

“How do I discipline my foal? She’s starting to lay her ears back and threatens to kick when I’m grooming her.”

Voice is a wonderful tool! A sharp no can mean so much. It's a tricky age because you must set some rules but also understand that youngsters are just that - young 😊

If your foal is threatening to kick you grab hold of the offending leg and say no at the same time. Hold on to it until she relaxes and puts it down. If she’s kicking *at* you give her one sharp tap on the actual leg so she understands exactly what you’re complaining about.

Biting is tricky with youngsters but I try to avoid it wherever possible. Always lead her with one hand firmly under her chin so she can't wriggle round to nip you. When you’re handling her or grooming use two ropes. Thread one through some string attached to the ring but not tied up. (That’s always enough for a foal to feel secured without running the risk of them panicking and pulling back. When the rope is threaded through the string it will slide through under pressure.) Throw the other rope over her neck from the opposite side and keep it in your hand. This way you can keep her head turned slightly away from you.

If your foal ever properly lays back her ears and comes towards you to bite you need to square up to her - face head on - and take a strong step towards her and say no. If she actually connects with you get hold of the head collar - or her nose so it's clear to her what the problem is. Never smack her on the face - instead it can work well if you get hold of her muzzle firmly so she understands exactly what you find unacceptable.

This is a difficult time for any owner. You want to bond with your foal but also remain the boss in the relationship. Just remember that she’s looking to you as her mum. Her actual mother would lay her ears back, swish her tail or even give her a quick nip if she over stepped the mark. Use your voice and quick, firm reactions to do the same. Love comes from respect not from being too soft.

Best of luck!

*If you have a question about riding or schooling your horse get in touch by emailing*

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