

FITTING, FAMILIARITY, AND USE

Bitting and Tack for Peak Performance

by Mike Endicott

There is so much material to consider when discussing bits and bitting. Thousands of bits exist in thousands of variations. You could talk for 50 years on the subject of bits and still not cover every nuance. It's a tough topic because there are so many variables. Still, certain key elements remain constant when the subject of bitting is primarily focused on the horse's well-being and his ability to perform.

Different Bits for Different Horses

Determining the correct bit for the horse depends upon such factors as the horse's training level, sensitivity, physiology, natural balance, and the rider's ability. Because every situation and every horse is different, different bits are necessary for different horses. When determining what bit is right for any horse, *always* start with the mildest bit possible.

I think you should always start your training with a loose ring snaffle. Don't be in a hurry to move on to something stronger. Start with a soft, smooth, medium-size loose ring and go up from there, if necessary.

The reason for the loose ring as my bit of choice is because it is one of the softest bits and the most often accepted by the horse. When training, you want your horse to accept and respond to the aids with the least amount of bridle possible. There are several thousand bits you can go up to, but if you can keep the horse's mouth supple in a loose ring, then he will remain light and responsive to your hands as his training progresses. You may opt to add rubber bit guards on each side of the loose ring, as occasionally the horse can get pinched in the side of the mouth.

The less severe the bit in the horse's mouth, the less the rider is going to interfere with the arc or shape and scope, of the horse's jump. Those things are influenced by *more*: more bit, more tack, etc. The stronger the bit that is used, the more the horse's scope and shape to the jump can be adversely affected. It stands to reason, then, that training the horse in the least amount of bridle necessary will maximize the horse's performance. So, for a horse with a nice, natural balance one would like to stay in the snaffle range.

As the training progresses, some horses will require a stronger bit, like a French link, extra thin mouth-piece, or slow twist. (I'm not a big fan of a corkscrew bit. Every so often, the odd horse will work with this bit, but I find that in most cases a slow twist is best.) Each variation has its place, depending on the horse and the situation. Without exception, however, it should always be advised to stay away from sharp bits if possible.

Training Bits and Show Bits

I like to occasionally train and school in the tack that will be used in the show ring. This includes training with the show bit as well.

I understand that sometimes during training, you might need a different bit in order to achieve more collection or finesse. So, I like to occasionally work at home in show equipment—including the show bit and a standing or running martingale. I like to periodically train with the equipment in which I am going to expect my horse to perform at his best in the show ring.

I would love to see most horses stay in a snaffle of some sort, whether a loose ring, full-cheek or D-ring, even for the show!

A bit in the right hands can help collect a horse, bring his balance down if need be, or even help to raise his balance. When handled correctly, it can keep a horse from getting behind and also referred to as hiding behind the bit! This is often necessary in the show ring. The rider's hands must be as soft, steady, and forgiving while riding in any bit as to optimize the performance of the horse.

If a full-cheek snaffle is the bit of choice, I would advise refraining from using bit keepers as much as possible. Bit keepers make the bit stiff or rigid in the horse's mouth, and you want the horse to be relaxed and stay supple with the bit in his mouth at all times.

In the jumper ring, a lack of bit keepers poses no problem. However, when showing in the hunter and equitation divisions, bit keepers are a traditional look. In my opinion, however, use your discretion when deciding whether or not to use bit keepers in the show ring. If you're at the Medal Finals, or Devon, or a really traditional event, or one of the major shows, then you might want to use bit keepers for cosmetic reasons. If you have a horse that needs help following the rein aids, bit keepers can help. But for me, the rest of the time I wouldn't use them.

Fitting the Bit to the Rider

Choosing the right bit for a horse is done on a person-by-person basis. It really depends upon individual feel. You want the horse to respond to you as a rider.

Bit choice often depends on what fundamental result you want to encourage or enhance. Do you want to affect the horse's balance? Do you want him to collect and flex and where do you want him to flex? Do you have a beginner rider (in which case you really just want the horse to slow down or speed up)? In any case, what you're looking for is a bit that the horse is comfortable with, that he doesn't overreact to, but that doesn't encourage him to under-achieve. The best bit in the world is no good if the horse doesn't listen.

Choosing a bit also depends on the rider. There are different bits for different abilities, depending upon whether the rider is a real beginner, or has intermediate skills, or is an advanced rider.

