

Wheel to Wheel **MARCH** 2022

Newsletter for the HUB Club

<http://www.facebook.com/hubclubdrivingclub>

<http://www.hubclubdriving.com>

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A current negative Coggins must be on file with the club secretary in order to participate in any HUB Club event

**The HUB Club:
Education &
Comraderie**



HUB CLUB



From the Editor As your editor, I ask that you send me photos and anything else that you would like to see in the newsletter. I am more than happy to use anything you want in the newsletter, as it is **YOUR newsletter**. If you want to continue to have an informative newsletter, I need material from the membership. You can send them to me directly at briarpatcheast@aol.com by the 20th of each month. Kris Breyer

From the Webmaster: Please submit items for web page. Include pictures of all our members. Please send names of driver, passengers, horse(s), and description of what you are doing, and where.



Prez Letter: Typical February weather, freezing cold one day and 50 degrees the next. Give me the cold, keep the mud and ice water until it's time to get and stay warm! I went up to Door County, WI last weekend for a get-away with a friend. We went on a trolley tour which included shopping, wine tasting, scenic overlooks and a horse drawn sleigh ride. A pair of Percherons, 1 gelding, 1 mare pulled our sleigh through and around a huge orchard while the driver gave us information about the apple and cherry trees and the equipment that harvests them. What a blast and not sooo cold at 7 degrees when you are dressed for it. The ornery mare harassed her buddy of

16 years the entire drive and the driver said she never gives up but can't live without him.

I've been reinforcing my 19-month-old to trust me while I line drive him past every scary thing and noise maker that I can find in my barn. We've done bucket in a muck bucket, plastic bag wrapped fans, metal sheeting from the barn, plastic pumpkins, PVC pipes, running and jumping on the wooden loft and stairs, chains and wood slats on the metal aprons of hay racks and my trainer stood on top of the mounting block and waved her arms and swung a rope. I'm practicing for my CDE horse that trusts me no matter what comes up. This training builds his confidence, keeps his mind fresh and should pay dividends when I begin driving him. I've already sent in my registration for The Spring Fling/

National Drive and I plan on bringing both Tevis and Ritz to play. **See ya'll on the March 6th Zoom meeting. Time: Mar 6, 2022 01:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87126407340?pwd=Vk5xQ2NwU3dvM0RXT2h3S1BMOUhtZz09>

Ann



SALE BARN

FOR SALE: Wooden driving cart for sale.



\$750 OBO Built by Amish - DA Hochstetler & Sons, Topeka IN for a 16H TB. Has been stored inside so the condition is very good – just needs the dust cleaned off. Striking Red with Black pin striping. Wheels are 48". Black leather seats. Rear entry – seat moves forward. Call Nancy Jacoby 847-650-2447 or email nanookj@comcast.net for more details. Located in Wauconda, IL.



MEMBER NEWS: JANE HELMBOLOT AND DANCASLE STORMY WEATHER

At a Suzie Stafford clinic



At Villa Louis 2021 Reserve
Champion Open Horse



DRIVING 2022



Midwest Region (and then some...) 2022 Driving Season (2/10/2022)

Note: The Midwest Region is Region 5...Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota & into Canada

