

# TRAINING, BOARDING & BUYING

***Horses can be trained to cooperate with veterinary care.***

*by Katharine V. Mertens, DVM*

Think of all the things horses learn to do for us: they pull, carry, jump, spin, slide, in a variety of gaits over all types of terrain. They are able to do these things willingly because they understand the job at hand.

In contrast, few domestic horses understand the “job” of being a veterinary patient. Veterinarians, and owners, may not realize how easy it could be to teach them.

Think of the equine learning gap this way: If I asked the amateur owners in my practice whether they could saddle their horse daily, for more than two consecutive days, without causing stress to themselves or their horses, they'd look at me like I was crazy for asking. But if I asked these clients whether they could administer an oral medication for more than two consecutive days—a deworming protocol, for example—many of them would balk. What if they had to medicate twice daily for 5 consecutive days with an oral antibiotic? There might be a more experienced handler at the barn who could get it done, but accepting routine veterinary handling isn't something the horse world considers normal operating procedure. And if the patient is a donkey or mule—forget it.

# August 2019 - Can Your Horse Handle the Vet?

Written by by Katharine V. Mertens, DVM

Friday, 02 August 2019 01:49

---

