

Chapter 29. Working with the ESCT Pulser



LEFT: The ESCT Pulser comes with a zippered carrying case, the hand unit with speed, intensity, volume and on/off controls, the two pulsers and the guidewire. One battery is included. The masking tape is extra and is used to attach the pulsing lozenges to the halter or bridle. The two green LEDs at the top of the unit flash left/right as the pulser works, indicating which lozenge is pulsing and the rate of speed.

It was inevitable that, having modified the human protocol for horses, we would also end up using the human pulser on horses. The ESCT Pulser is

an ideal tool for working with spooky riding issues and to calm the horse during training. It allows the rider free hands for the reins and all that is needed is careful monitoring of when you turn the hand unit off and on. The point is not to leave it on more than a minute at a time and to allow the requisite rest breaks between sets of pulsing.

On the ground, the pulser has indicator lights that flash left and right, so you can count the pulses. However, riding a horse does not allow you to check the flashing lights so you will need to use your sense of timing in choreographing the pulsing and the exercise. Even though the hand tapping protocol calls for 20 to 25 counts of bilateral body tapping, the ESCT pulser can be run longer. As we indicated, for up to a minute at a time.

The ESCT Pulser works very well in these situations:

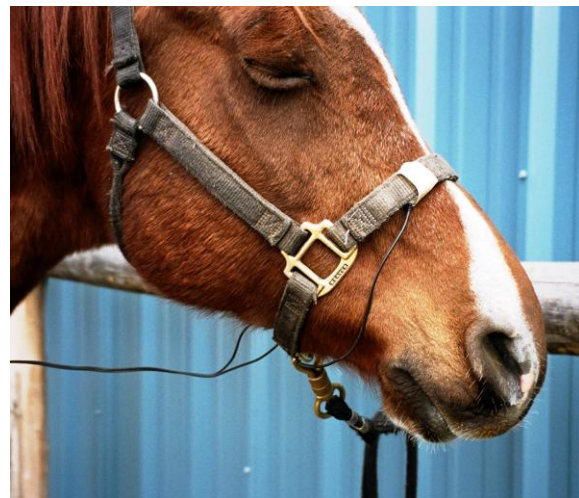
1. Problems with gait transitions
2. Balking at objects on the ground
3. Testing the previous ESCT ground sessions' stressors under saddle
4. Calming your horse for whatever reason
5. Helping establish rhythm in gaits
6. On the ground instead of your hands

I personally believe horses prefer the human contact rather than the pulser, but it is always good to have another tool in your kit and the ESCT Pulser is an excellent one.

The situations I use it in are (weather is a big consideration in Colorado at 8,250 feet):

1. While riding in a metal barn on a windy day with sliding doors clanking and making sudden noises
2. When teaching a new routine that requires more concentration and is technically more challenging for horse and rider
3. On the trail in case we encounter any unusual objects or the wind whips up suddenly
4. As a relaxing device after a good workout
5. Because my horse is an Arabian!
6. To test all my ESCT ground sessions with the rider up
7. On those horses that seem to respond to the pulser better than the hands

RIGHT: The ESCT Pulser is attached to the noseband, left/right symmetrically, with masking tape. The guidewires are looped through the ring at the bottom of the halter.



The ESCT pulser is a hand held control unit about the size of a pack of cigarettes. Attached to it is a guidewire that splits off into two wires, each about 4 feet long, at the end of which is a lozenge shaped pulser that vibrates. The intensity of the pulse and the speed can be adjusted on the hand held unit. There is also a manual on/off switch.

Attaching the ESCT Pulser to the Halter

The pulsing lozenges are attached to the halter with masking tape at the noseband, along the cheek straps, near the mandibles or behind the ears. The lozenges are placed symmetrically on the halter, one on each side.



LEFT: Here the pulser is attached to the vertical cheek strap. Again, the guidewires are looped through the ring at the bottom of the noseband of the halter.

If attaching it to a leather bridle, use the noseband as your point of attachment. You will need to loosen the noseband a bit since the pulsers take up about ¼ inch to ½ inch space in thickness. You can experiment with other positions on the bridle, depending on what style you use. With bosals, the lozenges can attach to the headband. Sidepulls allow for attachment on the noseband, as do bitless bridles. Most bridles fit snugly behind the ears and do not allow additional room for attachment of the pulsing lozenges. Some bridles allow attachment on the cheekstraps that go to the bit.

With a conventional halter, the guidewire is laced through the halter's metal ring (when used on the nose) and attaches to the hand unit, which is hand carried while working on the ground or placed in the rider's belt while riding. The ESCT Pulser is not recommended for use with any type of rope halter since there is not enough material to safely attach the two pulser units.