If biting a horse that will be ridden by a beginner, it helps to keep the basics in mind. The basics don't change: if the rider pulls on the reins, you want the horse to slow down. You don't want him to flip his head, gap his mouth, or otherwise overreact.

More advanced riders are concerned with more advanced issues. They want the horse to readily move out and to willingly collect—without a fight; without a fuss; without hollowing his back; without locking his jaw; and without getting angry.

Hands are important. Some riders have a natural feel. They have good hands. They have a good relationship with the mouth of the horse. And some people don't. Different bits are required for the trainer to choose the right one for the horse. Sometimes, the trainer also has to consider the rider as well, and the choice of bit depends on the rider's ability. That's important. Because if you have a rider with BAD hands: they're grabby, or they're clumpy, or they yank on the horse—all bad riding habits—then the trainer has to consider the right bit for the rider as well as the horse.

It's really important to match a bit to horse AND rider. Because a bit for one person is correct, it may be absolutely the wrong bit for the next person.

The bit plays a crucial role even when the rider is quite accomplished. Jumping, as a sport, is a series of transitions. You need to move up the line, or you're going to collect in the line. You want to move up in the corner or you're going to collect in the corner. Understanding transitions has everything to do with the bit and with the function of how the bit and the horse work together.

It's not difficult to determine when a bit is not working. It's not working if the horse is flipping his head. It's not working if the horse refuses to collect or slow down after a gallop. It's not working if transitions are awkward and rough. And it's not working if the horse is resistant to turning—or if he doesn't turn at all!

In its simplest form, the checklist for “Is the Bit Working” includes:

- Can I gallop and then slow down?

- Can I collect?
- Can I easily transition from one gait and from one speed to another?
- Can I turn? Is the steering working?

Not every bit works only for the horse. You might have to find a bit that works for both the horse and rider. That's a key factor. I'm stronger than my wife. I might not need as much bridle as she does. A little girl might need a lot more bridle than a professional. A green rider might need a more forgiving bit than the professional rider.

The bit is right when horse likes it. It's right when he responds and works the way I like him to. If everything is working smoothly, without a struggle, then the bit works. It's that simple.

Bits vs. Background

Changing the bit is not a cure-all. If things are not working out as you'd hoped, and the horse is not working as you feel he should be, you can delve deeper into the symptoms the horse is exhibiting, looking for the background or source of the problem.

You've got to be a little bit of a researcher. Make sure the horse has a happy mouth before you step up into another, harsher bit.

First, consider whether or not the horse has had his teeth worked on lately. Do you have a dental issue that is interfering with your training? Often, a reason that bits don't work is because of a lack of dental maintenance. The horse may have sharp teeth, and nothing you put in his mouth is going to make him happy. So, regular once or twice a year dental exams may help.

Next, evaluate where the horse is in his training and development.

- Could the issues you are facing be because the horse is young and immature? Remember, the right bit for a horse at one stage in his training may not be the right bit at another stage. A green horse coming up through the levels may need several different bits throughout his life.
- Is the horse especially dull or overly sensitive?
- Do the problems you encounter stem from poor or incomplete training? If a horse has been badly trained you will have to re-shape him mentally in order to get him to physically perform the way you want. This mental reshaping is especially important if you are committed to using the least amount of bit pressure possible.
- If the horse has been badly trained, he's been tortured a little bit. (He's definitely been mentally abused, if not physically.) In these instances, it's always advised to go back to the basics. Go back to a snaffle, and the least amount of tack—including the least amount of severity in the bit as possible. You want to develop a new relationship with the horse

and gain his trust. If the horse has been badly trained, it's going to be fairly obvious, and no bit in the world will offer a quick fix.

On average, the amount of time it takes to reclaim a horse that has been poorly trained depends on the trainer and depends on the damage. I can improve a horse that's been under rough hands for a month in a day or two. But a horse that has suffered from habitual bad training can take much longer—sometimes as long as six months or a year—to reclaim.

- Are you dealing with a difficult horse with ingrained behavioral issues that might be mistaken for bad training? A lot of horses have behavioral issues. They don't want to be trained.

I have a horse that I've never found the right bit for. I've had him for two years. Originally, I thought his issues were just the result of bad training. But after all this time, it's difficult to blame it on poor training. Sometimes you have to accept the fact that you are working with a difficult horse. Perhaps he has a difficult mouth. Perhaps he doesn't want to be trained. So you're forever changing bits, so you can keep him guessing.

