

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

To educate a horse we need a well thought-through educational program.

Suppose you have a fresh young horse who has been turned out with a herd for the past three years and has yet to start performing any exercises.

In your dreams you can already see this horse as an adult horse performing a wonderful passage, filled with pride, relaxation and lightness.

You have told everyone about how great your horse is and what you will achieve with him and that high school capriole will really happen. But to get from herd living to the half pass, there's quite a gap.

You can imagine your dream home but in front of you lays a pile of bricks. Before this pile of bricks becomes your dream home there is also a long road to travel. To build your perfect home, you will begin with the foundations.

If you want to travel to Paris, you must decide what time you want to arrive, what route you will take, when and where you would like to take a break, what time to leave, what you will need to bring. You have to plan your trip in order to succeed!

Training horses isn't a quick fix. It will take years.

It's just like humans. In order to educate human children, we go through an educational program in schools to become competent in a variety of skills:

- We start with **primary school** where we learn social etiquette and all kinds of crafts.
- Then we go to the **secondary school** where we learn writing, mathematics, reading and other skills which we will need for the rest of our lives. During our time at school we have goals of being able to read/write/count. These skills will make our lives easier.
- Then we start to choose our course. Maybe we decide to go to a sports **academy** to develop our physical talents or to become a sports teacher.
- Finally, we graduate, and we **reach our goal** and we achieve the status of professional athlete, sports instructor, coach or any other goal we had in mind from the beginning.

It is the same for a horse. A horse has a whole educational program which he has to undergo:

1. The baby phase
2. Nursery
3. Primary school
4. Gymnasium



BABY PHASE

In the first two weeks of his life a horse learns

- Basic instinctive skills
- He develops his senses
- He learns behavioral strategies of his dam
- And he learns Manners around humans (touching, lifting feet, being haltered) and to live in our surroundings (water, gravel, sand, wood, trailers, cars, leaf blowers, dogs).

NURSERY

During the first three years of a horse's life, is it important that the horse learns to be a 'horse' and this can only be taught by other horses. Out in the pasture the horse develops both mentally and physically, by learning:

- Horse language
- Social structures
- To dominate and to be dominated
- Behavior rules
- Playing skills

PRIMARY SCHOOL

At 3 or 4 years old the horse gets a human teacher and he will learn:

- To build a good relationship with humans
- He will learn to be held
- And to walk with humans
- Stop, stand and walk backwards
- To move the front legs
- To move the hind legs
- To be touched everywhere
- To stand in the brushing area
- To be brushed
- To lift his hooves and let you clean them
- To be washed
- To pass, go over and under 'obstacles
- To go in the trailer
- Not to be scared of a whip, blanket, bareback pad, saddle or a rider

So the horse will learn the most important elementary facts that he needs to know and be able to do. Different natural horsemanship methods can help you with this if you are inexperienced.

GYMNASIUM

At the gymnasium the horse learns how to perform gymnastic exercises so he will develop both physically and mentally and his talents will be fully developed and revealed.

Physically	Mentally, emotionally, spiritually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His body and limbs become more flexible and supple and will develop symmetrically• His physical strength will increase and he will become agile• He will improve his coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He will learn to 'learn'• He will develop self esteem• He will be less likely to be frightened• He becomes more loyal and devoted towards humans.• He gains emotional stability• He develops a wise spirit

HIGH SCHOOL

After completing the "gymnasium", a talented horse can be trained further in High School maneuvers and learn to perform exercises such as levade, courbette, and capriole.

THE GYMNASIUM

The next step for the horse is the gymnasium. What the γυμνάσιο (gymnasium) was for the young Greek that is the riding arena for the horse.

The young Greek developed the gifts of his body, mind and spirit to the fullest and the greatest harmony through daily exercises in the gymnasium.

SCHOOLING BODY, MIND, EMOTIONS, SPIRIT

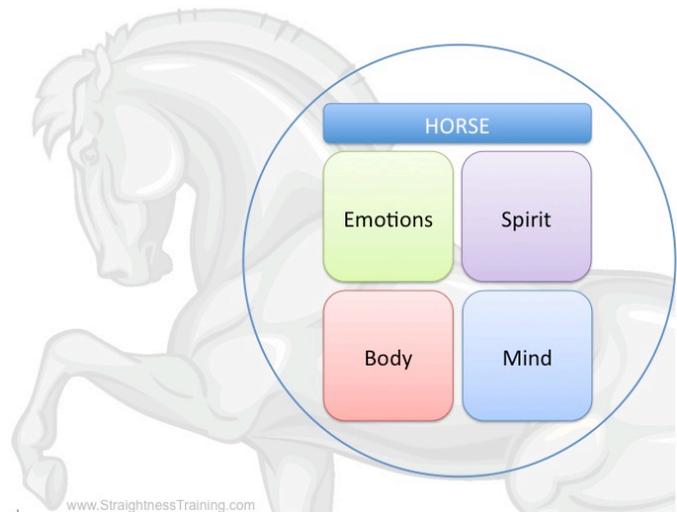
Straightness training helps to balance our horse's:

- Body
- Mind
- Emotions
- Spirit

A relaxed, strong and straightened body will positively affect the horse's mind.

