training with a person on the ground because a horse properly started has so much ground time, that is their comfort zone. We graduate ,according horses behavior, to rider only. Anytime you can retain control from the mounted position you gain respect you need to progress.

I used to start all my colts standing with a set of hobbles. You need to start slow as some colts will panic when they can't use their legs and go over backwards. Start one leg at a time, let them get use to something around their pastern. Put one on have them stand. Depending on the horse how long and how many times don't rush it. Once the horse is doing okay put them on both legs. I used a set of hobbles that had dee rings on each one with a chain that connected the two. I cut the chain part out and took a piece of slash cord long enough to try the hobbles together with a slip knot . Don't have the horse tied just stand there holding the lead rope. Here's the good part if the

horse starts to panic because of the hobbles all you have to do is pull hard on the slip knot which will allow the hobbles to come apart. Do this until the horse is comfortable, let him graze feed him whatever. Once he is use to the hobbles then you can have him stand with them on all day if necessary. Now once he is ok with his feet being hobbled saddle him up and mount him with the hobbles on, be careful .I would have split reins to hold him(no handler) put your toe into the stirrup not your whole boot that way if he starts to rear up you can slip your toe out very quickly and hit the ground standing. You mentioned that the horse reared on the farrier that is not good. You need to look for this now. Also you said the horse has run off with you while mounting. My guess that he will try again with the hobbles on. If you use this method you will be able to teach him not to run off plus you will be able to give him the command to go and not him. Just be careful and you should be all right. The main objective is to have him stand while he has the hobbles on with no problem. This also should help with the ferrier.

Picture of Mounting with one rein stop



There are many different things that could be causing him to try to run away when you are mounting. The fact that he didn't do that in the beginning of your partnership is important. A run away horse is very dangerous to you and him. I would suggest that you write down all the specific things that have happened that might be a clue to why he is doing this and consult with a professional trainer that comes with references if you don't know of any personally in your area. This is a very dangerous situation, it would be safer for you to have a professional step in to help you through this problem.

The problem could be caused from many different things, that is what we don't know, so, we don't know how to go about fixing it, especially without seeing the entire picture.

It could be:

1. Saddle fit

2. Tack that is hurting him
3. Physical pain in the horse
4. Being herd bound with his new friends
5. The method of stepping into the saddle that you use could differ from what he is used to and might be frightening him
6. He might not want to go to work and has figured out that this is a good way to get a vacation.

It could be a number of other things that are causing him to react the way he is. You might want to phone the previous owner for clues to his behavior also.

Please use your intuition and keep safe.

Okay, Amanda - First of all, a Mustang is a horse, and a horse is a horse. If this horse is already gentled and saddle trained, he doesn't need specific "mustang" training - any good horse trainer or clinician can help you. (If you think they will be prejudiced, just say you have a green horse and don't mention breed)

The answer is not so much more time, as more quality time, which probably means that you need to get yourself some training in horsemanship. Mustangs are, unfortunately for many people, "Black Belts" at reading people, and they have you figured out way before you have them figured out. That's probably the main thing that distinguishes mustangs from domestics - they are just a whole lot more astute at reading people, and they have a far stronger sense of self-preservation than domestics. In this case, these two attributes are not serving your horse very well - they're just making him skittish.

The best thing you can do would be

- 1: DON'T RIDE HIM YET!!!!
2. Get professional help - see if there is a good natural-type horsemanship trainer or clinician in your area - see if you can take lessons with your horse. That would be best. If that isn't possible, your next bet would be a video series - maybe Clinton Anderson or something like that.

I like Mark Rashid's book, A Good Horse is Never A Bad Color and Considering the Horse." He give good advice on horse that will not stand while being mounted.. Basicly he is saying it's a training issue and give several ways to train them.

Mine would step away from the mounting block as soon as I climbed on it. That was very frustrating too. Good idea to have a friend hold him. Make sure you reward him profusely when he stands even while being held. I actually give my horse carrots (he's very food motivated) to stand while I get settled. You can also have him face the fence panels so he cannot walk forward. Practice getting on, wiggling around like you are getting settled and then get off. Praise him - reward him (scratches and rubs work too) Keep doing this. Also from the ground, practice weight

in stirrup while he stands (there are several examples of how to mount your horse - shows you with hip to the saddle facing front before swinging leg over) - practice that and get down - do it from both sides. reward him for standing still. This may sound silly, but make sure you aren't asking him to move forward by your body position or legs or something. Maybe have your friend watch how you mount up.

