

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Using Your Dually Halter

From correct fitting and responsive leading to calm control and confidence around obstacles.

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Fitting the Dually with Sandra Williams

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Back up with the Dually - Kelly Marks

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Monty's Dually DVD - full video course

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Recipes for SUCCESSFUL HORSEMANSHIP

by IH Trainer Sandra Williams



No.6 Step-by-Step FITTING THE DUALLY®

When it comes to putting a Bridle on our horses, we already know to stand at the side of the face. This recipe is no different, it serves to assist you fitting halters, fly masks or a Dually® with greater ease and acceptance. Giving you a safer place to stand and your horse a comfortable place to learn.

UTENSILS:

- Dually® (now in 5 sizes: Miniature – Large, colour coded for size)
- 12ft/20ft Lead Line/Rope

INGREDIENTS:

- Observation • Stillness
- Breathing & exhalation
- Clear body language, mostly passive
- Mindfulness

Method: Before you start, ensure that you and your horse are in a comfortable space. A stable or similar size area is probably the best place to start. Have your Dually® halter with the nose strap (front and back) and buckles on the loosest holes. Avoid having your rope clipped on to the training ring as this will shut down the available space on offer to your horse. Either attach it to the under ring (tie up ring) or have it close by and ready to attach.

Comfort Zone: You are creating a comfortable place for your horse to find. By starting out with a loose fitting Dually® you'll notice how he comes to catch you. If you leave it buckled up tightly you are setting yourselves up for failure (it's too uncomfortable). This could lead to his head turning way and not wanting to be caught

Safety Point: Ensure you hold your lead line across the palm of your hand whilst fitting the Dually® or attach afterwards. It is too risky to loop it over your arm (you are not a hat stand!). Practise best practice even when you think it might not be necessary, as this will help your muscle memory for when it is.



1 Stand next to your horse, behind his eye on the nearside. Give him a wither scratch or neck rub whilst exhaling yourself.

2 Hold the Dually® in your left hand. Ensure you lay both nose straps across the palm and then hold the poll strap between your thumb and fore finger.

3 Place your left hand (now holding the Dually®) underneath his neck. Let out a calming exhale.

4 Put your right hand (empty) over your horse's neck, ensuring to exhale a nice out breath.

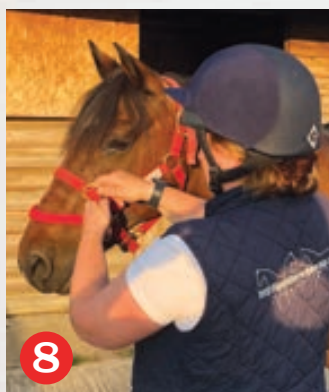
5 Release the poll strap into your right hand bringing it over and behind his ears.

TOP TIP✓ AFTER STEP 5,

you could ask your horse to take a sideways step towards you if you need to. This might be helpful if the space around you both is tight. It also allows the horse to recognise that you are able to request he moves his feet. Simply request the move by squeezing the ends of the Dually® towards you.

6 Use your left hand to guide the two nose straps up and over his nose, exhaling as you do this.

7 Secure the poll strap, ensuring that the Dually® is lifted up into the throat line (you could liken this to a cheeky facelift).



TOP TIP

Unbuckling your Dually® regularly also helps to keep it malleable and flexible

8 Tighten the front nose strap until it forms a backward facing L shape down the side of his cheek bone and around his face.

9 Tighten the nose strap behind the chin. This is also the time for an out breath and to give a nice positive stroke along his neck.

10 With your hands behind the horse's eyes, take hold of the Dually® each side by the cheek pieces and ensure as you give it a wiggle it does not twist around to his eyes.

11 Once you are happy with the fit, tuck the straps into the buckles and give another positive stroke along his neck.

12 Attach your lead line to the training ring and you are ready to go!

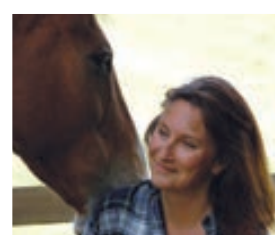
The next step...

Over time you can consider reducing the slackening off to just the back chin strap, as this will still allow enough room for his head and face to fit comfortably.