Event	ADS Rec'd	Date	Host	Location	Contact
Beginner to Winner Seminars		3/19/2022	Tejas Carriage Assn.	Greenville, TX	Ruthie Graves iminthebarnnow@gmail.com
Innsbrook Drive		3/20/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Innsbrook Stable Innsbrook, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
Equestrian Distance Sports Clinic		3/26/2022	Fox Valley Distance Equestrian Team	McNeish Barns & Stables Shiocton, WI (This includes distance driving)	Amy Broadie writew@gmail.com
Bridlespur Show, with 3 driving classes		4/9/2022		National Equestrian Center, Lake St. Louis, MO	www.bridlespur.com/horseshow.html
Bluebell Drive		4/10/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Maple Bend Farm St. Clair, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
Sunrise Ridge DT	X 6	4/23-24/2022	North Texas Whip	Sunrise Ridge Ranch Paradise, TX	kbarthel221@gmail.com
National Drive		4/28 – 5/1/2022	Nat'l Drive	Hoosier Horse Park 7105 S. Kern St. Ninevah, IN 46164	Linda Sadler TheNationalDrive@gmail.com
Tom O'Carroll Clinic		4/30 & 5/1/2022	CDSGKC	Hunter's Ridge Equestrian Center 26095 Rockville Road Louisburg, KS	Sheila Goodman sheila.d.goodman@gmail.com
MnDRA 1 (recreational drive)		4/30-5/1/2022	Minn. Distance Riding Association	St Croix State Park Hinckley, MN	mndra.com Any of their events marked with * is ALSO Driving
Annual Mother's Day Drive/Camp Weekend		5/6-7/2022	St. Croix Horse & Carriage Society	St. Croix State Park Hinckley, MN Make reservations through DNR.state.mn.us/state_parks.com	Diane Monson mdeq@aol.com
Raymond Helmuth Clinic		5/14/2022	Mid-Iowa Driving Ass'n.	Helmuth Equine Facility 56124 280th St. Ames, IA 50010	Theresa Burns theresadburns@gmail.com

Midwest Regional Drive	X 5	5/20-22/2022	ADS	Jester Park Equestrian Center 11171 NW 103 rd Ct. Granger, Iowa	Mary Lu Norland midwest@americandrivingsociety.org
Pine Hill Driving Trial	X 6	5/27-29/2022	Houston Area Driving Assn.	Belville, TX	Details in Omnibus
Robin Groves Clinic		6/4-5/2022	ENDS	Arlington Training Stable Elkhorn, NE	Garnet Blatchford garnetblat@gmail.com
Trish Demers Clinic		6/4-5/2022	Fox Valley Saddle Assn.	44W300 Rohrsen Rd. Hampshire, IL	Sue West suegwest@gmail.com
TENTATIVE** OHHA CT & HDT		6/4-5/2022	OHHA	Payne County Fairgrounds Stillwater, OK	Go to Oklahoma Harness Horse Assn. FB page for more info
Pioneer Pleasure Show	X 5	6/11-12/2022	ENDS	Seward County Fairgrounds Seward, NE	Garnet Blatchford garnetblat@gmail.com
Midwest Carriage Festival & CT	X 5	6/17-19/2022		Walworth County Fairgrounds Elkhorn, WI	midwestcarriagefestival@gmail.com Also FB Midwest Carriage Festival
TCA Carriage Classic Pleasure Show	X 6	6/18-19/2022		OK Corral Terrell TX	See the Tejas Carriage Association FB page for more info
Nat'l Area VI Show & PtHA Miniature & Pony Show		6/25-26/2022		Lancaster Event Center Lincoln, NE	www.bluestemminihorse.com/events-news Registered Miniature Horse & Shetland Carriage Classes
My Half Farm Drive		6/25/2022	Gateway Harness Club	My Half Farm Wentzville, Mo	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
Silver Whip Driving Trial		6/25-26/2022	Rocky Mountain Carriage Club	Silver Whip Farm Fort Collins, CO	rockymtncarriageclub@gmail.com
OHHA Fun Drive & Seminars		7/16/2022	OHHA	Drumright, OK	Go to Oklahoma Harness Horse Assn. FB page for more info
Wade House Carriage Driving Days		7/16-17/2022		Wade House W 7965 State Hwy 23 Greenbush, WI	Rachel Meek haffyfun@gmail.com
Lancaster County Super Fair		8/5/2022		Lancaster Event Center Lincoln, NE	www.bluestemminihorse.com/events-news Registered Miniature Horse & Shetland Carriage Classes
Bridlespur Drive		8/7/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Bridlespur Hunt Club Eolia, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com

