

## Ear and Head-Shy

**Build your horse's confidence with his face and ears.**

Does your horse hate having his ears touched? Does he flip out when someone tries to touch his face? Pat Parelli calls this the "sensitive zone" – from the ears to just above the nostrils. Build your horse's confidence with being handled in these areas by using the concept of approach and retreat. Start by giving your horse a good scratch at the crest (through his mane). Depending on your horse's degree of sensitivity, start as far away from his ears as necessary. Move your hand up toward the ears, still scratching his mane, and the instant you notice him getting worried, retreat back to the withers. Work your way up and down his mane, approaching his ears and instantly retreating when you see a negative reaction. Build on this until you can touch his ears lightly and retreat before he reacts negatively. Watch for your horse to lick his lips, chew or sigh. These are all signs that he's beginning to relax and understand. When he's licking and chewing, he's digesting a thought. Practice this tip once a week, and you will definitely change your horse's attitude toward having his ears and face touched.

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