I might try two bits a week on this horse. I should know him by now, but we're still looking for the bit that he's happy working in. He's a "difficult case," and sometimes you have to accept that fact or—what's even more difficult—explain the situation to the owner. Sometimes this happens. Sometimes you didn't know all of the issues when you bought the horse, or you inherited it... That's rare. But it's possible.

- Does the horse have a low palate that is interfering with or irritated by the bit? A horse with a low palate is sometimes misunderstood and labeled as a behavioral issue or a training problem when, in reality, his unresponsiveness to a bit is physical. Often, a horse may be thought to be misbehaving when, instead, he is in pain. It's not a training problem, or a poor rider; the horse has a sore mouth because the bit is ramming into the low palate.

A horse with a low palate needs to go in a straight bit. If it is ridden in a jointed bit, as the rider pulls on the reins, the scissor effect of the joint ends up jabbing the horse in the roof of the mouth. Sometimes this can become obviously irritated and the horse suffers from that.

One of the best ways to determine if the horse has a low palate is to simply try a straight bit. If the horse is fussy, I'll just try a straight bit with a straight, smooth mouthpiece. Or I'll try a hackamore. I'll try anything that won't jab him in the roof of the mouth when I pull on the reins. Even a French link (a double-jointed bit), would be less severe or problematic, because it would eliminate the problem of the scissor effect poking the horse in the roof of his mouth.

Specific Bits for Special Situations

Not all bits are created equal. Some, because of their design, action, and leverage, are uniquely suited to affect a horse's way of going in a predictable manner.

A horse may be built in such a way that adversely affects his performance. Sometimes, work in a specialty bit is helpful in tempering the effects of these conformation issues.

For instance, a horse may have a *low natural balance*, in which the neck comes off the shoulder low, but the hindquarters are built high. Or the horse can have a very *high natural balance*—he can be quite up-headed, with a neck that comes from high off the shoulder. Neither conformation type necessarily constitutes a career-ending flaw; it's just the way that the horse is built. I personally like a horse with an uphill balance. Horses with low or high balance, however, will have different performance issues that relate to their conformation. Each type will respond best to bits that specifically affect its unique issues.

In my experience, the following specialty bits are the ones to start with when addressing a specific training situation or conformation type. Of the many, many bits available, try to stay within a close variation of these types of bits, if possible, without getting gimmicky. In every case, the goal is to get the horse to accept the bit and work with it, rather than reject it and fight against it.

Gags

When working with a horse with a low balance, one would be advised to try gag type options. I have always believed a gag has the likelihood to invert a horse's jump more than any other type of bit, but it is a necessary bit to use sometimes.

There are many ways to soften the effects of a gag. Again, as with any bit, always start with the least amount of bit and go up from there until you have found the best match for you and your horse.

Gag options are many, but the mildest gag has no gag rounds. (In industry jargon, this is often colloquially referred to as a "hunter gag.") A white plastic "happy mouth" mouth-piece also lessens the severity of this bit. This is where you should start if the gag is where you believe you should go.

Try all variations of mildest gag until that has been exhausted before progressing to the traditional gag with gag rounds. Make sure you start with two reins! Go through all the mouthpiece variations before moving to the next option, which could be a gag with only one rein. Again, start with the mildest mouth-piece.

As you progress from no gag rounds, to gag rounds, to two reins, and then to one rein, each change will alter the effect of the bit. Each time you change, you are really changing the leverage. That's why, even though it is work, each time you change the set-up, you need to go back to a milder mouth-piece.

Pelhams

My favorite bit for a horse with a high head and high natural balance is the rubber Pelham. This can be a white plastic or black rubber mouth-piece. Try them both! (When showing in the Hunter or Equitation rings, the metal Pelham mouthpieces may be considered to be cosmetically better, as they are the traditional bit of choice for those divisions.)

As with the gags, there are many ways to set up Pelhams, as well as many mouth-pieces to try! In addition, there are different lengths to the shanks as well. Obviously I believe in starting with the minimum possible and going from there.

