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Title: The application of learning theory in horse training

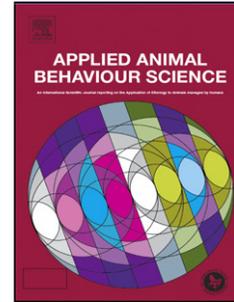
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The application of learning theory in horse training

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Research highlights

Not applicable

REVIEW ARTICLE

Abstract

The millennia-old practices of horse training markedly predate and thus were isolated from the mid-twentieth century revelation of animal learning processes. From this standpoint, the progress made in the application and understanding of learning theory in horse training is reviewed including a discussion of how learning processes are employed or otherwise under-utilised in training. This review describes the process of habituation and the most commonly applied desensitisation techniques (systematic desensitisation, counter-conditioning, overshadowing, response prevention) and propose two additional techniques (approach conditioning and stimulus blending). The salience of different types of cues, the interaction of operant and classical conditioning and the impact of stress are also discussed. This paper also exposes the inflexibility and occasional inadequacy of the

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