• To get in touch with IH
Trainer Sandra Williams visit:
www.hearinghorses.com
Instagram: [ihrtsandrawilliams](https://www.instagram.com/ihrtsandrawilliams)
Facebook: Sandra Williams
IHRT 

TOP TIP

Please avoid double buckling the left-over straps through the buckles. This can increase unnecessary pressure points.



Taking THE LEAD

By IHRA Jenny Major

Leading is fundamental to the relationship between horse and human, and investing time and patience in ensuring the foundations are laid correctly can pay dividends later on.

Anecdotal evidence shows clear correlations between leading and confidence levels, assisting later work such as loading and ridden work, and having a positive knock on effect on other areas of training.

As with all other aspects of a horse's education, although it is entirely possible to re-educate a horse to lead well, it's easier to get it right first time. So if you're about to teach your youngster to lead, this is just the article for you!

As with any training, the right equipment is essential: a correctly-sized and fitted Dually halter will allow you to be precise with your 'ask' and give a clear release to reward the desired behaviour. I would also recommend using a rope of at least 12-15 feet but it can be useful to have a longer rope if you are working with a less educated or remedial horse. A hard hat and gloves should be worn for all groundwork.

Positioning

Many schools of traditional horsemanship advise you to lead from the shoulder. This practice makes it very difficult for the horse to see you, and to follow your lead. If you have ever tried turning to the right whilst leading from the horse's left shoulder you will know what I mean!

IH teaching recommends leading with the horse's head level with your shoulders. This way, he can clearly see you and respond, and you will be able to turn easily in any direction without feeling that the horse is in your way.



Position yourself at the horse's head (rather than shoulder) when leading. Make sure there is a 'smile' in the lead line; long enough that the horse does not feel a constant pressure from the handler, but short enough to guide/correct the horse in a timely manner. Note, too, the 'overhand' grip on the line, which allows a more subtle 'bump' of pressure to guide/correct the horse

'Smile in the line'

Having a 'smile' in the line means allowing sufficient slack in the lead rope between you and the horse to allow it to form a smile shape. This means the horse will be able to see you, as you are not standing right up close underneath him.

In addition to this, slack line will provide a lovely soft feel when your horse stays where you want him to be – with you – and will give him time to respond to your body language before becoming taut if he doesn't keep up, when it will reinforce your cue with a 'bump' or tightening of pressure. It is human nature to want to have a tight grip on a short line to maintain control but, by hanging onto a horse's head, you are actually more likely to cause him to go 'into pressure' and try and get away from you in panic.

'Feel' on the line

Imagine you are holding onto a child's hand whilst crossing the road; your hold should be firm but gentle, and ready to take up a stronger contact in an instant. Transfer this to leading your horse: you should aim for a smooth, elastic feel on the line; try not to

jerk or jab, and always begin your 'ask' gently, incrementally building up to a stronger ask if required.

The most effective way to hold the line is with your hands on top of it, as if as if you are holding the reins or a motorbike handle. By holding the line this way, you will be more able to utilise your core and stabilise yourself should the horse pull back or challenge your request.

In addition it is useful to have your feet spaced fairly widely on the ground, to further increase your stability should you need to give a strong 'ask' on the line.

Release and timing

By releasing the pressure on the line when the horse responds to your 'ask', you will give a reward which will enable him to recognise that he has done the 'right' thing. Even better, if you watch a horse closely you may notice him shifting his bodyweight and thinking about moving before he has even lifted a foot; if you can reward with a release at this point then he will actually be stepping into the release which is a perfect example of good timing. >>

Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston

Taking THE LEAD

“ IHRAs are available to help where needed with inexperienced or remedial horses when teaching leading...”

Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston



For best practice when teaching leading, make sure you adjust the Dually headcollar so that it is fitted correctly. A longer lead line can also be useful

>> Body language

Our ultimate end goal is to produce a horse that is light on the line and responds to our body cues. In many respects, your body language is the most important tool you have for achieving this, and it can be used to create or discourage movement.

You can use your body to inspire a sluggish horse by walking with energy and spring, or to slow a horse down by breathing slowly, looking down and walking heavily. Similarly, you may encourage the horse to stand still by standing in front of him, looking him in the eye and squaring up to him with your shoulders, hips and feet, arms raised as if you are stopping traffic.

Transitions and backing up can be great for encouraging a horse to listen and engage with you. A top tip for a horse that won't come forward off pressure is to step sideways away from him so you are at a 45 degree angle, with your feet spaced wide

apart, ensuring your shoulders, feet and hips are not blocking him.

