



brains and are tuned in to us. Then we get in the saddle and spend a few minutes flexing them at the standstill. Then we spend some more time bending them around in a circle and softening their bodies.

One of the rollback fences is located near where we typically get on the horses, so after we warm them up, we go put their feet to work doing rollbacks on the fence. I'm using rollbacks as an example because they're one of my all-time favorite training exercises, but as long as you're hustling your horse's feet and constantly changing directions, it doesn't matter how you're working the horse, just that you are assertively moving his feet. You can do serpentines, counterbend the horse, etc.

I've placed rollback fences like this one all over the ranch so that we can train on our horses whenever the opportunity arises.



After warming the horse up, I hustle his feet at the rollback fence for five to 10 minutes. The more busy-minded the horse is, the longer I work him at the fence.



Even though I work the horse at the rollback fence, I don't just practice rollbacks with him. I'll throw in some bending transitions (*left*) and yield his hindquarters (*right*). I don't want the horse to anticipate just rolling back or to tune me out. I want his attention on me.



Even when I'm working the horse at the rollback fence, I don't just do rollbacks. I practice Bending Transitions, I yield the horse's hindquarters, I trot him in serpentines, etc. I keep him guessing about what I'm going to ask him to do. If I only practiced rollbacks at the fences, the horse would eventually start anticipating rolling back next to the fence. And since you're already dealing with a hot-blooded, busy-minded horse to begin with, a lot of these horses also start to get nervous about the rollback. So I constantly mix up how I ask the horse to move his feet at the fence.

We work the horses for five to 10 minutes. The length of time depends on how hot it is, how athletic the horse is and how busy-minded he is. The hotter the temperature, the shorter the session, and the more athletic and busy-minded the horse is, the longer the session.

Then we put the horse on a loose rein and walk him down the trail to the next rollback fence. The fences are about a half mile apart and take several minutes to walk to. As a general rule, you want to let the horse walk for about five minutes between workouts. The walk is the relaxing part of the ride for the horse—he gets to be on a loose rein and get his air back. While the horses are walking down the trail, we rub on them. But the key is to let the horse walk on a big, loose rein and not do any sort of training whatsoever on him. Hold the middle of the reins in one hand and let him be.

At first, when you put the horse on a loose rein, he's going to power walk down the trail. That's fine. Even if he wants to trot or lope, let him. Remember, you're not forcing the horse to relax and slow down; you're just going to show him that it's the better option.