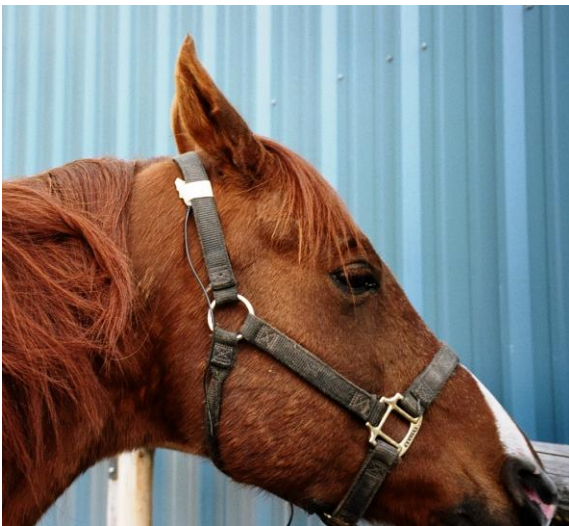
RIGHT: Here the pulser is attached to the chin strap, although on the fleshy part of the cheek, not on bone. This is acceptable since the pulser sense out a resonating vibration.



The ESCT Pulser unit itself is tucked in the waistband so that the on/off switch can be reached with one hand without looking down. Alternatively, it can be taped to the saddle horn on a western saddle, on/off switch facing the rider. The guidewire is long enough so that it reaches from the horse's head back to the rider with room to spare, even if the horse were to suddenly lower its head, to scratch its legs, let's say.

Two green lights blink left/right when the unit is on so, on the ground, you can see if it is on just by looking at it. In the saddle, you would not be able to see the lights blinking on the hand unit unless you have it taped to the saddle horn on a western saddle. Wearing it in the waistband means being aware of your switching it on and off at regular intervals.

LEFT: Attached to the head strap of the halter, the lozenges are position left/right on the atlas/axis protrusion behind the ears.



The guidewire input is designed so that if the horse was to jerk its head, or if the hand unit was dropped accidentally, the guidewire input pops out easily without ripping the cord. Accidents are bound to happen with dropping, but I find the case is hard enough so that, unless it is stepped on by a horse, it will not break. Still, one must take extra care holding it to make sure it is working and safe.

The recommended use on the ground is the same as with your hands, however you have only three attachment points - nasal bridge, jowl area and atlas/axis behind the ears because it is attached directly to the halter or bridle.

Attaching the ESCT Pulser to the Bridle



LEFT: Ian Kersch works with Victoor using the ESCT pulser during a riding session. Vic wears the pads attached to the noseband and you see the right side. Another pad is placed symmetrically on the left side as well. The guidewire runs alongside the face and down through the bottom of the noseband and is attached to the hand unit, which is resting in the saddle for the moment.

The bridle attachment points are very similar to the halter attachment points. They are the noseband, side leathers, browband and cheekstrap. Again, use masking tape to attach them as this holds the lozenges in place and makes them easy to remove when you are ready to remove the bridle from the horse's head.

When you attach the pulser pads to the browband, make sure there is enough room to do so comfortably. Often, the browband fits so snugly that there is not enough room to comfortably slide the pads under the leather and attach them with masking tape. If that is the case, use a slightly looser bridle so that no pressure is put on the horse's facial plates at the attachment points.

If you attach the pads to the cheekstrap, then you may not be tapping on bony structure, but the horse will still receive the benefit of the interrupt signal generated by the left/right pulsing action of the pads. If attached down low toward the curve of the mandible, the pads will be seated close enough to the bony structure to act through the bones as conductors for the electric signal.

Keep in mind that because you have attached the pads so near to the brain, the unit settings should be on low pressure as it does not take much to irritate a horse if the pressure is set too high. I use a setting of 3 or 4 maximum while

working with the units on the headstall. Check your setting from time to time to make sure it has not accidentally moved up. The speed should be slower rather than fast and you will need to experiment with what is comfortable for your horse.

BELOW: Here the ESCT pulser lozenges are placed on Vic's browband and the guidewires run between his ears, down his neck to the hand unit on the saddle.

A cell phone carrying case is often big enough to house the ESCT pulser safely. An alternative is a small utility bag slung on the saddle horn on a western saddle. Ideal is a Velcro strap around the upper thigh to which a utility bag is attached. One can reach down and simply turn the on/off switch to the desired position without having to look down. Some riders prefer to carry the hand unit in their belt, in their jacket pocket or taped to the saddle horn. You will find a way that makes reaching for the unit comfortable for you. It takes a while to remember to turn it off at regular intervals while working with your horse, and that requires focus - something one needs to have all the time while riding in any event.



LEFT: Ian has taped the pulser to the front of the trail saddle for easy reach. The on/off switch is at his thumb. He holds the reins in his right hand. Usually a few wraps with some masking tape is all that is needed to keep the hand unit in place. The hand unit is taped to the saddle as well.

If you are using the ESCT pulser while riding and working through your horse's stressors, I recommend having someone there to help introduce and remove the

stressor and to general guide the horse from the ground. Your assistant can also be a reminder to you to keep the pulser on no more than a minute at a time and to allow for rest breaks in between each approach and retreat with the stressor. The pulser's green lights flash left and right to show you which pad is pulsing at each moment in time. By glancing down and seeing the lights, you can immediately tell whether the unit is on or off.

