

THE SEVEN PARELLI GAMES

The Seven Games: Seven categories of interactions for you and your horse to develop a language together that will earn you your horse's respect as a leader. The Games are based on the ways horses interact with each other in a natural herd to establish communication and dominance. The Seven Games are the basis of everything you will want to teach your horse, no matter how basic or advanced.

Technique

- ◆ Learn the games in order.
- ◆ Vary them as you progress.
- ◆ Advance them through faster gaits and longer distances.
- ◆ Introduce obstacles and props.
- ◆ Play them on the ground and when riding.

Psychology

When you learn to use the Seven Games, horses quickly understand what you want. The Seven Games establish a language between you and your horse makes you head of the herd, even if there's only two in your "herd." The Seven Games are natural to horses, but it's a language we humans have to learn in order to communicate clearly and effectively.

Application

The Seven Games will help you solve problems and become a better horseman. When you learn how to think like a horse, it takes the mystery out of training horses.

Fear, spookiness, handling difficulties, resistance, and behavioral problems can all be solved through communication, understanding and psychology, without punishment or restraint.

You will see that every skill you want to teach your horse - from leading to flying changes, jumping to cutting, slide stops to piaffe - has its roots in one or a combination of the Seven Games.

The Parelli philosophy is all about using behavioral psychology in training, and it teaches you to build a horse's confidence in five areas:

- ◆ His self-confidence
- ◆ In you as his leader
- ◆ As a learner
- ◆ In new environments
- ◆ Among other horses

The Seven Games give horsemen a language to use, a simple alphabet that builds into increasingly complex requests and "conversations" that horses can understand. Not only does the horse become calmer and more responsive, he becomes more mentally and emotionally connected to you - developing a partnership, strength of bond and loyalty, to the point that your horse will prefer to be with you more than with another horse.



THE 7 GAMES - EXPLANATIONS

1. The Friendly Game

The Friendly Game: the first of the Seven Games; the Friendly Game builds trust and relaxation. It is the most important game to play with horses who are skeptical and tense. This game is played between other games to ensure that the horse is not afraid of you or your tools.



2. The Porcupine Game

The Porcupine Game: the second of the Seven Games; the Porcupine Game teaches your horse to yield to and from steady pressure when leading, moving your horse backwards or away from you, and responding to the rein and your leg when riding.



3. The Driving Game

The Driving Game: the third of the Seven Games; the Driving Game teaches your horse to yield from rhythmic pressure without touching him. It is meant to influence the personal space around a horse.



4. The Yo-Yo Game

The Yo-Yo Game: the fourth of the Seven Games; the Yo-Yo Game equalizes backwards and forwards, and develops straightness. It's essential to transitions and promotes engagement of the hindquarters.



5. The Circling Game

The Circling Game: the fifth of the Seven Games; the Circling Game sends the horse around you and teaches him to come back to you. It also teaches him the responsibility of continuing to circle without being reminded, and to maintain his gait, direction and to look where he is going. It is a game that teaches - and tests - partnership.



6. The Sideways Game

The Sideways Game: the sixth of the Seven Games; the Sideways Game develops the skill of moving sideways. This is important for everyday things like opening gates, as well as building suspension for lead changes.



7. The Squeeze Game

The Squeeze Game: the seventh of the Seven Games; the Squeeze Game teaches horses to overcome their fear of small or narrow spaces. This is valuable for things like wash racks, trailers, gates, veterinary stocks and narrow passageways.



How to Do The 7 Games

1. The Friendly Game

The way I describe the friendly game is saying "Hi" to your horse. If you've ever seen two horses in the field doing mutual grooming that's what you are about to do. First you're going to touch your horse everywhere, and yes, I mean everywhere, flanks, stomach, under the tail, mouth, nose, ears, face, udder or sheath, etc. Think about your approach and your own self while you're doing this. Are you happy? Relaxed? Neutral? Is your heart rate normal? Breathing calm and slow?



Next you are going to rub the horse all over with your stick. Introduce it slowly but not timidly. Again think about your own self while doing this making sure you are not nervous and are neutral.

After successfully touching the horse all over with the stick you are then going to swing the string over the horse's back and slowly drag it off. You can do this over there neck, back, rump and around the legs. This is similar to that mutual grooming that I mentioned earlier. Again, consider yourself and your breathing and make sure to remain neutral.

