

HORSECENTERED CURRICULUM:

PINK LEVEL

Pink Level is the first Level in the unmounted HorseCentered curriculum, designed to introduce horse training principles and hands-on ground training skills.

This Level covers basic groundwork concepts and exercises while giving students an understanding of the training process, increased awareness of equine body language and empathy for their nonverbal partners.

WHO IS PINK LEVEL FOR?

- 🐾 **Students who have demonstrated an understanding of basic horse safety** and ground handling skills. We recommend using the **Red HorseSense Level** as a prerequisite.
- 🐾 **Riding lesson students** who are mature enough for introductory learning theory and able to handle a horse independently, generally ages 10 and up.
- 🐾 **Students and parents** who plan to pursue horse ownership or to work with a horse independently in the future.
- 🐾 **Non-riding horse enthusiasts** who want to learn how to form a working relationship with a horse on the ground.
- 🐾 **Backyard horse owners** interested in setting goals and increasing their understanding of groundwork and training principles.

WHAT DOES PINK LEVEL TEACH?

- 🐾 **Equine body language**, including signs of stress or discomfort.
- 🐾 **Basic learning theory** and the benefits and drawbacks of different forms of reinforcement and punishment.
- 🐾 **Groundwork fundamentals** such as leading, yielding, sending and circling.
- 🐾 **Introductory targeting**, including methods of using rewards that improve rather than erode the horse's manners.
- 🐾 **Safe, effective ways to increase a horse's confidence** and overcome fear.
- 🐾 **How to handle a horse with partnership** and create activities for the horse's enjoyment.
- 🐾 **How to construct a training plan** and break training goals into achievable steps.

Partnership begins and ends on the ground.

Groundwork is an essential horsemanship skill, especially when paired with knowledge of how horses think, communicate and learn. Yet many riding schools skip the ground training in an effort to maximize time in the saddle.

The HorseCentered curriculum is designed to bridge that gap and can be taught as a supplement to riding lessons as well as a standalone class. It provides students with a balanced overview of different training methods, but many of the hands-on exercises can be practiced using the philosophy of your choice. Natural horsemanship, R+ and classical in-hand training are all welcome here!



HORSECENTERED CURRICULUM:

WHITE LEVEL

This Level introduces intermediate ground training skills, encouraging students to deepen their understanding of basic horse training principles and equine psychology.

Students in unmounted **White Level** lessons are encouraged to consider the impact of a horse's environment on the training process and to utilize obstacles safely and creatively.

WHO IS WHITE LEVEL FOR?

- 🐾 Students who have **completed the Pink HorseCentered Level**.
- 🐾 **Riding lesson students** with the maturity and physical ability to learn more challenging groundwork skills, including liberty work.
- 🐾 **Students and parents** who plan to pursue horse ownership or to work with a horse independently in the future.
- 🐾 **Working students and horse caretakers** who manage a horse's training environment.
- 🐾 **Non-riding horse enthusiasts** who want to learn how to develop a working relationship with a horse on the ground.
- 🐾 **Backyard horse owners** interested in setting goals and increasing their understanding of groundwork and training principles.

WHAT DOES WHITE LEVEL TEACH?

- 🐾 **More in-depth learning theory** including an understanding of **operant conditioning**.
- 🐾 **The role of health and environment in training** and how to set a horse up for success in the arena.
- 🐾 **Basic liberty skills** such as leading and yielding.
- 🐾 **Circling or longeing** with an emphasis on balance and relaxation.
- 🐾 **Trick training** and more complex **targeting** skills.
- 🐾 **Use and design of obstacles** in groundwork.
- 🐾 **Cooperative care training** and the process of developing training plans to improve routine care and handling.

Communication creates connection!

White Level students expand on skills learned in **Pink Level** and apply various training techniques to more sophisticated groundwork. **For most students, this is where ground training gets exciting and FUN - but achieving this level of ability requires consistent practice!**

If you are incorporating the HorseCentered curriculum into regular riding lessons, plan on dedicating a little extra time to groundwork, and consider giving students independent training projects to practice in between lessons. While it can be beneficial to work with a variety of horses, your students may prefer the deeper relationship created by working with a single equine partner.



HORSECENTERED CURRICULUM:

GOLD LEVEL

Gold Level is the third and final Level in the HorseCentered curriculum. It applies advanced training concepts to groundwork skills, teaching students to train their horses ethically and effectively.

This Level challenges students to deepen their awareness of equine and human body language, demonstrating partnership and refined communication throughout their ground training practice.

WHO IS GOLD LEVEL FOR?

- 🐾 Students who have **completed the Pink and White HorseCentered Levels.**
- 🐾 **Riding lesson students** with the maturity and physical ability to practice more ambitious groundwork skills, including liberty and work at the canter.
- 🐾 **Students who ride and train independently** and need empathetic tools for addressing unwanted behavior.
- 🐾 **Students who aspire to train project horses,** personally or professionally.
- 🐾 **Non-riding horse enthusiasts** who want to learn how to advance a working relationship with a horse on the ground.
- 🐾 **Backyard horse owners** interested in setting challenging goals and developing problem-solving skills.

WHAT DOES GOLD LEVEL TEACH?

- 🐾 **Ethics in horse training,** including methods of evaluating training methods and safe ways to get equine feedback.
- 🐾 **Strategies for reducing anxiety** and food aggression.
- 🐾 **Advanced liberty skills** such as obstacle work, circling and transitions between all three gaits.
- 🐾 **Lateral steps** such as sidepass and dressage maneuvers in-hand.
- 🐾 **The role of groundwork in rehabilitation** and equine fitness.
- 🐾 Advanced **targeting** and **trailer loading** skills.
- 🐾 **Solutions for common “problem” behaviors** and the importance of addressing the root cause, including pain, environment, etc.

Good horse training should be kind, effective, practical, and fun.

Gold Level students are encouraged to consider the mental and physical benefits of ground training and to apply problem-solving skills to a variety of “real world” training scenarios.

Expect that it will take months of dedicated practice and study for students to achieve Gold Level objectives - especially if they are working with a school horse - but that it will be time well spent. **As students work toward big training goals, they will discover the possibilities created by patient, thoughtful practice,** and take their relationship with their horse to a whole new Level.

