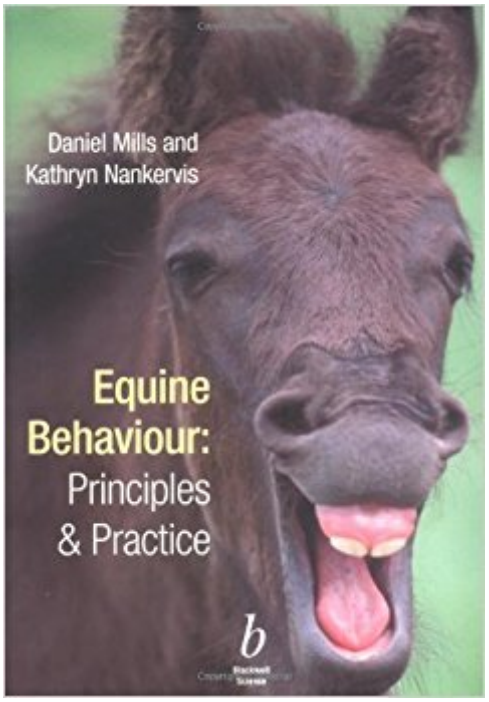
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Equine Behaviour: Principles And Practice



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Synopsis

Understanding the flexibility and limits of behaviour is essential to improving both the horse’s welfare and its performance. This book tackles the fundamental principles which will enable owners, riders, trainers and students to understand scientific principles and apply them in practice. Subjects covered include the analysis of influences on equine behaviour, the perceptual world of the horse, learning and training techniques including the latest developments in "join-up" and "imprint training".

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fundamental principles of behavioral science & their applications with respect to understanding, raising, & training horses is explained here, in a reference readily understandable to owners, trainers, & riders as well as veterinary practitioners & students. More than 100 illustrations visually reinforce key concepts described in the text.

Almost every person working with horses will have studied equine behavior to a certain extent. Understanding the flexibility and limits of behaviour is essential to improving both the horse’s welfare and its performance. This book will enable students, trainers, riders and horse owners to understand the fundamental principles behind the behavior of horses and how to apply them in different situations in practice. Part 1 looks at the constraints which apply to the modern horse because of its evolutionary history and the nature of the evolutionary process itself. Part 2 examines the processes and mechanism which control the behaviour and responses of a horse and explores

the sources of individual variation, whilst Part 3 looks at the effect of the environment on the horse's behaviour and welfare. This includes a critical look at current and recent training techniques such as 'imprint training and 'join up'. Here is a readable, scientific text expertly illustrated throughout the clarify the key concepts in equine behaviour.

I really enjoyed reading this book. Examples and case studies give you a better understanding of the hardwiring of a horse.Scientifically based but easy to read. This book is a must have, in my opinion, for anyone who owns or works with horses. Hopefully know this information will produce much better relationships between man and horse.

Mills and Nankervis display a rare talent for synthesising the complex, and frequently contradictory, theories of the origins and application of horse behaviour. A prolific author and speaker, Mills's teaching expertise is evident in the frequent examples of definitions or issues which arise in the various fields of study. The practical approaches to learning and welfare make this book a keeper. Nankervis is a lecturer in equine physiology at De Montfort University and founder of the Equi-Tutor distance learning programme. The authors' combination of talents means that the reader can absorb their explanations of such terms as "receptor adaptation", "neotenisation" or "simple and composite signals." The reading level is appropriate for a pony-mad 14-year old and up. Its chapter sub-divisions are logical and well-organised. Succinct steps are given for an analysis of problem behaviours together with alerts for other interpretations and modifying aspects. The link between the causes of behavioural reactions and their expression is memorably demonstrated. The beady-eyed horse drawings (the artist is, alas, unidentified) amuse and inform. Similar line drawings are used to illustrate the anatomy of taste buds or the ear, or the spinal cord or brain or neuronal components and connections. The uniformity of style gives the book a clean look. The list of references are short, covering both scientific and popular sources. The tables and graphs are well chosen, uncluttered, and sometimes cleaner refinement of the original. It was gratifying to see the author's diplomatic correction of the terminology used by popular trainer, Monty Roberts, in his "join up" presentations. Roberts refers to the mouth actions of the horse under pressure as "Don't hurt me, I'm a grazing animal" signals. In fact, as Mills and Nankervis point out, they are more likely to be submission, or, as I prefer to call it, "deference" signals given by horses to each other and sometimes other animals or humans. There were some oversights in the text. The ill effects of lungeing horses based on ages and stages of handling could have been emphasised and detailed. The approaches to weaning, while standard, did not detail the safer, kinder one of gradual transition

via the social group of all ages. This approach is hinted at in the description of weaning in the wild. The authors make no mention of transport problems. Of all the management practices, transport confronts the horse with the most sustained challenges to its behaviour and health. Nearly 100 years of motorised transport have brought few adjustments to eliminate the problems of horse and handler during transport. Each chapter concludes with stimulating questions inviting further observation, experiment, and refinement. Although Daniel Mills invites correspondence on the topics raised, the printers have forgotten to include his address. We can assume that he is still at the school of agriculture at De Montfort University, Lincoln. This is an excellent book, with much current information, and a resume and resolution of historical background on many issues such as ethology vs. psychology, or nature vs nurture.

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