

The Summerwood Series

The Journey Begins: E-guide 2



At Summerwood we believe a bitless approach will enrich your relationship and experience with your horse.

These guides will help you get started on your incredible and rewarding journey with bitless riding and training.

Join us!

An Introduction to the Bitless Journey

10 Keys to a Smooth Transition

- Bridle research
- Bridle fit
- Prepare
- Assess
- Take your time
- Start small
- Be realistic
- Persevere
- Attitude
- Ask for help

This e-guide provides a roadmap to the beginning stages of your bitless journey and offers advice on how to make a successful transition.

Bridle Research

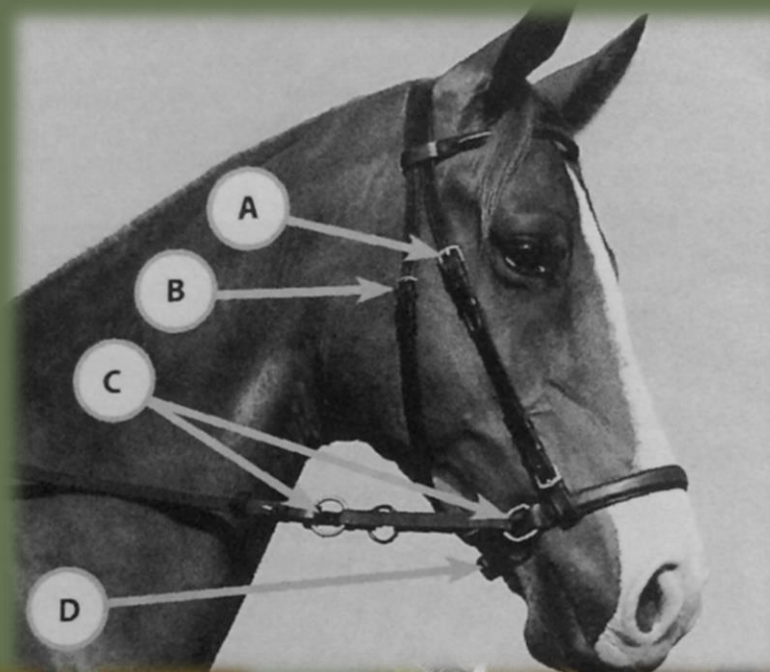


Research your bridle options. There are several bitless bridle styles and numerous designs within those styles. Each horse and rider will have an individual preference. Many bridle manufacturers and tack stores offer a trial period, allowing you to find just the right style for you and your horse.



Bridle Fit

Make sure your bitless bridle fits and is adjusted correctly. Following the manufacturer's guidelines is a great place to start, but each horse may have its own suggestions. It is important to follow advice from knowledgeable sources, but please keep in mind that your horse just might have the most valuable opinions to offer!



Prepare



Prepare, prepare, prepare! You can do this without even owning a bitless bridle. You can immediately start with basic groundwork in a halter or cavesson. You will want to make sure to establish clear vocal cues with your horse and to work on exercises that build a trusting relationship. These two investments will go a long way toward making a smooth transition to bitless riding.

Assess

Assess your abilities as a rider and trainer. Even seasoned professionals can be unaware or in denial about their inadequacies, and we all have them! Put your ego aside and try to figure out where the gaps are in your skill set.

For example, what happens when you tie your reins in a knot and no longer have them to depend upon? Can you steer? Halt? Turn? This is a great test, and will tell you a lot about your riding, your horse's training and how you've both been taught to communicate.



Take Your Time

Take your time! It is crucial to adhere to the three Ps. Patience, Persistence, and Perseverance. For some, the transition to bitless riding will be quick and seamless and for others, it will take more time.



Take your time. Don't rush. Approach this process as an enriching journey – one that will be well worth every step of the trip!

Start Small



Let safety and common sense be your guides. Take things slowly, small step by small step. When experimenting with new equipment, always begin in a small, safe, enclosed environment. Stay small until you and your horse are comfortable and communicating well. Only then should you graduate to larger, more open spaces.

Be Realistic

Never expect any tack or equipment to work as a magic cure for serious behavioral or training issues.



Riding with a bitless bridle should be just one part of a well-planned, humane training regimen; one that shows respect for your horse and its individual needs.



