

Young Studs

A rambunctious colt to a skillful stallion is what we envision when we see a young colt play and have fun, but how do you turn that ball of hormones into a tall, proud, majestic stallion.

Controlled enthusiasm is what I would call it; getting your stud to behave like a stallion naturally in a controlled setting with mutual respect.

Stallion handlers set the horses conduct, you must allow the stallion to act like a stallion even applaud it but not let him get carried away so that you or he is in a dangerous situation. Instilling and reinforcing ground manners at an early age will help later. Young colts need to learn to stand and walk on and back up with command, and yield to lead shank pressure. The stallion must learn that the handler can stop him and control his direction. Stallions should take their cue from the handler when it is time to collect or mount a mare. As well a handler's personal space should not be invaded as this can throw a person off balance or put the handler in a situation where they will not be able to control the stallion.

Stallions will learn through repetition and when a positive routine is established then the stallion will feel comfortable. Teaching a stallion to perform in the breeding shed whether for live cover or collections must be planned and before you get to the shed the stallion should have his ground manners in place.

Stallions will act like stallions and call, prance, curl their upper lip, and get all puffed out, these actions are normal and should not be disciplined, but there are limits to behavior; stallions should never strike, kick out, rear or charge for either teasing, washing and the act of mating or collecting. Reprimanding must be done quickly sometimes with a growl and a NO, sometimes with shank pressure and sometimes with a crop. It is important to get to know the stallion as some respond differently. It is important to not over reprimand which could fracture a young stallion's confidence and cause more problems or even cause a stallion to lose respect for the handler. In the end stallions have to be able to tease, wash, and collect or mount in a safe controlled manner. That said sometimes getting the end result can be having the limits pushed by the stallion but as long as he can be controlled then there is some leniency. Misbehaved breeding stallions should be handled by experienced handlers and may require some reschooling. When working with stallions remember to be fair, firm and consistent this leads to respect and some understanding of the task.

When teaching a young stallion to breed it is important to study his behavior and see his frame of mind. Is he aggressive? Timid? Or somewhere in between. Sometimes we must modify our ways in order to get him to do his job. Patience is important when working with young stallions as they look toward you for guidance. Thoughtful handling will lead to mutual respect and less hassle in the breeding shed.

Training young stallions should not be taken lightly, and should not be done by a novice. The act of stallion collection or live covering a mare is a dangerous act for both the stallion and the breeding team, controlling a stallions behavior will help manage the risk of injury but not eliminate it. Each stallion is different and what works for one may not work for the other. Adapting breeding shed protocols to each stallion individually allows for higher success rate in completing the job with mutual respect and understanding.

Knowing why a stallion is doing certain things will help you know why he is acting a certain way. Know that when you're looking at a young stallion prospect that one day he will be a proud sire of many and with any luck his journey there will be exciting and controlled.