

My "Aha" Moment

By **Kim Abbott**

Monday, June 22, 2009

I attended Centenary College in New Jersey for its equestrian program and had the opportunity to ride many horses throughout my four years. Learning to work with various horses and their unique personalities is a great way to improve your riding experience, but I always wanted to work with one horse so I could hone my skills. I never had that chance until I began half-leasing Mirkos, an off-the-track Thoroughbred.

Over the past year, Mirkos and I have had many good and not so good rides. Just when I thought I figured him out, he would prove me wrong. For a while we had been stuck in a rut of one good ride, one bad ride, and so on. I began feeling discouraged and thought that maybe we weren't a good fit for each other.

After attending a biomechanics demonstration conducted by Colleen Kelly, I implemented some of her techniques in our rides and noticed an improvement, but we weren't quite where I wanted us to be. I was working too hard through our entire sessions to keep him forward and consistently on the bit. However, it recently occurred to me to try letting him trot on a loose rein around the arena several times in both directions, and allow him to lower his head and round up when he was ready. It worked! He has been much more round, supple, responsive and most of all, forward. We have had three really good rides in a row. (Of course, I say that now, and I probably jinxed myself.) You're probably thinking, "Well, duh. I could have told you that." It is something I've been taught from the beginning, but there's so much to learn and remember when you're riding that sometimes you focus on some things and forget the rest. Now that I've incorporated this technique, we've both been enjoying our rides more.

[<< Previous Entry](#)

[Back to The Near Side.](#)