



Should I Send My Mule To A Trainer?

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So, you are having a problem with your mule. Should you fix the problem yourself or send your mule to a trainer?

There are many things to consider when making this decision. Number one is time. Do you have the time needed to train your mule? Next, is the issue one that you feel comfortable fixing?

Training is not a quick fix. Ninety-nine percent of the time, you cannot fix a training problem by buying a piece of equipment. If you bought new equipment to fix your problem, you are wasting your money. However, 99 percent of problems can be fixed with proper training methods and good ground work, all of which will transfer to the saddle. If you are willing to take the time to learn good training methods with your mule, you will see big differences in your mule without risking injury to you or your mule.

A new harsher bit will make your mule stop better for a little while. When the mule finds out that the pain of the new bit will not go away, he will resist more. Instead of not stopping, he might start running away with the rider. The mule is thinking "this person is not going to stop the pain; I have to stop the pain myself."

The only time purchasing equipment will help the problem is when a saddle, bit or any other piece of equipment is the wrong size for the mule. Mules do not like pain. When a mule feels pain he will tense up his muscles and resists. When a mule resists against any pain their performance will drop.

So, time is one of the most important factors in fixing a problem. But, if you do not have the time to work with your mule yourself, then send the mule to a trainer with proven methods that teach the mule and don't force the mule.

Other reasons to send a mule to a trainer is you are not fit

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enough to be able to work with the mule, you do not have a safe area to work the mule or you feel the mule is too dangerous for you to work with.

Be sure to choose a trainer who will work with you and explain how he taught your mule the cues he used in a way you understand.

But, in order for you to have success with your mule, you must also learn how to train because whenever you are around your mule you are training him. Mules are always learning.

Keep in mind, no mule is ever perfect, just like people are not perfect. In order to maintain your mule's performance, you have to be able to tweak things as you go and that means you must know how to teach the mule and know what the mule needs to be successful.

Training a mule is not the same as training a horse. There are a lot of horse trainers, but only a few mule trainers.

So, how do you find a good mule trainer?

First, look at the qualifications of the trainer. Is the trainer certified? If a trainer is certified that means that the trainer has taken the time and money to study how to train correctly. If the trainer is certified, who granted their certification?

Knowing where your potential or current trainer received his or her training is very important and unique to each individual mule owner. This is a preference that should be taken very seriously. You as the mule owner must be familiar with your trainer's methods. If you are, that is a good first step. If you are not, you need to ask and become familiar so you know your mule is being treated humanely and taught appropriately.

Next, cheaper is not better. Training a mule is like a lot of other businesses, you get what you pay for. You cannot expect to receive the best training at a cheap price. We all know of trainers that will train and board your mule for a couple hundred dollars a month. That price will barely pay for hay, so what are you really getting?

You should watch the trainer during a training session or several training sessions if possible. Make sure the trainer is willing to teach you the training methods he uses, so you will have the knowledge to continue the training at home.

Some trainers offer private lessons where the trainer trains you to train the mule. The trainer will show you the steps needed to train the mule as you wish. Only you will be training the mule with the trainer right beside you to help you every step of the way. After one on one time with your trainer, you should not have any concerns with where you are going and what you need to do to get there.

All good trainers will also offer you telephone support should you have a question about training your mule.

Make sure the trainer is using methods you approve of and don't take their word for what method they use. Watch the trainer yourself. Paying for a lesson or two from the trainer before you commit to a long term training contract is money well spent. Get to know the trainer and do not be afraid to ask questions. Be clear about what you are wanting the trainer to do with your mule.

If you do not feel comfortable with anything you hear from the trainer, ask the trainer. If you still feel unsure, then do not send the mule to the trainer, no matter what your friends or other people are saying. Trust your gut.

If a trainer does not want you to watch him train, do not send your mule to him. Any good trainer will be happy to have you watch a training session, as he has nothing to hide. If a trainer will not train in front of people, that tells you that he does not want anyone to see him work a mule. They may use too much force or even cruel training methods.

A trainer must also use time to train your mule. The trainer may be able to get the mule so the problem goes away one time. But that is not your goal. You want the mule to stand

still when you mount, not buck you off, not to run away with you when riding or whatever problem you have with the mule.

You want the mule to not do the problem all the time, not once or twice. This takes time. If you pressure the trainer to get the job done, it will not be done correctly and you will end up wasting your money on training.

You have checked out the trainers training methods, watched him work, and asked him questions. Now, let him do what he feels is best for the mule. You may want the mule fixed in one week or one month or even one year, but that may not be possible for your mule. A good trainer will know that and tell you up front what to expect. At the same time, you have to be willing to let the trainer do his or her job.

When you decide to send your mule to any trainer, the trainer should have a written contract to protect you and him. Make sure all information is correct and you understand everything in the contract, remember the contract is for your protection also. If the trainer does not use a written contract do not send your mule to him.

If you do not have a contract, you have nothing to protect yourself or your mule if the relationship between you and the trainer does not work out. If there are any problems that arise during the training time frame, it is your word against his.

Remember that training is a long term commitment. The trainer should keep you updated on the mule process. You as the owner should be able to call and discuss your mule's training with him as much and as often as you wish.

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Tim's past articles can be found on his web site.



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