If setting up a horse for the jumper ring, I would start with a short shank Pelham with bit converters to convert the Pelham to be used with just one rein. (This has long been my favorite, but it is not the traditional use of the bit!) I would also use a leather strap before using a traditional curb chain. From there, it's easy to go through the motions of making the bit more and more severe, depending on what the horse needs: go to a longer shank, use two reins for more leverage, try a curb chain with bit converters and a single rein, then try it with two reins. If a horse does not have a low palate, try a jointed Pelham.

It is also important to note that I do not put the curb chain or leather strap through the rings of the bit but rather, just let it fit inside directly against the horse's jaw or chin. Adjust firmness as you see fit. I feel this keeps the bit from being so rigid in the horse's mouth. It causes the horse to be more likely to accept and enjoy the fit of the bit when you draw on the reins. The suppleness of the horse's mouth is directly related to the bit in his mouth. (Of course, if you are showing in the Hunter or Equitation divisions, you must always use two reins and the curb rein or strap should be put from the outside of the Pelham through the bit to the clasp or clamp on the other side. These divisions require you to stay traditional in the show ring!)

As with everything else that affects a bit's severity, don't start with the curb strap or chain cranked down. Use the least amount of pressure possible, and increase it only as necessary. It should be immediately obvious that adjusting the curb chain tighter will change the pressure of the bit. Some horses will be happier with very little. Others may need a lot. (Putting the strap on and cranking it down is not a good way to start.) Every time you make a change, start with the mildest setting.

Hackamores

Hackamores are common, but are not so easy to ride in as one might think. They look simple, but they can be tricky. The hackamore is generally indicated for the horse that has a difficult mouth or a difficult mind. Hackamores can work well for horses that are either very strong or are fussy in the mouth.

Typically, a hackamore does not encourage a horse to respond to the rein aids well or turn well so it is best used for a horse that follows or turns well naturally.

There are many different variants of hackamore, like any other bit. The length of the shanks will affect the leverage on the horse. As with the Pelham, short shanks deliver less leverage than long shanks. The fundamental difference in a hackamore, however, is that the leverage is not exerted on the mouth, but rather puts pressure on the nose and chin together.

The hackamore is a touchy bit. It's a very aggressive bit with regards to strength in stopping a horse's forward motion—and that's the main reason why people use it. If a horse has a tendency to be a bit of a runaway, or has a tough mouth, and you can't find the right bit, sometimes the right option is *no* bit. Just follow some common sense—start with the least amount of shank and curb and gradually go from there.

Odd Bits

Of course there are odd or non-traditional bits. Many “out of the box” options exist, as far as bits are concerned. If none of the straight-forward bits work, there are virtually limitless options to try.

Sometimes these “odd bits” work best. For instance, if a horse feels a little trapped with his tongue, a loose *ball bit* (also know as a Waterford bit) can be a good choice. (I don't like the rigid ball bits. I prefer the many-linked ball bit.) It's not a common bit. It might be viewed at a little gimmicky, but it's a “normal” bit. Some horses like it. They can chew on it and relax with it. They don't feel trapped. They don't feel like their tongues are being depressed. It also works in some instances where a horse has a low palate (for more on biting a horse with a low palate, see “Bits vs. Background” above).

A *double bridle* is sometimes indicated for a very strong horse. It puts two bits into the horse's mouth—one is a snaffle bit, the other is a ported curb. It's indicated for a horse that is very strong and generally high-headed, with a very high balance. It works, but it's a lot of bridle. It is not for the beginner, or for anyone who doesn't have very good hands.

On the Nose

Biting issues aside, the bridle can be a hugely influential piece of tack. Nosebands are one area in which the bridle can significantly affect the horse's performance.

A regular noseband or *cavesson* is designed to keep the horse from opening his mouth to some degree. A thicker noseband is slightly more effective at this than a thinner one. The cavesson can be placed slightly higher or lower to change the effect. For normal placement, the noseband should be just below the cheekbone.

The regular cavesson is used with the standing martingale if that option is needed.

I like to have a cavesson fairly tight. It really helps to control the horse's jaw. My opinion is that the function of the noseband is not just to help keep the mouth closed, but to help keep the jaw closed as well.

There is a *flash* attachment that can be put on the cavesson. The flash was originally developed to close the mouths of showjumpers, if the horse went to gap his mouth or evade the bit. It is very common, both in the jumper and the Equitation ring (but never in the hunter ring). When adjusting the flash, the noseband should be fairly tight and the flash should be only snug so the horse can still chew the bit.

