

Online HorseCollege



Student Workbook

3.R.03 Aids and Gaits

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Aids and Gaits 3.R.03 Assessment Information

Students are to complete Riding 2.R online assessments prior to attempting Riding 3.R and to follow all recommended safety considerations.

Practical assessments for Riding 3.R are as follows:

- A) Grooming and Equipment
- B) Riding Preparation
- C) Aids and Gaits
- D) Riding

These assessments incorporate the following unit from the SIS30710 Sport Industry Training Package which include the listed elements

SISOEQO202A Demonstrate basic horse riding skills

- Plan a horse riding activity
- Select and prepare tack, horse and personal equipment
- Mount, ride and dismount the horse
- Cool down and release horse
- Evaluate the ride

Further information about this assessment is available at www.training.gov.au

Aids and Gaits Introduction

Aids used for communicating with the horse. For example when you use your hand on the rein to turn your horse, which is an aid. As your riding progresses these aids (or cues) will be developed and refined allowing you to be more precise and subtle with how you use them.

Gaits (or paces as they are sometimes referred to) are how a horse will move. There are many gaits which have been developed or trained within the horse by people and certain breeds are better suited to those gaits but this workbook will cover the four main gaits of the horse.

Gaits

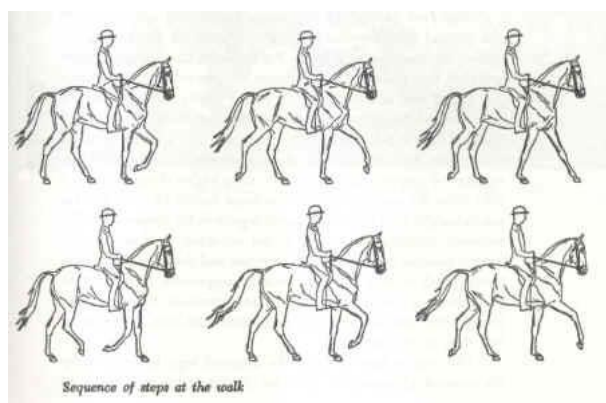
Gaits are the different ways in which a horse can move and in these gaits the legs will move in different sequences.

There are 4 'natural' gaits which are walk, trot, canter and gallop.

An example of a breed which has breed inherited and trained gaits is the Standardbred which have been developed for pacing (racing industry).

The Walk

The slowest of the four paces it has four beats and no moment of suspension meaning, there is always at least 1 hoof on the ground. The head of the horse will bob up and down slightly in time with the motion.



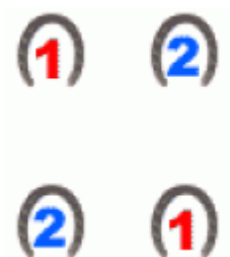
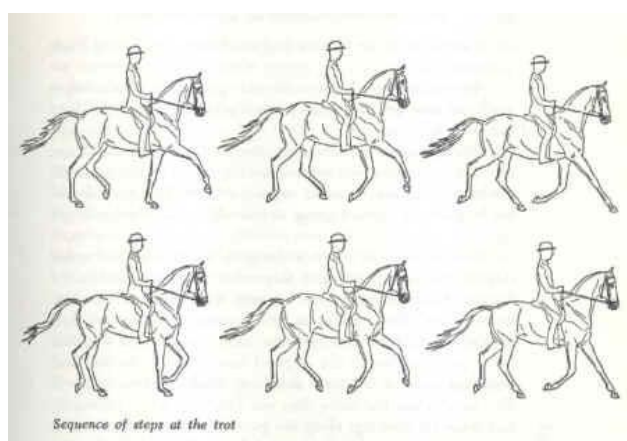
Footfalls-

Right hind leg, right front leg, left hind leg, left front leg

Gaits (cont.)

The Trot

In the trot a horse's legs move in diagonal pairs producing a 2 beat gait with a moment of suspension, meaning, there is a small period of time as the horse moves its weight from one pair of legs to the other that there are no hooves on the ground. In dressage there are many variations within the trot involving lengthening or creating elevation in the stride.



