

How To Train Your Horse For Survival If SHTF

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In a SHTF scenario, your horse can be an invaluable survival tool.

He can carry you to safety, haul your provisions, drag logs or injured people, and perform any number of other useful tasks. Horses are naturally creatures of flight though so if you want to use him in a survival situation, you need to train him properly.

Fortunately, training him isn't a hard job but it will take a bit of time and effort on your part. Throughout the following paragraphs we're going to discuss how to train your horse for survival if SHTF.

It'll be fun!

Trailer Training



Getting into a trailer is scary, time-consuming task if a horse isn't used to doing it. In a SHTF situation, he needs to know how to load quickly and efficiently. There are several good methods of gently teaching him to get quickly and quietly into a trailer. Here are 2 of my favorites:

- Feed him in the trailer. Simply park the trailer in the field with all of the doors open and place his feed bucket in it. Start with it near the back so that he just needs to put his head in to eat, then move it back a bit farther each day until he's climbing right in to eat.
- Gentle pressure on the lead rope. Using release from pressure is a great way to train a horse to do just about anything. Open the trailer up wide so that it's as light as possible inside. Line the horse up so that he's in position to walk in. Put gentle pressure on his lead rope and every time he gives even a little by moving forward, release the pressure, reward him, and apply pressure again. It's a slow process that may take a few sessions but it works.

The key to teaching a horse to trailer is patience. If he doesn't get in during the first session, stay calm, end the training session on a positive note, and try again the next day.

Desensitization Training

If you're going to use your horse in a SHTF situation, he needs to be accustomed to anything that may crop up in the environment. You can't prepare him for everything but you desensitize him to common things that you may encounter on the trail so that he doesn't spook and hurt you or himself. The best way to do this is just to expose him to them in his daily environment. Some of these things include:

- Flapping objects. Horses are shy about objects that flap around and make noise and in a SHTF scenario, you're likely to encounter this. Tarps, flags, sheets on clothes lines and rain coats are just a few common flapping objects that will spook a horse.
- Water. Horses often won't willingly cross water because they have poor depth perception so do what you can to get your horse used to stepping in large puddles or crossing streams.
- Loud noises. Horses tend to be spooky about sudden, loud noises so getting him used to sounds such as banging doors, gun shots and whip cracks is a good idea.



- Fire. Fire is a horse's natural enemy and they will spook from even a small campfire if they aren't used to being around it.
- Dragging objects. Having anything dragging behind him is sure to scare your horse if he isn't used to it. However, in a SHTF situation, you may need him to do this for several reasons. Start small and move to larger things. Be extremely careful with this though: you don't want either of you to get hurt and frightening him will make the training process slower.
- Ponying another horse. Some horses are fine with having a rider lead another horse and some aren't. Since you may want to lead a pack horse, it's a good idea to get your horse used to doing this on a regular basis.
- Standing still while mounting and mounting from either side. This may sound like a no-brainer but you'd be surprised how many horses won't stand still to be mounted or become uncomfortable if you try to mount them from the off side. In case of injury or danger, you need to teach your horse to stand still while being mounted from either side.
- Carrying 2 riders. Just as carrying one rider isn't natural to a horse, neither is carrying 2 riders. Teach your horse to double up so that you can ride double in a SHTF scenario if you need to.
- Carrying a pack. Anything bouncing around behind the saddle will feel weird to your horse but most don't mind carrying a pack. Still you don't want him to freak out when you're trying to bug out just because he's scared of a pack. Get him used to it now.

- Standing tied. It may seem obvious but your horse needs to be able to stand tied. Teaching him to ground tie and tie on a line next to other horses is also a great idea.

Leg Command Training

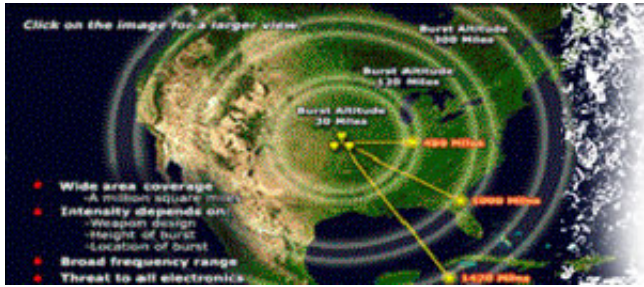
An important thing to train your horse for in a SHTF scenario is to move and stop using leg commands. Your hands may be full but you still need to be in control and be mobile. At the very minimum, teach your horse to stop, back and go forward at a walk, trot and canter using just your legs. You can do this using extinguishing – issue the command that you usually use to get a response paired with the leg command and gradually fade out the hand commands so that you're only using your legs.

Opening and Closing Gates



This is a great skill to train your horse for in a SHTF scenario. You will undoubtedly need to open and close gates and doors and if you can do it quickly without getting off of your horse, that's even better. It's an easy skill to learn that involves backing, side-passing, and pivoting. These are skills that a horse should have anyway, so opening and closing a gate will be easy to teach. Try doing it with just your legs just to be a little more prepared.

Training your horse for a SHTF scenario is a great thing to do. He can [travel farther and faster](#) than you can, he can [carry your gear](#), pull logs for firewood or shelter, notify you when somebody is near, and just serve as a companion when things get cold and lonely. Start now and you'll have an awesome tool and a friendly ear no matter what SHTF scenario you find yourself in!



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