

MANOLO MENDEZ

Training for Wellness™



A clinic with the Dynamik Stallions
2017

At 18, Manolo Mendez was one of six founding members of the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art and its very first Head Rider, working closely with School Director Don Domecq. Based in Jerez, Spain, the school is one of the four classical schools of riding, which include the Cadre Noir in Saumur, the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art in Lisbon.

An expert horseman with over forty five years of experience spanning classical dressage, Doma Vaquera and jumping, Manolo Mendez is considered one of the world's leading experts on piaffe, passage and pirouette. However, it is not just this facility with training the 3P's that sets Manolo apart, but his ability to rehabilitate horses.

Always a considerate rider and trainer, Manolo became increasingly passionate about the intersection of equine soundness, well being, welfare and training in the early seventies and began experimenting with bodywork; in hand and riding to develop, enhance or repair the horses that were entrusted to him.

To this day, Manolo uses his custom three prong approach daily. He will dismount and use in-hand or bodywork to unblock a horse or facilitate its learning. His work is characterised by an ability to inspire trust and confidence in horses, feel and create spinal alignment - including under saddle - and create and restore willingness, rhythm, balance and straightness. One could say Manolo works within what Dr Bennett calls the "envelope of release" and what Dr Denoix speaks of when he notes the relationship between muscular tonus and emotional equilibrium.

"The horse's muscles provide the earliest indications of anxiety. Muscular tonus is closely involved with variations in its psychological state.

It is important to recognise that emotional equilibrium is as vital to optimum sporting performance as the physiological readiness of the underlying mechanical structures, which will not perform on command unless the horse is comfortable and confident."

~ Denoix and Pailoux, *Physical Therapy and Massage for the Horse*

In all his work, Manolo is dedicated to a soft sympathetic and thorough training method which prepares horses physically and psychologically for each stage of training, from Training Level to Grand Prix. He uses the same approach while working with horses from every discipline including western, jumping, eventing, working equitation, hacking and even . . . driving.



Over the years, Manolo has become sought after by riders, veterinarians, chiropractors and other equine wellness practitioners for his holistic approach to training, developing and rehabbing horses, which incorporates his unique brand of bodywork, in-hand work and riding. Besides teaching amateur and professional riders worldwide, he now teaches a 2 days course for equine health professionals which focuses on assessing horses with common sports horse physical or training issues and then demonstrating and discussing the bodywork, in-hand work and training steps needed to restore the horse to wellness.

Manolo has published a 3 hour introduction to in-hand work DVD where he introduces Equine Biomechanics lecturer Jillian Kreinbring to his method and demonstrates how to help horses develop a healthy posture and movement.

For more information about Manolo's approach, to view clips, read articles, look at his clinic schedule worldwide or purchase his DVD, please visit www.manolomendezdressage.com

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Top Der Da

Imported German Riding Pony
Licensed Westphalia Germany HLP via sport
DOB 1st March, 2006
Competing at PSG/Inter I in 2018



At this clinic Manolo worked with the stallion Top Der Da in-hand in the Spanish cavesson with the bamboos to help develop his piaffe.

Manolo commented that Top Der Da is a very willing stallion who is always wanting to please.



Over the first two days of ground work using the bamboos Top Der Da's piaffe really improved. Manolo commented how his posture improved as his neck became relaxed and his gullet opened. The steps became more active and he started to lift more with the front shoulders and knees. We had worked a little with starting the piaffe with Der Da at a previous clinic and I talked to Manolo about the fact that whilst I felt I had some good active steps with the piaffe on the left rein, I was having issues with the piaffe to the right with him bringing the hindquarters in, so was reluctant to work more on that without his help. The issue was with the off hind on the right rein piaffe being not as active and we needed to work on this to achieve the perfect straightness and balance.

Manolo really improved Der Da's piaffe over two days creating a better reaction with the hind leg and positioning the shoulders better so that the piaffe was now starting to become straight and balanced in both directions. Of course perfecting the piaffe on both reins will take time. Manolo explained that on the right rein where the quarters were coming in, that it is very important not to keep pushing the horse while in this incorrect posture. By trying to get more and more and more from the piaffe, this would never achieve straightness. Continual pushing would cause an irregularity in the piaffe, an incorrect technique which is commonly seen.

