



Neck Stretches.

Three basic stretches are recommended to help maintain poll, neck and wither flexibility. These are best done from the ground before the saddle is on the horse (saddle and girth will restrict the ability of the horse to bend to its full ability)

Step 1 Teach your horse to bend around for a treat but to hold for 10 to 20 seconds before getting the treat. Once this is achieved go onto teaching the three stretches.

Step 2

Stretch 1 – encourage your horse to follow the treat first to its foreleg in front of the girth and then finishing the stretch approaching the hip bone. Horses normally initially just get part of the way and over time get all the way to the hip bone. Hold for 15 seconds. Do one side, then the other. Repeat once. This stretch side bends and rotates the neck and poll.

Stretch 2 – This time we get the horse to side bend its neck around you. Stand at the horse's shoulder facing away from the horse and encourage the horse to side bend outwards and backwards. Hold etc as for first stretch.

Stretch 3 - Now we ask the horse to drop its head down to the ground and then backwards between the front legs. Have the horse hold the stretch for up to 30 seconds before getting its treat. This stretch lengthens and stretches the backline and encourages lifting of the belly. May be repeated once.