ADS Preliminary Championships Metamora CDE		8/19-21/2022		Metamora, MI	
Safari Drive		8/28/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Maple Bend Farm, St. Clair, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
TENTATIVE** OHHA Pleasure Show		8/20/2022	OHHA	Payne County Fairgrounds Stillwater, OK	Go to Oklahoma Harness Horse Assn. FB page for more info
41 th Annual Villa Louis Carriage Classic	X 5	9/9-11/2022		Villa Louis Prairie du Chien, WI	Mike Rider www.CarriageClassic.com
Indiana CDE	X 4	9/16-18/2022	Indiana Whips & Wheels, Inc.	Hoosier Horse Park Edinburgh, IN	Terri Birk oldestgreymare@aol.com
Longview by the Lake DT	X 5	9/24-25/2022	CDSGKC	Longview Horse Park Kansas City, MO	Sheila Goodman, Organizer sheila.d.goodman@gmail.com
ADS Intermediate Championships Clay Station	X			Wilton, CA	
Colorado CDE	X 6	9/30-10/2/2022	Rocky Mountain Carriage Club	Colorado Horse Park Parker, CO	rockymtncarriageclub@gmail.com
Gypsy Iowa Classic Horse Show		9/30-10/2/2022		Iowa Equestrian Center Cedar Rapids, Iowa	Gypsy Iowa Classic Facebook
Halloween Drive		10/29/2022	Gateway Harness Club	My Half Farm, Wentzville, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
OHHA Clinic		11/11-12/2022	OHHA	Drumright, OK	Go to Oklahoma Harness Horse Assn. FB page for more info
OHHA Fun Drive & Picnic		11/19/2022	OHHA	Payne County Fairgrounds Stillwater, OK	Go to Oklahoma Harness Horse Assn. FB page for more info
Turkey Drive		11/27/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Maple Bend Farm, St. Clair, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com
Eagle Estate Drive		12/11/2022	Gateway Harness Club	Eagle Estate, Wright City, MO	Rosie Ring rosiering@ymail.com

Starting Your Driving Horse At Home

By Jeff Morse

PART II

Longing techniques are well covered in several good books on the subject (see the list of resources at the end of the article) and an in depth look at them is beyond the scope of this article. If your horse is under 2 years old, it's probably best to ground drive them first. Use longing to refine your verbal communication with your horse. Your horse should also improve its balance and rhythm at the walk and trot and the canter can be introduced as well, although there is adequate time for canter work later on. Longing is not simply for exercising your horse although your horse will receive exercise. Longing is for training your horse. All longing should be done with a bit in the horse's mouth and some form of side rein. Without a side rein, your horse is just moving in a circle and not learning anything about how to carry himself. Important lessons your harness horse can learn on the longe are to halt and stand, back up, walk, trot and canter (although canter work is not essential at this point) with ease comfort and relaxation. Once your horse has reached this point you can move on to ground driving fairly easily.

Introducing the side rein is done while longing or ground driving. There are many kinds of side reins each with their particular strengths and weaknesses. The sliding side rein (also known as a German side rein) is particularly suited to starting the harness horse. The sliding side rein runs from one side of the saddle thru the bit on the same side of the mouth, then down between the legs of the horse through a ring on the girth, back up through the bit on the opposite side, then to the saddle on that side. This arrangement allows the horse almost full range of motion of its head and neck up and down and side to side. It very effectively helps the horse find its balance, stretch through the topline and to accept the bit. All this without being overly interfered with by the unsteady hands of the driver with less educated or less skillful hands. These side reins do not pull or force a horse into a position. They simply remind him and guide him to a position that is efficient and efficiency is its own reward. The job at hand becomes easier to perform. They are easily made out of cotton cord (clothesline works fairly well) A few well chosen snaps make it very handy to put on the horse. A further modification is to make the rein entirely out of elastic shock cord. This works particularly well as it has the consistent give and take very similar to the gentle hand of an educated rider or driver. Some horses very much resent being overly constricted in this side rein so great care should be taken to adjust it properly. Loose at first. An elastic rein, instead of a fixed length rein, very much lowers the risk of the occasional bad reaction. Never hook a horse to a vehicle wearing any side rein on for the first time. Always ground drive a horse for a minute or two whenever you add a side rein or change any part of your set up to make sure they are accustomed to the new feel.

