

# Q&A

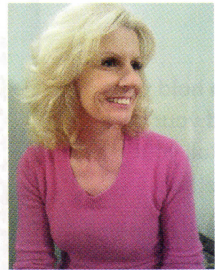
## CONFIDENCE BUILDING

I had a bad fall when I took a corner too tight and ended up with a fence post stuck between my leg and the saddle, making the horse spook.

I got back on again two months later, and while I feel OK sitting on a horse, if my leg touches a fence I panic.

How I can get my confidence back?

**Jodie Burnett**, *Mid Glamorgan*



**Sherree Russell Ginger**, clinical hypnotherapist, **says:**

I understand how frustrating it is when a fear or anxiety stops you from doing something you desperately want to do.

What you are feeling is a perfectly normal, but a totally unconscious, nervous response.

It might seem strange, but your mind is demonstrating how good it is at keeping you safe and how quickly it learns to look out for things that could be a threat in the future, especially if they are connected to a previous injury.

Hypnotic techniques would enable you to communicate with your unconscious mind and allow you to take the emotional charge off the memory of the accident, and reduce its power to trigger the fear response. Then you can re-establish and strengthen the links to your memories of having fun on a horse.

A good exercise is to dig out photos that show you enjoying riding. Recall everything about the time, as if you are watching a film. Step into the movie and relive what you saw, heard and felt.

Allow the positive feelings to wash over and through you, building more powerfully as they update every cell in your body.

Link the positive experience to a colour and the next time you ride, think of the colour to help you recall the amazing feeling.



**Clare Chamberlayne**, sports psychology consultant, **says:**

Think back to the many times, prior to your accident, when you rode past or against fencing without a problem.

Recall all the positive things you felt about riding and use these to help you overcome any panic sensations that arise.

Take control of your breathing as well, because panic is driven by an excess intake of oxygen, which in turn fuels adrenaline.

If you feel yourself starting to panic, slow your breathing down to enable yourself to stay relaxed.

Then put in place a desensitising programme, which involves rating the activities that you want to do with your horse from one to 10.

Something that makes you panic, such as trotting alongside the arena fence, would be rated as a 10.

Now think of small stages that will help you progress towards your goal. For example, holding your horse in the middle of the school could be rated as a one. This will give you an action plan to build your confidence back to where it was.

Work gradually from item one up to 10, drawing on your positive images to keep you going.

## 3 STEPS TO RESTORING CONFIDENCE



**Enlist the support of a good instructor or sympathetic friend who can help and encourage you to achieve your goals.**



**Doing groundwork enables you to develop a better bond with your horse, and feel more confident around him.**



**Take your riding right back to basics, building up in gradual stages. And don't attempt too much too soon.**