



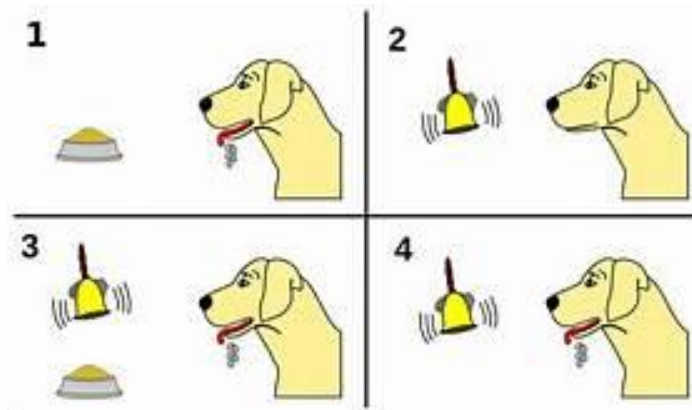
The Evolving Equestrian  
**Evolve Challenge**  
For Starters Lesson 1

**-What is reward based training?**

Reward based training is a scientific approach to training using positive reinforcement. The trainer uses rewards to influence and train behaviors.

**-Classical Conditioning**

Classical conditioning is the process by which a neutral stimulus, something that holds no meaning for the horse, like a click is paired with an unconditioned stimulus, something the horse naturally likes or dislikes such as food or pain, so that the learner forms an association between the two, thus making the neutral stimulus a conditioned stimulus (click) that by itself can elicit the same involuntary response as the unconditioned stimulus (food).



**-Bridge or Marker Signal**

A bridge or marker signal is used to mark the exact moment that we are rewarding the horse. The bridge gains its value through classical conditioning.

Without a bridge signal, by the time we deliver the reward the horse will not know what he is being rewarded for. The bridge signal bridges the gap between the behavior we are reinforcing or rewarding and the time it takes to deliver the reinforcement.



## -Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning is the learning process by which the strength of a behavior is modified through reinforcers and punishers.

Reinforcement increases the strength or likelihood of behavior- the behavior will happen more often.

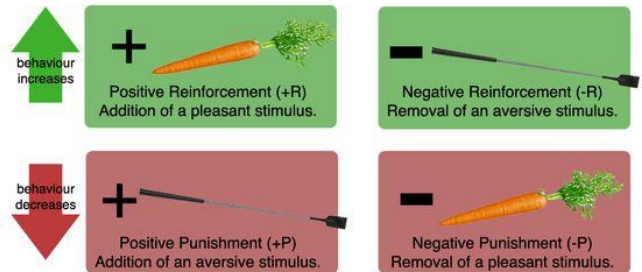
Punishment decreases the strength or likelihood of behavior- the behavior will happen less often.

1. Negative Punishment- the subtraction of an appetitive, something the horse likes, following an undesirable behavior to decrease it.
2. Positive Punishment- the addition of an aversive, something the horse does not like, following an undesirable behavior to decrease that behavior.
3. Negative Reinforcement- the subtraction of an aversive following a desired behavior to increase that behavior.
4. Positive Reinforcement- the addition of an appetitive following a desired behavior to increase that behavior.

### How horses learn: Operant Conditioning.

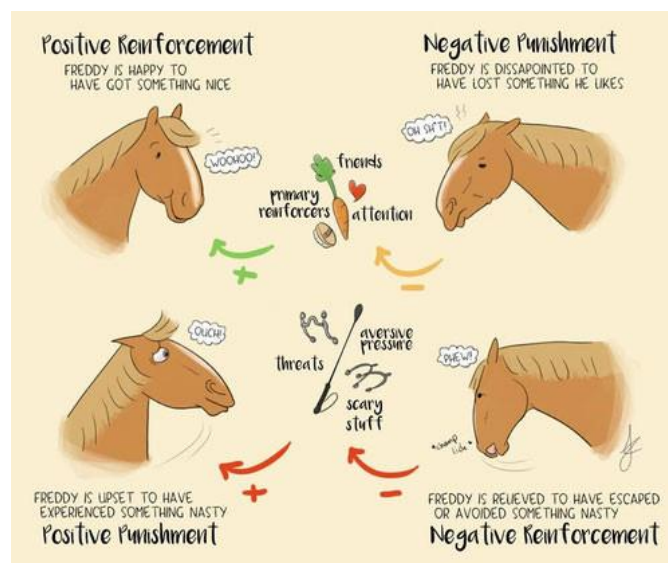
One way animals learn (including humans) is by operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is a type of learning in which the individual's behaviour is shaped by consequences. It focuses on using reinforcement or punishment to increase or decrease behaviours. Through the process, an association is created between the behaviour and the consequence. All horse trainers, regardless of the method they market, use operant conditioning (consciously or not).

In this infographic whips are a visual representation of aversive stimuli and carrots of pleasant stimuli.



Positive reinforcement is the most humane and effective quadrant of operant conditioning but also one of the least used in the horse world. Traditional and natural horsemanship mostly uses negative reinforcement and positive punishment.

For more info on humane, science based horse training visit: <http://fairhorsemanship.com>



-Why reward-based training/positive reinforcement?

**FAIRHORSEMANSHIP**  
*Learn from the horse*

*Our actions are driven by consequences*

I do what my human tells me  
to avoid or remove  
pain/discomfort.



I do what my human asks me  
because good stuff happens  
when I do!



1. Increased motivation.
2. Engaging.
3. Safe for horse and human.
4. Builds confidence and try.
5. Precision and clarity.
6. Better understanding and progress.
7. Ability to work well below fear threshold.
8. Positive associations with behaviors and handler.
9. Less chance of relapse.
10. No stress/force-free.