



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Horse Rushing Jumps

Hi Frank,

I was wondering if you could give me some advice on a horse I'm training. Right now I am working on jumps with him, they are low jumps about a foot off the ground. He doesn't shy from them or anything like that; in fact I think he really likes jumping. Whenever he sees a jump he charges them at full speed, I try to keep him collected and calm as we approach the jump but about five feet away he will just take off and fly over them. I am not sure what to do to get him to jump controlled.

Can you offer any tips?

Thanks,
Olivia Cipro

Olivia,

Over the years I have learned that it is actually a scared, unsure of his job and worried horse that will rush the fences. Not a horse that likes jumping. He tries to get it over and done as quickly as possible. He might worry about knocking them too. The warmbloods are usually calm about jumping because they are more thick skinned (lit and fig) so it does not hurt as much. (the legs and the mind)

A horse must get so used to poles that it does not faze him. Do lots of groundwork with him over poles and anything else to desensitize. **(5th step in Frank Bell's Safety System)** Especially ropes etc. around the legs. Be sensible and do not get him more scared. Then lots of poles on the ground when you ride.

Check the TT Touch exercises. Then the jumping poles only on the ground like trotting poles etc. Remember to do one pole, then three poles and only if he can cope, four poles. Never two because they try to jump it. Then the trotting poles to a small jump. Make sure your distances are correct. I do not know what type or how big your horse is. Any jumping horse must do this exercise 200% perfectly. Jumping is not riding a horse to a fence / poles and hoping it will get over it. Make sure you school the horse very well in his flatwork. Meaning, he must be obedient to the leg and hand aids. Be able to walk, trot, and canter. Slower and faster on command. Stop, start. There must never be a full speed. It should be your speed. You get the idea? Some horses are highly strung and will never cope with jumping.

Enjoy,
Herma Jansen
Accredited Instructor
South Africa



Frank Bell Horse Whisperer

Dear Olivia,

Along with some solid, positive suggestions my colleague Herma has given you I will also add that once you have established that your horse has all the correct aids from the ground (ground pole work) you start your horse over caveletti's and cross rails (caveletti's is one pole which is also called a vertical which is 1 ft in height). You will start your horse with one jump at a time. It is not about "height", it is about confidence and allowing for your horse to balance on approach and over a rail.

Place one rail (cross rail or caveletti) on the long side of your arena. Be sure the footing is comfortable for your horse and you are protecting your horses lower legs with proper wraps/boots. Exercise your horse over this jump until they find their confidence and then add a second jump on the opposite side of the arena along the long side.

What is extremely important is that you are equipped with the proper riding equipment for your horse and you understand all jumping positions such as, 3 point, 2 point and half seat. These are essential positions in order to jump your horse with a flow and naturally move with him. You must also know your proper releases such as automatic (advanced release) and crest release (this is a beginner release). These skills are essential as you will need to adjust your seat accordingly on approach, take off and landing. Without these skills you are at high risk of injuring yourself and your horse (as it is a dangerous sport in nature) or possibly discouraging your horse from wanting to jump from confusion, catching his mouth etc on ever jump.

If you have never schooled a green horse over jumps I would personally suggest getting a coach that is skilled in hunter jumping or show jumping (which ever is the one you prefer) to assist you with your goals.

We wish you the utmost best in your endeavor.
Stay safe and enjoy the ride.

Tracey McCleave
Accredited Instructor
British Columbia, Canada