



The guide for good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of donkeys and donkey hybrids - Factsheet

## Handling and training

Young foals should learn to be led by a head-collar, be touched all over the body, to have their feet lifted and remain calm during foot trimming.

### What you need to know

- Donkeys may display fear reactions if not familiar with human contact and restraint. Reactions may be subtle and easily missed by trainers.
- Inappropriate training methods may have a negative impact on donkey welfare, and may lead to aggression or conflict behaviour that could endanger handlers.

### How to do it properly

- Donkeys can be trained to remain calm by gradual and gentle introduction to objects and situations that may frighten them.
- The best training results are achieved when donkeys are given a reward (e.g. a feed treat) immediately when they respond correctly.
- Any stimulus used to encourage the animal (e.g. gentle hand pressure) should be removed immediately when the animal responds as the handler wishes.
- The company of a bonded companion is beneficial when a donkey has to be loaded for transport or habituated to a novel situation.
- A complex task should be broken down into smaller steps, taught and learned in sequence, to achieve the end result.
- Avoid using inconsistent or conflicting signals to donkeys during training.



*Keep hoof near to the ground*



*Lead donkey as shown, remembering not to wrap lead rope around your hand*

Donkeys should be gently handled and trained from a young age. Methods involving cruelty or punishment must not be employed.

Photographs used in this factsheet to illustrate some situations should not be considered to illustrate the sole solution to situations described.