

1. Spiraling In and Out

1. Begin an active working trot rising on a big circle, 20 meters or larger.
2. After a few revolutions around the circle to ensure you are maintaining a steady and rhythmic trot, begin to shrink the circle down to as small as possible without losing tempo or balance.
3. With each stride, ask him to move over a little more until your circle gets smaller and smaller. You will most likely be on a circle about 10 or 12 meters in diameter.
4. After two revolutions around the small circle, begin to guide your horse one step at a time out to the larger circle you started on.
5. Repeat the exercise twice in each direction.

2. Sprint Lines

1. Develop a nice working canter that is rhythmic and balanced.
2. As you approach the first cone, pick up an extended canter and sprint to the second cone.
3. Immediately after you pass the second cone, slow your horse down to your original working canter.
4. After passing the third cone, sprint forward to the fourth cone and return to the slower working canter at the fifth one.
5. Continue like this for 5 minutes, then take a 5-minute walk break and repeat the pattern for another 5 minutes.
6. Do this three times in each direction.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Pay attention to how your horse uses his body. Make sure he remains balanced and round with his ring of muscles.

3. Strengthening the Front End

1. If you are not accustomed to riding your horse outside the arena, begin by *walking* him at a brisk pace on open terrain. Teach him to stay focused and marching along on all kinds of terrain.
2. Begin with a 1-mile (or 2 km) gallop but not on overly steep terrain. Rolling ground is fine, as are gentle slopes. Practice this once a week. If you have access to more mileage/land, you may want to ride a longer gallop every couple of weeks, up to 3 miles (5 km).
3. Maintain a gallop for a *sustained* period of time. Do not, for instance, gallop up a short hill and then break back to a trot. Short bursts will only excite the horse and do nothing to provide the continuous stress he needs to build strength. Allow the horse to settle into his gallop and maintain it.

4. Legging Up

1. Find an area that is mostly flat. Terrain with too much slope requires the horse to constantly adjust his stride. You want the horse to develop a steady rhythm and stride length.
Pavement is desirable, but packed dirt ground works well too. Most boarding stables have a large parking area or roadway to suit the purpose.
2. Strive for a brisk, active walk with purpose where the horse is actively rolling his feet forward with each stride. Remember that you are trying to create a gentle concussion to lightly stress the horse's legs. To achieve this, the horse should travel at a lively pace. If riding, leave the horse on a loose rein, so he can carry his body in a relaxed and natural posture.
3. Walk for 1 or 2 miles (2–3 km), which equals about 12–20 minutes.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Practice the gallop on different leads each time.
- Ride with a light seat, with your weight slightly inclined forward, so the horse's back is entirely free to undulate and to draw his hind legs forward in big strides.



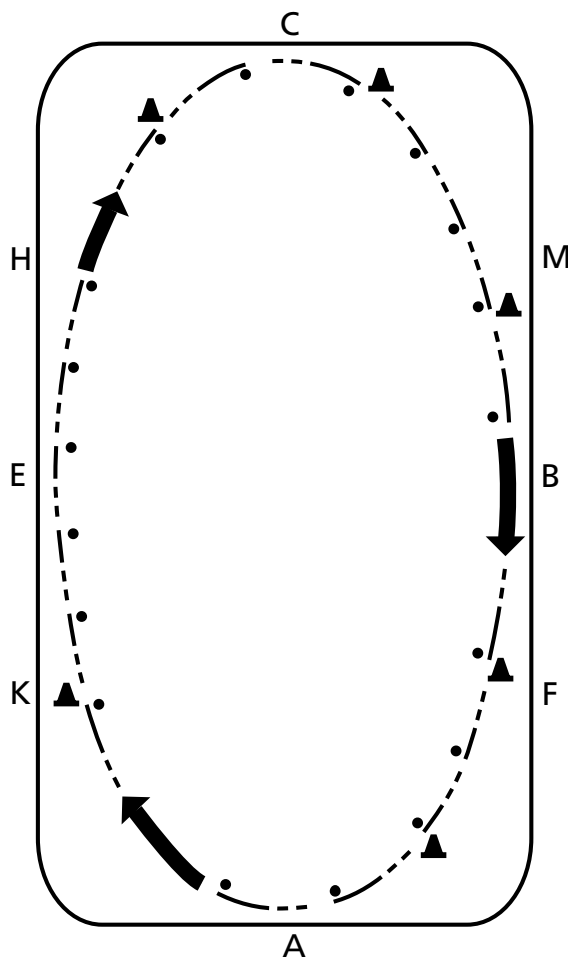
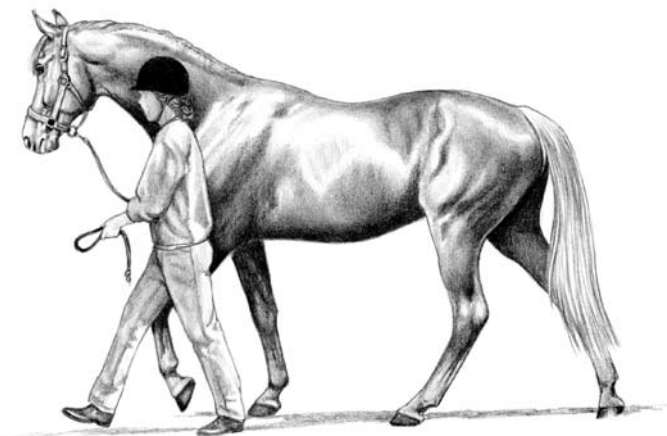
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- As you rise up out of the saddle, nudge the horse sideways with your inside leg at the girth as you enlarge the circle.
- Take approximately three revolutions to end up back on the larger circle.
- While moving to the larger circle, keep his spine evenly bent from poll to tail toward the inside of the circle.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be sure the horse is not fresh!
- A good rule is to ride your horse in the morning, cool him out, and let him rest a few hours. Then, in the afternoon, do 20 minutes of legging up.
- Space legging-up sessions at least 2 days apart; 3 or 4 days is fine.



5. Transitioning Downward

1. Begin in an active working trot, tracking to the right around the rail of the arena.
2. In the middle of the long side of the arena, when your horse's body is fully straight, transition down to a slower trot.
3. Proceed for three strides like this and adjust your posting to rise lower and closer to the saddle.
4. Then, from the slower trot, transition down to a walk, waiting to sit down fully onto your horse's back until the first complete stride of walk. During the transition, ensure that your horse reaches his nose out slightly so that his face is slightly ahead of the vertical.
5. Immediately energize the walk following the transition.
6. Practice in both directions.

6. Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Massage

1. With your horse relaxed on the cross-ties (or tied in his stall), gently stroke his jaw area.
2. When he accepts this rubbing, begin to make tiny circular motions with the pad of your index finger where his jaw muscle begins (a point made by intersecting a line straight down from the base of his ear and a line straight sideways from the center of his eye).
3. After several seconds of circling, hold direct firm pressure on this spot for several seconds and then release.
4. Move down 1 inch (2.5 cm) and begin tiny circles in a new spot. Then, apply direct pressure.
5. Move down 1 more inch (2.5 cm) and repeat.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Use the amount of pressure you would use to squish a grape.
- Go slowly and use gentle circles rather than direct pressure if your horse is nervous.

7. Loops and Poles

Contributed by David Lichman

1. Initially, ride each loop as a full circle.
2. Once you can negotiate the pattern with a steady rhythm, eliminate the circles and just ride the serpentine with poles. Remember to cross each pole in the center, not over the ends.
3. Cross directly over the center of each pole *after* changing your horse's bend for the new loop. The pole is intended to prevent him from rushing or falling into the new turn.

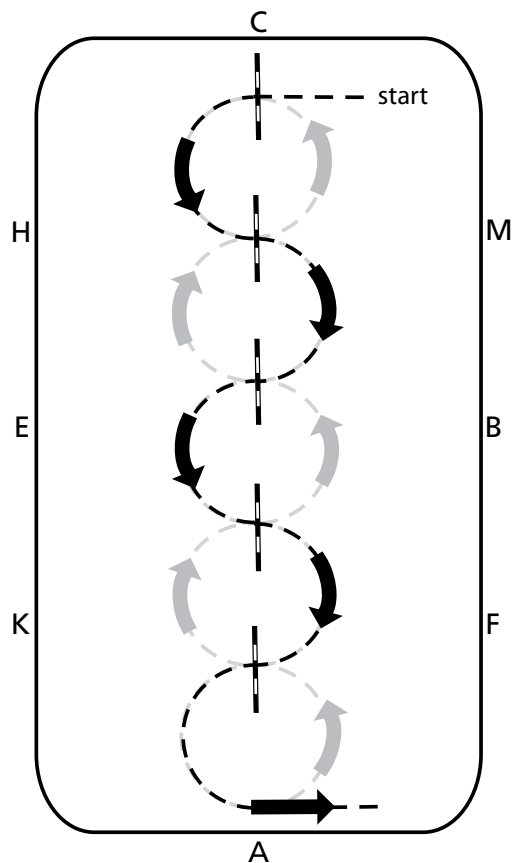
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- If your horse seems tense or is bracing or becoming high headed, modify the serpentine to go twice (or more) around each circle from steps 1 and 2 above until your horse is staying more relaxed and soft.
- Do this pattern in a sitting trot so that your weight is deeply rooted in the saddle and your weight is not tipping forward, affecting the horse's balance.