I like a horse to be able to chew on the bit. When a horse is working and happy with the bit, there should be saliva. That means he has accepted the bit. And if the horse is relaxed, he should be able to chew on the bit. That's why you want the cavesson tight, but not the flash. You should be able to get your fingers through between the flash and the horse's mouth. Otherwise, there isn't any way for him to chew on the bit; it's too tight.

A *crank noseband* or *Swedish cavesson*, while a piece of equipment primarily associated with dressage, can be useful at times—especially if you have a severe horse that can be extremely difficult. But a crank noseband can be tightened so much that a horse is unable to chew on the bit at all. Generally, a flash is advised instead.

A *figure eight* noseband (also called a *crossed* or *grackle*) is used in the case of a horse that likes to twist his jaw. It offers two points of pressure on the horse's face. One is higher, to help keep the jaw from twisting; and one is lower, to help keep the mouth from gapping.

The figure eight cannot be used with a standing martingale. Also, a figure 8 is only for the jumper ring and jumper type medals. At no time is it allowed in the hunter ring!

One last noseband option that merits mentioning is the *Kineton*—an aid that is an attachment to the noseband. It is often used with race horses, or horses that work at high speeds. This device wraps around the bit and then follows over the horse's nose to give extra drawing power or leverage. It works by transferring bit pressure from the rider's hand to the nose. It gives the rider a little “extra draw” on the reins, creating a sort of hackamore effect.

The Kineton can be a good piece of equipment if you just want a little bit more draw on the horse's nose—if, for instance, when you really gallop, you want him to come back a little sharper, but not in a rough manner. Of course, you can't show with it in hunter or Equitation rings. But you can use it in the jumper ring, and it can be a good training aid for the other disciplines.

A lot of the equipment that you're not allowed to use when showing in the hunter or Equitation rings, but are allowed to use in the jumper ring, are good training aids. Even though you can't show in something, that doesn't mean that it's not a good training aid.

Rulebooks change. If you're uncertain about what is “legal equipment,” check with your current USEF and or FEI rulebook, or ask your horse show steward. Get your questions answered so you don't make a mistake.

Boots, Belly Guards, Bungees, and More...

All equipment carries the potential for misuse or abuse in the hands of an uninformed or untrained person. The same equipment that may be inappropriate for one horse and one trainer may be a critical training aid for another horse in another trainer's program.

Consider, for instance, *weighted boots*. These are a tricky business. Rules change. Currently, according to the FEI and USEF, boots over a certain weight are illegal.

This doesn't change the fact that the old weighted boots worked great. I always equated them to a baseball player warming up with a donut on his bat. Some people preferred to warm up with them and then take them off before entering the ring.

You could use them on the front end, too. If I had a horse that was very slow on the front end, I might warm up with heavy boots. I believe it was found, though, that after time and overuse, the horse could get injured from wearing weighted boots. Through hearsay, I understand that horses would sometimes get strained ligaments behind from using heavy boots.

In any case, weighted boots are a thing of the past now. Most people don't use them anymore. Instead, they use the *Doda boot*. This boot's effectiveness comes from pressure across the horse's hind leg. It's actually a much better boot than using those with weights.

Usually, people will warm up and move around without boots on; then they'll put them on in the warm-up ring. The boots apply pressure to certain points on the leg and encourage the horse to "jump extra" behind. To help the horse to use his hind end better—an extra "flip" of the hind end, as opposed to just jumping normally. The Doda boot is the most common type of high performance hind boot used today. It's more common than weighted boots. It causes less injury. It just works better.

Sometimes weighted boots aren't bad to use in daily work for muscle strengthening. If you're bringing a horse back from an injury, and you're just walking under saddle, you might find that weighted boots are quite useful. You don't want to work a long time in weighted boots, but you might do a little bit of work with them for improved fitness. That's more of what the boots are used for in today's world: rehabbing and strengthening, rather than performance.

Belly pads are great for a horse that jumps very correct in front and slaps his chest or his belly with his front feet when he jumps. Belly pads are absolutely necessary, because you never want to discourage your horse from jumping better. If he jumps hard and he hits himself, that would certainly discourage him from trying too hard. You always want to protect the horse from hurting himself through trying—especially if he has cleats for jumping on grass turf.