Look at the foot you want him to move and then apply incremental pressure on the line, releasing as soon as his bodyweight starts to shift. You may have to zig-zag along your path, changing direction for a while, but if your timing is correct you will soon see results.

By moving your horse's feet you are encouraging him to trust and accept you as leader and decision maker, which will ultimately allow him to relax and lower his adrenaline levels, resulting in a safer, calmer and more manoeuvrable horse.

• **There are many exercises that can improve leading and keep it fun for both you and your horse – Kelly Marks' book *Perfect Manners* explains some of these in detail. IHRAs are available to help where needed with inexperienced or remedial horses when teaching leading.** 



If you tie up to a baler twine loop, ensure it's not too thick and strong so that it will break easily in an emergency

By IHRAs Sarah Weston & Sue Palmer

One of the benefits of teaching your horse to be led correctly is that, once he has learnt about pressure and release (and reward) it is much easier to teach him to tie up.

"Many years of taming wild ponies, using touch first and the headcollar second, has shown me that horses, once tame, can be taught to lead, and to 'give' to a pressure using something as simple as a soft scarf around their neck – not even a rope. When the headcollar is put on and a scarf or lead rein attached to it, the horse already knows how to follow that pressure rather than resist it," says IHRA Sarah Weston, who adds that those ponies do not go on to pull back and break their tie when they are eventually taught to tie up.

Despite this, and the fact it is a simple process to teach your horse to lead correctly once you know how and use the correct equipment, there are still some who insist on using a method known as 'swinging' to teach a horse to tie up.

"The practise of 'swinging', or 'tying on' as it is often known, is still commonly used by owners and breeders of semi-feral ponies to "teach ponies to respect the halter". It involves tying the pony for significant periods of time to something solid so that if they pull back it does not give or break," says Sarah.

Sometimes ponies are tied up for a day or more with limited access to food and unable to lie down.



WHAT YOU **SHOULD** BE TEACHING YOUR YOUNG HORSE **THE BASICS**

By IHRA Sandra Williams

Before ridden training starts, all young horses should have the ground-handling basics firmly established. IHRA Sandra Williams has put together seven simple exercises for building your bond and creating safer leadership with your young horse.

EXERCISE 1. STAND STILL

Practice this in three different places to begin with; start off by standing about half a metre away and directly in front of your horse so you fall into his line of vision. Gradually build up your distance to three metres.

Use your hand up in front of you to give clear signals for the horse to stay: if he moves, school him immediately (events must happen instantly). Move back to your horse and give a positive stroke between the eyes – this can be quite frequent to begin with and then less frequently over time.



Use your hand up in front of you to give clear signals for the horse to stay

EXERCISE 2. WALK AS YOU WALK

Your horse's nostrils need to be level with your shoulder; as you walk forward, invite the horse to follow you by offering the shoulder which is closest to him by slightly crossing his axis. If your horse walks too far behind you, school him forward; too far forward and you need to school back.

You need to be able to make turns to the right and the left with your horse, changing their speed and length of stride as required. Always have sight of your horse using your peripheral vision.

“...as you walk forward, invite the horse to follow you...”



You need to be able to make turns to the right and the left with your horse

EXERCISE 3. STOP AS YOU STOP

Stand tall, with shoulders square and chin up. If your horse walks too far forward, you need to school back instantly and then rub between the eyes. If you need to be clearer about the stop, swing around to face him.

If your horse continues to walk off past you or ignores you, then walk off in the opposite direction; this will cause a 'bump' down the line to the dually and put the horse back behind you. You may need to repeat this a couple of times.



Make your first request clear, intentful...

EXERCISE 4. BACK UP

Stand in front of the horse but slightly to one side. Make your first request clear, intentful but as light as you would wish your horse to move from in the future: if your horse does not move, you need to act quickly and assertively using pressure down the line.

Use a lovely rub between the eyes as a reward once your horse has stepped back.



Use your spare hand and extra rope to 'dance' near his shoulder

EXERCISE 5. STEP THE SHOULDERS ACROSS

Stand in front of your horse and ask him to bend his head slightly away from you. Step yourself across and use your spare hand and extra rope to 'dance' near his shoulder; as the horse steps across, release the pressure and give a lovely rub between the eyes.