The sliding side rein is particularly useful for re-schooling horses that have been originally driven in a check rein and a running martingale. Some become so reliant on those devices for balance that they have to completely re-learn how to carry themselves. The sliding side rein can help that process dramatically. Any side rein is simply for showing the horse the way to a more efficient approach to his work. It is not nor should it become a *permanent* article of working or training equipment.

Ground driving or long lining is an essential step in training your horse to drive. Frequently, older horses have already been taught to ground drive and it can be used to refresh their training or to safely work on areas that may be lacking like balance, fear issues, suppleness, bit acceptance etc. Ground driving is done with two lines or reins. Since up to this point you have not been using rein contact to the bit, begin by attaching the reins to the side rings of the halter or cavesson. Your horse may take a few sessions to become accustomed to the feel of lines over his back or on his rump. Attaching the lines to the halter or cavesson will prevent him from jerking himself in the mouth. Once he accepts the lines, attach them to the bit. Generally the lines run from the bit ring through the terrets on the saddle to your hand. Some prefer to run the lines through a lower position on the side of the saddle. If you do not have rings attached there, you can run the lines through the tugs of the saddle. If you are using the sliding side rein attachment, you most likely can run the reins from the bit through the terrets since the side rein will be asking the horse to carry himself in an efficient position and your rein contact with the bit will likely not disrupt that action too much. Draw rein arrangements are not useful at this time. Their increased leverage may in fact be quite counterproductive to producing a supple, cooperative driving horse with a light and responsive mouth.

Your horse is by now used to longing in a circle so at first you will ground drive in the same circle. Round pens make this work very simple since your horse's work area is so well defined by the pen. It may be more difficult to do this work in an open area but if you have done your longing work well, by now it should not be too big a problem. Repeat your verbal command lessons that your horse learned on the lunge and begin to add some signals from your hands. This can be difficult to do well for people who are not experienced at ground driving. You must be able to maintain a light, constant connection through the rein to the horse's mouth while moving yourself across the ground. The secret to this is to be willing and able to freely move your entire body towards and away from the horse depending on where he moves in relation to you. This will take some practice. Hold your elbows by your side bent at 90 degrees with your hands level in front of you. This position will allow your elbow to act like a hinge opening to stretch your arms forward or closing to move your elbows behind your back. This will allow you to maintain that nice responsive connection to your horse's mouth. You may find it very beneficial to practice this on a well trained horse with the help of an experienced instructor before you try it on a young horse or an older horse that has some training issues.

There are several positions from which you can work your horse while ground driving. At first you will probably find that staying in the position in which your horse was taught to longe will work the best: from the side just behind the girth. This works well for circle work. You will want to begin to teach your horse to steer and for this you should move closer to the horse and a little further behind but still to the side where he can see you, not directly behind out of his vision. If you are using a hood or blinders, this will obviously not matter to your horse. There are several ways to introduce steering. The choice you make will depend on the nature of your horse and the working space you have. It is rather easy to begin to add a few straight strides in your circle work. Some will simply walk the horse along a fence in a straight line, ask for a turn when coming to a corner in the fence. The horse will quickly associate the instruction in his mouth with turning. After a few tries at this, you can ask for a turn slightly before the corner and gradually increasing the distance from the corner in successive tries. You can always return to waiting until rather deep in the corner if your horse has difficulty. Once this introductory work is learned at the walk, you can move on to the trot.