Balance in a horse will get him in a comfortable, relaxed, confident, trusting, respectful and willing state which is necessary if we would like to teach the horse exercises.

Through the years of education the horse's wisdom will increase and his dignity, pride, inner strength and wise spirit will flourish.



TRAINING COMPONENTS

To be able to school the horse, we use the training components of Straightness Training which are:

1. Groundwork
2. Longeing
3. Work in hand
4. Riding
5. Liberty

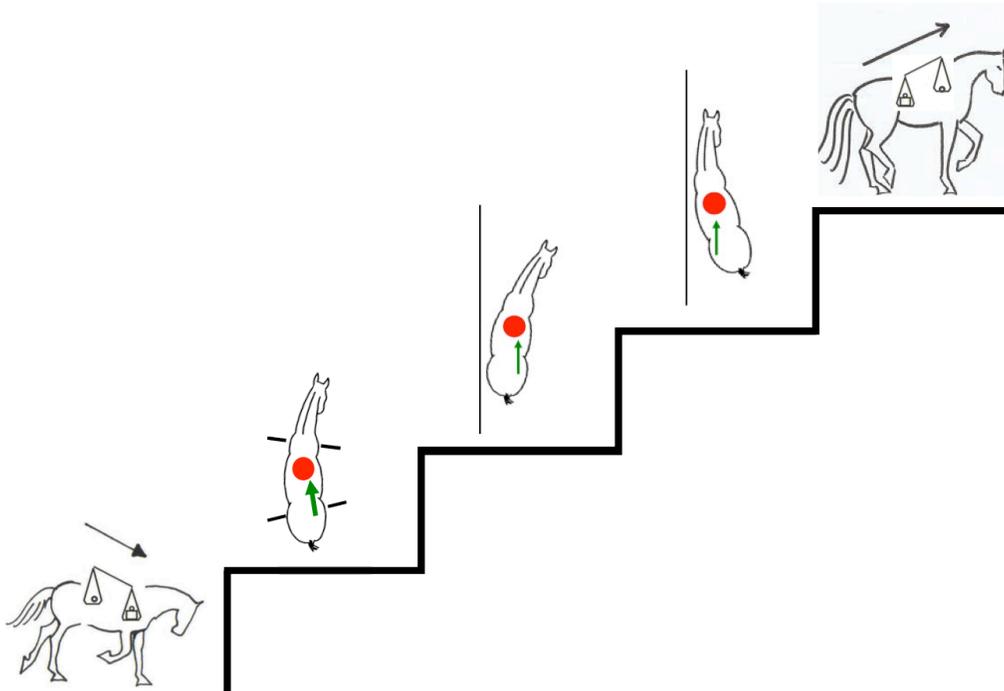
These are the components in which you and your horse are going to become proficient in Straightness Training Mastery.

- The first year of training starts with liberty, groundwork and longeing, where the horse learns to communicate with a human and to walk in a circle and learns to bend to both sides.
- The exercises in hand are to improve agility, flexibility, strength and coordination and to prepare the horse for riding.
- Once the horse has become stronger by groundwork, longeing and work in hand, you can start to prepare the horse for riding. This will be done on the longe. Once the horse has got accustomed to the rider and the aids, the horse can move freely around the arena.
- Once the horse starts to carry the rider, a training period of years will start to improve him gradually on all levels (body, mind, spirit).
- At liberty you and your horse learn to use less and less technical aids.

EVER INCREASING EXERCISES

In order to develop his body symmetrically the horse needs to perform horse gymnastics.

In the arena (“gym”) we do these horse gymnastics and we develop the horse’s muscles structure and riding balance through a system of stages of ever-increasing exercises that follow one another in a logical sequence.



The golden thread in all training components and all exercises are the six keys¹ of Straightness training.