8. Waltzing with Your Horse

Contributed by Dr. Sherry Ackerman

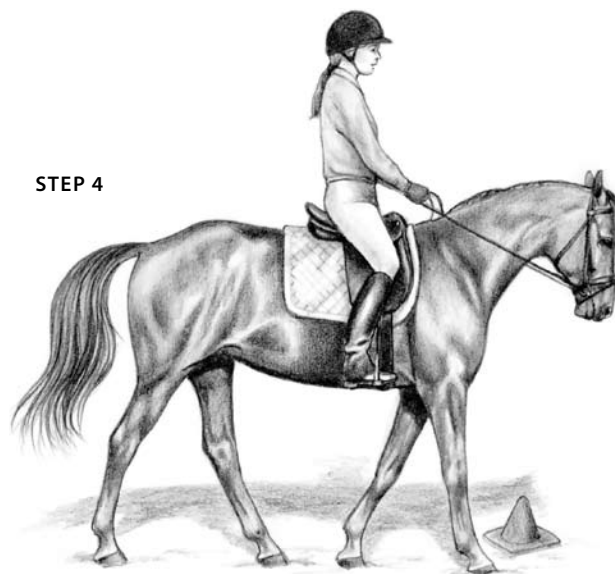
1. Establish a brisk walk with contact on the straight side of the arena. Keep a steady rhythm.
2. Sit so that your inside hip feels slightly more pushed down toward the ground than your outside hip and ask the horse to bend around your inside leg.
3. As the horse continues walking rhythmically forward, rotate *from the waist* so that your inside shoulder goes back while your outside shoulder goes forward. It is important that you rotate from the waist and not just move your shoulders.
4. Keeping your outside leg against the horse, allow him to bring his shoulders into a position that mirrors your shoulders.
5. Ride the movement for four strides and then straighten the horse and walk on.
6. Ride this exercise in both directions.



Each loop should be no larger than 10 meters, although you can adjust the size according to how your horse responds. Set up a single ground pole at the beginning of each loop on the serpentine.

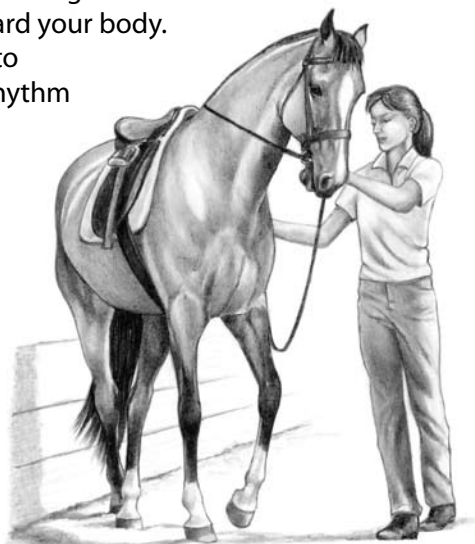
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Don't sit down too early when riding from trot to walk.
- Continue posting until the very *last* stride of the trot so that your horse keeps his back lifted and round through the transition, rather than dropping it away from the rider's weight.



VARIATION

1. Face your horse, holding a short whip toward his inside barrel to invite him to bend.
2. Bending and rotating from the waist, position your shoulders the same way you would in the saddle, allowing the horse to mirror the movement.
3. There should be a sense of gently and carefully drawing the horse's shoulders toward your body. Be careful not to interrupt the rhythm of the walk.



STEPS 2 & 3



STEP 4



STEP 5

9. Gearing Up to Gallop

Contributed by Yvonne Barteau

1. In an arena, develop a regular canter. Make sure you have a light rein contact and that the horse is in a rounded topline posture.
2. For 30 seconds, make the canter bigger (slightly faster and with longer strides).
3. Come back to a regular canter. Assess how well things went. Did your horse get excited? Did the horse change his stride with what felt like more propulsive power? Did you maintain a good contact?
4. Again make the canter bigger for 30 seconds and return to a regular canter.
5. Alternate 30-second bouts of bigger canter with 30 seconds of normal canter. Keep doing this for several minutes.
6. The next step is to stay in the bigger canter for longer than 30 seconds until it becomes a sustained period of galloping.

10. Rein-Back up a Hill

1. Find a gentle uphill slope with hard ground. A driveway will suffice.
Stand your horse with his hind end facing up the hill.
2. Ask your horse to lower his head, ideally to shoulder level, before beginning to back up.
3. Ask for as many steps backwards as possible, aiming for 10 at the minimum. Maintain the rhythm of an ordinary walk — no faster, no slower.
4. Each day, add four more steps.
5. If your horse becomes crooked or braces his neck/head upwards, stop the movement.

Note: In the absence of a suitable hill, you can substitute a large pole for your horse to travel over backwards.

11. Rein-Back on a Curve

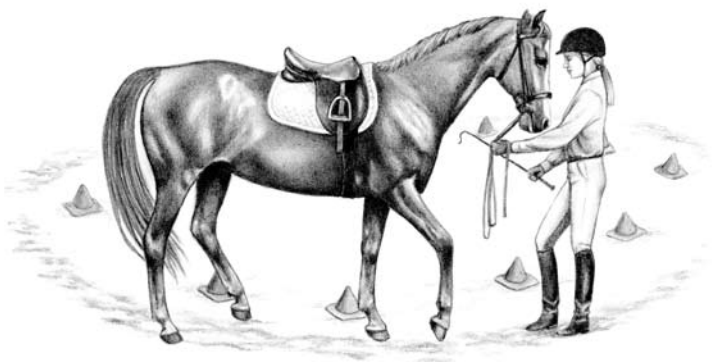
1. Designate a 10-meter circle using small cones or other markers.
2. Stand facing your horse, outside the cones.
3. Ask him to rein-back three straight strides to start.
4. Once you have that momentum, gently guide his shoulders slightly toward your left (away from you) and allow his hind end to swing to the right.
5. Continue walking him backwards around the 10-meter arc that you are now on.
6. If he loses the circle or gets stuck, you might need a long whip on the outside of his body to keep him on the circle.
7. Go halfway around the circle, then stop and praise him.
8. Finish the circle. Work your way up to being able to do the entire circle in one steady flow.
9. Repeat in the opposite direction.

12. Turn on the Forehand in Motion

1. Ride in a walk with light contact and the horse in a good posture.
2. Gently half halt with your seat and back to downshift.
3. As soon as the horse responds, bend him to the right and push his hindquarters away from your right leg.
4. Keep asking him to step his right hind leg in front of his left hind leg.
5. Keep a little bit of forward momentum in your turn so that the horse's front feet keep marching in half steps forward instead of coming to a complete stop.
6. After you have executed a 180-degree change of direction, ride straight forward and resume the normal energy of the walk.
7. Repeat in the opposite direction.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Watch to see whether your horse steps the same length backwards with each hind leg.
- If your horse shows signs of worry or braces himself into a bad posture when on the curved line, go back to rein-back on a straight line to relax him and restore symmetry.
- When you have mastered the above, back your horse around a figure eight with two 10-meter circles to incorporate both a curve in your rein-back and a change of direction.



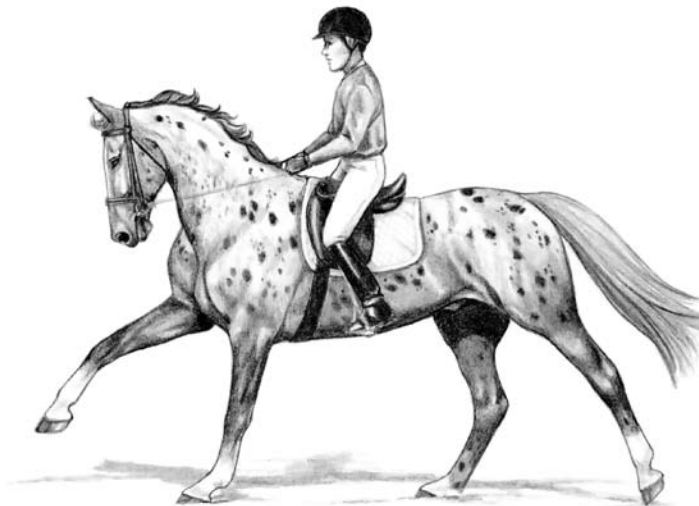
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- The horse's front legs should remain in place and "mark time," that is, they should step up and down without moving forward.
- His hind legs should cross over, forming little X's with each stride.
- The exercise should be done in the same tempo and rhythm as if the horse were walking a straight line.
- If you feel, or have someone tell you, that your horse is dropping a hip, adjust the size of your turn and amount of bend until you are able to remedy the problem.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Because of his larger strides, the horse will need to use his back in a manner very different from his usual way of going: longer strides, a feeling of a bigger jump with each stride, and a swifter tempo.
- *Always* practice your 30-second bouts equally on both sides.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- If your horse tends to put himself in a bad posture and raise his neck or drop his back, perform this exercise unmounted. Use a gentle pressure on the halter or bridle to keep his neck low and use a crop aimed toward his chest to signal the rein-back.
- Do not ask for backward strides that are too long. Keep the movement rhythmic and balanced.



13. Exercise on a Slope

Find an area where the ground rises several feet on one side and slopes downward the same amount on the opposite side of a 20-meter circle. The footing must be somewhat smooth and stable.

