

Reclaim your confidence

Event organised by Mendip Bridleways & Byways Association
www.mbba.org.uk

An introduction to Tai Chi with Mimi Raad

Success Coach, NLP Practitioner and Laughter Therapist
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KELLY JOHNSON – EQUITRAINER

SPECIALISING IN

BUILDING HORSE AND RIDER CONFIDENCE

After a fall or any type of accident. After a break from horses.

After buying a new horse

07746 541790 KJEQUITRAINER@LIVE.COM

I am able to support you with all aspects of horse handling including: riding, leading, loading, shoeing, clipping, bomb proofing and bonding. I can give you the tools to cope with every situation – resulting in a happy and loving partnership with your horse

Prepare to Ride with Kelly Johnson

These exercises are aimed at the rider who, due to some reason, is finding difficulty in enjoying their riding due to a general lack of confidence. The exercises are not to 'reform' a horse with behavioural problems. Kelly can help with this issue separately however it has been found that the horse too will relax during the exercises.

First of all use some visualisation techniques whereby you see yourself approaching the yard/stable without any outside distractions. Clear your mind and slow down. You focus on the pleasant approach to the yard and do not allow outside problems to distract you. First of all you need to dump your metaphorical 'shopping bags full of troubles'.

Remember - Do not be influenced by outside pressure. Riding should be fun and healthy. You should only attempt new challenges when you are ready and comfortable to do so.

Do not go back over past failures. (women and elephants!)

This is a new day and **anything** you achieve is a positive move and a step in the right direction.

Do things at your own pace – stay within your comfort zone until you naturally want to take the next step. If you are worried about handling your horse – simply groom him and turn him away until you feel ready to tack up. You should congratulate yourself for doing the smallest of things.

Prepare a safe enclosed working area and ask a friend to work with you. Lead your horse quietly around the arena changing direction and generally having a bit of 'bubble time to connect with your horse and make sure that you are working as a team.

If you are worried about mounting, stand on the mounting block and stroke your horse, his neck and hindquarters. Stroke the saddle and lean over it until you feel happy to mount.

Once mounted walk the horse quietly around the area on a 20 m circle, taking slow breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth, relaxing into the movement of the horse. You could be led if it is easier/safer.

Lower body exercises.

When ready, remove your feet from the stirrups and cross them over. Walk the horse around the arena on a circle.

Point your toes to the ground for the count of six and then totally relax your legs. Do this four times.

Point your toes up for the count of six, pushing your heels down and then relax your legs. Do this four times.

Rotate your feet both ways and relax.

Swing your leg back on one side and note how far you can comfortably go and return it to its position, lightly down the side of the horse. Now swing the other leg and compare the two. Do this three times, each time returning to a relaxed aligned ear/shoulder/hip/heel position.

Raise your knees like a jockey, one at a time and then together, feeling your seat bones underneath you. Replace your legs back onto the horse. Your legs will now hang gently down the sides of the horse and you will be in a more stable and balanced position. Take up your stirrups, (lengthen them if necessary) and return to your new better riding position with your leg back and your heels down.

The aim of these exercises is to relax the leg muscles, secure your seat/leg position and provide a firm balanced position deep within the saddle with a long leg.

Change the rein. Upper body exercises

With the horse either stationery or being led.

Loosen your neck muscles by gently turning the head from left to right and down to the chest a number of times. Do this slowly as your head plus hat is very heavy.

Now stretch out one arm and rotate it slowly. Do this with both arms; forwards and backwards, making as big a circle as you can manage. Note the differences between each arm.

Tighten and release each fist several times, now shake your hands out.

Bring your shoulders up to your ears and then release back down again several times.

Turn your hips and upper body as far as you can to the left, with your legs in the riding position and then to the right. Do this four times. Note any differences.

Lean forwards, from the waist, onto the horses' neck, do not allow your legs to move out of the riding position. Do this three times.

The aims of these exercises are to relax the muscles of the upper body and create a balanced rider who will not interfere with the horse and its way of going. The horse can identify that the rider is balanced and relaxed and will be calmer and more responsive to the rider's wishes.

If you find that any side of your body is stiffer than the other and does not improve with practising these exercises, it may be sensible to see a chiropractor or similar who will be able to assist with the re-alignment of your body.

It is a proven fact that if you smile, the brain cannot identify if this is a genuine smile or not. So it will **always automatically release helpful endorphins** into the blood which will lower your stress levels and help to calm your responses and emotions.

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On your horse or ours

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