



Meet Baba the Marwari stallion

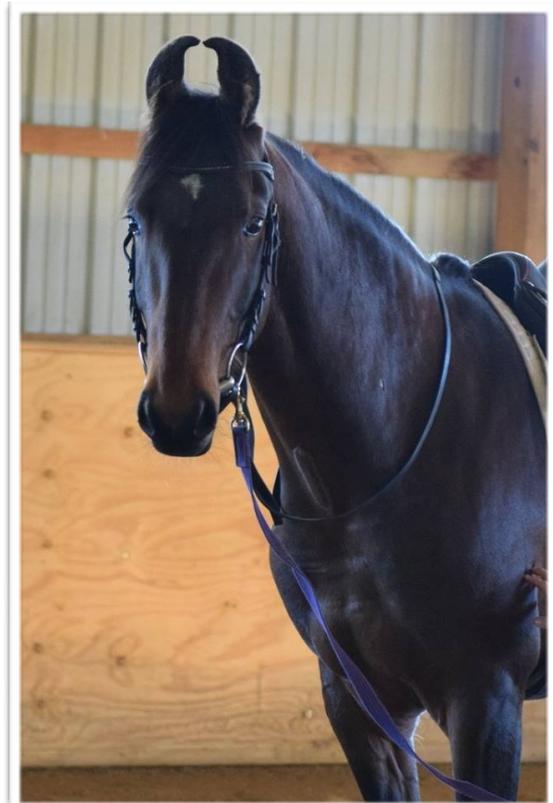
Baba is the inspiration for gathering and sharing reflections that we hope can help in your connection to your horse. Here are some facts about Baba and the Marwari horse: His name means "brave one" in Hindi. Bahadurshah, or "Baba" is a Marwari horse, one of the rarest equine breeds in existence. Through his partnership with his owner, Dr. Maria Katsamanis, the bay stallion is helping promote his breed and equine-based education, as well as call attention to animal welfare around the world. There are less than 1,000 in the world like him and fewer than 30 that live outside of India. Descending from India's war horses, his ancestors were the chosen breed of the nobility. Though built of average size, his exotic heritage comes sharply into view with an upward glance at his ears, which curl inwardly until their tips touch. Thus the name, the "Heart shaped eared horses of India."

THE BUZZ FROM BABA

Horses are our best teachers if we learn how to tune in. This month the lesson that came up with Baba had to do with—

Knowing when enough is enough! When during a ride, is it time to stop? When is it enough?

Many of us have the idea that a successful riding session has a time stamp on it. We plough through trying to make the last 20 minutes of our hour long session. We may even notice how winded we are, or cranky our horse has become as the minutes roll and yet we plug on.



What is Molecular Equitation?

There exists molecular gastronomy, molecular biology and molecular equation. And now...Molecular Equitation! Molecular equitation was coined in the book "The Alchemy of Lightness". Molecular equitation, which is otherwise known as the scientific study of the interplay of mechanisms when horse and human meet, communicate and interact. Molecular equitation is not so much a technique as an approach, an approach from the viewpoint of the so-called basic sciences to provide basic ingredients key to the perfect ride, the perfect connection to our horses thereby making this accessible to anyone. This is a space where old world equestrian traditions merge with new scientific findings to guide those wishing for the ultimate connection.

Our horses, however, are not operating on a clock

It would be a mistake to evaluate the quality of the session by the time spent on it. With an educational background as psychophysiologicalist, I have learned a great rule of thumb to be the 2:1 ratio. For every hour of physical load, include two hours total of overall downtime (inclusive of before and after the ride) which can include a brief massage, hand grazing, longer grooming session, etc. The Russian Olympic team learned that in the late 80's in helping prepare athletes, but in a way that preserves their longevity in the sport and minimizes sport related injuries. More about the specifics of that, and implementing an individualized and progressive program for your partner coming up soon!

It is not so much the length of a working session that will build up a horses physique. It is the quality of the work.

In fact, the tact and judicious decision-making in determining when to stop can be learned and can make the difference in creating a slave or a partner of your horse. While there are many factors in knowing when enough is enough for that day, consider the following ONE point:

What do you do when you start to feel winded and tired mid-way through your ride?

When we become fatigued we often end up leaning on the horses mouth to support ourselves, and becoming more unbalanced as our endurance dwains. We may even resort to pushing on him or labeling him "pluggy or lazy" as the session continues when in fact we may have become tired and labored in our riding lacking the endurance we think we have. I often rely on my mechanical horse "Harry" to let me know how I am doing in the endurance department and to help me maintain an active riding fitness program OFF my horse.

- The less you ask for the more you will receive-



About the Author

Dr. Maria Katsamanis has received worldwide recognition as a horse trainer, clinician, exhibition rider, and author. She holds a doctoral degree in clinical psychology. Dr. Katsamanis has worked with many different breeds and has also had the privilege of training the rare Marwari horses of India. Dr. Katsamanis is co-author of "The Alchemy of Lightness" (Trafalgar Square Publishing, 2013) that introduces the concept of molecular equitation to the equestrian community. Her training barn is located in Ringoes, New Jersey and she is hosted for clinics both nationally and internationally. She continues to maintain an appointment as a Clinical Assistant Professor at Rutgers Medical School. With a formal education as a clinical scientist she is able to help demystify and explain elements of this formula where magic seemingly occurs, that are key in helping us establish the ultimate connection with our horses.

4 Hints to Consider

The following are four hints to consider before your next ride:

- Preserving ones **dignity** is the first step to forging a solid relationship. You wouldn't want someone pushing or nagging you to do something?
- **Imagine** the feeling of when you have overextended your welcome. Picture this- You have been invited to stay at someone's home indefinitely. At some point, that small still voice in your head tells you, "It's time to go!" You have overextended your stay. Cultivating that feeling, or honoring that sixth sense is one way to begin "hearing" your horse. For some this is easier said than done. We have been so removed from even *recognizing* that gut sense. But, start today.
- Commit to **quality** not quantity- It is always better to stop while you are on top- Not literally, as in "on top" of your horse!
- **Monitor** at what point you begin noticing yourself pushing your horse or pulling him around. Start by simply noticing at what point during the ride, or lesson do you start to decompensate.
- How **fit** are you? When was the last time you checked! More often than not I hear riders saying how their riding is their primary source of exercise for the week. However, it is wiser to cultivate another fitness option. When one comes to the horse as their main outlet for exercise they risk violating some fundamental elements of lightness.

Creating the ultimate dance partner does mean that there is a certain level of physical as well as mental fitness that would ensure that our partner can easily carry us. The more we consider his comfort the more likely that this genuine regard will be heartfelt. And that is when offerings and miracles happen!

Follow along on this post board for training tips and encouragement about creating the ultimate dance partner! You can also find us on Facebook by clicking on www.facebook.com/molecularequitation