

watch yourself. Pay close attention and see if you can find any differences in what I'm doing compared to what you're doing. When it comes to training horses, sometimes you have to be your own doctor and diagnose where the problem is. Maybe you're not setting your horse up correctly to get the lead. Or maybe he's anticipating you and not waiting for you to give him the cue to canter. First find your problem, and then fix it.

VII. SUCCESS TIPS

Don't expect perfection right away.

Teaching your horse to do Collected Lead Departures is something that will take a couple of months of practice before he gets good at them. This isn't something that within two lessons he'll be really good at. Not only that, but it's something that you have to maintain for the rest of his life. Anytime he gets pushy or tries to rush into the lead, you have to fix it. Horses are nothing but maintenance with legs and require constant work. When you don't expect perfection right away, it takes a little bit of the pressure off you and the horse. Chip away at it a little every day and after awhile, it'll become a habit. Remember, horses get good at whatever they are allowed to practice. In reality, you don't even have to teach your horse anything

for something to become a habit, you just have to allow him to do it. If it's a good thing, it's a good habit. If it's a bad thing, it's a bad habit. If your horse gets good at stepping up into the canter collected, it'll become a habit for him to do so.

Disengaging vs. Engaging

It's important for you to understand the difference between disengaging the hindquarters and engaging them. When you disengage a horse's hindquarters, you're actually taking away all the power in his hind end [Photo M]. You teach him this from the very beginning so that you can quickly gain control in an emergency situation. Since you're at the Advanced level, you shouldn't have to worry so much about your safety, so you can start teaching the horse to engage his hindquarters, which will actually increase the power in his hind end. When you engage a horse's hindquarters, you're pushing his hip up underneath himself so that his shoulders are elevated and it's easy for him to perform a lead departure or lead change by driving from his hind end [Photo N].



When you push the horse's hip up, make sure that you aren't pushing it way over to the side, because you'd be disengaging it, taking his power away. When you push his hip up too far, all his weight has to fall on his front end because he can no longer balance on his hind end, which makes a lead departure very difficult and frustrating for you and the horse. So instead, push his hip up at no more than a 45-degree angle so that you're driving his hind end forward underneath himself, putting him in a power position that he can use to elevate his front end and drive from behind.

VIII. PRACTICAL PURPOSE

Use Collected Lead Departures anytime you ask your horse to canter throughout your ride. It's not something you should spend an hour working on every day. Instead, practice the departures as they come about during your other exercises.