

Riding By Reasoning

Photos by the Author
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Part XIV

"Controls and Weight Cueing"

Don't overlook the basic aids for controlling your horse. They pay off, especially when used in the early stages of training your horse to handle the way you want him to. As you and your horse develop, keep these cues in mind:

★ REINS ★ WEIGHT ★ LEGS ★ VOICE ★ SIGHT

HORSEMEN for hundreds of years have proven that there are four basic ways to control a horse for riding and training. These "controls," known as "the aids," are by the use of (1) *reins*, (2) *weight*, (3) *legs*, and (4) *voice*. It seems, for the stock working horse, a fifth aid should be added. It is *sight*. These horses do learn to do special jobs by watching cattle.

Even though stock horses are worked mostly by sight and reins, the better riders do use, to a small extent, their weight, voice, and leg "controls." For instance: a cowboy kicks his horse into a lope (leg aids). He may say "whoa" to stop (voice aid), or either accidentally or on purpose "cue" his horse to turn by leaning (weight aid).

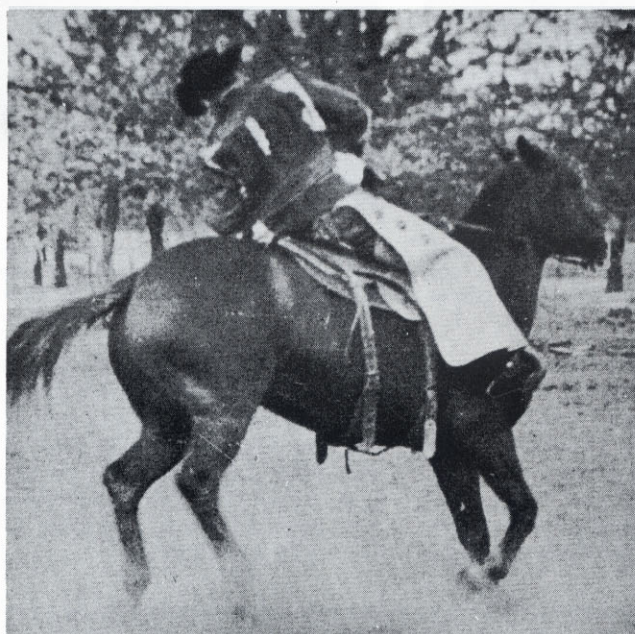
Many cutting and reining horse trainers and riders are more than aware of this "weight aid," and train their horses to handle by "weight cues." Reining contest rules have no

reason to score down for "weight cueing," but the cutting horse people do. You would be surprised at how slick some fellers can get at "weight cueing" their cutting horses — but the majority over-do it by sitting down, which causes their horses to work basically wrong — spread and down on their front legs during their blocks. Very few horses are physically able to come off their front ends without their hind legs way under them to get a second block made quickly. Light, wild cattle usually can stop, turn, and get away four, five or more strides before these "spectacular" but time-and-ground-wasting horses can head them again.

Two of the best, basically correct, working cutting horses that I've ever studied are Skeeter and Little Tom W, both ridden and trained by the three-time world's champion, Phil Williams. (Gene Overcash started and made a cutting horse of Little Tom. Phil bought him, then changed Tom's cow-

working style to that of Skeeter who had already won two world's championships, then he rode Little Tom W to another championship.) Both these horses got their hind feet way up under them on blocks, and they got in more blocks in the open than other horses. I wanted to know why . . . made some movies on them . . . Phil does not sit down on his blocks. He raises up! That makes his weight ride mighty close to his horse's carrying spot. Phil Williams also has a top "lick" for stopping a horse in balance with his reins. It took both his riding and rein handling to teach his horses to work in balance without a waste of time, ground, and energy.

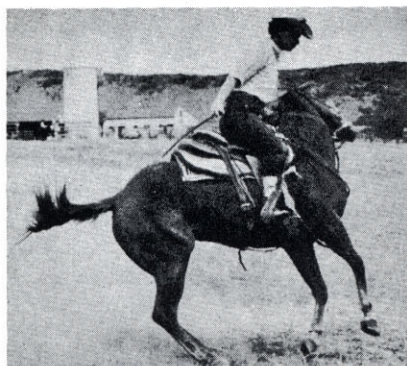
Good riding is only the start toward better performance on any kind of horse. It also takes a working and using knowledge of the "controls" — all five of them. The more the better! And the easier! Keep them fresh in your mind . . . and use 'em.



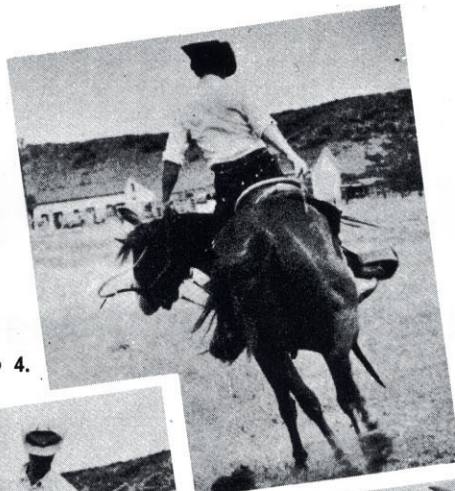
• 1. Weight cueing by the rider's seat not only makes him into an acrobat, it causes the horse to go down heavily on his forequarters, spread, and come off the ground with his "pivot" (left hind leg) which should not happen.



• 2. More weight cueing on the seat. The stud does have his pivot leg down, but not far enough under him to come on around on it without moving forward. (Pictures taken five years ago before Balanced Ride Saddles.)



• 3.



• 4.



• 5.



• 6.



• 7.

• 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. It takes more than good riding position, which Sue Wolf demonstrates does not basically change even by loss of a stirrup. Her mare flounders and limber-necks due to too much neck rein pressure. (My students are taught the use of snaffle, hackamore bit, pelhams and double reins — and the limitations of each — because I have never been able to do, nor have I seen anyone else do, an *all or every speed* basic handle with a curb, hackamore, or any other single rein bit except a snaffle. I use a curb because of *tradition* and outmoded *western rules*, but lose over one-third of my horse's handiness due to the loss of head placement. This is easily seen in motion pictures where these Riding by Reasonings originate in my studies for better performance.)



• 8 and 9. This maneuver is a 360-degree inside roll to the left lead. The stud (Cowboy Hancock) keeps his pivot (left hind leg) under him all the way around. The other three feet move around it. Rider's right leg (leg aid) pushes the horse's hindquarters under him for better turns. Leg aid when used *behind the front cinch* is not a cue to turn; it only places the hindquarters for the maneuver. (Leg aids on and in front of cinch are cues for turning.)