

[Mule Training](#)
[Cowgirl Cooking](#)
[Store](#)
[Trail Rides](#)
[Lady Rhinestone](#)
[Conceal & Carry](#)
[Cowboy Code](#)
[Home](#)



## Answers To Your Mule Questions by Cindy K (McKinnon) Roberts

Updated: 02/04/2009 02:24 PM

[WWW.EVERYCOWGIRLSDREAM.COM](http://WWW.EVERYCOWGIRLSDREAM.COM)

### BITING MULE

My mule is 9yr old and I have had him for a little over 1 yr. Based on the information I have, he had 2 previous homes and was treated very well. We have bonded well and he appears to be glad to see me when I walk toward his pasture. We ride about 3 times per week. He loves trails rides and never gets tired. His training had been progressing very well (I take riding lessons once a week). A few months ago, I was leading him to a large pasture to ride. He does not like this pasture (one side backs up to woods and this seems to make him spook often). He was very reluctant to walk and he kept stopping. I got him walking again and with no warning he reached down and bit the outside of my right knee. I screamed and threw my arm up, but did not hit him. We continued to the pasture and rode without much event (he spooked a few times, but that is normal). He has attempted to bite my knee since then, it seems to occur when I'm asking him to do something he does not want to do (he has even tried to bite my boot when I ask for a lope, he will still try to bite when being led even I'm just leading him around the riding ring). My instructor has suggested doing ground work with him so he will learn to respect me. We have been doing that for a few weeks, he learns very quickly and seems to have gotten bored with the ground work, he will sometimes make a half-hearted attempt to bite. I have been using a stud chain under his chin when leading or doing ground work, when he tries to bite, I jerk the chain a few times. He is still calm and gentle when I groom him, pet him, give him treats....during these times he has plenty of opportunity to bite, but he doesn't even try. Is it possible that biting has become his way of saying "I don't want to do this" and how do I change this behavior? He really is a good boy and I would like us to communicate better. He has no medical problems and all his vet care is up to date. My instructor said that his saddle and bit fit him well. Thank you for any suggestions. M Watson

---

Yes you are right...your mule is communicating his reluctance or insecurity through biting. I would make sure that what ever the task is -- your mule should be schooled to that level to be able to do that task. Your mule should have a relaxed frame of mind (and not be upset or frustrated) in order to move forward with what ever you are working on. I would not use harsh or extreme measures to correct your mule at this point but I would suggest this: make sure your mule gets enough play/relaxation time while working under saddle with you. This will take the "pressure" off of him. Also, reward him from doing things correctly. Simply rub the crest of his neck and say "good boy" -- mules do better with praise and encouragement. I would keep a short crop in my hip pocket -- have it ready just in case he attempts to nip or bite -- and you will know when that time comes. He may have that look in his eye or you may just "feel" his disapproval -- be quick to respond with a smack on his side or rump -- one smack. **Do not strike him in the face.** Then move on to something else. Don't give him time to think about what happened -- just move on. You are very attentive and thorough to check with your vet about possible health issues and to check with your instructor to make sure that you have correct saddle fit. You have the right attitude and your mule is lucky to have you. Thanks for your email -- best wishes Cindy K. Roberts

---

Warning! Under Missouri law, an equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to the Revised Statutes of Missouri. Your participation in training your own mule or horse by following the advice given in this column and throughout Every Cowgirl's Dream web site is a risk that may result in permanent disability and even death to you and/or your animal. Advice in this column is given through 20 plus years of professional and private mule training experience. The unique personality of your animal and the individual reader's skill level will vary greatly. This column is not a substitute for a qualified mule trainer in your area. Always utilize a professional and knowledgeable trainer to assist you. The author asks each reader to evaluate his or her skill level, athletic ability and mule sense prior to attempting any training technique. By submitting your question, you agree to having your inquiry and answer posted on Every Cowgirl's Dream web site and possibly published in upcoming literature and books.

---

 [Mule Training](#)  [Cowgirl Cooking](#)  [Store](#)  [Trail Rides](#)  [Lady Rhinestone](#)  [Conceal & Carry](#)  [Cowboy Code](#)  [Home](#) 

[www.everycowgirlsdream.com](http://www.everycowgirlsdream.com)