On the third day of the training clinic, Manolo worked Der Da in-hand once again and was really impressed with how his posture and activity improved in the piaffe work. To keep a good active piaffe, allowing a little forwardness is also essential.





We gave Der Da a break in the paddock and later brought him back into the arena for me to ride and get a feeling of the piaffe. Manolo was super happy with his even activity and the lift he gave in the shoulders and also with his posture.

Top Der Da was reacting as soon as Manolo positioned his body to face him ready for piaffe work and he remained calm and active.

The most important pointer Manolo gave me for the piaffe under saddle was to be sure to allow with the outside rein to keep the straightness so as not to block the energy going through his body.



My homework for Der Da for the in-hand work was to still keep working the piaffe on the left rein but on the right rein to only work on ensuring he had good reactions from both hindlegs when touching with the bamboos, then allow him to walk and then repeat.

Under saddle I am to continue training the piaffe on the left rein and for the right rein to go into piaffe but to walk out of it whenever he starts becoming crooked or struggles so I do not train the wrong response with tension or irregularity.



Golden Rock

Imported German Riding Pony
Licensed Premium Westphalia Germany
Reserve Champion Stallion HLP Short Test 8.58
DOB 2nd March, 2008 1st March, 2006
To compete at Medium/Advanced in 2018



Golden Rock was out of action this year for nearly 5 months due to a keratoma in his hoof. Now that this is finally resolved I have started building up his fitness level.

Manolo worked him in-hand and pointed out that he has slightly over developed the pectoral muscle opposite to the front hoof that he was lame on for so many months.



It is very important to be aware of your horse's body and musculature when they are recovering from something like this. It is purely compensatory with him taking his weight off the other hoof. Manolo said that gently working him back into fitness in a good posture will resolve this issue over the next few months. Manolo is always a big fan of working with Rock as he really loves to work and is reactive and willing.

Manolo was happy with his posture under saddle and commented that he is so easy to ride as he allows you to always position him and perform movements using your body and weight. Rock had three sessions of in-hand work with Manolo and achieved some nice piaffe steps on the third day.





Manolo asked me not to do piaffe work with Rock in-hand as his piaffe is very good quality with his active hind legs and ability to lift his shoulders along with his natural knee action. He said that Rock has very good reactions when touched with the bamboos and finds the piaffe super easy.

He said a horse with a good natural piaffe like Rock is not for an amateur to work with in-hand as it could easily go wrong, resulting in the horse travelling backwards or running off in the piaffe. Manolo had told me this in a previous clinic however due to Manolo's past work with him he easily offers some piaffe steps under saddle when he is fit and working well.



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Trussardi D

Imported German Riding Pony
Licensed Premium Westphalia Germany
HLP Short Test 8.05
DOB 19th April, 2007
To compete at Prix St Georges in 2018



Trussardi is a stallion who loves to perform in his work and is a laid back, very cool and brave character.

During the in-hand training session, Manolo did some work on releasing Trussardi through the pectoral muscles and also worked rocking his hips and loosening his pelvis. He has some tightness in these areas as a result of his work as a breeding stallion.



Manolo and I discussed the body issues of modern day breeding stallions. With the wonders of AI and being able to collect our stallions so that they can be bred and the semen can be transported chilled Australia wide, there also comes some downfalls with the impact this has on their bodies. Whilst the phantom creates a level of safety for the stallion to avoid being kicked by mares, the breeding phantom is a solid object and does not move with the stallion. Working on the phantom can also impact their body, particularly the pectoral muscles and pelvis.





The twisting action of the stallion for the collection can also create issues for the ribcage, especially on the side from which they are collected. Tension and pain through the rib cage area can affect the stallion's ability to lift the ribcage and engage a good posture and active hindleg.

The wellness and management of the breeding stallion, especially one that is expected to perform happily under saddle is essential. Stallions that have endured heavy breeding seasons on the phantom will have experienced a big impact on their bodies. At Dynamik Stallions a combination of myofascial work, Bowen, chiropractic and acupuncture work are conducted by professionals as required. Stretches and in-hand work are also a part of their regular work and management program.

