

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO IMPROVING STEERING & TEACHING NECK REINING *By Stacy Westfall*

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<https://courses.stacywestfall.com/p/teaching-steering-and-improving-neck-reining>

	Inside Rein	Outside Rein	Forward motion	Hug/release
Rearing	X		X	
Bucking	X		X	
Runs Backward	X		X	
Won't leave camp	X		X	
Refuses to cross water/mud	X		X	
Prancing/jigging	X	X		X
Paws when standing still	X	X		X
Rushing up hills	X	X		X
Rushing down hills	X	X		X
Jumping water/mud	X	X		X
Head tossing-evasive (don't touch me)	X			X
Head tossing-heavy/dull/pulling	X		X	

The most common MISTAKE people make trail riding is...

...not understanding the use of each rein and how to combine rein and leg cues.

I love trail riding. I live behind a state park and trail ride regularly.
I grew up trail riding and I have ridden horses **WITH EVERY PROBLEM LISTED ABOVE.**

Now, many years later, I recognize why these problems exist. They are symptoms of an underlying misunderstanding of the aids by either the horse or the rider.

If you have a car that shakes when driven 60 mph, it could appear that 60 mph is the problem...when really the problem is the tires.

When riders are unclear...

The most common mistake with the technique I call 'balanced reins' or riding two handed is that **riders often don't understand the role of each rein.** This lack of understanding causes the riders to be unclear with applying and releasing pressure.

This alone is a huge problem but it is often combined with a lack of understanding how to **effectively use leg cues** as well.

Quick Start Guide

To determine the **inside rein** or **outside rein** the horse ***must be bending to some degree***. A horse that is perfectly straight from head to tail has no clear inside or outside rein. It is much easier for horses to buck, rear, bolt, etc when straight. (If you want to confirm this statement please watch bucking horse or rodeo videos on YouTube:)

Inside Rein:

The inside rein is the first rein horses learn to understand. It has the ability to encourage bend, lower the head and neck, inhibit head tossing, rearing and many other disobediences. Direct reining is the action of applying pressure to the inside rein and releasing or softening the pressure when the horse moves in the desired direction.

Forward Motion:

In early training horses learn that the rider's legs are used to create forward motion. While the legs can be used to do many other things, it is important that they always maintain the ability to move the horse forward. Many of the most dangerous problems riders experience involve a lack of forward motion.

Outside Rein:

The correct introduction of the outside rein is a big deal. Horses must have a strong understanding of both the inside rein and forward motion for this to be successful. Using the inside rein to create bend, the rider now begins to use the outside rein to steer the horses shoulders. This is the gateway to neck reining.

Hug/release:

As horses advance it is important to ensure they do not begin evading or hiding from the riders aids. When a horse 'hides' from the riders hands it is often expressed through head tossing, over bending or other noticeable head and neck movements. Horses that evade the riders legs are often labeled as hot or sensitive. One major symptom of this is a rider that keeps their legs braced away from the horse's sides.

When riders begin to use the rein and leg cues together many horses noticeably relax. I call this becoming 'balanced' on the aids. This is the gateway into neck reining, steering with leg cues and serious enjoyment on your trail rides!

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