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Training Horses to Cooperate with Veterinary Care

I've been using my knowledge of equine behaviour and learning theory to train horses to cooperate with regular husbandry and veterinary procedures, as well as teaching owners and equestrian staff to do the same for the past 20 years. First as a Blue Cross rehabilitation groom and as a behaviour professional.

Most recently I have been aiding the Horse Trust training team in teaching some very fearful, neglected and abused horses in their care to cooperate with injections so that they can be safely sedated for more intrusive procedures without setting back their behaviour therapy. These are young horses that will now offer their rump to the in-house vet to receive an IM sedative prior to IV sedation – without being haltered or even behind protective contact. The photo is from a recent demonstration of the same techniques at Llust Horse and Pony Trust – large syringe for audience benefit.



You don't just need to take my word for it, you've probably already seen BEVA's #dontbreakyourvet campaign vet, Gemma Pearson demonstrating the same results: correct application of learning theory gets the job done with less stress and with greater safety¹. Understanding the horse's innate temperament adds some finesse to this approach, as all horses who associate the vet and veterinary procedures with fear and pain are highly motivated to escape and avoid future interventions: particularly horses with proactive and neurotic temperaments².

- Do you have owners who could benefit from some one-to-one lessons in cooperative care training for their horses?
- Do you want some training in the application of learning theory to veterinary work yourself?
- Would you like to host me for a client evening to give a presentation on the subject?

I will provide my speaker service free of charge to any interested veterinary practice in South Wales, for those further afield I simply ask that my fuel costs are covered.

Lessons for clients are charged at my "follow-up" rate and group bookings are available.

Lessons for veterinary staff can be arranged as half-day workshops, at my place or yours. The cost for this is £200.00.

References

1. Pearson, G., 2019. Managing difficult behaviour in horses. *In Practice*, 41 (7), pp.329-336.
2. Ijichi, C. Collins, L.M. Creighton, E. & Ellwood, R.W. 2013. Harnessing the power of personality assessment: subjective assessment predicts behaviour in horses. *Behavioural Processes* 96: 47 - 52