



Getting out & about with Hula brings big benefits.

by Kaitlyn Zaleski

After several months of what has felt like a “three steps forward, two steps backward” dynamic, it’s finally starting to feel like we are making consistent progress with Hula. She has become so sweet to be around and easy to handle. When it comes to riding, we are starting to be able to build on previous rides each time rather than feeling like we have to start from scratch every time we sit on her back. I attribute most of this “slow” progress to her age and immaturity, and less so to the fact that she was a racehorse. Ultimately, it’s a combination of both.



Over the last month or so, our main goal was to expose Hula to as many off-property experiences as possible. The first was Hula’s very first horse show, the W&KRP Open Show in the Fresno area’s Sanger. Hula and I competed in two in-hand classes and two walk/trot classes. She was on her best behavior!

May 2019 - Thoroughbred Makeover: Weekend Adventures

Written by by Kaitlyn Zaleski
Tuesday, 30 April 2019 00:40

This local show is part of a monthly series that we love to support because they hold Thoroughbred Incentive Program classes. T.I.P. was created by The Jockey Club to encourage the retraining of Thoroughbreds into other disciplines after they complete their racing careers. T.I.P. offers incentives for competitive and non-competitive Thoroughbreds in their varying post-racing disciplines.

The very next weekend, we loaded up early on Saturday morning and set off for a friend's ranch in the Central Valley's Springville, to gather cattle. In addition to being excited for Hula to experience their ranch, I was also extremely grateful for the opportunity myself. I had a blast and learned just as much as Hula did.



Wow: A Cow!

This was Hula's first experience working cattle and I suspect it was likely the first time she had ever seen a cow. She was definitely timid at first, but thankfully she (we) had great company in a handful of very experienced ranch horses and people. By the end of the day, she fit right in with the crew, was helping push cattle through and between pens, and even stood right at the fence while a few of the young steers were roped and branded. It felt good to know that the foundation we are working so hard to lay for her has helped her to prepare and adapt to such a different and high-energy situation so quickly.

Hula had a relaxing week following the trip to Springville—a brief session working in the round pen, and one peaceful trail ride. On the following Friday, our barn loaded up several of the horses (including Hula) to head to the Paso Robles Horse Park for their Kick-Off Schooling Show.

This is the biggest travel challenge we've presented Hula with so far. We were at the show for

May 2019 - Thoroughbred Makeover: Weekend Adventures

Written by by Kaitlyn Zaleski
Tuesday, 30 April 2019 00:40

three days and two nights, there were over 100 horses there and classes were going on in three different rings simultaneously throughout the weekend. My favorite part of the show was Saturday morning when I took Hula out for a ride at 6:30 a.m. We rode during the sunrise, had all of the rings to ourselves, and I was able to calmly and successfully prepare for her flat classes later that day. It was so beautiful and peaceful!



When doing entries, I was thrilled to learn that there are TIP classes offered at the Paso Robles Horse Park schooling shows this year, so Hula and I showed in both of the TIP Thoroughbred Hunter Under Saddle classes. It was so much fun to be in the presence six other Thoroughbreds in both of our classes. Our rides weren't perfect by any means but it's so easy to be thrilled with the outcome when I look at the big picture. I already can't wait for the next time we head into the show ring because I know our rides will be even better than the last as her education and training continue.

Now that I'm on the other side of all of these very different but equally valuable experiences, I feel like we have a completely different, and much better, horse. Hula's confidence is soaring and her level of focus has improved greatly, making it easy to make progress during every ride or ground work session we have at home. Now, we are that much closer to getting more focused with her training as soon as we decide which event(s) to compete in at the Makeover this October!



Stay tuned and follow Hula and the rest of Team KZ Equestrian throughout the entire

May 2019 - Thoroughbred Makeover: Weekend Adventures

Written by by Kaitlyn Zaleski
Tuesday, 30 April 2019 00:40

Thoroughbred Makeover journey on Facebook (KZ Equestrian) and Instagram (@kzequestrian_ca).