2. The Porcupine Game

This game involves moving the horse with pressure. It teaches your horse to yield to and from pressure which is very handy when it comes to riding, steering, leg yielding and turning. We will ask the horse to move from pressure in six different directions, Left, right, backwards, forwards, up and down (head).



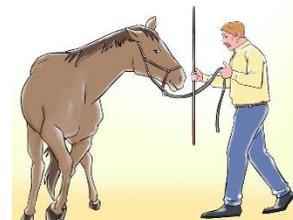
To ask your horse to move off of the pressure you will first rub the area you are going to apply pressure to with your fingertips (friendly game). Then you will apply the pressure in stages (see glossary). When the horse gives to the pressure, you need to release and rub (friendly game) the area where you applied the pressure. Smoothly and assertively increase the pressure until the point where your horse is motivated to respond.

Remember, you're moving together, not you pushing him or him running away from you, you are partners. Now to move in the directions discussed earlier:

- ◆ Left, Right: Move the front end (Zones 1,2 & 3) by applying pressure in each zone with your fingertips. Move the hindquarters (Zone 4) the same way.
- ◆ Backwards: Back your horse by applying pressure with your fingertips on your horse's nose. Be careful as to not grip the nasal passages. Back your horse by his chest (front of zone 3) with fingertip pressure.
- ◆ Raise/Lower: Lower your horses head to the ground with pressure on the poll and raise his head back up.

3. The Driving Game

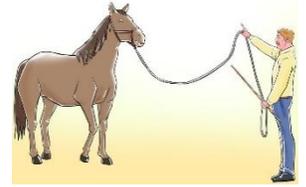
This Game helps your horse to understand and respond to supporting aids. In this game you will drive your horse, or ask him to move without touching him. Think about it this way: When you see a mare pin her ears at another horse and that other horse moves away or when one horse kicks out and another horse moves away that is the driving. You will really need to focus on yourself for this game and muster up your inner horse. You will drive your horse backwards, left and right.



- ◆ Backwards: Tap your stick on the ground in between your horse's two front legs. As you up the phases the "taps" become larger. Stay in a rhythm (think row, row, row your boat). Quit tapping as soon as your horse moves backwards. Combine the tapping with energy. Raise your energy as you raise the phases.
- ◆ Left, Right: Drive your horse's hindquarters by first raising your energy and "pinning your ears", then crouch down, then swing the stick, then swing the string, then touch the rump all the while looking directly at your horse's hindquarters (right on the flank). To drive your horses front end first raise your energy, then pin your ears, then swing your stick, then tap the horse on the neck all the while looking directly at the neck.

4. The Yo-Yo Game

This game balances backwards and forwards movements while developing straightness. In this game you will ask your horse to back away from you using your lead rope and halter. You will then ask your horse to come back in to you. Begin by standing directly in front of your horse. To back your horse away from you follow these phases with the hand holding the lead rope while looking directly back beyond your horse:



- ◆ Phase 1: Wiggle your index finger.
- ◆ Phase 2: Wiggle your whole hand.
- ◆ Phase 3: Wiggle from your elbow down.
- ◆ Phase 4: Wiggle your whole arm.

As soon as your horse takes even one step back, no matter what phase you're on, quit, go back to neutral, and take a deep breath out. When your horse is all the way out let them sit out there for a minute or two then "comb" the rope to lure them back in to you.

5. The Circle Game

This game teaches your horse to take responsibility and not change gait or direction unless asked. In this exercise the horse circles around you. You are teaching him to yield his forehead and move out and around you.



You will go two to four laps and then ask your horse to stop, yield his hindquarters and stand facing you with both eyes "front and center." To start you are going to stand in the middle with your horse facing you and backed a few steps from you. Then you are going to go through these phases to ask your horse to move out and around you in a circle:

- ◆ LOOK (Look in the direction you want to go),
- ◆ LEAD (Lead with your arm straight out in the direction you want your horse to go),
- ◆ LIFT (Lift your stick with the other hand towards the horse's hindquarters),
- ◆ SWING (Swing the stick and string towards the horse's hindquarters), and
- ◆ TOUCH (Touch the horse lightly with the string then harder each additional phase).