1. Begin by longeing your horse at the walk to ensure he is managing his footwork on the uneven ground.
2. Once he is moving comfortably, pick up a trot around the circle. Keep the tempo slow.
3. Once your horse is trotting rhythmically around the circle, add a row of three or four ground poles to the bottom (downhill) side of the circle. They should be spaced appropriately for your horse to take only one trot stride between each one. The poles will encourage propulsion and a rhythmic stride.
4. Once your horse is negotiating the ground poles comfortably, add a small jump or cross-rail at the uppermost portion of the top (uphill) side of the circle. This way, the horse finishes his ascent with propulsion before rebalancing for the downhill section.

15. Canter to Walk Downhill

Contributed by Gina Miles

1. Warm up for 10 minutes with Canter on Uneven Terrain (page 113), finishing at the top of the slope.
2. Proceed in a slow canter straight down a gentle grade.
3. Pick a midpoint on the downhill slope and transition into a walk.
4. Keep your horse straight in the transition; do not allow him to get crooked.
5. Walk the remainder of the slope.
6. Trot or canter to the top of the hill.
7. This time, divide the hill in thirds (if it is long enough), and at each third, transition from canter to walk. Then walk four strides and canter again to the next transition point.
8. Build up to being able to execute 10 of these transitions on each canter lead.

14. Riding a Drop

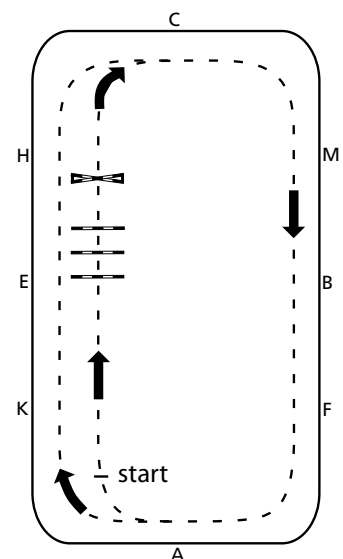
If you do not have a drop constructed at your barn, you can easily make one. You can construct one in a small area utilizing already-sloped ground, railroad ties, ditches, or whatever is handy. All that matters is that the horse has roughly a 2- to 3-foot (0.5–1 m) drop to jump into with stable ground on the opposite side to jump onto.

1. Approach the drop straight on at the walk, making sure that your horse is facing it straight and not crooked.
2. Just at the edge of the drop down, ask him to stop. Stand quietly for a few seconds to focus his attention on the drop.
3. From a standstill, ask him to step down into the drop. Keep your momentum going forward from this point, but not rushing. You want all four of his feet to step down in a balanced manner.
4. As soon as you are in the drop, urge him on with more energy. Ideally, he will jump his way out of the hole, rather than scrambling out.
5. Repeat three times.

16. Gymnastic Jumping

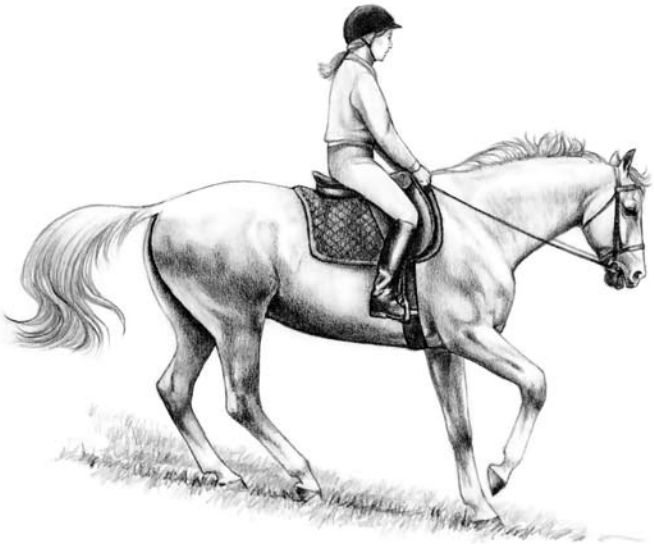
Place three trot poles on the ground approximately one trot stride apart. Then set up a cross-rail at a height of approximately 1 to 2 feet (0.3–0.6 m) spaced about 8 feet (2.5 m) away from the last trot pole.

1. Develop an active rising trot and trot *straight* over the *middle* of the trotting poles.
2. After crossing the last one, come into a half-seat or two-point position.
3. Go forward over the cross-rail.
4. Give your horse a short rest by trotting once around the edge of the entire arena.
5. Repeat for a total of 20 minutes, including rest periods.



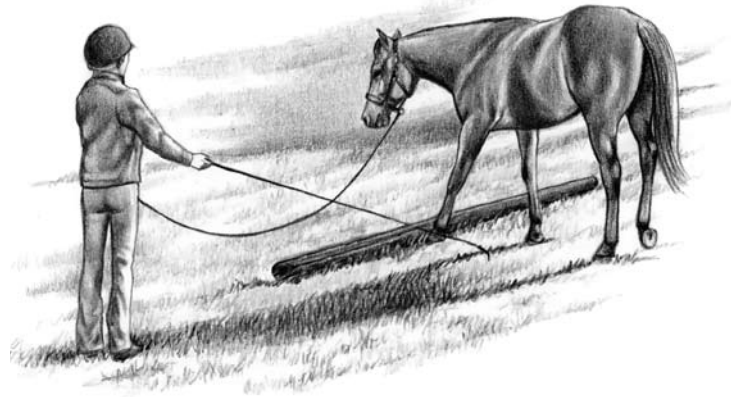
TIP FOR SUCCESS

- You can modify the exercise to a trot–halt format going downhill.



TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Keep the speed slow and easy enough for your horse to maintain the same rhythm all the way around the circle, rather than changing his rhythm from the uphill to the downhill portion.

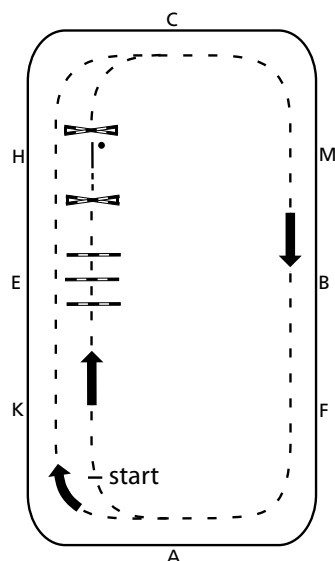


VARIATION

1. Trot straight over the three ground poles and over the first cross-rail.
2. Immediately canter one stride straight ahead to the second cross-rail.
3. If you have trouble getting your horse into the canter before the second jump, space yourself more until your horse understands.
4. Rest him at the trot for 2 minutes around the edge of the arena before repeating.

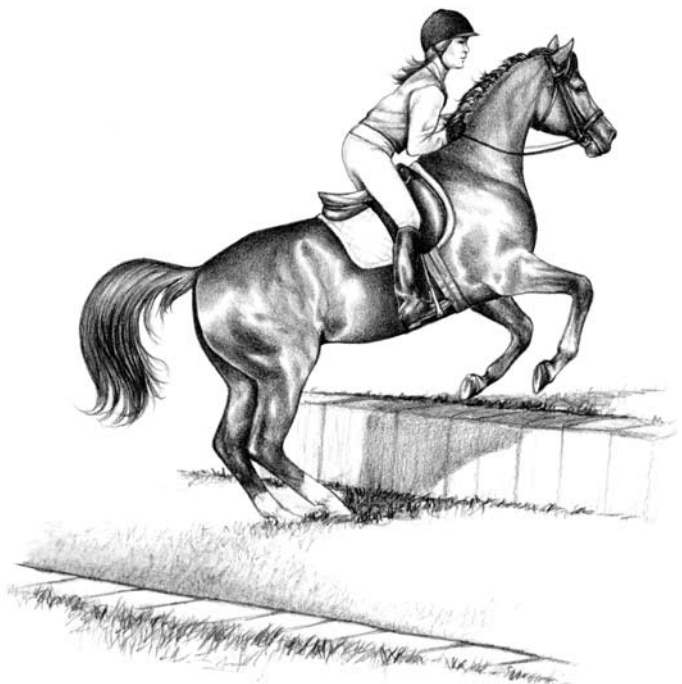
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Sit with a tall but light seat.
- Maintain a steady non-rushing rhythm and hold a *straight* line.



TIP FOR SUCCESS

- You may need to urge him more energetically and with a slightly forward seat if he does not respond by jumping out.



17. Sets and Reps for Arena

Contributed by Jennifer Bryant

To benefit even more from an arena workout, intersperse higher-intensity periods with brief breaks for your horse's muscles and mind. During the rest periods you can walk on a loose rein or let your horse stretch forward and down over his topline. Here's how to structure the workout.

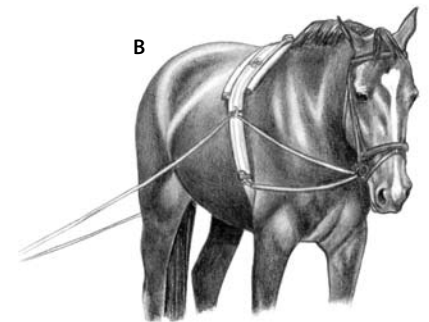
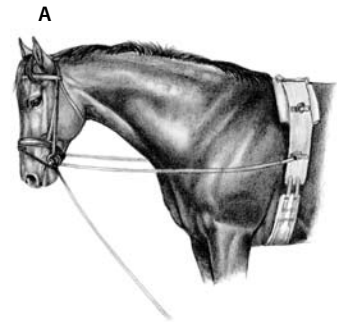
- Perform the work set for 5 minutes.
- Allow your horse to rest for 5 minutes by stretching on a long rein at the walk or trotting easily in a stretched frame.
- Perform the work set for 4 minutes and rest for 4 minutes.
- Perform the work set for 3 minutes and rest for 3 minutes.
- Perform the work set for 2 minutes; final rest and cooldown.

