



Missoula County 4-H Miniature Horse Project

Obstacle Level I





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This project is open to all 4-H members who have completed, or are currently be enrolled in Miniature Horsemanship Level 1. Members in this project will have an opportunity to teach their horse basic obstacle skills, learn obstacle safety, gather tips for competing successfully in the show ring, and discover non-competition uses for obstacle training.

Members may use the following resource book: Training Miniature Performance Horses: A Complete Guide to Hunter: Jumper: and Halter Obstacle, Jennifer Alisia Garrett, Small Horse Press, Ohio, 2006.

This book is only the beginning. You are encouraged to seek advice from a variety of people, including trainers, farriers, breeders, and veterinarians. Members should also read a wide variety of books and magazines, participate in clinics and workshops, brows the internet, and organize the information you gather into a notebook.

Members enrolling in this project area should have the basic equipment needed and access to a suitable horse at least one year of age or older. A member may enroll in each area up to two times depending on their interest and skill level. All new Obstacle Project members must enroll in Level 1, but experienced youth may advance on to higher levels more rapidly than a novice youth. Each level has a corresponding workbook section and project assessment that must be completed and signed off on before a member can move on to the next higher level.

Objectives

In **Level 1**, 4-H'ers will have an opportunity to learn basic skills such as:

- Teaching your horse to accept strange objects and noises
- Leading through a course of cones or poles at a walk
- Backing in a straight line
- Walking over varied and raised surfaces such as a tarp and bridge
- Walking over cavaletti or ground poles
- Completing a 360 hind pivot

- Walking through an obstacle with streamers over head
- Teach your horse to carry an object

Keep in mind that this is only a sample of what you may learn. Miniature Horse Halter Obstacle is a dynamic sport and obstacles are constantly changing. While some skills such as backing are basic, a finished obstacle course is as varied as the imagination of the course designer. A typical obstacle may combine more than one skill such as crossing a bridge lined with balloons.

In **All Levels**, members will learn:

- To train and handle a miniature horse safely
- How to build trust and teamwork between a horse and handler
- Knowledge of proper terminology
- How to share with others the knowledge gained
- The rewards of good sportsmanship, both in winning and in losing
- To enjoy a healthful lifetime activity

Once you have completed each level, you may want to show off your skills or exhibit your knowledge at the fair. You can compete in one of the obstacle classes offered or perhaps design an educational display or poster on the non-competitive uses of a miniature horse such as trail companion, parade horse, or therapy animals.

You must have completed or be currently enrolled in Miniature Horsemanship Level 1 before beginning this project. When did you complete Horsemanship Level 1?

Section 1 - Project Goals

A. What do you hope to learn in Level 1? _____

B. Write a paragraph about the horse you plan to use, including age, color, markings, size, and any previous training he has had.

C. Training a horse for obstacle takes time and patience. Who do you have to help you who are experienced in this field? Write a brief description of his/her background and an explanation of why you choose this person to help you.

Section 2 – Training

A. What is a good age to start training your mini for obstacle? _____

B. Teaching your horse new skills and building trust takes time. You should always start with simple skills first. Discuss which skills you plan to start with.

C. How long each day and how many days a week do you plan to train your horse?

D. Positive reinforcement is very important. What is an appropriate way to reward your horse during training?

E. In training, what can you do if your horse fails to follow your command? _____

F. Explain how you will introduce your horse to a new object or obstacle. _____

G. List the equipment you will need to begin this project. Be sure to include any tack you will need. You may want to use pictures cut from magazines or pictures you draw to illustrate.

Section 3 - Activities

Events (Participate in a minimum of three events such as workshops, clinics, seminars, group practice sessions, lessons, or shows.)

Month	Type of Work	Hours

A. In backing, a judge is looking for a nice smooth back through the obstacle. Can you list 3 backing faults that may lower your score?

B. List 3 backing patterns you may find at a show. _____

C. Having a horse trained to complete obstacles can be useful for more than showing. Can you think of other reasons obstacle training can be valuable?

Section 4 – Safety

A. Safety always comes first! List 3 things to look for in a safe obstacle. _____

B. In a well executed serpentine (cones), should the handler be slightly in front of the horse guiding him, slightly behind the horse showing he can do it on his own, or beside the horse between his head and shoulder?

C. Why did you choose your answer in the question above? _____

Section 5 – Level 1 Project Assessment

	DATE	LEADER
1. Lead your horse through a course of cones or poles at a walk.		
2. Safely back your horse in a straight line.		
3. Horse calmly accepts strange objects and noises.		
4. Walk your horse over a tarp and a raised bridge.		
5. Walk your horse over a set of cavaletti.		
6. Complete a 360 degree hind pivot to the right.		
7. Horse walks willingly through an obstacle with streamers overhead.		
8. List 3 safety rules to remember when training a horse for obstacle.		

Congratulations! Your hard work has paid off. You and your miniature horse have successfully completed Level 1.

4-H Rules for Competing in Obstacle Classes

The obstacle course must be posted at the Show Office not less than two hours prior to the class. Horses must be at least one year old for halter obstacle. All obstacles must be numbered on the course in order of sequence.

Classes will be judged 100% on the manner of horse's performance through the course.

There is a sixty second time limit to complete each obstacle. After time is used, the exhibitor will be directed to the next obstacle. Refusals of three (3) obstacles shall be a major penalty.

Obstacle requirements:

1. Must be a minimum of 5 and maximum 8.
2. Tires and stair steps are prohibited.
3. Jumps are prohibited.

Edible treats to encourage an animal to perform one of the obstacles are not allowed.

All obstacles should be safe for exhibitors as well as for horses.

Faults may include, be are not limit to:

1. Taking an obstacle in the wrong direction.
2. Negotiating an obstacle from the wrong side.
3. Skipping an obstacle unless directed by Judge.
4. Negotiating obstacles in the wrong sequence.
5. Physically moving, or coercing the horse by touching.
6. Stepping on, knocking over, or falling off an obstacle.