

Loosening the Longissimus Dorsi

In order for your horse to move well, to move forward with light, comfortable rhythm, he must be **relaxed** through his long back muscle (aka, the longissimus dorsi).

How can you help?

Try starting out with a **gentle massage** following your before-ride grooming sessions. This is the perfect time to check for any sore or tense areas on your horse's body. Work along his neck, shoulders, pectorals, as well as over hips and the long back muscles

Some horses aren't particularly fond of massage when it's new to them. Keep your touch **light** and the session **brief** if that's the case.

Once he's tacked up, let him warm up by walking out on the **longe line**. Ask for the trot, back to walk and go again up to the trot, watching for that easy swing in his hips before cueing into canter.

Your horse will appreciate this opportunity **to stretch and loosen up** before you place your weight onto his cold, unprepared back.

Want to add a balancing side rein or full-body lunge system? When **used properly** in experienced hands, these can be terrific aids. We'll discuss them in more detail in the next newsletter.

Hand-Fed Treats; Yeah or Neigh?

Yeah! (Yes, affirmative and 10-4 good buddy).

Why? Hand feeding can help create a **trusting bond** between horse and handler.

If occasionally practiced under saddle, it can assist in developing relaxed **lateral flexion**.

Horses who are accustomed to hand-fed treats are highly unlikely to be head shy (a **big** bonus when your equine vet or dentist needs to put hands in or around the horse's face).

Hand feeding myth: it promotes nipping.

We say: **not likely**. A horse that nips probably has other ground-manner or trust issues that need to be addressed.

Why I want to be a dressage horse

By DJ Fantastic Pride

I just learned about dressage a couple of months ago, so I can't say I'm an expert, but I am very smart and **love** learning new things. I have a great work ethic and enjoy being ridden almost daily. I'm not a hang-out-in-the-pasture kind of guy.

I'm pretty big. I know, guys say that *all the time*. But, really, I'm **16hh**. My new dressage friends tell me I have "**big, fancy movement**." They seem especially impressed with my trot. I'm handsome (chestnut and white paint with dark brown eyes). Pretty flashy, if I do say so myself. Age: just 7 years old.

I recently heard about **eventing** too - now that could **really** be for me!! I love to jump, canter and have a smooth, controlled gallop. I've been out on mountain trails and in the arena and I like both!

I'm looking for a long-term, committed relationship and am available to a **good, active home** for just **\$2800**. Please call us (ask for Diane) at **801-230-3322** if you'd like to meet me in person.