Push yourself and your horse for a little more energy, good form, balance, etc., during each of the above four sets. The final 2-minute set should be almost perfect and really exerting.

18. Double Longe

Contributed by Mark Schuerman

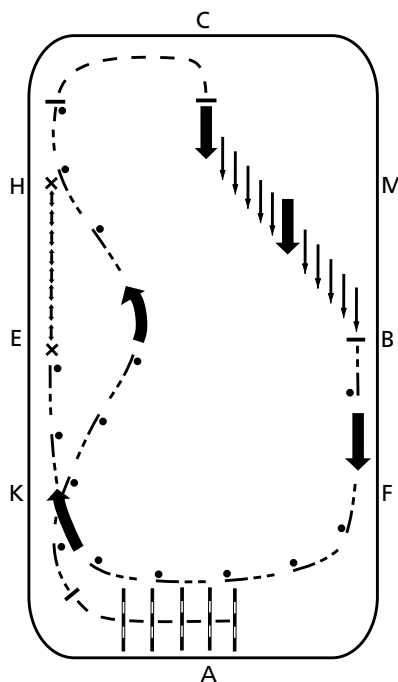
1. Begin by lining up your horse to make a large circle to the left, then halt him and make him stand still.
2. Attach the inside line as shown in A. Keep a hand on this line for safety while attaching your outside line.
3. Attach the outside line as shown in B and run it behind his buttocks, just above his hock.



17. Sets and Reps for Arena (continued)

WORK SET B

1. In active working trot, go straight over a row of five raised (3-foot [0.9 m]) ground poles.
2. Pick up a canter and ride a shallow loop down long side and come back to the trot.
3. Turn down the centerline and leg-yield to the rail.
4. Canter halfway around the arena again.
5. Halt and rein-back eight steps.

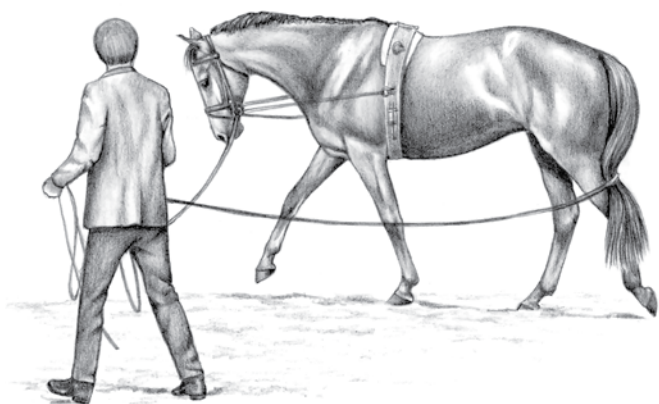


19. Arena Interval Training

1. Walk your horse briskly on a long rein for 5 to 10 minutes to warm up.
2. Canter at a moderate pace around the track of your arena for 2 full minutes.
3. Transition down and do a working trot for 2 minutes. This is your "rest" period.
4. Canter in the opposite direction for 2 minutes.
5. Repeat the canter-trot-canter sequence four times for a total of 24 minutes.
6. After the fourth set, bring your horse down to a walk. Let him walk at ease for a full 10 minutes until breathing and heart rate return to a resting rate.

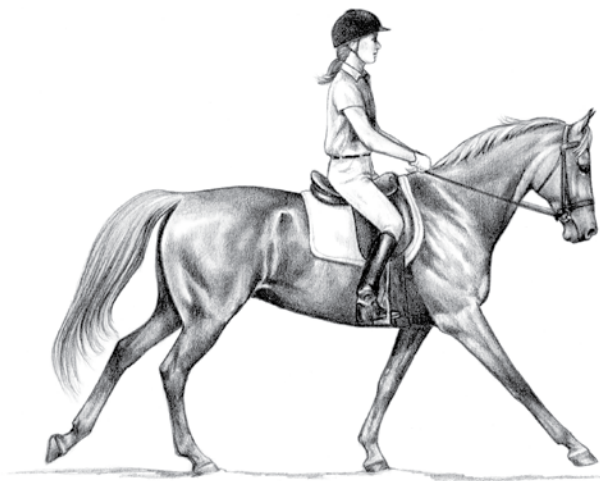
An interval is a short burst of speed that increases the heart rate, followed by a brief rest period during which the horse's heart rate is kept at working level. Interval training will help improve or maintain your horse's overall cardiovascular fitness. If you want to increase, rather than maintain, fitness over time, gradually add a second work set after the long walk break.

4. Holding the inside line in your left hand and the outside line plus a long whip in your right, step back toward the middle of the circle. Your horse must stand quietly as you do this.
5. Organize your lines and send your horse forward into a brisk trot.
6. Keep your horse trotting vigorously the whole time so that he rounds his topline into the contact with the ground-driving lines.
7. Do 10 minutes in each direction. When you change directions, switch the hookup of your lines.



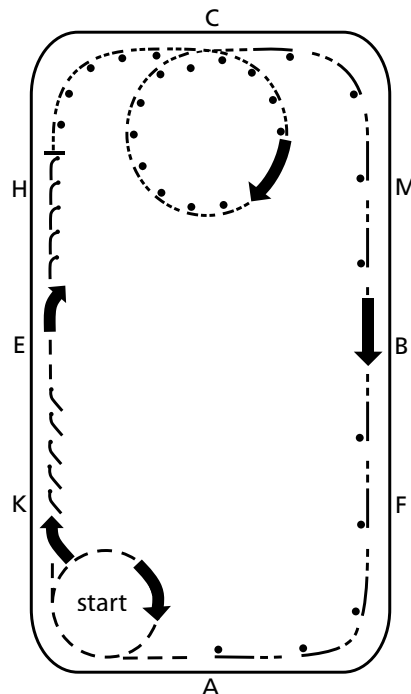
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be precise and consistent. Try to perform a cardiovascular workout of this type at least once weekly.
- Be aware of your footing. Loose, sandy arenas, for example, will strain your horse far more than firmer ones. You may need to modify the outlined intervals depending on your arena.
- Allow nearly 20 minutes of hacking around or walking for the horse to cool down.



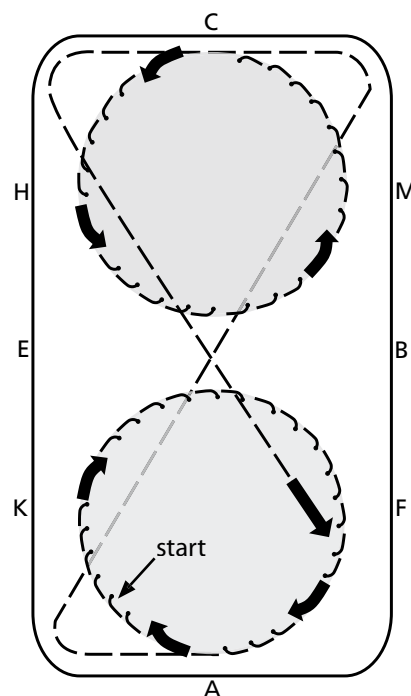
WORK SET A

1. Execute working or collected trot on a 10-meter circle twice.
2. Ride halfway down the long side in haunches-in, then change to shoulder-in for remaining half of long side.
3. At the end, straighten your horse and pick up a working or collected canter. Canter twice around a 15-meter circle and go down the long side in extended canter.



WORK SET C

1. Perform shoulder-in in working or collected trot on an approximately 65-foot (20 m) circle.
2. Proceed across the diagonal in extended trot.
3. Ride 65-foot (20 m) circle in shoulder-in in the new direction and then across the diagonal again in extended trot.



RIDING SEQUENCE

- Perform the work set for 5 minutes; rest for 5 minutes.
- Ride 4 minutes; rest 4 minutes.
- Ride 3 minutes; rest 3 minutes.
- Ride 2 minutes; final rest and cooldown.

20. Tail Pull

1. Standing about an arm's length directly behind your horse's buttocks, grasp his tail above the end of the tailbone.
2. With your feet firmly planted, gently pull the tail straight out from the horse's back.
3. Hold for 20 seconds, maintaining a consistent amount of traction.
4. Release very slowly so that the horse's back muscles can ease out of the stretch.
5. Work up to holding this stretch for 2 minutes.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Incorporate tail traction into your grooming routine. Aim to do it before and after each ride. In chilly weather, however, do it only after riding.



23. Shoulder Release Down and Back

Contributed by Jim Masterson

1. Position yourself at the horse's left shoulder, facing forward.
2. Lift the foot and place your right hand on the inside of the fetlock and your left hand under the horse's knee. Make sure your right hand is on or above the fetlock, not on the hoof.
3. Hold the leg in this position, allowing the muscles of the shoulder to relax. When you feel the leg and shoulder relax or drop slightly, move on to the next step. The idea is for the horse to relax the leg in your hands until he sets it down and back. Do not pull on the leg.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be sure to straighten his leg and allow him to put his foot down!
- Wiggling or rotating the foot and leg may help him to relax. If the shoulder is tense, move on to the next step.