You will have to be quite fit to run along with your trotting horse so ground driving at the trot is best done in a circle at first. Once again you can begin to add a few straight strides in your circle which will necessitate you running along with those few strides. If you are up to it physically, you can make other figures while running along side your horse.

Keep your lessons brief (15 - 25 minutes) and be happy with small but positive results. Your horse is trying to assimilate a lot of information that is foreign to his inherent nature. Give him plenty of time to assimilate it. At many junctures along the way, you will have to carefully gauge when to move on to the next step. Some horses seem to be born trained and some of the more independently minded just want to choose the hard road every time. Be patient. Go slow repeat and review. Your horse will be a good driving horse for years and years if you will take the time to make his life in school as pleasant as you can.

Once your horse has the basic elements of steering under control, you can take him for walks outside of your work area. Most horses really enjoy this part so if your horse seems to be bored, inattentive or tired of ring work, perhaps you can refresh his mind by exploring the outside world. It's a good idea to ground drive him where you will be driving him once you get him hooked. A familiar environment is one less thing for your horse to worry about on those first few drives.

At some point you will have to make a decision about whether to use blinders or not. There are good arguments on both sides of this issue. Those that use blinders will tell you they have never gotten in trouble using them and most horses in competitions, whether in the show ring (where they are considered appropriate) or in carriage competitions, will be driven in blinders. Once your horse is being ground driven well, it may be as good a point as any to introduce the blindered bridle.

Introducing the blinders can be done by switching to a blindered bridle or by adding a blinker hood over an open bridle. Blinker hoods can be very helpful with horses that ignore your verbal commands and react inappropriately when you attempt to amplify your instructions with a whip. When they can no longer see you, and your verbal instruction is subsequently reinforced with the touch of the whip, suddenly they become quite

obedient. In any event, repeat your lessons with the blinders on until your horse is relaxed and comfortable with his limited vision.

Introducing noises is especially important to the making of a solid driving horse. Once your horse has the basic knowledge of commands and can be driven from the ground relatively confidently, it's time to protect him less and less from the noises and commotion that you will inevitably encounter while driving. It's time to find out how he will react to sudden noise and movement. Tap the bushes or the ground with your whip while ground driving. Pick up stick and drag it on the ground. Have assistant drag things on the ground in front, beside and behind your horse while you drive him from the ground. Some horses will be unconcerned with this. Count yourself lucky if this is your horse. Some are quite bothered by these noises. You will have to work a little harder and longer to desensitize your horse but it must be done before you hook him to a vehicle. Once hooked, there will be all kinds of noises foreign to your horse being made behind and around him. Best to work on this lesson prior to hooking.

Pulling a drag is the next natural progression to this process. The initial work with the drag is best done in an enclosed area. Drags make noise. This is a good thing. It will help to desensitize your horse to sudden noises around him. In making this step it is wise to use an assistant. Your assistant can pull your drag out in front of your horse where he can see it and get used to the sounds it makes while it is in his view. Once he is settled at that, your assistant can move to various positions around your horse. Work at this till your horse is unconcerned with the noises the drag makes. Remember that the drag will make different noises on different surfaces. It may even be silent on grass. Make sure you work on this going from one type of surface to another.

Once your horse is unconcerned with the drag being pulled around him its time to hook him to the drag. Before you hook up your drag, have your assistant hold the traces out behind the horse while you drive your horse for a brief walk. Have your assistant pull on the traces from directly behind the horse, then from each side. This will alert you to any issues the horse may have with the feeling of the traces on his rump and legs and with the feel of the weight against his chest from the breastplate. Once you are convinced those things do not bother him, proceed to the next step.

You are now ready to hook to the drag. Place your assistant on the end of a lead on the horse's head. Usually this is done with a halter placed over the bridle but can also be done by attaching a lead to the cavesson if it is sturdy enough. With your assistant at your horse's head and your horse positioned so the traces can reach the drag, attach your traces quickly to the drag. Better yet, with the traces already attached to the drag, bring them up and attach them to the breastplate with snaps or buckles, depending on the design. Keep the reins in one hand or at least within easy reach at all times so that if your horse moves off you have some control.

