

■ Use accepted gentling principles to evaluate the trust that your wild horse has for you. When you can touch your horse, rub slowly and firmly. Do not pat.

■ Educate yourself as fully as possible. Beware not to place yourself in harm's way. Become fully educated in the language of the horse, including the use of an artificial arm.

■ With proper knowledge, one can easily prepare within a few weeks virtually every mustang for its first visit with a blacksmith. Take care to utilize safe methods when preparing animals to have their hooves trimmed.

■ The round pen can be a great environment in which to convince your mustang to prefer to be with you rather than away from you.

"The BLM is reaching out to bring you information to make your adoption a success. Make use of that opportunity. It is not possible to educate in detail in a brochure, but it is critical that you get the information needed so as to maximize your chances for success."

- Monty Roberts

Training:

Now that you have made good progress toward establishing your friendship, you can begin work toward actual training. An abundance of materials exists to help you with this. Many trainers use the gentle training techniques endorsed by the BLM. There are books, videos, and training courses. Various wild horse mentoring and adopter assistance groups exist across the nation, and their members are ready and willing to help you.

■ A round pen, approximately fifty feet in diameter, is highly recommended for whichever training method you choose. It will provide plenty of room for the horse to move, and lots of room for safety.

■ Elements that should apply to any training method include patience, gentleness, kindness, and consistency.

■ Any restraint used should be the minimal amount needed. An overall gain in gentle training methods is to inflict no pain or fear in your animal.

Special Thanks to horse trainer Monty Roberts for contributions to this publication.

For more information, call 1-888-U2-MONTY or visit on-line www.montyroberts.com

Other trainers and information available at www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov

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Tips for Working with your Wild Horse or Burro



*Famed horse trainer, Monty Roberts
with his wild horse Shy Boy*

photo by Christopher Dydyk



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

"Do not use violence or force of any kind when working with your mustang or burro. Be patient."

- Monty Roberts

Thank you for your interest in America's wild horses and burros.

Whether you are just considering adoption, or have already adopted your Friend For Life, renowned horse trainer Monty Roberts has several important tips for you that will help get you off on the right foot as you gentle, then train your animal.

Safety:

Safety is best achieved when the adopter fully prepares for the arrival of their wild horse or burro. This means preparing the proper facility and also preparing yourself.

When you adopt a wild horse or burro, safety -- for you and the animal -- is your first priority. Remember that your animal is wild. Your wild mustang has had very little contact with humans and until gentled, sees you as a threat. A wild horse's first reaction is to use its best defense -- to flee.

- A round pen of approximately 50 feet in diameter is best for training your animal.
- Watch your animal's reaction to you and the surroundings. There are obvious signs that your animal is concerned.
- Be sure that no sharp objects protrude into the corral, and that feed and water containers have no sharp edges.
- Keep children and pets out of the corral especially during the first days when the animal is getting used to new surroundings.



Making Friends:

Regardless of the type of riding or work you intend for your wild horse or burro, it will need to be gentled sufficiently so that people can work safely around it. In general, wild burros are easier to domesticate than wild horses. The following tips pertain to horses, but can also be used for burros.

It is important to remember that you will need time and patience -- lots of it -- when working with your wild animal. While professional trainers

often demonstrate successful gentling in only hours, chances are it could be weeks before you can even pet your wild horse. But with that first touch, you will know that every minute was worth the work. Try these ideas to begin making friends with your new wild horse:

- Give your horse a few days to get used to the new sights, scents, and sounds of its new home. Provide plenty of fresh water (an adult horse needs 15-20 gallons a day) and fresh hay daily.
- Whenever possible, provide your wild horse with a domestic friend. A gentle, older gelding that is fully trained is recommended.
- Using the older, gentle horse, convince your wild horse that you are a friend, not an enemy.
- Do not use violence or force of any kind. Do not rope or tie-up in the early stages of gentling your animal.



photo by Laura Davis

Horse trainer, Monty Roberts with tamed wild horses Cherokee and Shy Boy

Wild horses from public lands