

# Hindlimb Stretches

- Always stand to the side of, and never behind the horse.
- Keep the horse's legs on a forward (for flexion) or backward (for extension), line of motion, keeping the leg in line with the body.
- When in doubt, it is much better to have the leg underneath the horse's body, or slightly crossing the midline of his body, then it is to pull it away from the body.
- Do not pull the horse's legs outwards or abduct them away from his body at any time.
- Go slowly, gently, and allow the horse to tell you how much stretch is comfortable for him.

## **Hindlimb Extension**

Face the back of the horse, and position your knee beneath his tibia, or hock, as you lift the hind leg. Placing a hand over the point of hock helps to secure the leg and let the horse know what you are doing. Gently move your body in the direction of the stretch. The horse is resting his leg on you as you move to create the stretch. You are not pulling his leg with your arms to stretch it.



**Hindlimb Extension**

## **Hindlimb Flexion**

Still facing the back of the horse, gently pick up the hind leg, and grasp the pastern with your inside hand (the hand closest to the horse). Rest the elbow of your outside arm on your thigh so that your legs take the weight of the exercise. Slowly step backwards, taking the horse's leg with you, keeping it under his body. You should not feel any weight of pressure in your back when you do this exercise. The horse should stretch with your movement, but not lean heavily on you. Take the leg back to neutral before releasing it. It will take some practice for both of you, but most horses enjoy this stretch once they learn it.



**Hindlimb Flexion** Although the horse is flexing the hip joint here, he is also stretching his Hamstring muscles. Many horses will point their toe as their leg comes forward for this stretch.