When your horse moves forward around you in a circle, quit your phases and return to neutral. Allow your horse to go the requisite two to four laps then disengage his hindquarters by following the steps and phases used to drive your horse's hindquarters. Then go the other direction. If your horse stops or turns in on the circle repeat the phases.

6. The Sideways Game

This game includes moving both the fore and hindquarters together using either pressure or driving. Using either the porcupine game or the driving game ask the front end to move one step, then the hind end to move one step. Then try moving them together.



- ◆ Porcupine way: apply pressure to both the neck and the flank with your fingertips and go through the phases.
- ◆ Driving way: use the stick like a windshield wiper in front of your face driving first the front end, then the hind end.

7. The Squeeze Game

This game helps horses to overcome their claustrophobic tendencies. Develop confidence for trailer loading, jumping, crossing streams, passing through gates, into stalls, wash bays, etc.

You are going to drive your horse between two objects or yourself and another object. To do this use the look, lead, lift, swing, touch phases and ask your horse to move forward through the two objects.

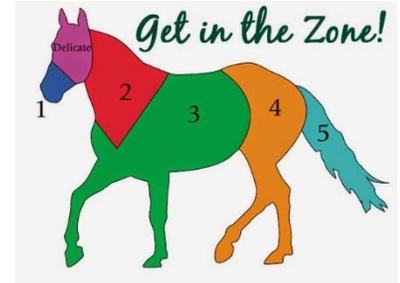


Master the art of positioning yourself so that you can direct your horse's nose into the space with one hand, and swing the rope with the other to create impulsion. You should ultimately get to where you don't need to swing the rope and just the amount of pull on the halter will signal how quickly you want the horse to go. Start with a big space then make the space narrower to make it more challenging. Use this to practice trailer loading.

Glossary:

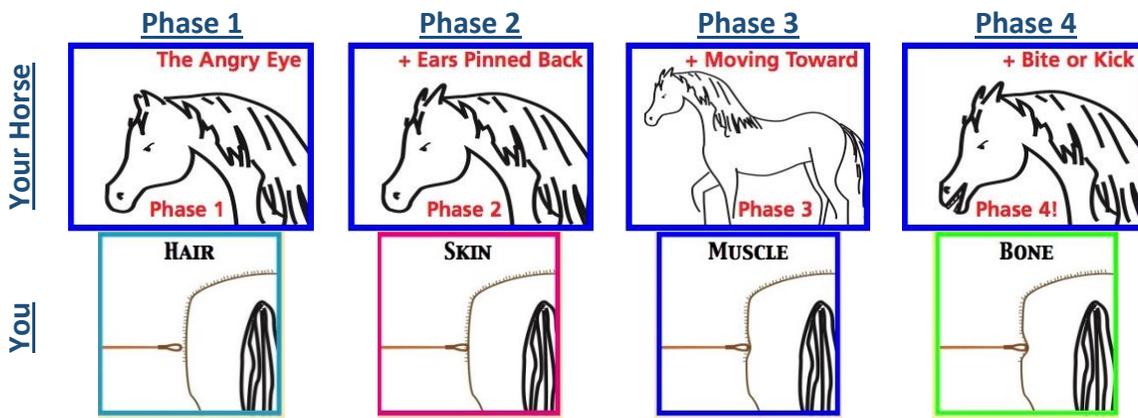
The Zones

- ◆ ZONE 1: from the halter nose band stretching out for a mile & a half in front of the horse. It includes his muzzle and his personal space in front of him.
- ◆ ZONE 2: from right behind the ears to the little dip right in front of the withers. Essentially it's the neck and chest. The end of the zone makes a diagonal line to the point of the shoulder.
- ◆ ZONE 3: from the break of the withers to the point of the hip.
- ◆ ZONE 4: from the point of the hip to the top of the tail.
- ◆ ZONE 5: from the tail head stretching out a mile and a half behind him.



The Four Phases:

- ◆ We use the four phases to politely ask our horse to do something.



The Four Savvys:

- ◆ These are the areas you want to work on and have an understanding in to be "savvy":



1. On line
groundwork



2. Liberty
free of physical restraint



3. Freestyle
riding without contact



4. Finesse
riding with precision

Neutral:

- Maintain a calm demeanor, steady heart rate, slow, deep breathing.



1. Neutral Position



2. Driving Position