

Andrea Maestas

I have trained one Mustang. His name is Neon Babylon aka Reno. He went through the Extreme Mustang Makeover Trainer Incentive Program (TIP) and then sat for a while. I received him from the TIP trainer. I started with building trust, getting him used to me. I did a lot ground work, moving his feet and changing direction with body language, using forward pressure to increase his speed, and moving away from him to have him slow, stop and face me. I do not use force. It is a balance between give and take. There is no such thing as a schedule or a time frame.

Once we had the trust I was able to introduce ground polls, a bag, and tarps on the ground. We worked on discovering what they were and that he was safe and I wouldn't ask him to do anything that would harm him. I also worked on desensitization such as having a rope draped over his back while he dragged it. These things got him ready for saddling. I worked on side pull pressure with the halter to ready him for riding. I also used voice commands that would prepare him to be ridden.

I put a saddle pad on and off of him until he was able to stand still with it touching him all over, and placed on his back while being walked around. I then did the same thing with the saddle, taking it on and off with the stirrups hanging and clanging. Then we moved onto working on the saddling with a girth.

When it came time to get on him I started by putting pressure/weight in the stirrup and then praise. Once I was able to mount I got up, sat in the saddle, then off the other side. Then I worked on mounting and dismounting from both sides.

Introducing movement, (he knew voice commands from the ground work and the pressure of the pull and release on the sides of the halter) I would turn his head to one side and ask for forward motion with voice commands and a little leg pressure. Once doing this on each side multiple times I could control his head and knew that I would be able to stop him with the one rein stop. I kept teaching him from there. Repetition is key. I am currently competitively barrel racing and trail riding him and his education continues as we experience new things.

I have been riding horses since I was nine years old. I can help adopters by offering insight from my experience. I offer techniques and help to work through training setbacks and offer moral support it time of tested patience.