STEP 2

22. Lateral Cervical Flexion

Contributed by Jim Masterson

1. Standing next to the left shoulder, place your left hand gently on the nose and your right hand or fingertips about 4 inches (10 cm) below and behind the ear.
2. Gently flex the nose toward you with your left hand and apply very gentle pressure toward the opposite ear with your right hand. You are asking (not forcing) the horse to relax the atlas. Watch for the eye to soften, feeling for a release of tension in the atlas and poll.



STEP 1



STEP 2

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Signs of release of tension are repeated blinking, yawning, licking and chewing, snorting, sneezing, and "shaking it loose."
- If your horse shows more resistance bending to one side, start on the opposite side.

24. Shoulder Release Down and Forward

Contributed by Jim Masterson

1. Position yourself at the horse's left shoulder, facing toward the hind end.
2. Lift the foot with your hand under the fetlock as if you were going to clean the hoof.
3. Step backward bringing the foot with you, with one hand under the fetlock and the other under the bulb of the heel, so that the leg is extending slightly forward.
4. With the leg slightly forward, support the leg either with the fingers of both hands under the toe or under the bulb of the heel. *Important: If the horse falls forward into your hand, put the foot down. Do not keep pulling forward.*



STEP 4

21. Tail Rotations

4. When he is relaxed, lower his foot with your right hand, straighten his leg with your left hand, and ask him to put his foot down and back until it is flat on the ground. Feel for his shoulder blade (scapula) to drop slightly as he does this. Do not ask him to step back too far.

5. Allow the horse to release. The horse may stay in this position as long as he wants or he may go back to a normal stance.

6. Duplicate the exercise on the opposite side.



STEP 4



STEP 5

5. When he is relaxed, slide your right hand under the bulb of the heel and lower his foot to the ground, keeping your left hand on his shoulder. Feel for his shoulder blade (scapula) to drop slightly as he does this. Do not pull his leg out too far.

6. Step back and allow the horse to release. As he releases his leg down and forward, pick a spot on the ground close to the horse for him to put his foot. Do not continue to hold the foot out because he could fall forward or hyperextend the leg — not good!

7. Repeat this exercise on the opposite side.



STEP 5



STEP 6

1. Stand close behind or slightly off to the side of your horse, behind his hip on one side.
2. Hold the dock of his tail (about 4 inches [10 cm] from the top of his tail) with both hands and lift gently straight up 2 to 4 inches (5–10 cm).
3. Make small circular motions with the tail, circling in each direction three to five rotations.
4. Be sure your circles are evenly sized in both directions of rotations. If not, it might be an indication of stiffness or tightness in the horse's back.
5. Move slowly in this stretch so the horse does not clamp his tail.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- You can get your horse to relax by gently rubbing the hairless underside at the dock. Once he relaxes, move into the circling motion.



3. Move your right hand 2 or 3 inches (5–7.5 cm) down the neck vertebrae. Keep your left hand on the nose.
4. Gently flex his head toward you with the left hand, pushing gently away with the right hand. Bring the nose toward the shoulder, stepping back as you go.
5. Relax both hands again and move the right hand farther down the vertebrae of the neck.
6. Bring the horse's nose farther back toward the shoulder each time until you have brought the head all the way back to the shoulder and your hand all the way down to the lower vertebrae of the neck. As the horse relaxes, gently rock the head and neck with both hands as you go.
7. Step back and allow the horse to release. Duplicate on the opposite side.



STEP 3



STEP 4

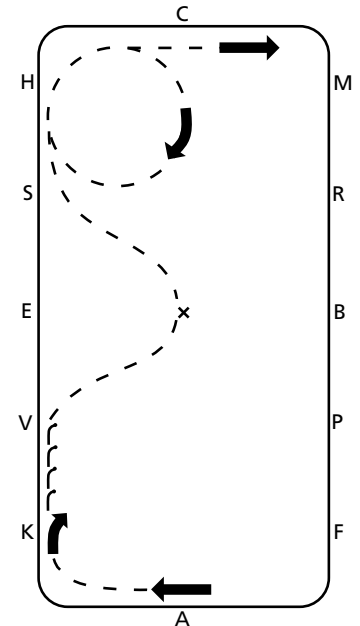
25. Loosening the Back

1. Set up five ground poles on flat ground spaced so that your horse can walk comfortably over them without taking a stride *between* any of them.
2. Before heading into the arena for your workout, ride over the poles.
3. Continue straight back and forth over them until you feel your horse's stride change; that is, he begins to keep a steady cadence over the poles and is reaching nicely with a long stride over the poles, beginning to round up his back under your seat, and stretching his neck toward the ground.
4. On some days, it may require several trips over the poles (up to 10 or more) until you notice a change; on other days, your horse may loosen up after crossing the poles only twice.
5. After you feel your horse's muscles becoming looser, establish your contact and head to the arena for your workout.

28. Shoulder-In to Shallow Serpentine

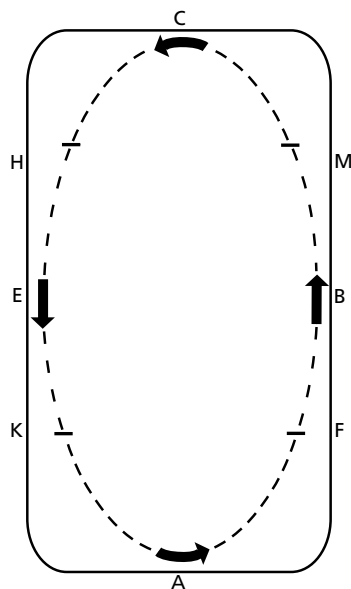
Contributed by Betsy Steiner

1. In an active trot, ride shoulder-in for the first third of your arena's long side (from the letters K–V).
2. "Peel" off the rail and ride to X.
3. At X, change your horse's bend to the left and ride back to the rail at H.
4. Once you return to the rail at H, ride a 10-meter circle to the right.
5. Proceed the rest of the way around the arena to repeat exercise again at K.



26. Warm-up 1 — The Oval

1. Visualize a giant oval around the edge of your arena.
2. On the long sides of your oval, ride a big ground-covering trot with lots of energy.
3. As you come to the rounded ends on the top and bottom of your oval, downshift to a slower trot.
4. As you come out of the rounded ends, immediately ask your horse to surge forward in a big, bold trot down the long side of the arena again.
5. Downshift again coming into the top/bottom of your oval. Continue this sequence for several minutes, in both directions.



29. Canter on the Honor System

Contributed by Dr. Jessica Jahiel

1. Warm up thoroughly at the walk, and perhaps also (depending on your horse's fitness and flexibility) at the trot.
2. When warmed up, go into a light half-seat, lengthen your reins until they are *loose* rather than *long*, and allow/encourage your horse to canter on a large circle (at least 20 meters).
3. Continue cantering for at least 5 minutes and possibly much longer, depending on your horse's level of fitness.

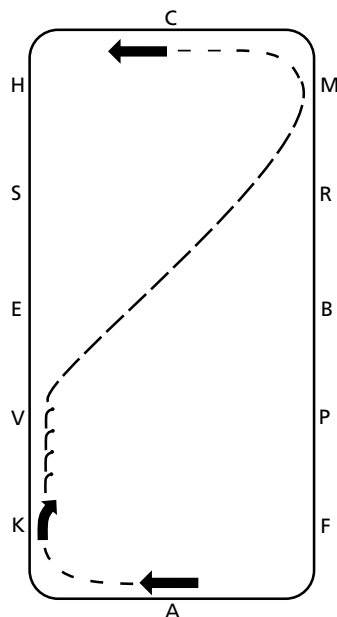
VARIATION

Shoulder-In to a Diagonal in the Trot

Follow the above pattern through step 3, except once you peel off the rail, extend your horse's trot strides all the way across the arena to M. When you get to the rail at M, slow down a bit and reorganize his working trot.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Keep a consistent rhythm throughout this pattern.
- Maintain an energetic trot to build strength.
- Work in both directions.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Use this simple exercise to work on your seat. Sit deeply, *follow* the movement, keep your eyes *up*, and stretch your legs down from your hip.
- Keep your horse *straight* over the middle of the poles.
- Note any changes in the way he feels from day to day. Does he bump into the poles when you start? Is he distracted? Does his back seem sore and unwilling to round up? Is he resisting your aids to be straight?



EQUINE FITNESS

27. Warm-up 2 — Simple Trot Pattern



This exercise is pleasant for the horse but can be challenging for the rider. There is no use of reins and no sitting deep in the saddle — your contact and communication with the horse come from your legs, weight and balance, breathing, and voice.

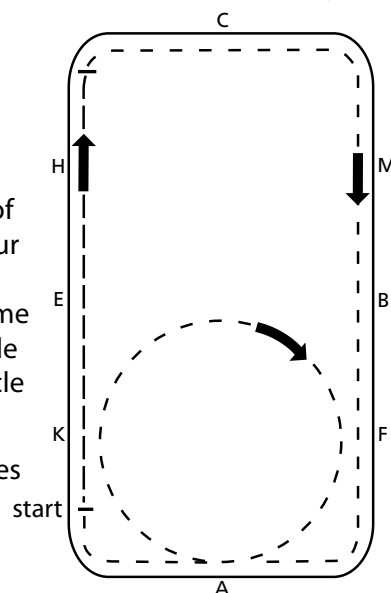
1. Begin in an energetic working trot to the right. Ride once around the edge of the arena, maintaining a steady rhythm.

2. At A, ride one 20-meter circle.

3. As soon as you leave the circle and are on a straight line again, ask your horse to increase his trot tempo to cover as much ground as possible.

