

# Thomas Herding Technique

Discovering the Communicated Equine

**THT AirWorks System©**

***Patterns-Of-Motion Playbook Designs***

Innovative Racehorse Technologies; *Developed by Man, Applied by Nature*

The **THT AirWorks System©** is a training assistance program working toward the better development of the equine athlete. It is a team concept that works with Trainers & Owners to find ways to apply the Natural Herd Dynamics of Time-In-Motion. **AirWorks** can be used to develop unraced athletes or correct behavioral overcompensations affecting the efficiency of competing athletes.

*“Racing is a battle for position within the herd; you must accomplish your purpose,  
before your competitor can affectively react...” KMT*

## Why

A race in actuality is a herd of horses in motion, making the rules of Natural Herd Dynamics a governing factor. AirWorks blends Herd Dynamics & Emotional Conformation Profiles in a physical fitness program using Time-In-Motion protocols to build efficiency of motion. We work to identify behavioral anomalies that impede the harmony of natural and efficient movement. In essence, we find the base of your horse and design an individualized program so that your horse has the opportunity to be the best athlete it can become; adding value to your investment.

Emotional as well as physical fitness need to be in harmony in order for the equine athlete to attain optimum performance levels. Equine motion is far more than the body moving in a given direction. There is a pilot in charge of the airplane, and your horse’s Emotional Conformation is that pilot. Building a better athlete means developing optimum efficiency of motion and communication of intent over space. Mental & Physical Interval Training is the key to building a proper foundation. For if a horse is expending too much emotional energy, they are not moving forward efficiently. Patterns within their behavior directly influence their individual patterns of motion.

Developing properly the mental soundness of the athlete, we use their Patterns of Behavior to nurture their Patterns of Motion. When we deal with a behavioral/emotional aberration, we use Patterns of Motion to nurture Patterns of Behavior. If you watch any race and closely observe

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each individual, a pattern of motion can be identified. Some horses like close contact, some horses control space from the front of other horses, some control space from just off their flank, some are controlled and some wait and appear contented to *buddy-up*. Any number of different aberrations and anomalies can influence the efficiency of motion of the athlete. Their ability to communicate and even anticipate these is often the deciding factor of where the horse is within the herd in motion.

\*The importance of herd motion and the influence of the herd dynamics cannot be overstated. Horses learn while on the hoof and this is by Natural Design; the decisions made while in motion are for the horse reactions to sustain survival.

*Coaching the horse forward means teaching proper communication skills so that even at accelerated physical speed, the mental efficiency and aptitude governs a smooth rhythm of motion without behavioral overcompensations occurring.*

### How

The Playbook? If you can imagine playing football outside with friends, and recall how you draw "patterns" in the dirt, then you know what a pattern of motion playbook THT style, resembles. Quite literally these exercises of motion are drawn out for said horse and other *coach* horses, in order to begin to elevate the athlete. Working to elevate the horse's base level raises the level of their ability. One should not consider race performance/finishing position as the clearest indicator of true ability.

Three areas that need to be addressed are; building stamina (air work) over a *protracted* Time-In-Motion, build Emotional Conformation & focus ability over that same time period and layer the two with speed within retraction. When you lengthen the demands, even at slower pace, of required mental and physical proficiency, you develop stamina and ability of mind and body. Condensed in shorter time, you develop efficiency, power, and speed. These three components make up the rhythm of motion. In short; build the air, store the energy, and hone the focus.

Proper development of mental aptitude and physical ability requires both puzzle pieces to be properly blended together via the avenue of interval training. **THT AirWorks System**© breaks down the Time-In-Motion (T.I.M.) into stages; interval portions of the whole, applied to develop such things as Target Anticipation, Push-Pull Target Work and teaching *focus, target, release* so that the horse can be trained forward. These are layered like the layers of a cake.

Often a program design starts with going back to the basics and teaching your athlete how to communicate, and that means how to *listen*. An efficient herd horse must be able to manage multiple stimuli while in motion and *read* the movements of others horses even if it is by *feel*. Blind-spot infractions of space should launch your horse forward, not anchor them, and the motion of individual horses, and the rhythm of motion of the herd, should be identified, managed, and as they learn to communicate control over space, not only will their intentions be

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recognized by the horses around them but the horse will begin to anticipate the motion of other horses before their body language gives them a chance to take over space. The high level horses, schooled in stimulus management and operating on a high level of communication ability, has the edge over 80% of the average horses within the herd environment.

*“To change the game, you have to change the approach...” KMT*

### The Program Steps

Specifically designed for the needs of the individual a pattern of motion playbook starts with an Emotional Conformation Profile Inspection. The profile will define the ingredients that make up the *who* part of your *what...* your horse. Patterns of Behavior are identified and placed alongside patterns of motion to identify the consistencies and anomalies that are impacting the athlete's performance. Once done, a series of workout patterns are designed in weekly or bi-weekly stages, depending on the case and the needs, in order to begin a layering, teaching process.

Each successive stage becomes more progressive in the demands but is layered carefully to make achievable goals a reality, and the horse's progress and ability is closely monitored each step of the way so that proper nurturing and growth take place.

Case specific and encompassing from three to five stages of development, the initial playbook is designed with three different exercises of motion taking place over a 3 to 4 week period, each stage designed to build upon the one before it.

Depending on the horse's progress, the goals and the time-frame available to work in, the playbooks are designed in such a way as to develop the athlete, or therapy an existing performance issue with a horse in between races, in as expeditious a manner as possible.

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Many horses' talents go underutilized because physical fitness is not developed and guided along with the basics of Emotional Conformation & Herd Dynamic. With the AirWorks System, we at THT aim to eliminate these costly oversights by helping identify the *complete horse and allowing it to be the best athlete it can be.*

Additional reading is available on the website in such articles as *Training Efficiency of Motion, Building a Better Athlete, Discovering The Communicated Equine & Behavior On The Move* and many more. In addition there is a PDF available as part of our Equine Education Seminar Series upon request.

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