

From the Newsletter put out
by pupils of The Little 183 School -
at Ashley Place

Means Whereby of Grooming a Pony.

Inhibit the desire to groom a pony.

1. Direct the neck to relax, the head to go forward and up, and the shoulders down, to lengthen and widen the back; and continue this. Take the dandy brush in one hand and rest the other firmly (inhibiting stiffness) on the pony's side. All grooming is easier if the feet are apart as the body is then firmer, and it is better to have one, half a pace in front of the other; the weight is then going forwards and upwards into the stroke: lengthen and widen and direct the knee forward to move the feet. Continue lengthening and widening to let the arm go up and bring it down with quick, firm strokes; go all over the horse. this movement is apt to bring the groom's head down, or to make her stiffen her neck: she should watch this. A groom is often told to 'throw her weight' into the stroke, but it is interesting to note that the stroke is stronger when the head goes up to lengthen the back and free the arm. Inhibit brushing the tail, stand to one side of the horse, (not behind the heels) to let the arm go out to brush the tail while keeping on lengthening. Grooming with a dandy is the Means Whereby of loosening the dirt and scurf.

2. Take a Body Brush in one hand and a curry comb in the other. Keep on lengthening and widening to bring the brush down over the horse with long, clean strokes; pass it through the curry comb on its way up, to clean it, between every stroke. Inhibit between every stroke. Grooming with a body brush is the Means Whereby of removing the dust and scurf loosened by the dandy.

3. Go all over the horse with a wisp of damped hay, or with a clout. Keep lengthening all the time. Dust inside the horse's ears with the clout, if the horse is tall you will have to look up for this, inhibit shortening to look up. The hay or clout is the Means Whereby of giving a shine to the coat.

4. Inhibit washing the horse's face. Continue lengthening to let the left hand take hold of the pony just above his nose, with a sponge rinsed in cold water in the right hand remove 'sleepy dust' from the eyes and clean out the nostrils. Many horses object to this and throw their heads up. Do not stiffen the fingers or elbow, the human arm is not strong enough to hold a horse's head. Direct the head forward and up and the back back and the elbow downward from the horse to let the fingers hold the nose; then power will come from the lifter muscles of the back.

5. Inhibit picking out the horse's feet. Take an iron prod or wooden stick and stand in front of the hoof facing the horse. Inhibit stooping. Direct the neck to relax, the head forward and up, the shoulders down, keep this going to lengthen to let the knees go away from one another, and the arm forward and down to the foot. (Ponies generally lift their feet for themselves, steady it with the hand under it.) Clean out the dirt with the prod. Smell the foot carefully, if an unpleasant smell is present scrub out with jeyes as a Means Whereby to prevent thrush. It is wise to do this regularly twice a week.

6. Lengthen and widen to pat the horse and give him sugar or apple, talk to him all the time for he appreciates your friendship. A command such as 'Stand Lad' will often quieten a restive horse, but it is no good to squeak angrily at him and come down on the throttle. Lengthen and widen to smile to let the jaw drop to speak, the horse knows if the voice is firm and controlled. Always inhibit and go slow in the stable. A sudden noise or movement will frighten ponies, for many are nervous. If the rider does the stabling herself the horse is friendlier and both will enjoy the rides better.

'IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOURSELF, YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR HORSE'