“Direct your look and energy towards the quarters...”



If your horse doesn't step across, use your spare hand and rope to 'dance' towards the quarters

EXERCISE 6. MOVE THE QUARTERS OVER

Standing down the side of your horse then ask your horse to flex his head around. Direct your look and energy towards the quarters (avoid being too close to your horse).

If your horse doesn't step across, use your spare hand and rope to 'dance' towards the quarters.

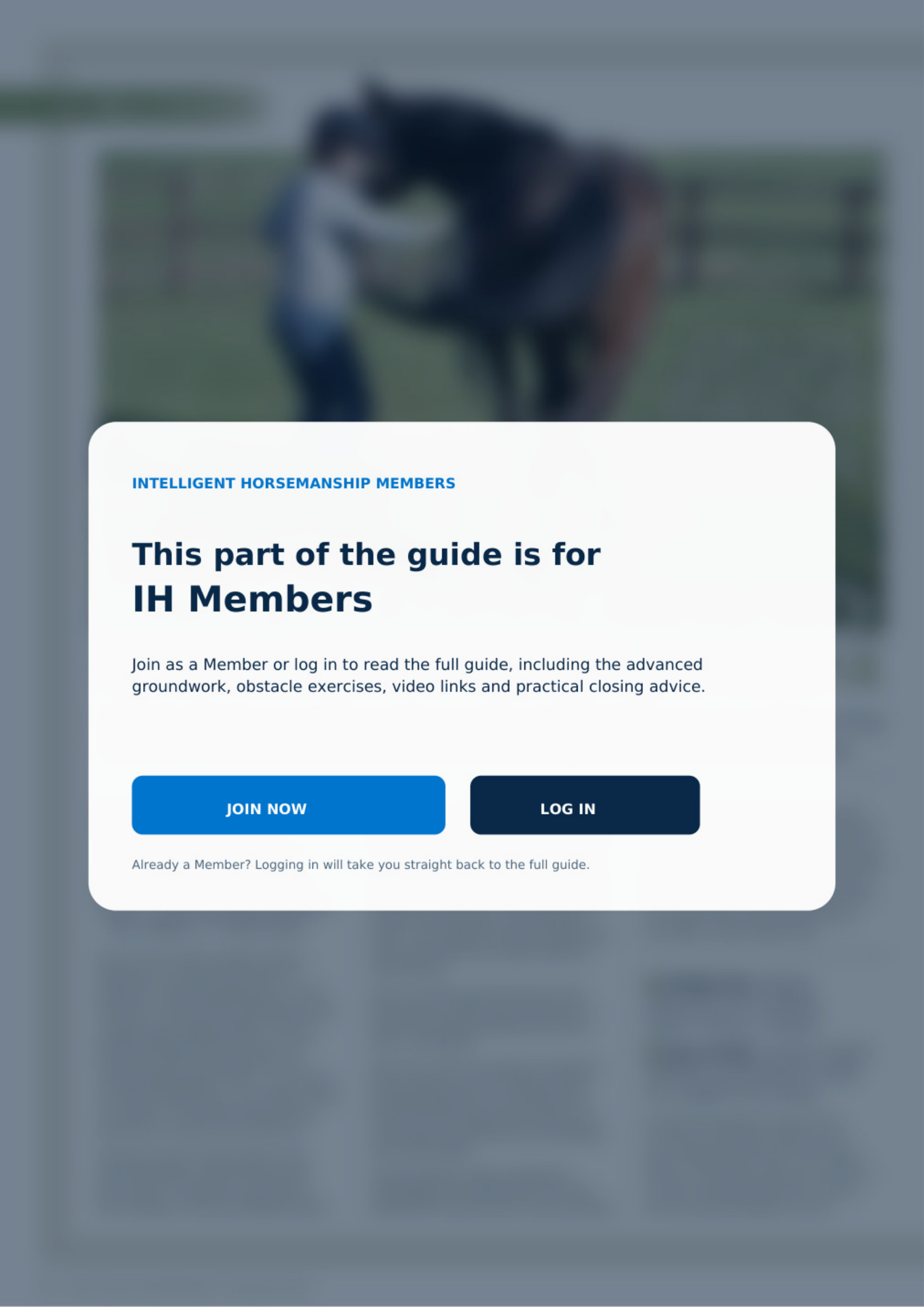


Ask with an elastic squeeze on the rope

EXERCISE 7. HEAD LOWERING

Ask with an elastic squeeze on the rope connected to the neutral ring of the dually. Release the moment you feel the slightest movement down, to reward.