Belly guards are fairly straightforward, although some of the old-fashioned belly guards are very wide. They had a tendency to interfere with the elbow of the horse. They would get under his front armpit and create interference. When choosing a belly guard, be careful not to get one that's too wide. It might interfere with the horse's underarm.

Draw reins are probably the most misused aid in training. I was fortunate to have Bernie and Christine Traurig as my mentors. Everyone should be so lucky. They are absolute artists with the draw reins. Using draw reins is an art.

You have to understand how to use a draw rein in order for it to be effective. Otherwise, if you tie the horse's head to his chest with a draw rein, you just end up with the horse leaning on the rider's hands and much of the desired function of the draw rein is lost. Using draw reins incorrectly makes the horse too low and too heavy, because he learns to lay on the bit, and gets numb to it.

I see a lot of people using short draw reins, and they are doing *nothing* beneficial to the horse's training. Draw reins should be used to draw a horse in, and then to let it out—to ask him to chew on the bit, then once this is accomplished the rider must relieve the pressure on his mouth. They should never be locked into place. Never.

The draw rein should be used when you need it, and then you let go of it. The

rider using it has to have enough education to understand to tighten the draw rein as necessary, and to let it out as necessary. The draw rein is never to be a constant tie-down, for example. (“Tie down” is good terminology, because it seems that most people use it as a tie-down.)

Something I like to do sometimes with the draw reins is put them through the throatlatch. The reins go from the hands through the throatlatch, to the bit, to the breastplate. It changes the angle of pull, with the end result being that you get the break on the horse much higher than if you used them in the traditional set-up. This is a little more advanced—it’s the sort of thing that might be indicated later, rather than sooner, in a horse’s training. You never want a horse to break back by the wither. But if you want a horse to break by the poll, or if you want to help the horses balance, or to bring his nose in with a little higher balance, that’s when threading the draw reins through the throatlatch is indicated.

Another use of draw rein would be a *long draw rein*. These are used without a breastplate. They just go from your hand, to the bit, directly to the girth. It’s a good use of the draw rein if you want to stretch out your horse. If you want him to be long and low, to stretch out his back, the long draw rein is a good option.

Specialty training equipment like *gogues* and *chambons* are related. They serve the same function, essentially, though each has a slightly different set up. The gogue keeps the horse in a little higher balance than the chambon, which works more as a tie-down effect.

The whole operating mechanism of both gogues and chambons is engineered so the horse doesn't get inverted, upside down, or u-shaped through his back or through his neck. Personally, I prefer the bungee gogue. It has give (obviously), and rope or leather doesn't. The horse will get supple with the bungee gogue, because he can feel the reward. If he pulls on it, and it gives as soon as he quits fighting it, the elasticity creates the same rewarding effect as an educated hand on the reins. The reward is no more pressure. If the horse fights it, he ends up fighting himself, to some degree. In the end, he gives up fighting. (This is in marked contrast to the rider always fighting the horse with draw reins or with more and more bit.) Gogues and chambons let the horse fight himself, while keeping his neck and back in the shape you want.

The bungee gogue creates a sort of triangular effect, if you want the horse both down and in, or up and in, depending on how tight you make it. It’s a good training aid, in the hands of an experienced trainer, and on a horse that has progressed somewhat in his training. I wouldn't put it on a really green horse too early in his training. You don't want the green horse to feel suffocated and panic. It’s more appropriate for a horse that is going well—a 6-, 7-, or 8-year old at least. I wouldn't use such a training aid on a 3-, 4-, or 5-year old. I don't think they're ready for that kind of pressure that early in their careers.

Incorporating these aids into a training program is really a matter of individual preference. If, for instance, you find that your horse is *always* upside down, and you don't always want to be in a constant struggle with him, you might consider working him in a gogue or chambon. That doesn't mean he’s a strong-mouthed horse or that he’s poorly trained. It’s not always related to the horse’s mouth. He might just be built in a certain way, or move in a particular manner.

Use a gogue or chambon with any bit (except, perhaps, a hackamore), but bear in

mind that these are training aids. So use them more with your training bits, rather than with your show bit. From time to time, I will use such training aids in the jumper ring, but—again—I will do it with the least bit possible. To do otherwise (with this or with any training aid) would be defeating the purpose of training: to enhance a horse's performance while expanding his understanding and maintaining his well-being.