

# Training 101: Making the Most Of Your Investment

By Kenda Lenseigne

Working with a trainer is a two way street. Here's how to get the most out of your training time and dollars.

Practice makes perfect. You get out of it what you put into it. Perfect repetitions a number of times over, equals certainty. That's pure wisdom ladies and gentlemen.



*Giving you tools and showing you how to use them are part of a trainer's investment in you.*

We have a running joke among my weekly group lesson participants, with the punch line being shouted out, "IT'S GROUNDHOG DAY AGAIN". Here's how the scenario looks: I'll set up a drill that we've worked at seemingly a million times over the last two years, and as it sits in front of the riders, there are a few who stare at it blankly, with a giant question mark hovering over their head. I'll ask, "Do you remember this one?" With a silent pause and then a hesitant reply, someone always says, "No, I don't think we've run this one before, what is it again?"

We all laugh and lightheartedly blame it on the 'senior moment' aspect or blonde hair. As it seems to come up often, I contemplate whether or not a student is practicing the fundamentals that are taught when they leave the class. They've paid the money to be there, been given the tools,

taught how to use them and yet, sometimes it seems that the tools get packed up in the horse trailer and stored in the corner until the next session.

**INVESTMENT:** Mounted shooting is an investment in time, money and relationships. We participate because it's fun, and something we can do with our families and horses. There are some who have worked hard to build a career around the sport, and have hung out their shingle for business. There are people seeking training, and people offering training, and in the great tradition of American free enterprise it's a win-win for all as the sport continues to grow.

When you find a trainer that you connect with, meaning, one whose program and teaching method makes sense to you, stick with them. That doesn't mean you need to stay forever if you reach a point where you aren't getting what you need to grow. If you find yourself stuck on a plateau, communicate that to your trainer - if nothing changes over a reasonable amount of time and effort, then move to a program that fits your needs. It's a service that you pay for, and should be treated as such.

#### **What a trainer can do for you:**

**Teach techniques that have given them proven results. Provide fundamentals for you to practice at home. Help you find those moments when things start to "click".**

#### **What a trainer can't do for you:**

**Force you to do your homework. Fix everything in one session. Help you grow if you only visit them once every 6 months.**

While you're investing your valuable time and money in an hour or two per week lesson, also consider that a trainer is also doing some investing of their own. The trainer is investing time into you, and put their hard earned experience into developing a plan to help you achieve your goals. Add to your toolbox the methods that make sense and provide results, if something doesn't make sense, ask for clarification.

**DO YOUR HOMEWORK:** Repeat the lesson at home until you see your trainer again or ask for homework so you won't waste your valuable time and money starting over each week. Good trainers want to see you succeed, as you bring a sense of pride and achievement to their program if you are doing your part to grow.



*Take notes so you will remember key points of the lesson when you get back to your home area.*

**NO EXCUSES:** "My arena isn't big enough, "I don't have an arena", "the weather is bad", "I don't have any time". Ask your trainer for advice on fundamentals you can work in a small arena or out on the trail if you don't have an arena\*. Training doesn't have to mean running pattern after pattern, and there are ways to train in your living room (without horse of course) if the weather is questionable. If you claim that you don't have time, but have to catch up on a bunch of TV shows at night, then you have time.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Take notes: Write down the lesson of the day as it's fresh in your mind so when you get back to your home arena you will have a plan to follow. Keep your notes handy for future homework in case your trainer is temporarily unavailable for a lesson.

Ask, listen, do your part: Ask your trainer to repeat critical points, or give examples if you don't understand what they are trying to teach you. Ask for homework or what to work on before the next lesson and then stick to the plan. It's up to you to commit time to follow the program that's been prepared for you. Once you master those fundamentals, you can easily move to the next step in your progress the next time you see your trainer.




*Ask, listen and do your part when your trainer is offering advice*



*Your trainer can provide many forms of motivation to stay on track!*

\*Kenda won the High Overall at the 2009 CMSA World Championship and trained for the event all year in a 70x140 sand patch in the pasture. The workspace had no arena rails or fencing.



## REMEMBERING JOHNNIE HENDRICK

We all mourn the recent passing of Johnnie Hendrick, one of the foundation members of our sport. Johnnie CMSA #17, with his friendly personality and good humor helped to provide a beginning basis for the foundation of Cowboy Mounted Shooting's culture. Johnnie had a genuine love for horses, the American West and everything cowboy. He will be remembered for his sincere, candid and unpretentious personality. Throughout the years, we've shared many good times, friendly competitions and lots of laughs because of his sense of humor, like when he had his horse trailer decorated--not with a listing of wins as some others did--rather he chose to place "Participant" after each of the major championships he'd attended. As we aged, we'd joke about sharing a bottle of a special blend for old guys. We called it "Old Gelding!" Johnnie had something funny to add to any conversation and he was always glad to see fellow CMSA competitors. His contributions to our great sport should be memorialized and appreciated by all of us.

Jim Rodgers and Phil Spangenberg