Taking the bit out of your horse's mouth can and will bring your horse much relief, and may also help your horse overcome many issues caused by the bit. However, nothing can ever take the place of a strong foundation and good solid training.



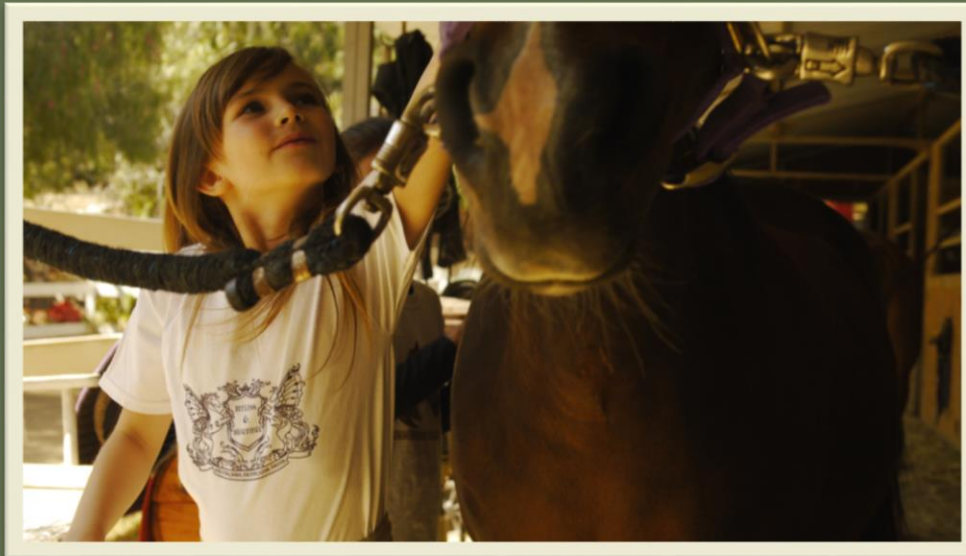
Persevere



Don't give up! You may feel that bitless riding is not attainable for you or your horse at this moment in time. Be assured, riding bitless is truly an achievable goal for all of us. If you are finding the transition to be unusually difficult, then slow down, go back a few steps and continue your preparation efforts while continuing to develop your riding skills. Commit to achieving this goal slowly. It doesn't matter how quickly we make this transition. The journey is the destination! Embrace your stumbling blocks and speed bumps. Each obstacle offers a valuable lesson. You can never go wrong moving at a slow and steady pace.

Attitude

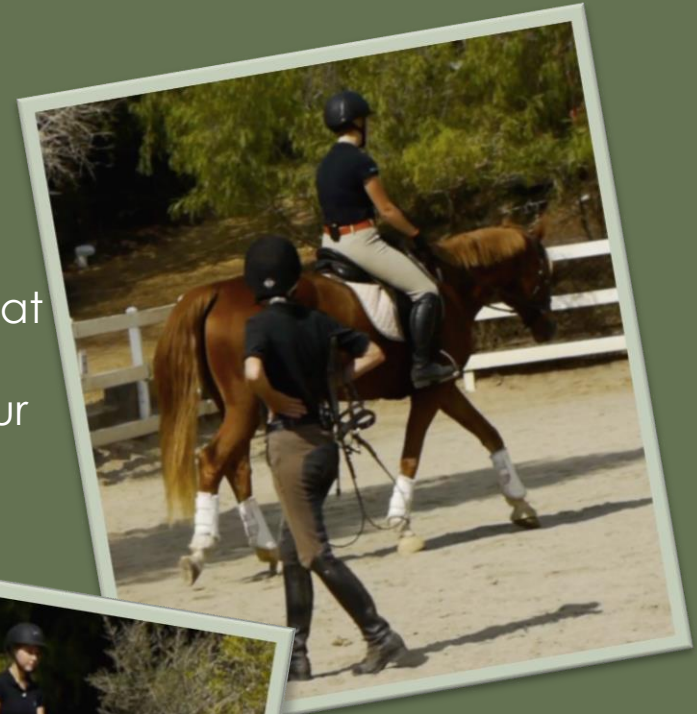
Check your mood and attitude! Remember, your horse can be a mirror, and many times will offer a reflection of your own mental and emotional state. This can work for you when you feel calm, confident, and secure. It can also work against you if you are feeling tense, apprehensive or frustrated. If you feel confident about your choices, usually your horse will too. If you get easily frustrated, chances are, your horse will also. You will need to address your issues before you can successfully work on the issues your horse may present.