Check the guidewire at the tactile setting insertion point to make sure it has not accidentally come loose. The lights may be blinking left and right, but the current is not getting to the horse's head through the guidewires. Again, stay focused.

RIGHT: Here Ian holds the hand unit in his left hand while guiding the horse with the right hand. For western riders, this is easier than for riders in disciplines where two hands are necessary to control your horse.



Protocol for Using the ESCT Pulser

If you use the pulser, you do not use your hands. It is an either/or situation. I find that men, especially, prefer using the pulser. It must feed into their need to have gadgets that “make things work.” Maybe using their hands is too esoteric for them. In any case, while riding, nothing works better than the pulser unless you happen to have a full-time assistant who can be beside you on the ground at all times. Most of us don't have that luxury.

The protocol follows that of the hands very closely. In fact, before mounting the horse, I recommend tapping down the horse with your hands on all the bony structure you can reach that the horse's tack does not cover. This is bonding as much as it is therapy.



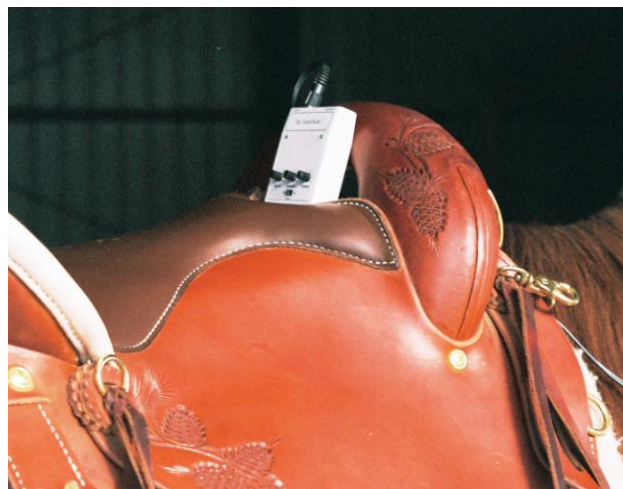
LEFT: Ian wears the pulser in his pocket now as he is moving Vic around the arena and uses both hands on the reins. He has practiced turning the unit on and off so it is a second nature movement for him, not interrupting his balance, posture or visual focus. Vic's ears are turned toward him waiting for a cue, most probably it will be to drop his head correctly.

Once you've done that, attach the pulser pads as shown above. You may have to experiment the first few times to find out where your horse likes the pads the best. Test him with the pulser pads while you are on the ground first, so he is used to it before you mount. You don't want to startle him while mounted.

Have your situation and/or stressors set up beforehand so that everything is ready to go once you mount up. Then, mount up and use the pulser on a soft setting at medium speed for about a minute while you sit on your horse and feel his reactions underneath you. You may need to do this a few times.

Beginning with baby steps, work your way through the approach and retreat of the stressor the same way you did on the ground. That is, have the assistant bring it to you or move your horse toward it or guide him through the stressful situation. When he becomes nervous, turn on the pulser and let it go for about a minute until he settles back down. When you sense he settles, and you will feel him soften underneath you, turn it off and reward him with a stroke or kind words. I am not against cookies at this point, either.

LEFT: On this Sharon Saare custom trail saddle, the pulser fist neatly into the well in front of the saddle role, exposing all the settings.



Repeat this several times, trying to get him to accept the stressor or situation a little more each time. After about five minutes, just walk him around and let him move at liberty on loose reins, or let him stand and rest. Then begin again.

The session should last about 15 minutes the first time. Leave the lesson on a good note, both of you. If a blow up occurs, retreat and walk and pulse until he comes down into the learning zone again. It is part of the process and not a mistake. It's how both of you learn by testing limits.

You will experience remarkable changes in your horse vis a vis his fears. All during the session, monitor the pulsing and how long you leave the unit on. Keep focused on your work with your horse, but stay relaxed and breathe at the same time. Even though the pulsers work miracles, the horse will still sense your body fear through the reins and by how you hold yourself, as well as the rate and depth of your breath. So, relax. When you glance down at the unit, roll your eyeballs down and do not drop your chin - I am sure you have heard this many times from your riding instructor.

Here we show configuration of attached to the guidewires saddle and the tucked into the the saddle for



the complete pulser pads browband, the running to the pulser unit well in front of easy access. It

will take a little practice, maybe 10 tries, for the motion to become second nature, wherever you decide to fasten your pulser. I have used it in my breast pocket and that worked well, too. I have used cell phone cases, small riding bags that can be looped around the saddle horn and even taped the unit to my wrist where it felt very safe and easily accessible. Experiment and see what works for you.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The pulser is a psychotherapeutic tool that needs to be monitored constantly.
2. Remember to turn the unit on and off as needed. We recommend one minute of pulsing and then several minutes of rest.
3. The pulser is used instead of the hand tapping or eye movement therapy.
4. The pulser works best in rider-up situations when both hands are needed for riding.
5. The same protocol rules apply to the pulser as to eye movement and body tapping – allow rest breaks for integration to take place.

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