4. At the opposite end of the arena, resume your steady working trot tempo. When you come around to A again, ride another 20-meter circle and repeat step 3.

5. Repeat this a few times and then do the same pattern in the canter.



30. Horizontal Frame Conditioning

1. Begin by trotting your horse in a “horizontal frame,” meaning his poll and withers are at the same height and his neck is horizontal to the ground like a table.
2. When you feel he is reaching into the bit and you have good contact, begin to shorten the reins half an inch at a time.
3. Shorten the reins until the horse’s poll is now the highest point on his body. Depending on his height, his ears might now be relatively level with your chest.
4. Keep the trot active and ride in this frame about 15 seconds.
5. Gradually let the reins slide through your fingers a half inch at a time until the horse is in a frame with his poll *lower* than his withers.
6. Ride 15 seconds in this frame.
7. Repeat the whole sequence several times in each direction.
8. When you are performing it well, also ride it at the canter.

31. Changing Speeds

1. Choose either a working trot or a working canter; this exercise is beneficial in only those two gaits.
2. Proceed in your working gait on either a very large circle or a straightaway.
3. Making sure your horse is in a good posture, extend your gait.
4. Remain in the extended pace at least as long as you were in the working gait. For example, if you ride three-quarters of the way around the arena in the working canter, extend the canter for the same distance.
5. Make a *gradual* downward transition to the working gait.
6. Repeat numerous times in both trot and canter in both directions. It is only effective when the horse is pushed enough to take more oxygen into his body.

32. Counter Canter Loops

1. Begin on the right lead. Execute a few large circles to establish a clear and consistent rhythm.
2. Leaving your circle, ride through the corner and then immediately peel off the rail toward the center of the arena.
3. When you are about 10 feet (3 m) from the rail, ride straight ahead for about 7 feet (2 m). Make sure your horse goes straight at this point.
4. Guide him back to the rail for your next corner.
5. Instead of doing another shallow loop right away, ride straight down the following long side of your arena.
6. Practice in both directions.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

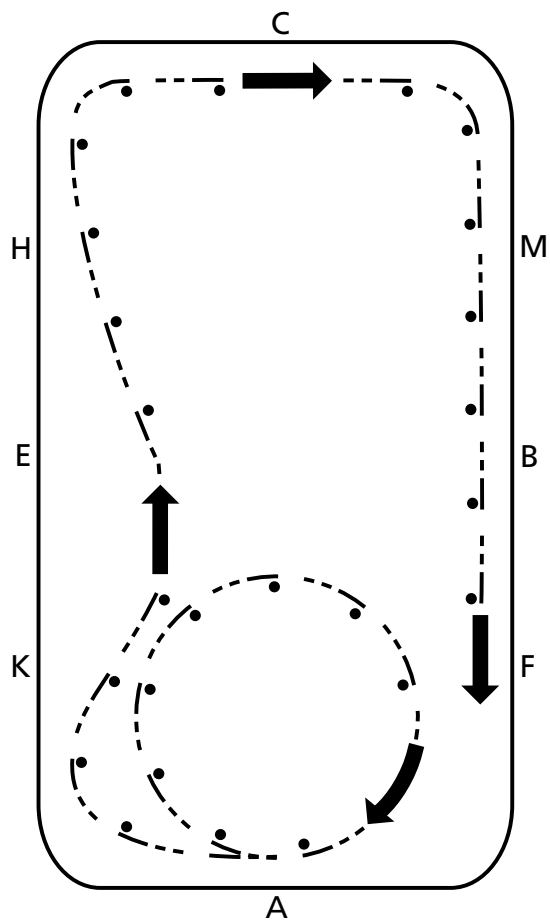
- If the horse changes his posture or his rhythm, make your loop even more shallow or “fatter” until you can ride it without fluctuations.
- Be precise with your geometry because the difference in loop sizes taxes your horse’s postural muscles distinctly.

33. Counter Canter Serpentine

1. Develop a working canter on the right lead and begin by riding alternately between a 20-meter-diameter circle and a 15-meter-diameter circle, to get the horse on your aids for changing the size of his bend.
2. When you’ve established a consistent canter, ride the first loop in the diagram. Make sure your horse’s rhythm, bend, and posture remain even throughout.
3. Ride straight down the following long side of the arena.
4. Play around with the different patterns, tracing each one with your horse and alternating between them.
5. Work in both directions.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

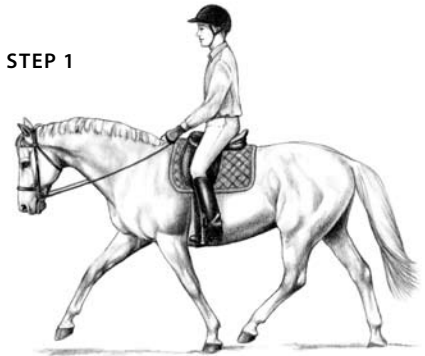
- Follow the suggested geometry precisely. The shape of the pattern determines whether or not the horse balances himself correctly.



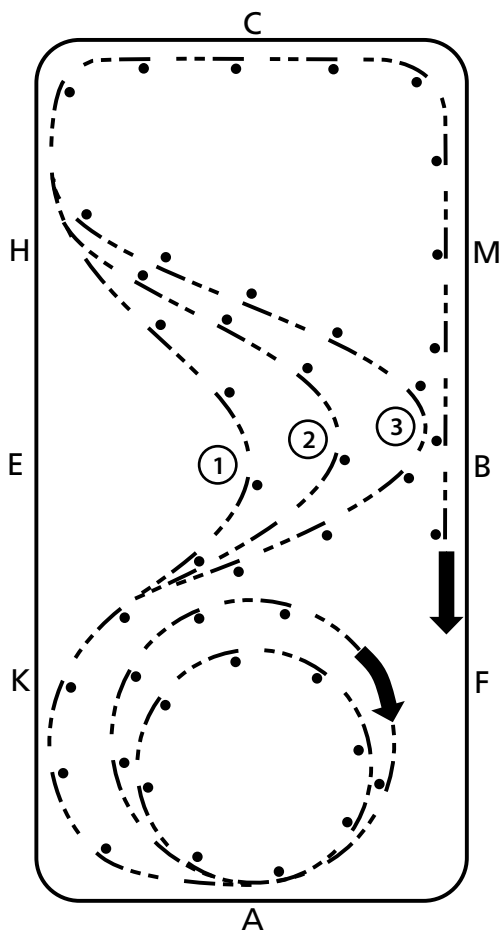
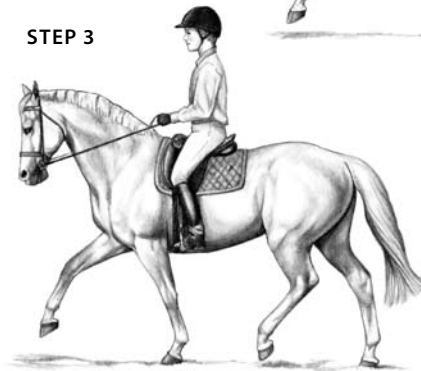
TIP FOR SUCCESS

- If while you are adjusting the reins, your horse becomes fidgety with the contact or drops it, stop at *exactly* that length of rein and ride forward until you regain his connection to your hand.

STEP 1



STEP 3



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Do not make the transitions too close together without the time to establish a clear rhythm in each pace. Be sure to maintain a good posture in the horse throughout the entire exercise.
- Allow the horse's neck to lengthen forward when you transition to the extended gait. If you do not, his body will remain blocked in the extension.



34. Shoulder-In Repetitions

1. In an arena or flat surface with good, level footing, begin in an active working trot traveling clockwise. Note your horse's heart rate on the heart monitor after 4 minutes.
2. Maintaining a steady rhythm, execute 10 steps of shoulder-in, taking note of the horse's heart rate as he moves over.
3. Note how many strides of shoulder-in it takes until his heart rate rises noticeably.
4. Once you have determined the number of strides in your set, continue trotting around the arena riding various simple patterns (big circles, diagonals, and figure eights). Every 60 seconds, execute a shoulder-in set.
5. After each set, continue riding simple patterns for 60 seconds.
6. Repeat this cycle for 5 to 10 minutes in both directions, depending on your horse's skill with shoulder-in. Keep checking the heart rate to ensure you are getting a consistent rise in heart rate for each shoulder-in set.

35. Shoulder-In Traveling Out

Contributed by Manolo Mendez

1. Begin in an active working trot traveling clockwise around your arena.
2. At one end of the arena, ride a 15-meter circle to maintain your rhythm and establish an inside bend.
3. Ride a quarter of the way again around the circle and then gently displace the horse's front end with your right leg in the direction of the rail. You should end up with a slight diagonal slant in the horse's body toward the rail.
4. Ask him to move sideways from your right leg toward that rail while ensuring that his forehead remains ahead of his haunches, as in the diagram.
5. As you travel slightly sideways to the rail, keep the horse's spine bent to the right. His body should feel "curled" around your right leg.
6. When you reach the rail, accelerate the trot for two or three strides to push the horse's hind legs back underneath him.
7. Travel around the entire arena and then repeat.

36. Striding In, Striding Out

Before you begin, set up eight ground poles according to the diagram. Place the first four poles spaced apart at a distance that is roughly 1 to 2 inches (2.5–5 cm) shorter than the length of your horse's normal stride in the trot. After this set of four poles, leave a 32.8-foot (10 m) gap and then set up four more poles, this time spacing the poles at a distance 1 to 2 inches (2.5–5 cm) longer than the length of your horse's normal stride.