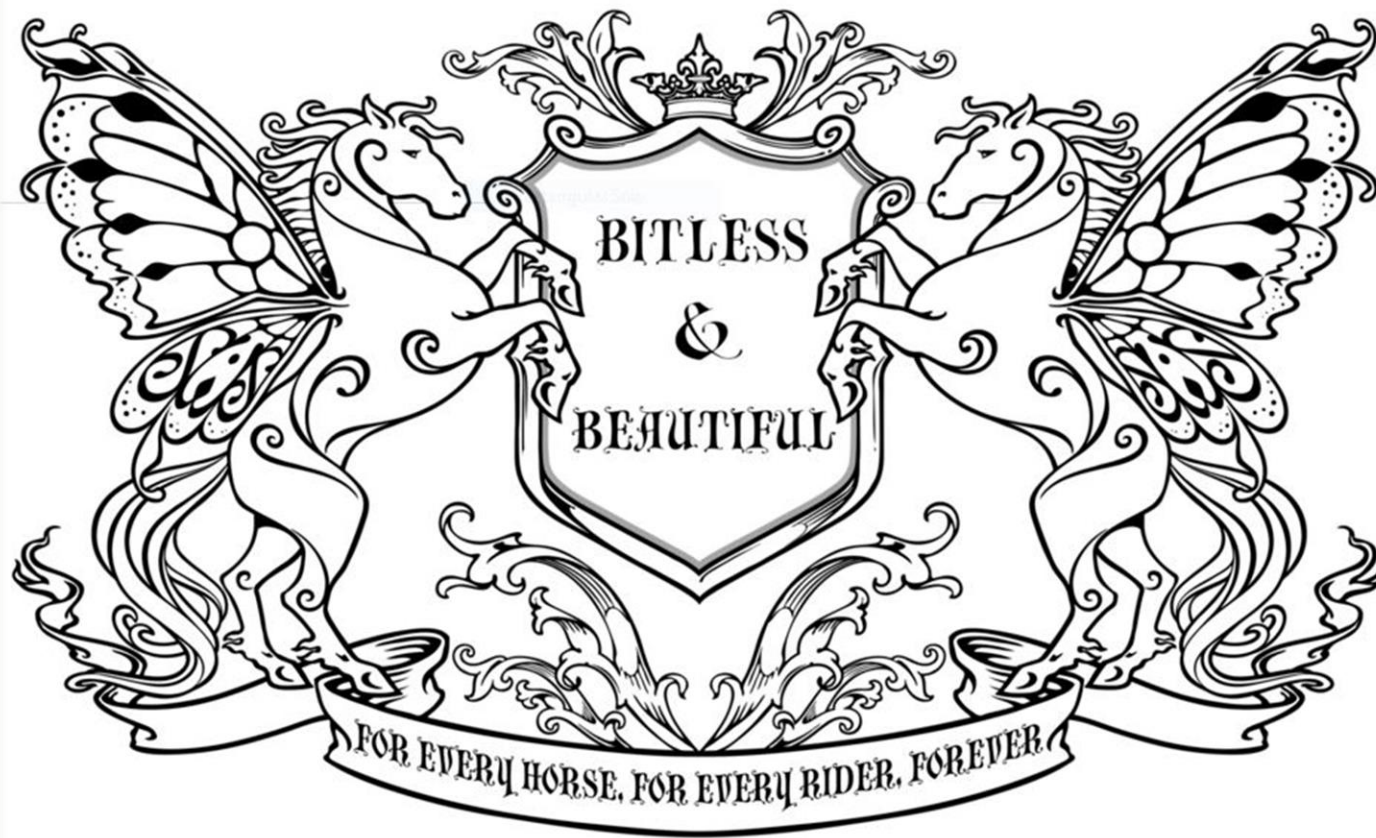


Making the transition from bitted to bitless riding will transform your horse into a more sensitive being. You will discover that you have the ability to communicate more effectively and clearly with your mind, energy and intention than you had previously with the bit and your other aids.

Ask For Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Make sure that those you ask clearly understand your personal goals and will be supportive of your choice to embark on a bitless journey.





For more information, please visit our website.
www.bitlessandbeautiful.com