Another trick is to run the traces through the breeching hanger straps and the breeching strap itself and then down to the drag. This keeps the traces well above the hocks before they attach to the drag. The additional benefit to this arrangement is that some pull and tug is applied to the breeching as the horse pulls the drag which will help accustom them to the feel of the breeching when finally hooked to a vehicle. If you are not using breeching, you can fashion a hanger from the turnback strap out of stout cord to hold the traces above the hocks.

You are in the most vulnerable position with just one trace hooked. Should your horse move off at that point, he is apt to be easily frightened by the uneven draught on the breastplate and events can quickly escalate out of control. Try to be purposeful, without wasting any time hooking the drag.

Once your drag is hooked, move to the side with your reins and ask your horse to walk off. Plan in advance to only walk a few strides and then to ask for a halt. If all goes well through that first halt, walk off again for a longer distance and then halt. The point is to make sure your horse is confirmed in the halt command before things escalate out of control. Proceeding this way will give your horse time to assimilate what is happening before events start to happen faster than he is comfortable with. The first lesson with the drag is best ended before your horse has a chance to make a mistake. If he walks off and halts a few times with the drag in the first lesson, you are probably smart to quit. Begin the next lesson, just like the first. Make the lesson longer each time and begin to add some figures and turning. If he is unconcerned with the drag, you may ask proceed

without your assistant and ask for a trot in a circle. Again, ask for just a few strides at the trot the first time. The drag will make a different noise and life will come at your horse faster than at the walk. Give him a chance to assimilate the new sensations before asking for longer and faster trot work. Do several halt-walk-trot- walk-halt transitions in each lesson. Vary the routine slightly each time so that your horse does not anticipate what you will ask for next. Keep in mind, the key to good driving is not so much with the movement forward as it is with the quality of the transitions between the movements. The most common mistake drivers make is not allowing enough time and space for their horse to execute their instructions. This is especially important early in the game when the horse lacks the physical strength and coordination as well as the mental discipline to execute precise controlled movement. All athletes take much practice and exercise to perfect their performance. Horses are no different.

Once your horse is doing well with the drag in the ring, take him for lessons out of the ring. Go wherever you plan to drive him for his first few lessons. Don't forget the standing lessons!

False shafts are good way to introduce the feel of a vehicle to the horse. If you have been using a drag that has shafts, you obviously can skip the next step. A false shaft can be simple piece of light lumber; a debarked sapling or a piece of plastic pipe about 10 feet long. Slip one end of the false shaft through the tug on one side of the horse and have your assistant on the other end holding it up about waist high. Your assistant can make sure the pole rubs against the body of the horse as you ground drive him. Most horses do not mind this but it is best to find out before your proceed with actually hooking to a cart. A horse that is afraid of the touch of the shafts will have a hard time bending properly while hooked to vehicle. This lesson can be very brief and usually, unless you encounter trouble, does not need to be repeated more than once or twice before proceeding.

Hooking the horse for the first time is one of the most critical junctures in the driving horse's life. Your horse can be ruined in seconds if things do not go well. All the careful work you have done to this point should have prepared your horse well so that being hooked will be a non-issue. But there is always that slim chance that his natural instinct will over power all your training if he becomes scared.

You will need at least one assistant; two are better. Provide each with a stout lead shank. Put a halter on over the bridle of your horse. For a few minutes, pull the drag you have been using up till now so you can assess your horse's mood and obedience level. If there is any question, proceed with your regular drag lesson rather than hooking him that day. It can wait. Wait till he is ready. It's probably not a good idea to try to hook your horse for the first time after he has been cooped up in his stall for a couple of days. Do what you can to have him in a relaxed frame of mind for this lesson.

