

# Belly Lift

- Stand to the horse's side, facing its hindquarters.
- Make a fist with your thumb pointed upward, and press your thumb gently inward and upward a few centimeters behind the horse's sternum.
- You may want to use a pen cap (*not* a pointed one!) when you are first learning this exercise. As you progress, the tool may become unnecessary.
- With a firm, consistent pressure, move your hand back and forward a few centimeters, keeping your thumb in contact with the horse's belly.
- The horse should raise his back in response to having his belly touched.
- Go slowly. You do not want to agitate the horse. Kicking, stamping, tail swishing, are signs of agitation, and should not be a regular response to the exercise.



**Starting the Belly Lift** Note how the practitioner positions herself by the horse's shoulder, and out of the "kick zone".



**Finishing the Belly Lift** Notice how the horse has lowered his head and raised his back. This is the movement you are looking for as he lifts his belly.

## Sternum Lift

This is very similar to the belly lift, except that you are focusing thumb pressure upon and just behind the sternum, the chest bone between the front legs. The technique is the same, but the horse's movement is smaller in response to your thumb pressure. You should see the horse raise his withers ever so slightly and drop his head a bit during as his sternum moves back and upwards.