

Behavior in Motion: *A State Of Pace...*

By:

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“In reality, you are not training for distance; you are training for time in motion, making Emotional Conformation and focus agility of essential importance.”

The Thoroughbred was born to run and studying the Emotional Conformation of your horse will help to nurture the Natural Herd Dynamic and establish training protocols that enable your horse to perform at peak levels.

The mental capacity of the equine controls the physical output of the athlete.

Physical training of the horse is important, but, training only for that is training for mediocrity. Real athletic training means the act of training the mind to control and influence the body.

The importance of both physical and mental or *Emotional Conformation* cannot be overstated when it comes to developing the equine athlete. Speed is the by-product of pace and true training of the equine athlete must embrace the expansion of its mental capacity and focus agility while in motion so the horse doesn't lose pace with the influx of stimulus – your athlete having the ability to focus for an extended period of time is your key to success.

Pace is determined by the mental ability to focus over a given space of time, speed is determined by the physical ability to react within that given space, motion thus becomes the collateral affect of the two combined.

Mental conditioning, therefore, must supersede physical ability in order to maintain both pace and accelerated levels of motion – speed in smooth transitions.

When you have mental soundness and maturity, you can attain tremendous pace.

Think of it this way; take a long distance runner as compared to a bullet from a gun. The bullet has *speed*, but it cannot have pace, for it is dependant solely on the influence from which it erupted for its *time in motion*. The long distance runner can have both pace and speed, because his time in motion is reflected by the pace he keeps, which is determined based upon mental recognition of both the motion itself and the stimuli affecting it. The runner's time in motion then, is reflective of his speed controlled by the pace, which can go up or down. The bullet only having speed, is moving as fast as it ever will at the eruption of motion, slowing down ever-after because it has no pace to control or influence that speed.

The Thoroughbred racehorse is a runner, not a bullet. Knowing the focus ability of your horse will assist you a great deal in understanding your athlete's natural ability and potential level, as well as the development of training protocols, making pace something that can be trained for in your equine athlete. It isn't always the *speedy horse* you seek but rather the horse with a high degree of focus and focus agility which can be determined in the *Emotional Conformation* of your horse. It is important to note that focus ability and steady or elevated pace can be *taught* in association with time in motion. This means that you can nurture the inherent mental capacity to elevated levels with both real and perceived stimuli by way of *Variable Stimulus Training* which is the act of applying variable forms of interpretative stimulus to necessitate a protracted time of focus. This stems from the concept of association or, for the horse, *triggers* by association.

This works in a similar manner in humans: I could not always remember the code for my keyless entry by itself however I could get the same result by using association. The numbers were 33957, so I found something I already knew that was similar but would also get the desired result, just in a *different* way. I just always drew a blank, especially when in a rush, until I *associated* this with 33 Heinz 57. I used the ketchup name to power my association, and to this day have never forgotten it.

For a horse, you can use variable types of similar stimulus in association, to gain your intended result on a consistent basis, and in time, this develops what seems to be anticipation. When I say even a part of the equation, I immediately get the complete number. For me, the *trigger* is *Heinz*. Your horse will also develop this same ability to *anticipate* an intended result. Variable Stimulus Training can be applied to extend focus, protract and associate it with a desired outcome. In such a way a horse can be *trained* in motion to hit the ignition switch, launching into a release point. It is essential for the competitive athlete to have a release switch that will allow the horse to assuage the buddy-up tendency of the Herd Dynamic. The finest physical athlete pales in comparison to the horse that can manage and negotiate the chaos, stress and stimulus of motion.

Pace requires a higher state of focus to maintain speed and is an ability that can be nurtured to enhance the naturally occurring physical capacity. *Pace* is the ability to maintain focus beyond the time in motion required to achieve a goal. In short, if your horse is conditioned physically to run a mile, it should be able to maintain focus for twice that distance which will then allow for optimum levels of both mind and body for the time in motion or *distance* you really need to win.