

“My pony keeps putting her tongue over the bit. How I can stop her?”

The first thing you need to do is check her mouth. Ponies usually flip their tongue over to avoid the rein contact or discomfort.

When was the last time you had her teeth checked? There may be a sharp edge - or even a small wolf tooth which is sitting just where the bit goes - that just needs removing or rasping away. (It's easier than it sounds! Your vet can do it.) One small sharp edge can cause an ulcer on the side of her mouth which is enough to make her uncomfortable enough to try to avoid it. Same as us I think - a tiny sore patch in your mouth feels like it's huge!

If her teeth are OK then have a look at your bit. Often it's the height in a pony's mouth that bothers them.

Any jointed bit should be fitted so you can see a couple of crinkles at the corner of her mouth. A straight bar will sit slightly lower - it works on the bars (gums) of the mouth. There should be one wrinkle.

What there shouldn't be is a gap between the corner of the mouth and the bit. If you can get your finger above the bit (between the corner and the mouth piece) then it's too low.

If a bit is too high - and it may have been hooked up in the past to avoid this exact problem - it can cause enough discomfort for a pony to still get its tongue over to avoid it. It's much harder for them to do but it can be done. Again check the height of the bit. The corners of the mouth shouldn't be pulled back so the lips are tight at the corners.

Another cause is the rider's contact. If your reins are too long and she plays with the bit - chomping on it, flapping her mouth etc then she could be looking for a steady contact. Ponies will put their tongue over to stop the bit bouncing around in their mouth. Make sure you either ride on a contact or a loose (buckle) rein. When you have a contact keep it even in both reins and move your fingers on the reins (as if you are texting!) to make sure you're not pulling back.

If everything else is OK though a flash noseband could be the answer. Make sure it's the top strap that is done up tight enough to fit one finger between it and your pony. It shouldn't drop down the front of her nose. With the top strap fitted snugly and straight round the drop part can be done up tight enough to get a finger in too. Fitted like that it will stop her getting her tongue over the bit without affecting the soft parts of her nose and nostrils. Too often flashes are fitted tighter at the bottom than the top. Not only do they not work/fit correctly they also cause discomfort.

So I hope something here is helpful? If not don't hesitate to ask again. Best of luck with it. Lorraine

***Get in Touch***

*If you have any questions about riding or training your horse or pony don't hesitate to contact me on [lorraine@schoolyourhorse.com](mailto:lorraine@schoolyourhorse.com) or upload a video under "Show and Tell" on the forum*

*<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/forum/?mingleforumaction=viewforum&f=17.0> It doesn't have to be a perfect film – prop your mobile on the ménage fence and hit play – you'd be amazed what can be seen from a few minutes of film. My advice is free so why not try me?*

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