



# Tölt Club - Wintry weather blues: Let's go inside. January/February Obstacles

At this time of the year, the weather is often inclement, so this month's challenge is not so much about obstacles as activities. While these tasks can all be performed outside, they are all things that can also be done in a relatively small area, such as a field shelter, stable or barn aisle. As such they are not suitable for ridden or long-reining this month. Maybe try liberty?

**Please make sure you are safe and do not surprise your horse in a confined space. Start gently with all of these things and take your time to practice. Be sure before you start filming that the horse is relaxed and happy with all the activities you are going to attempt.**

- ❖ **Have your horse put on his/her own head collar.**
  - Hold out your horse's head collar and have him/her put his/her nose into it.
  - Close the head collar while your horse stands quietly. Lead your horse to....
- ❖ **Sniff the flowers: Snowdrops and Daffodils.**
  - Line up 6 bunches of 'spring flowers'
  - Walk or ride your horse to each bunch and have them sniff each one. There should be a distance of approx. 1m (3ft) between each bunch.
  - If you are doing this in a confined space you may have to have the 'flowers' closer together, so have your horse sniff bunches that are a some distance from the previous one. So say bunch 1, then 3 then 5 followed by 2, 4, 6.
- ❖ **Put a foot on a block**
  - Ask your horse to lift a front leg and place it on top of a block approximately 4" (10 cm) in height.
  - Have him/her hold it there for a count of five.
- ❖ **Dust your horse off**
  - Use a cloth approximately the size of a tea-towel and flap it all around your horses shoulders and back both sides.
  - By flap, we mean lift it up and swipe/flap it down onto your horse's body each time.

## **Training Tip**

**Start gently and watch your horse's reaction, some horses consider being struck as punishment. Stop immediately if there is any sort of negative reaction and reassure your horse. Do not continue with this activity at this point if you get a negative reaction. (excessive flinch, quiver, eye rolling etc)**

- ❖ **Play ball**
  - Use a ball that it at least the size of a soccer or volley ball
  - Put the ball on your horse's bum and roll it off his/her rear end
  - Place the ball in the saddle area and roll it off towards you.
  - Place the ball in the saddle area and roll it off away from you to the offside. Alternatively roll the ball on the ground between your horses forelegs and hindlegs.
  - Your horse should stand still throughout.

**Training Tip:**

**Be careful with rolling the ball to the offside. Start small (maybe with a smaller ball and holding it over the back before releasing. It's important that you are happy that your horse will not jump into your space during this exercise.**

**❖ Treat an ear**

- Preparing your horse for any possible medical interventions is always a good idea.
- For this challenge you are going to apply ointment to the inside of one ear while your horse stands quietly without pulling away. Use any innocuous cream you may have e.g. some petroleum jelly, and rub a little onto the inside of your horse's ear.

**❖ Fetch**

- Make a start on this fun game.
- Teach your horse to pick up any safe item in her/his mouth and hold it for 2 seconds. There are lots of suitable dog toys or something like a small cone,.
- For inspiration have a look at Bex and her horse Hokey Pokey and think of lazy summer days to come!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2XazCyg7c0>