Here is a quick overview of the training components and the exercises to give you the Big Picture of the logical order of Straightness Training:

GROUNDWORK - LONGEING	GROUNDWORK - WORK IN HAND	RIDING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standing still: Head low 2. Standing still: Stelling/bending 3. Circle in the hand 4. Circle on the long lead 5. Halt 6. Change of rein 7. Transitions 8. Direct transitions, like halt-trot, canter-walk 9. Trot 10. Canter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circle 2. Moving straight with bending 3. Shoulder-in 4. Haunches-in 5. Renvers 6. Half Pass 7. Pirouette 8. Exercises in trot 9. Collection in trot: Piaffe 10. Exercises in canter 11. Collection in canter: Pirouette 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circle 2. Moving straight with bending 3. Shoulder-in 4. Haunches-in 5. Renvers 6. Half Pass 7. Pirouette 8. Exercises in trot 9. Collection in trot: Piaffe 10. Exercises in canter 11. Collection in canter: Pirouette

¹ See the appendix at the end of this document

GROUNDWORK – LONGEING

In Straightness Training Mastery we start with groundwork. We learn the horse to lower his head and neck and to bend to the left and right **at a stand still**.

On the circle the horse learns to bend his body, with his head and neck in a forward-down position and an inside hind leg stepping towards the center of gravity.

Then the horse learns to move on a **bigger circle**, to make a halt, to change gait, to trot and to make transitions and also direct transitions like trot-halt. And he may learn to canter on the longe.

GROUNDWORK – WORK IN HAND

After the bending work on curved lines and on one track, we introduce **the lateral work on two tracks** on curved and straight lines from the ground:

First we introduce the exercise **shoulder-in** for the further development of the horse's flexibility in body and limbs. The shoulder-in brings the inside hind leg forward under the belly and the horse learns to carry himself with this hind leg and to bend the inside hind leg underneath himself.

The exercise **haunches-in** can evolve as the result of a well established shoulder-in. In haunches-in, the horse learns to make his outside hind leg step under the body of the horse and to bend the outside hind leg underneath himself.

The renvers, half pass and pirouette are variants of the haunches-in with increasing difficulty: In **renvers** the wall is on the other side of the horse than in haunches-in and **half pass** is a haunches-in across the diagonal of the arena, where no wall is involved. The **pirouette** is a haunches-in on a circle and can be executed by gradually decreasing the size of the circle.

All exercises are taught in walk. Then they can also be done **in trot**.

Lateral movements in walk and trot make both hind legs flexible individually and contribute significantly to perfecting the horse's artificial balance. As a result of lateral movements the horse gets stronger and stronger which allows the rider to require greater, simultaneous flexion of both haunches:

In **piaffe** the horse has increased flexion of both haunches and they alternate in picking up and carrying the weight. The hind legs are still lightly supported in this work by the front legs, although the hind legs have to perform the major portion of the work.

And finally the **levade** which originates from the piaffe: If the croupe lowers more and more in the piaffe, the joints are flexed greatly and the center of gravity drops back more and more. If the croupe is lowered completely, the center of gravity drops back far enough, that the horse is able to balance the entire load of horse and rider completely on his hind legs. So the levade is not just a fancy randomly picked trick, but arises naturally when the horse is strong enough and when both haunches are able to carry all of the weight completely simultaneously.

The shoulder-in, haunches-in, renvers and half pass can also be done in **collected canter**.

The lateral movements in canter enable the trainer to engage and collect the horse more and more all the way up to the **canter pirouette**.

RIDING

When your horse is well prepared by groundwork, longeing and work in hand, you can start riding your horse.

In the beginning rider and horse will be **guided by a person on the ground**. The person longeing the horse has taught the horse from the ground to do the exercises.

The **rider will take over the aids** gradually. In the end, the longeing person will no longer give any aids to support the horse.

When the horse lets himself be led by the aids of the rider, more **advanced riding** training can start.

The horse will go through the same system of stages of ever-increasing exercises as he did in hand to make him supple and strong, to carry a rider properly.

LIBERTY

Liberty training can be used in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the schooling.

In straightness training at liberty the horse will go through the same system of stages of ever-increasing exercises and in liberty it is easy to see if the horse is okay with the straightness training.

In straightness training we strive for a **balanced body and mind** of the horse, **balanced emotions** and a **balanced spirit** of the horse and of course a balanced relationship between horse and rider

In liberty it is easy to see which element is getting out of balance and you have to address it.

If you do liberty, it will broaden, deepen and optimize the other training components.

SUMMARY

- The horse will go through a complete **training program**.
- At **primary school** the horse will learn the most important elementary facts that he needs to know and be able to do.
- At the **gymnasium** of the horse his body, mind and spirit, will be developed and his talents will be revealed.
- At the gym there will be five distinct **training components**:
Groundwork, longeing, work in hand, riding and liberty.
- Each training component will include a number of **exercises** which can be performed by the horse in varying degrees of difficulty.

In Straightness Training Mastery we will walk through all training components and all basic and advanced exercises. And I will tell you all about the why, what, when and how to do all these wonderful exercises.

Educational program of the horse



This document is part of Straightness Training Mini Mastery.

If you would like to watch the corresponding video, please click on this link:

[Http://www.urly.nl/minimastery](http://www.urly.nl/minimastery)

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