Manolo worked more on Trussardi's reactions to the bamboo canes during the in-hand work to get him a little quicker.



Manolo generally prefers horses to have a good established piaffe before working on the passage which I knew through previous training clinics with him. I told him that Trussardi would offer some passage at times both under saddle and with the bamboos for his in-hand work and that I was not sure what to do in this case given that he does not have an established piaffe at this stage.

Manolo said that with this type of horse, it's an exception to the general rule. He felt that Trussardi would find the passage very easy given his strong body type and that I should just allow it and reward him. We will take more time to work with the piaffe when Manolo returns next time.



Manolo was happy with Trussardi's posture under saddle and worked a little with his canter pirouettes. This stallion is very strong with a lot of power so he naturally tends to sit a little too much in his canter pirouettes making them too small at times for his level. Manolo suggested to work more on just bringing the quarters in for a few steps on the 20 metre circle to help develop him and keep his strength rather than working on the pirouette as much during his training sessions.



Numerus Clausus

Imported German Riding Pony

Licensed Premium Hessen

Champion stallion awarded FN Gold Medal

DOB 27th April, 2014

To compete Preliminary and Young Horse classes in 2018



During the three days of the clinic, Manolo also worked with my 3 ½ year old newly imported stallion Numerus Clausus. Clausi arrived home at Dynamik Stallions in October 2017 after a huge journey from Germany. Manolo had already spent some time with Clausi at Equestrian La Mancha after his release from the Melbourne quarantine station.

Wellness is our number one priority with this young stallion as of course travelling to a new country is a huge change for a young growing stallion. Manolo of course worked Clausi in-hand and was very happy with how his body had improved after the travel and quarantine.



This young stallion has exceptional rideability and a great character. Manolo watched me ride Clausi in the canter and we discussed the exceptional feeling given from his correct mechanics and power and that he feels very balanced for his age. I am able to maintain a really great position of the neck and posture in his canter. The walk is also super loose, over tracking and easy.

My concern was that I could not always maintain the outline where I would like it in Clausi's trot work. There are moments when he is either coming a little high in the neck position and sometimes a little too low. Clausi scored a 10 for his trot in-hand and for his free running at his licensing in Germany from the 5 judges and having owned him since he was a foal I know that he has a natural expressive trot with excellent mechanics and looseness. Of course, Clausi is only young and the aim is not to produce his trot for a 10 in his everyday training so that he can develop properly for the future and the long term.

After some canter work, Manolo was very quick to want to try Clausi under saddle. He commented that I had the posture and the position of the neck perfect for the canter work and wanted to have a feel for himself. Manolo was impressed with his rideability, willingness to work and with the feeling he gave him under saddle.

His opinion was the mechanics and the feeling that his dynamic canter gave him under saddle would score a 9 or a 10. Manolo was not at all concerned about the moments that Clausi was losing his position of the neck in the trot as he said that this would all come together with more time, fitness and strength.



With the in-hand session on the last day, Manolo's main focus for Clausi was to do some cranio work and release his TMJ. He was aware that Clausi had fractured a baby tooth early in the year and some inflammation was also created by his new tooth coming through. Being three years old he has also had some dental work here in Australia and some cap removals.

Working on the TMJ area is essential after any dental work. The release that Clausi got from this work was amazing. This is evident in the pictures where you can see him yawning and so relaxed.







