



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Horse Kicks When We Approach His Back End

I own a 12 year old gelding and when we bought him, we were told that he was a little touchy in his back feet. Well....you can't walk past his withers or he will cock his back leg and kick you. It's horrible! My fiancé refuses to give the horse back because this horse is an awesome roping horse. He's dedicated to fixing his problem. We don't know how to go about solving it or if we even can. We have tried starting from the beginning and acting like he was a young horse who was just starting out in the breaking process.

We did the sacking out, the round pen work and all that jazz, but nothing has worked. We don't know if reprimand would be good on this horse. If he kicks, should we reprimand that kick with a whip or what? He is a jackrabbit! If you walk towards him, he snorts and you can see the white in his eyes, he will shy away from you all of the time. My fiancé has now been able to brush back towards the hind legs, but once he gets so far, this horse will cock his leg like no other. I believe it has something to do with his butt. When you are on top of him and you put your hand at the top of his tail, he curls it under like a dog that has been whipped, and when he cocks his leg, he pulls it close to him like he's hiding his under body. I'm not sure. I'm lost for ideas.

Toshia Iowa

Dear Toshia:

I can offer a couple of suggestions that may help. It does sound to me like he's been abused - especially near the back end - and needs to be brought back. I'm sure his feet need to be trimmed, so it's something that needs to be taken care of.

With a horse like this I would begin by making friends and trying to build the trust as high as possible on the ground. I've developed a set of exercises that has helped thousands of horses and their owners. It all begins with bonding and ideally melting the horse. This is accomplished by finding his secret spots and melting him, basically "loving him up." I do things like rub the horse's eyes, ears, inside of the mouth and nose. I feather the horse's tongue and help him work his mouth since a loose mouth is a relaxed horse. I teach the horse to drop his head with downward pressure on the lead releasing for the smallest try, the slightest change.



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Once we've established a real relationship, then we focus on his issues which are likely a lot more than just kicking. It would be a matter of exploring out to the edge of what the horse can handle, then retreating, reassuring, then starting over. With this specific issue I would use a pole, whip, or one of our extendable wands to touch his back legs. That way he can kick to his heart's content and accomplish nothing but waste his energy. I do a lot of work with wild horses and use a 12' pole to make initial contact. With time, empathy, and patience I'm able to touch these untouched horses pretty much everywhere within about a half hour. Get my video on [Pole Gentling](#). This should be most helpful to you.

The best recommendation I can make would be to learn my 7-Step Safety System. I've created an audio book, a video, and a laminated pocket card to help people just like you. Read the [Western Horseman articles](#) on my site. The fourth step in my set of exercises is called "The Dance Begins." This specific maneuver will help those back legs dramatically - period! If you like my approach, order the "[Getting Started Package](#)." This will give you the information and tools to succeed and help your horse reach his full potential. As it stands now you're playing Russian roulette and it's just a matter of time before someone gets hurt. My focus is safety for you and your horse.

Happy Trails and Safe Riding,

Frank R. Bell