If all goes well you are ready to hook. Unhook your drag and have your assistant(s) pull the vehicle in front of the horse just like you did when first training your horse with the drag. Drive your horse from the ground behind, beside and in front of the vehicle being pulled at the same time by your assistants. If your horse is unconcerned, proceed with the next step right away or wait till the next lesson and repeat the above.

Attach the leads to the halter on each side with an assistant on the end of each lead. There is some debate about whether to attach the leads directly to the bit or the halter. Attaching them to the bit removes some level of control from you, the driver. Attaching to the halter may not give the assistants as much control. As a trainer and driver, I prefer to have as much control as possible so I attach them to the halter, perhaps even running a chain lead over the horse's nose. This gives me control through the horse's mouth and the assistants have **additional** control with the halter. That's usually sufficient.

Stand your horse in front of your vehicle. Keeping the reins in one hand and coiled carefully for instant use, slide the shafts through the tugs with an assistant doing the same on the other side. Some trainers will not tie the horse into the vehicle at first and ask the horse to walk forward while the vehicle is pulled forward by assistants. If the horse rushes forward, the vehicle can simply be slid out of the tugs and the horse can just continue on unharmed. Other trainers tie them in the first time as described below.

If you and your horse have been prepared correctly, you can probably safely tie your horse in and go as follows: With your assistant(s) holding your horse at his head, attach the trace and breeching on one side, then

the trace and breeching on the other. This keeps you from crossing back and forth several times to get your horse hooked. The greatest risk is having the horse move off while only partially hooked. Hook quickly, quietly, calmly, without any wasted motion. Don't rush or you'll make a mistake but don't waste a lot of time either. This is where snap-on traces and breeching can help a lot. They are much faster than fussing with buckles and straps. You can reduce a lot of fussing with harness adjustment if you have everything pre-adjusted to fit this size horse to your cart. If possible use a good driving horse of the same size to make sure everything will fit with a minimum of adjustment.

Once hooked, driving from the ground, ask your horse to quietly walk off. As with the drag, plan on halting after only a few strides. Be mindful that when the horse halts the breeching will push your horse forward. Some horses are bothered by that. Your horse may try to halt only to be shoved forward by the breeching and take another step or two, try to halt again and be shoved once more. Managing this will take some tactful rein management so as not to confuse your horse at both ends. You can have one of your assistants help to manage the shoving of the breeching by keeping a hand on the shaft and pushing backwards when you ask for the halt. It shouldn't take long for your horse to learn how to manage the breeching for himself.

If all goes well, walk off again. Your assistants should be instructed to leave the horse completely alone unless he acts upset. They should remain behind the blinders out of sight unless your horse needs some extra encouragement to walk forward. At that point one assistant can actually lead the horse forward with the lead shank. Assistants should be careful of the ends of the shafts so they are not inadvertently poked by them or even knocked to the ground if things go wrong. They may be instructed to talk to the horse and pat him carefully on the neck to re-assure him and to praise him for being such a well-behaved and brave horse. This first session should be short and sweet. Walk, halt, walk a little more and halt. Then stand and be unhooked. Back to the barn and much fuss and praise lavished on him. It sometimes help to end this lesson right about feeding time the first few times. There is nothing like positive reinforcement.

The next lesson proceeds much as the previous one. Each time you are focused on building the horse's confidence in the process. Each time the routine becomes more solidified in your horse's mind. If you have no problems up to this point after the first lesson of two, you can climb into the vehicle and ask the horse to walk off. Once he can walk and halt and stand with you in the vehicle, you are ready to ask for brief trot. Most horses will let you know they are ready for this step. They will naturally want to break from the walk into a trot because pulling at the trot is easier than pulling at the walk. Be alert to when that happens. The first time it happens ask to return to the walk right away. Walk for a short distance then ask for the trot. Make trotting your idea. Plan on only a few strides at the trot before asking for a return to the walk. If all goes well, ask for another brief trot. Return to the walk. Then halt and stand. End of lesson.