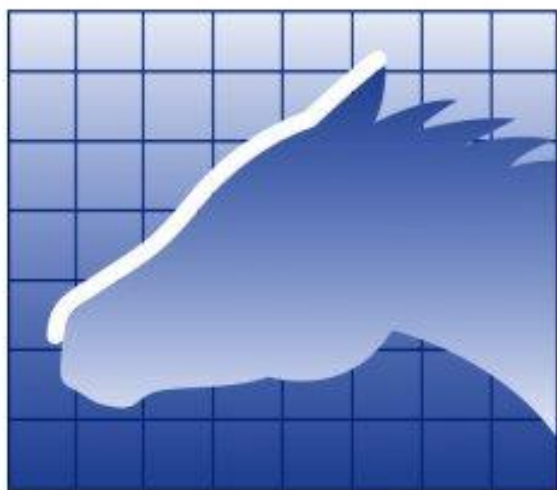
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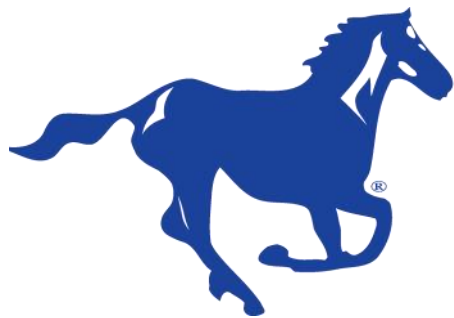
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Summer is here! With rising temperatures our horses produce a greater amount of sweat and therefore may lose critical nutrients. Exercise generates a great deal of heat that must either be dissipated from the body or stored. The dissipation of heat is very important, because if a large amount of heat is stored, body temperature will rise to dangerous levels. Do you know how much water and nutrients your horse loses during exercise in warm weather conditions?

Horse's rely on roughage for digestive health, it is therefore critical we understand and care for our pastures. Part of good pasture management is mowing. We will talk you through what pasture might need mowing and it's potential benefits. We will also cover practical questions such as at what height you should mow your pasture grass and any safety concerns thereafter.



HOW IMPORTANT ARE ELECTROLYTES IN MY HORSE'S DIET

Horses depend on certain electrically charged minerals to maintain the balance and flow of vital body fluids, the transmission of nerve impulses and the healthy function of the muscles and the circulatory system. These minerals are called electrolytes. Their positive and negative charges help to control the body's pH (acid/base) balance and the transport of nutrients and waste products in and out of the cell. The minerals sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, and magnesium collectively are termed electrolytes.

What do each electrolytes do?

Sodium and Chloride - NaCl, common salt, is the major electrolyte of the body. Salt is comprised of two electrolyte ions (charged particles) - sodium (Na+) and Chloride (Cl-). It is found in much higher concentration outside the cells (in the blood and other fluids surrounding the cells) than within the cell. The saltiness of the blood is measured as it is filtered through the kidneys. This way the body knows how much water to release in the urine to keep the concentration of salt in the blood at normal levels.

When the horse becomes dehydrated and the blood sodium level is much more concentrated, sweating will slow or even stop as the body is trying to preserve the critical balance of salt to water.

Potassium - Inside the cells, potassium (K+) assumes the role as the major positively charged electrolyte. One of potassium's major roles is to keep the sensitivity of nerves and muscles at normal levels, not under or over reactive to impulses telling them to contract. This includes both skeletal and heart muscles.

Calcium - When we hear calcium, we think of bones and teeth. This is indeed a major function of calcium in the body, and most of the calcium is found within bones and teeth. However calcium in its ionic form (Ca+) is an important electrolyte. Like potassium and magnesium, it is critical to the normal function of muscles and nerve tissue.

Magnesium - Magnesium is probably the most overlooked electrolyte. Although found in much smaller amounts than many other electrolytes, it has a critical role to play.

Phosphorus - Phosphorus is involved in the formation of bone. About 85% of the body's phosphorus is located inside the bones in a solid form. The remainder is distributed between the blood and the interior of the cells. Inside cell, phosphorus is absolutely essential to the normal functions as a co factor for over 300 enzyme reactions within the body. This means if magnesium is not present or is present in an insufficient amount, each of these 300 reactions will suffer. Magnesium is required for normal muscle function, especially for relaxation of a muscle.



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Another fantastic clinic with Manolo and I am so honoured to have this internationally renowned trainer work with my horses.

Training for wellness is essential, and to me very important given that I own stallions who are not only competition horses, but also breeding stallions.

I spent time with Manolo with my foundation stallion, Don Philino at his training barn Equestrian La Mancha many years ago and have also had clinics with him over the years since then. Implementing his training methods with the Spanish cavesson work is an essential part of my weekly training.

Kristy Jarvis - Dynamik Stallions

