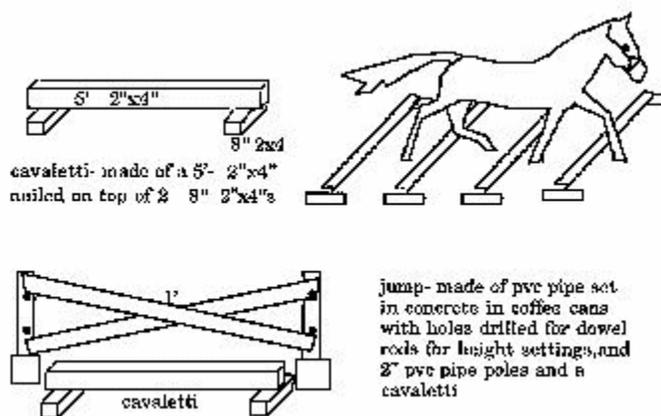


# TEACHING THE MINIATURE HORSE TO HUNT & JUMP WITH STYLE

by Jan Easter

Jumping is a natural movement for a horse and when trained properly you and your horse can enjoy and excel at the sport. It is important to teach the basics so that you will have correct posture and maintain the correct positions as your horse advances to larger jumps. First we start off with a cavaletti (pole) on the ground and walk the horse over it, going with him so he crosses the cavaletti in the center. The cavaletti should be made of a heavy enough material so that if he clicks it with his foot it will be uncomfortable. When he crosses the cavaletti without tipping it, praise him and let him know he has done the job right. Then lead him with about 2' of lead so that you walk beside the cavaletti, while he crosses at the center of the cavaletti. When he gets this down place 4 cavaletti in a row with about 14" apart (you will have to gauge this by your own horses stride). Walk him through these poles on a 2' lead so that he crosses these cavaletti in the center. He should be able to step over these cavaletti comfortably without tipping or touching them. Do this several times until he keeps consistent speed, always crossing in the center. This is an exercise to teach the horse to raise his feet and gauge the distance of an obstacle on his own. Make sure the horse maintains the same speed beginning, through and after walking over the cavaletti. This is very important to insist on in these early stages.



Next you need to spread the cavaletti about 24" apart and trot him over the cavaletti. Be sure and maintain the same speed until you ask for a halt several feet away from the obstacle. Do not continue on to another phase until he is crossing the obstacles at an even pace without touching or tipping the obstacles every time. Don't forget to praise when it is done right. Do this 5-10 times daily for a week, and as a warm up to all jumping sessions in the future.

Now you will place 3 cavaletti on the ground about 24" apart, after the third cavaletti leave a space of about 4 foot then place the fourth cavaletti on the ground about 4" in front of a jump of one foot. Use the crosspoles on the one foot jump as illustrated so it teaches the horse to take the jump in the center. The jump should be one foot high at the center of the jump. Trot him through at an even paced trot. He should trot the poles and jump over the one foot jump. Yes place the poles on the side of the jump you are coming from so that it will be uncomfortable if the horse tips the jump poles and learns that it will be easier not to knock the jump down. It is lightweight enough to fall apart if you have a problem, but difficult enough to be uncomfortable to knock down. Now is when he will learn the lesson not to knock down the jump. When in practice, substantial jumps should be used. Try this, it should take about a week or so to get to the jump and next time we will learn the higher jumps.

*Hint:* this is also the way I train my horse to go over the poles for the halter obstacle classes, I would paint the cavaletti white as it is easier for the horse to see and will represent the pvc pipe to him. I use schedule 40 pvc 2" as it doesn't warp as readily and store the cross rails flat to prevent warping.

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