The next lesson proceed much the same and ask for a trot, increasing the distance gradually. Do not worry up to this point about making sure you go in both directions. There is plenty of time for that. Right now you just want the experience to be uneventful, unexciting and un-troubling to your horse.

You are well on your way to having a safe driving horse. Work a few more lessons including a trot with at least one assistant on a lead. Once you are sure your horse is unperturbed at trotting while hooked to a vehicle, you can ask your assistant to unhook the lead while you continue with your lesson, making sure they stand by to come to your aid should you need another pair of hands.

Once you can trot both directions of your ring, halt, stand quietly etc., you are ready to take your horse out into the world. Drive him at the walk on your planned route where you have already taken him on your walks with the drag. The first lesson out there is all at the walk and is short. Try to make this work on more or less level ground. Your horse is not ready to face going up or down steep long hills. Introduce the hills gradually. Don't be overly concerned if your horse wants to travel crooked or wander a bit on the hills. It is very unnatural for a horse to travel straight up or straight down a hill. Given a choice they will traverse it. However, to efficiently pull a vehicle, they must be kept straight from the head to the tail. It is your job as a driver to show them how to do that. Again be mindful of when they tell you they are ready to trot outside of the ring, especially going up hill. Do as you did in the ring: ask for the walk then ask for the trot. Make it your idea. Gradually increase the length of your drives. Gradually expose your horse to more sights and sounds out there.

You'll note that I have not focused much on the rein back up to this point. The does not mean you should not work on it as you go through the ground driving and hooking process. However it is a fairly complicated movement for a horse to perform correctly. It is quite unnatural for them to push backwards with the breeching without being able to see in that direction to move your vehicle. The horse already has a lot of information to assimilate. Since the rein back is not used nearly as often as the halt or the forward movements, I will teach the rein back while ground driving and then wait until the horse is driving well while hooked before picking up the rein back lesson again. When you get to that point, it will help your horse if you halt pointed upwards on a slight incline. This will make it quite easy for the horse to rein back without becoming overly concerned with pushing a lot of weight with the breeching. As he makes progress, halt of more level ground and eventually on downward slopes.

Finally, your horse is now a well started driving horse. He has been in pretty intensive work that has been a lot for his mind and his body to accept. It's probably a good time to give him some time off. He will not forget his lessons. Two weeks off or more at this point will work wonders on his mental outlook and he will be ready and more willing than ever to take you wherever you wish to drive him. Once back to work you can begin to fine tune his education working on the quality of your transitions, bending, speed, etc. It can take years of work to fine tune and finish your driving horse. There seems to be no end to polish you can apply but there is also no end to the fun and satisfaction of doing it yourself.

***Disclaimer:** The concepts described in this article are generally accepted as legitimate approaches to training a horse to drive. The process is not without some risk to horses and handlers. The instructions contained in this article are to be used only as a guideline. The author can not be held liable for the actions of a horse beyond his control, nor for the actions or injuries of anyone using these guidelines to start a driving horse. The author does, however, encourage readers to contact him should there be any questions about any information in this article.*

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Resources:

www.americandrivingsociety.org - has many good books and videos about driving for sale
www.morganhorse.com - information about the Morgan horse and books and videos on driving for sale
www.carriagedriving.net - an online webzine about carriage driving
<http://www.carriagedriving.net/cdl/cd-1.html> - subscribe to the Carriage Driving List online
www.axwoodfarm.com - good driving articles in Nori Lamphere's online library

Books

101 LONGEING & LONG LINING EXERCISES ENGLISH AND WESTERN
A Ringside Guide by Cherry Hill

BREAKING A HORSE TO HARNESS by Sallie Walrond

BREAKING & TRAINING THE DRIVING HORSE by Doris Ganton

DRIVE SMARTLY-DRIVE SAFELY by the Carriage Association of America

LUNGEING - The German Riding and Driving System Book 6. Official instruction handbook of the German National Equestrian Federation

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