Repeat the process until the horse lowers his head at the lightest downward pressure on the rope. This exercise is great for lowering the horse's adrenalin (always useful when working with youngsters!).



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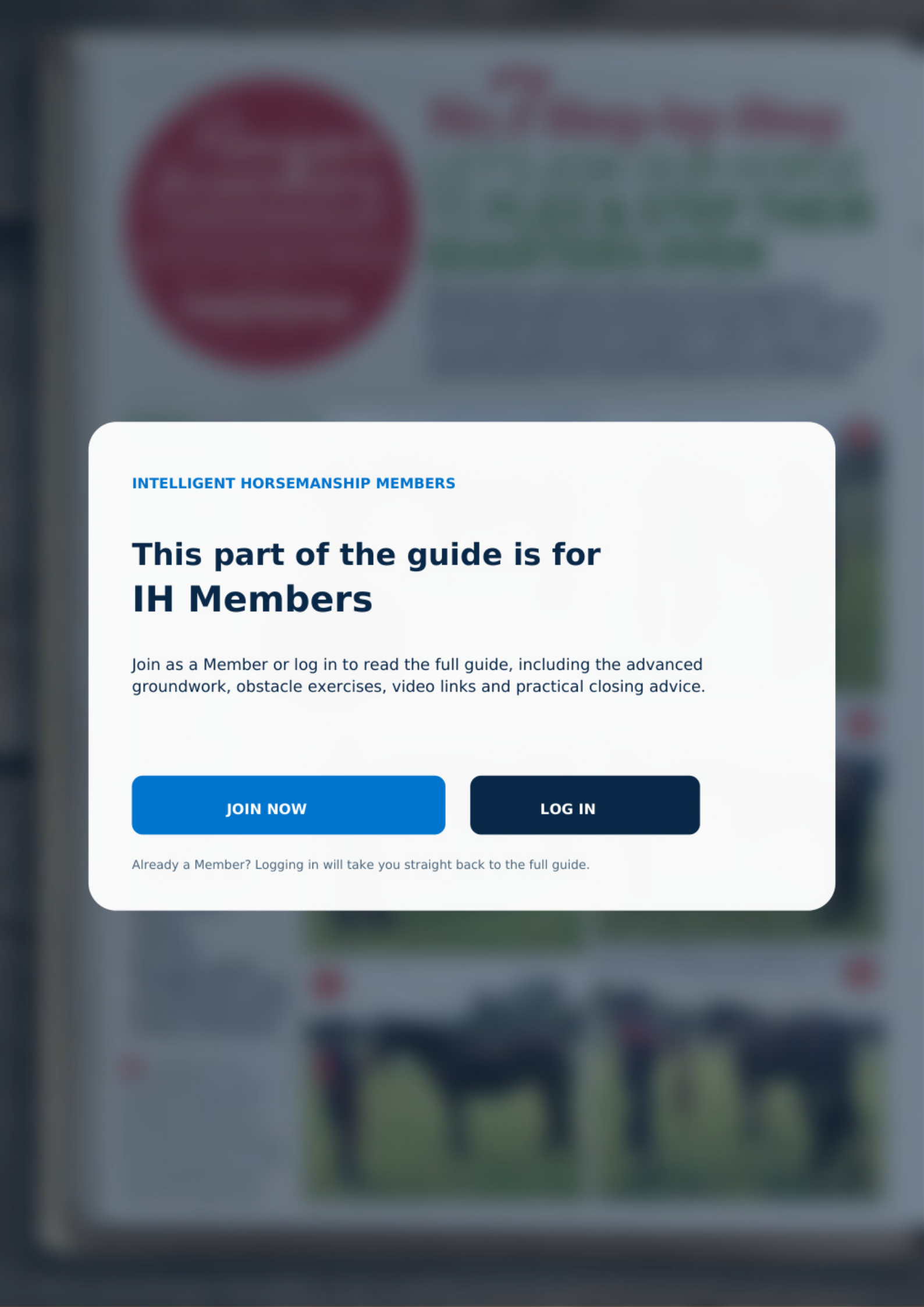
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