1. Develop a brisk working trot.
2. Aim straight over the first set of four poles.
3. About 3 feet (1 m) before you reach the first pole, ask your horse to slow down a little and shorten his stride.
4. Proceed over the poles in just four strides. Your horse should not take any strides between the poles or try to cover two poles at once.
5. Proceed straight to the next set of poles and start to push his trot more actively forward.
6. Ride over the second set of poles visualizing an extended trot. Again, your horse should cover the poles in just four strides, no more and no less.

37. Trotting Poles in an Arc

1. Walk your horse over the ground poles to ensure that the spacing is correct for his stride. Remain on the arc of the circle while traversing exactly over the *middle* of each pole. Do not drift to the outside edge!
2. Once your horse is going well in the walk, ride the ground pole circle in the rising trot.
3. Repeat several times in each direction, keeping an active trot and maintaining an inside bend through your horse's neck and rib cage.

VARIATION

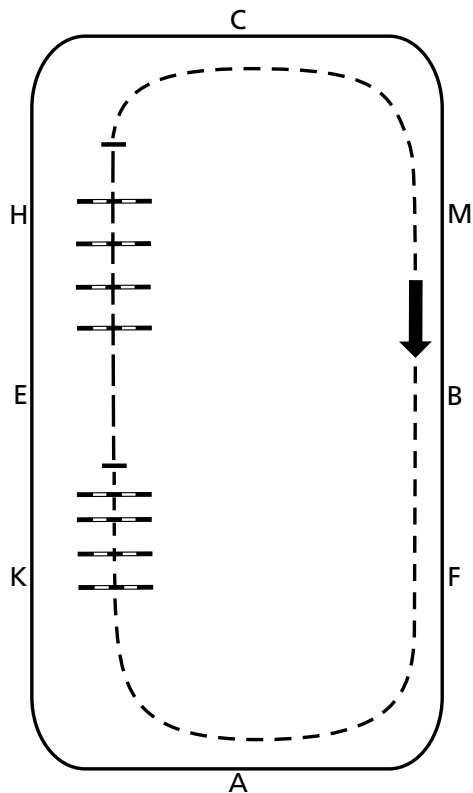
Ride the same pattern as above, except raise the poles 6 inches (15 cm) off the ground with jump standards or cones. Ride with a slightly forward and light seat.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Make a note if one direction of the exercise seems more difficult than the other. This indicates asymmetry in your horse's way of going, which you can address with targeted stretching after the session.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Ask a ground person to watch your horse's stride and move poles around for you as necessary.



TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Maintain the same energy and intensity level throughout this active exercise.



"Above normal" means 20 beats or more above his normal heart rate for a normal working trot. For most horses, it will take just four or five strides. That number of strides is the "set" that will be repeated throughout the workout.

EQUINE FITNESS

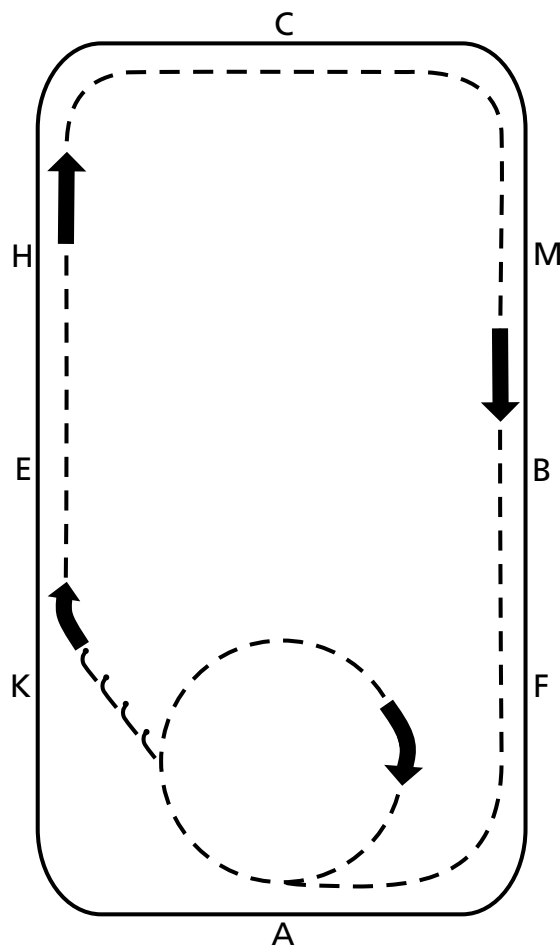
38. Pick-up Sticks

You will need a number (at least 10, but more is better) of ground poles or large-diameter PVC pipes, which are lighter and easier to handle. Scatter them around a 20-meter area so that some of them are lying across each other and others are away from the group in a random pattern.

1. Mount your horse and find a line from one side of the area to the other through that mess of poles.
2. For safety, walk the line first.
3. Once at the other side, turn around and find a different way back.
4. If you are finding success, then try jogging a few steps.
5. Find as many routes through the pole pile as possible, or make up little patterns.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Keep only a loose rein contact and, as much as possible, don't interfere with your horse. Point him where you want to go, sit back, and let him find his way. You are teaching him to balance himself.



39. Lifting the Hind Legs

1. Position your horse so that he is standing squarely and quietly along a fence, with his weight evenly distributed over all four feet.
2. Ask your horse to relax his head and neck so that his back is rounded, not hollow. Ideally, have him lower his head so that his poll and withers are at the same height.
3. Keeping his neck stretched, reach back with your longe whip or a bamboo cane and gently tap his near hind leg until he raises that foot off the ground.
4. Change direction along the fence and repeat with the opposite hind leg.
5. Gradually progress to having him flex the leg and hold the foot in the air for up to 10 seconds (do this by gently tapping again when he tries to put the foot back down on the ground).

40. Bringing the Hind Legs Forward

1. Position your horse so that he is standing squarely and quietly along a fence, with his weight evenly distributed over all four feet.
2. Ask him to lower his neck by using light downward pressure on his cavesson or reins.
3. Keeping your left hand near his nose/reins in case he tries to brace upward out of the posture, tickle just behind his girth area to ask him to engage his belly and round his back.
4. Now ask him to bring one hind foot forward under his body by gently tapping with your whip behind his cannon bone or on the inside of the leg.
5. Keep your horse stretching forward with his neck. Then ask each hind leg to keep inching forward under the body.
6. Once you have achieved the desired stance, ask him to stand quietly in this posture for 10 to 15 seconds and then allow him to simply be "at ease" before moving forward.

41. Stepping Over Slowly

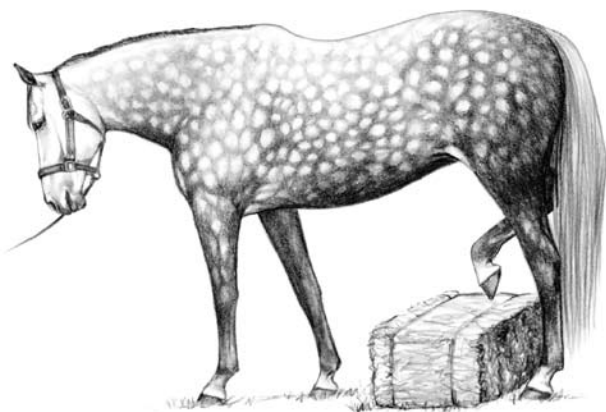
1. Place a tall but relatively soft object on level ground (an arena is ideal, but a driveway will suffice).
2. Lead your horse straight up to the object and halt.
3. Ask him to step very slowly over the object, one foot at a time.
4. Once he picks up his hind leg to step over the object, try to make him hesitate a few seconds so that he prolongs the motion of clearing his leg over to the other side.
5. Repeat a few times back and forth.

42. Canter on Uneven Terrain

1. Warm up by walking your horse vigorously on a long rein out in the open space.
2. Pick up a canter on either lead and start by cantering the gentlest slopes at first, cutting across the downward grades at 45-degree angles.
3. Gradually make your approach to the downward grades steeper.
4. Keep the speed of the canter consistent regardless of the grade of the terrain. At first, you may need a few strong half halts to show your horse not to change speeds when the terrain changes.
5. Keep doing this exercise for as long as possible. Don't quit after a few times around your open space; horses, like humans, generally improve on the exercise after they've been at it a while, have figured out where to put their feet, and have allowed themselves to relax into the movement.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Do this exercise *as slowly as possible* to build strength in the stif e. Rushing over the obstacle will have no benefit.



Use an object about 2-feet (0.6 m) high that will make your horse pull his leg up to walk over. It should be suitably soft in case he gets worried and steps on or kicks it. A hay bale works fine, as does a collapsible mesh laundry basket with some added weight to keep it in place.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Posture is critical in this exercise. Maintain a light contact with the horse's mouth so that you can guide him back to a good frame if he tries to hollow out when losing his balance.
- Try to ride the horse in this exercise with your reins about 2 inches (5 cm) longer than for normal arena riding. His stretched-out neck will help keep his balance over the terrain.



