
Horse Behaviour

Horses live in the “now” ... right here in the moment: right here, right now. They don't rationalize anything.

- **In a group (herd) horses will challenge the other horses to establish who is the leader** – each herd or group of horses has a leader, second in command, third, fourth and so on. When a new horse enters the group there will often be some fighting as the new comer challenges or submits to the control of the existing “pecking order”.
- **Having a “pecking order” makes a horse feel secure** horses desire a “pecking order”. This concept has helped horses survive in their herds for thousands of years.
- **The most natural tendency for a horse is to move forward** – horses move from place to place as they graze (eat grass). Horses move forward within the herd to establish pecking order.
- **Horse's are paranoid** - the instinct to run and flee for their life is never far from a horse's thoughts ... it's about staying alive.
- **Horses enjoy their personal space** – to enter into a horse's personal space is a way that we humans control and dominate a horse.
- **'Control' is something a horse appreciates in a herd** – each horse is controlled by other horses, higher in the herd “pecking order”. Horses understand this and feel secure.
- **A horse will lean against you** – a horse invades your space to challenge your control.
- **When a horse comes into contact with a person, they will challenge the person to see who is in control** – the horse is checking out the pecking order of the new herd. One or the other WILL be the “boss” and as in the herd, it often takes some show of strength or assertiveness.
- **When a horse kicks out with their hind legs** – it can be to protect itself from a predator (either real or imagined), signaling being mildly upset or outright anger.
- **When two horses 'compete' in the herd** – they do not seek to kill their opponent. They compete to find their proper place and how they are going to live together in the herd. Horses have worked out how to compete without causing pain, fear and distrust. The loser is actually empowered because it now acknowledges that a stronger horse that will look after it. They compete in a way that allows them to still live in a way that makes them all stronger as a society.
- **A horse can tell what a person is like from a distance** – a horse is a prey animal and is finely attuned to its environment. By being attuned with things around them allows a horse to flee from danger or fight a challenger.