



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

4 Month Filly Kicks

Dear Mr. Bell,

I have a 4 month old filly. She is completely weaned from her mother and doing really well. My question is, how do I get her to stop kicking at me? I have been trying to get her used to being touched all over and that's when she kicks at me. I purchased her and her mother about 6 weeks ago. They had been put out to pasture from shortly after the filly was born till I got them home. About 2 weeks ago I caught a dog chasing her in our pasture. I yelled at the dog to go home and a few days later the dog and its owners moved. I haven't had any more trouble with dogs but now I have a filly that wants to kick. What do I do?

Your Student,
Sara Hilder
Hampton, NY

Hello Sara,

I assume this is happening while she is haltered? If that is the case, there must be a reprimand when she tries to kick you. Make a shhhhhhhhhhhhh noise and a good solid downward jerk on the lead. Then let it soak in for a bit before starting the touching again. Most youngsters like having their butts scratched just above the tail. Once you get that, then you start working elsewhere. And experiment with touch. Some like firm, some light. I call it 'search touching'. Find what she likes and when it's really working, quit and walk away. Pretty soon she'll be hunting you up for more of it.

Another good option would be to pole her all over. We call this Pole Gentling and use it on mustangs for the initial touching. Any kind of pole will work and a 12' bamboo pole bought at landscape stores is the best tool. Start in the wither area and work from there. Get my [DVD on Pole Gentling](#) that describes this remarkable procedure that I learned from ace horseman John Sharp, now 91 years young.

My "[Young Horses Series Plus](#)" will give you the three videos you'll need for her- Working with Young Horses, Starting the Young Horse, and my foundation work Discover the Horse You Never Knew. This way you'll have a plan and a logical set of exercises to work that will establish your directorship, build trust and confidence for both of you, and connect her brain and feet. When it's time to ride her, a good ways down the road, she'll be ready and so will you!

Safe Riding,