When a horse uses his back and ring of muscles properly (above), he builds them stronger thanks to the added resistance of terrain changes. When he travels in a bad posture, on the other hand, the stress (jarring) of the exercise taxes his joints and tendons.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

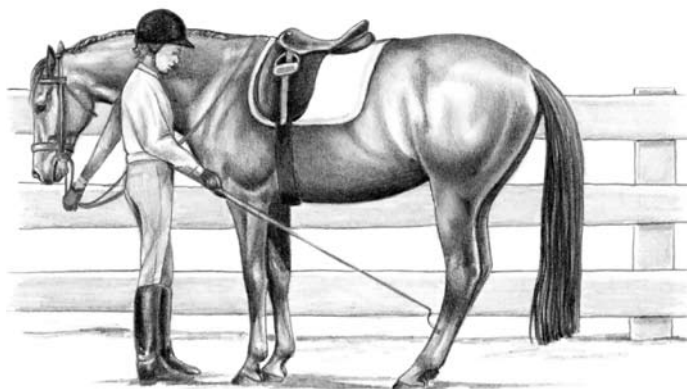
- Every horse responds differently to whip cues. Some horses will lift their hind legs when asked with a light touch near the middle of the cannon bone, but others will be more responsive to the area just below the hock or on the inside of their legs. Play around to see what works best for your horse and praise him whenever he even attempts to do what you're asking.



You can do this work with your horse outfitted in a plain halter, bridle, or longeing cavesson. You will need a longe whip or long bamboo cane.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- As always when dealing with your horse's balance, take time to develop the exercise day by day. Be satisfied with a little progress at a time and reward often.



You will need a plain halter, bridle, or longeing cavesson, as well as a longe whip or long bamboo cane.

43. In and Out Leg-Yielding

Contributed by Becky Hart

1. Begin by riding with the group of riders in single file, trotting down an open section of roadway (or arena). Maintain a horse's length spacing between the horses.
2. When all the horses are sustaining the same speed, have the last horse in line leg-yield three steps to the left and immediately extend the trot to pass the other riders.
3. At the front of the line, slow down to regain the trotting tempo of the group.
4. Leg-yield three steps to the right to arrive back in the single-file line in lead position.
5. As soon as the first horse has established position back in the single-file line, the horse now at the end of the line repeats the sequence.
6. When the terrain is suitable, continue with this exercise for a couple of miles, or at least 15 minutes.

44. Shoulder Rotation Stretch

1. Stand facing your horse's shoulder.
2. Using both hands, clasp the leg above the knee and raise it just to the point of resistance, then release it slightly.
3. Gently rotate the leg three to five times in a 3-inch (8 cm) circle moving the leg forward and back, not side to side.
4. Increase the diameter of your circle to 4 or 5 inches (10–13 cm) and repeat three to five times.
5. Increase the diameter of your circle to 6 or 7 inches (15–18 cm) and repeat.
6. Reverse the direction of the rotation, starting with a small circle as described above and increasing the diameter every three to five rotations.
7. Return your horse's hoof to its original position and repeat the entire sequence two or three times.
8. Repeat the sequence on his other front leg.

45. Rear-Leg Circles

1. Stand near your horse's left hip, facing his tail.
2. Bend over and place your right hand around the inside of his leg above the hock. Place your left hand on the back side of his fetlock.
3. Lift the leg off the ground and pull it forward several inches and then set the toe on the ground for a count of 3 seconds.
4. Slowly pull the leg to the outside and touch the hoof to the ground for another 3 seconds.
5. Push the leg behind the horse and touch the hoof to the ground for 3 seconds.
6. Rest the leg in its original position before repeating the sequence.
7. Repeat twice with each hind leg.

46. Pelvis Tucks

1. Stand squarely behind your horse (make sure he knows you're there!).
2. Tuck the tips of each thumb just under the dock of his tail.
3. Extend your fingers straight up to form a "box" with your thumbs.
4. Apply direct pressure into the horse's buttocks muscle with the tips of your index fingers.
5. If the horse does not immediately tuck or "squat" his pelvis away from that pressure, try a light tickling or scratching motion.
6. Repeat at least twice.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Move slowly in this stretch. You do not want the horse to pull his leg up and away from you.



STEP 3



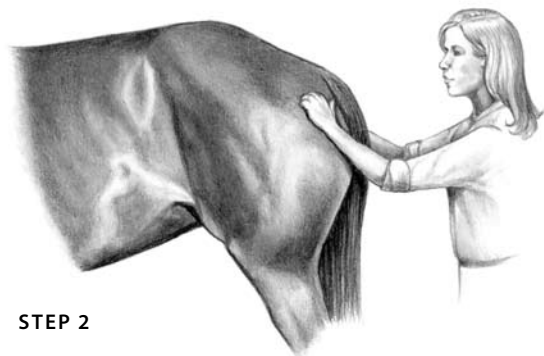
STEP 4



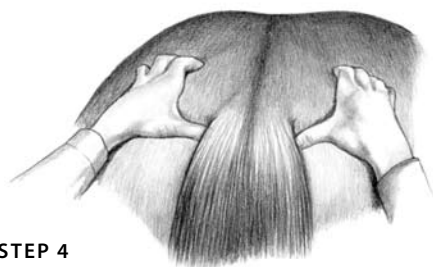
STEP 5

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Some horses are very sensitive in this area and others are duller. You may need to alter your hand position to find your own horse's response.



STEP 2



STEP 4

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be sure the horses in the line maintain a steady rhythm rather than racing the passing horse to allow clear transitions. This extending and then reducing of pace is part of the exercise's value.
- Ride good-quality leg-yields, applying the aids correctly to get a decent bend in your horse's spine and sufficient crossover in the front and hind limbs.
- If necessary, do this exercise at a walk first to accustom the horses to the idea.

This exercise is most suited for riding in a small group on a dirt road or wide trail. It can be modified, however, to work for just two horses riding together. It can also be modified from use on the trail to use in the arena if necessary.



STEP 2



STEP 3

EQUINE FITNESS
47. Poll Stretch

1. Stand alongside your horse just behind his jaw, facing forward.
2. Place your right hand on his neck just behind his poll and apply light pressure to prevent him from bending his neck toward you.
3. With your left hand, either hold the bridge of his nose or the halter nosepiece and draw just his head toward you. You want only his head to swivel toward you, while his neck remains straight. Be sure his ears and nostrils remain level. This indicates that he is not tipping his head, which you do not want.
4. Hold the stretch approximately 20 seconds then repeat on the other side.



EQUINE FITNESS
48. Hip Stretch

1. Stand alongside your horse's hip facing toward the rear.
2. Bend over and lift his hind leg, supporting it with your hand around his fetlock.
3. Lift the hoof slightly forward and straight up, flexing the leg to approximately 90 degrees. Hold here for 20 seconds.
4. Draw the hind leg forward toward the front legs until the horse's cannon bone is horizontal to the ground. Hold here for 20 seconds.
5. Return the leg to the flexed position in step 3. Then, by supporting the horse with your hand near his hock on the inside, lift the leg out to the side away from the body.
6. Gently return the foot to the ground and repeat the stretches on the opposite hind leg.

EQUINE FITNESS
49. Shoulder Circles

1. Stand at your horse's shoulder facing toward the rear.
2. Bend over and lift his hoof off the ground, flexing the front leg slightly as you resume a standing position. Support his leg with your hand on the back of the leg slightly above his knee. Maintain a slight bend in that leg; be careful not to overflex the knee.
3. Gently push the foreleg across his body toward his other front leg.
4. Immediately draw it back outward toward you.
5. Push it back across his body.
6. Repeat this sequence four to six times with each leg.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Do not *hold* the leg in any static position for a set period of time. This is a dynamic back-and-forth motion with the leg.

EQUINE FITNESS
50. Bladder Meridian Exercise

Contributed by Jim Masterson

1. Stand at the horse's head on left side.
2. Place the flats of your fingertips or cup the palm of your hand on the poll just behind the left ear.
3. Barely touching the surface of the skin, *slowly* (it should take about a minute to run your hand from the poll to the withers) run your hand down the bladder meridian.

The bladder meridian runs down each side of the body about 2 to 3 inches (5–8 cm) from the topline of the horse. This exercise begins at the poll just behind the ear and follows this meridian down the neck and back until it reaches the croup. From there it runs over the rump toward the "poverty groove," following this groove down the hind leg and over the side of the hock, cannon bone, and side of the fetlock to its termination on the coronary band.



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- If your horse has an old injury he may have inflammation in his poll and be resistant towards this stretch. Go easy at first and heed any adamant fussiness.
- If your horse is at all tight on one side of his poll or upper neck, you will see him react to the stretch by sighing, licking his lips or chewing, or closing his eyes sleepily. If you see this, repeat another stretch on that side.



Do not tilt the horse's nose like this. Keep his head straight.

4. As you move your hand/fingers down the meridian, watch closely for subtle signs or responses to your touch from the horse. These include eye blinking and lip twitching. Larger responses that indicate a release of tension are licking, yawning, shaking the head, and snorting or sneezing repeatedly.
5. As your hand or fingers pass over a spot that causes the horse to blink, stop. Rest your hand/fingers on that spot, keeping your hand *soft* and the pressure *light*. Stay on that spot, watching the horse's responses. This may take just a second, or up to a minute. Be patient.
6. When the horse shows the larger responses of release — licking and chewing, yawning, shaking the head, or snorting or sneezing repeatedly — continue down the meridian using the above steps.
7. Repeat on the horse's right side.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- If after 30 seconds the horse stops blinking or twitching, you may do one of two things: continue the process, running your hand/fingers down the meridian, watching for responses, *or* stay on the spot but soften your hand and lighten your touch.

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Give the horse time to become comfortable with what's being done with his body. Once trust and confidence are established, he will then benefit immensely more from stretching therapy.



STEP 2



STEP 5