Then there is lateral flexing - once you get on (practice this from the ground first) - flex his neck and head to both sides. you do not want him to move his body or feet, just turn his head

one more thing again from the ground, practice walking around him while he's standing still. touch him as you walk around - give a verbal command of stand or stay or something like that (not whoa as that means stop)

it takes some time, but is well worth the time now.

I also play with my horses in the round pen with the mounting block. I practice from the ground and while on the block, no saddle. I am not as graceful as I'd like to be when I get on so I condition my horses to kicks in the butt, jabs in their sides and such. I sort of throw myself at them while asking them to stand. Yes, they probably think I'm nuts but it seems to work. I laugh and they get rewarded with scratches and rubs and I "groom" them at the same time! I do jumping jacks and hops while on the ground. They put up with a lot from me. Fortunately for them I'm only good for a couple of jumps!

For the problem with mounting -

From what you have said you are doing, you are totally on the right track. Bit by bit and in small increments is the way to go. What worked for me, was food rewards. Some may not agree with that method but it worked for me. Lots of praise and a treat when things are done correctly. I would have someone hold him while you mount and every time he even holds somewhat still, he gets praise and a treat. Do it a few times each day.

The treat idea also worked for learning to hold still and trust the farrier.

Good luck to you. You are on the right track.

For the running off: Make sure that the saddle you are using fits and is not pinching when you mount.

Is this a young horse or is Cowboy older?
Ponying is a good way of connecting your horse with you and his new life. Tie a pair of jeans weighted with sawdust and rocks onto his saddle so that he thinks that he has a rider.

Slow and easy!

Get on and off at a mounting block. Don't go for a ride. Just get on and off. Feed treats while he stands. Put him in a turnout.

A week of that should get it through that you don't want to rush off to ride.

Never ever be in a hurry to leave the mounting block. Even when he gets good at it. Just stand and pet him. Backing up a few steps is not a bad idea either.

Once is an accident, twice is a habit. No difference for mustangs. Make sure you have them do it right and then put them away.

Round pen work with working on voice control is another good thing to do. Work on Whoa! Or whatever other word you use for standing still.

He has to learn your language. He's just moved to a place where he understands little. You have to help him learn your ways.

Learn how to trim your own hooves. It's not hard. The stands with slings are great. A little at a time and rasping works well if you have just washed the horse and the feet are nice and moist. Why should he trust the farrier. Nothing familiar about this person grabbing and holding his foot!

I hope he is barefoot. That's the best for mustangs and others. The feet may chip if overgrown, but that is nature's way. Don't freak out. I would not do the tranquilizers as he is going to feel awful afterwards. He will remember feeling awful!

Have family members pick up his feet, and friends etc. He will eventually feel comfortable with everyone.

Be kind, be firm but be clear in what you ask.

Mustangs are awesome. I am working with two right now. One broke on not. Both were too much for their owners. They were misunderstood.

They are horses.....

Misc. Responses:

My girl will acts out if the food she eats has too hot, if you are you give a mustang anything other than grass hay... hang on your going to crash!

Just my opinion but she needs to do a lot more ground work before she ever gets up on him. That sounds dangerous that he runs off. He needs a very strong leader and he will learn that on the ground first then in the saddle.

THOSE OF US NOT FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO LIVE IN THE WESTERN STATES AND AROUND NEVADA WHERE THERE ARE LOTS OF MUSTANG TRAINERS AND SKILLED PEOPLE AND TONS OF SUPPORT, HAVE TO BOND TOGETHER, AMANDA. EAST OF THE BIG MUDDY THERE IS A SNOBBERY AGAINST MUSTANGS PRIMARILY FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD TO HANDLE THEM BECAUSE THE OWNERS NEVER TOOK THE TIME TO GENTLE THEM. In our area, TWH are everywhere and they appear to be born broke. Mustangs take a different set of skills.

Well, let me say cowboy is a cool name cause I have a mustang I call cowboy also. Have you ever watched Clinton Anderson? I follow his method and it has worked wonders. He teaches you how to gain your horses respect. you can go to his website, www.downunderhorsemanship.com and watch some of his shows on these issues.

I went online and typed in Mustang mentors..and then went by state Low and behold we have 3 near us Sue emailed back immediately and is coming over to our house. What a great family , the Mustang family is
