

TRAINING AND PUNISHMENT

The subject of punishment is so often misunderstood or abused.

If your ponies disobeys you, he must be corrected; if he persists, he must be punished until he understand that disobedience does not pay. But we must remember that even a pony is far stronger than his trainer and it is only by using our superior intelligence and our reasoning power that we always win the day. For this reason let us always use tact and common sense and try to avoid a battle. If we have a fight we have got to win. So, it is up to the trainer never to ask a foolish or unreasonable question. If he does, he is asking for trouble and deserves to get it.

Be sure that every demand made to the pony is within his capabilities and that he understands what you want, then insist on obedience and carry on quietly but firmly, until you get what you want, and then finish your lesson on a good note.

If you have to punish a pony, do so at once, use your stick behind the leg, smartly, and growl at him at the same time. Afterwards the growl will probably be sufficient reminder that you will not stand such behaviour.

Be sure, however, if you hit him with a stick to make him go forward, that when he does jump forward you do not then catch him in the mouth with the rein, just because you are caught off balance. This instantly turns a reasonable punishment into a nonsense, upsets and worries the pony and starts spoiling him.

Never try to school in public. Get him used to every sort of eventually beforehand. No-one likes to see a pony hit, even if he deserves it, and if he deserves a smart tap for some bad behaviour and does not get it, he has won an unfortunate point. But equally, never do anything at home that you would be ashamed to have seen by anyone. Justice must always be tempered with mercy, and NEVER hit an animal when you have lost your temper.

Tact and outwitting are really the cleverest ways of getting round difficulties. So often people ask for trouble in the most foolish way. Firmness, kindness and intelligent management will produce a happy pony that respects humans.

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Extract from Chapter 2 of her booklet: SHOWING PONIES