Footfalls-

The sequence in which the legs move is left hind leg and right front leg move together then the right hind leg and left front leg move together

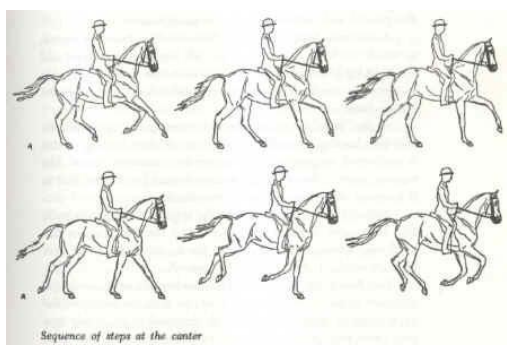


In this photo you can just see the brief moment of suspension

Gaits (cont.)

The Canter

The canter is a 3 beat gait also with a moment of suspension and has different leg sequences depending upon the direction of travel. Like the trot there are also variations within the canter in dressage.



If travelling to the right the sequence is left hind leg followed by the right hind leg and left front leg together, then the right front leg and finally a moment of suspension before the sequence starts again. This is known as the right leg or lead canter.



Footfalls-

Right lead.



Here you can see the moment of suspension when no hooves are on the ground.

(See video for larger image)



When travelling on the left rein the first leg is the right hind leg, then the left hind leg and right front leg together followed by the left front leg and the moment of suspension. This is known as the left leg or lead canter.



Footfalls-

Left lead

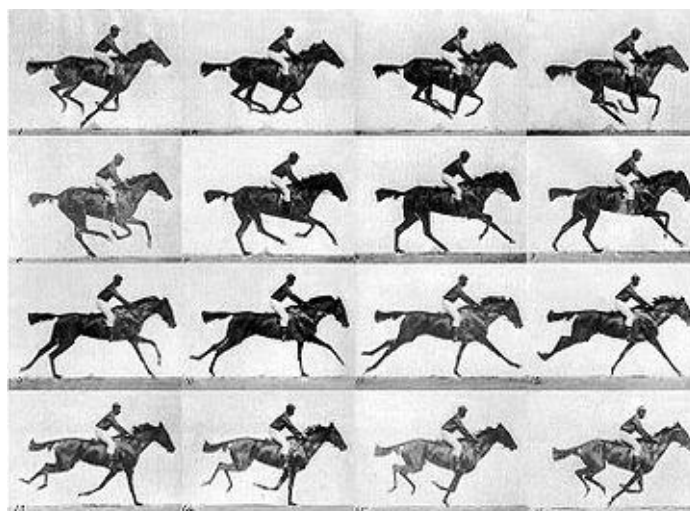


Gaits (cont.)

The Gallop

The fastest of the gaits but like the walk it is four beat. It also has a moment of suspension when all four hooves are off the ground and left and right leg sequences.

The footfalls are in similar sequence to the canter except now the 2nd and 3rd legs touch the ground independently.



Footfalls-
Right lead



Footfalls-
Left lead

Aids

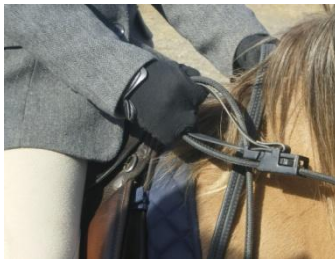
Riding aids are the cues you use when you ride to communicate to the horse what you want it to do. These aids are broken into two categories, Natural aids and Artificial Aids. How a horse responds to these aids will depend upon the type and level of training the horse has had.

Natural Aids



Leg Aid-

A leg aid is used either on or just behind the girth, depending on what you are asking for. Leg aids are used to ask for forward or sideways motion and control the placement of the body and hind legs. The leg is positioned with the toe pointing forward so the inside of the lower leg lies flat against the horse.



Hand/Rein Aids-

Your hands give aids via the rein to the bit in the horses' mouth. Reins are used as either a restraining aid or a guiding aid and can control the direction and the speed of travel and at a more advanced level, the placement of the head and shoulders. The hands should be positioned just above the horses' withers with the fingers closed around the rein and thumbs on top.



Seat and Weight Aids-

These aids can take a long time to develop as the rider needs to learn to balance and follow the horses' movement without bouncing or interfering first. The seat can be used as a restraining or driving aid whilst weight aids are used to position the horses' body.



Voice-

Voice cues are used mostly when lunging. Whilst sometimes the voice may be used whilst training, for example 'clucking' to encourage a horse, in dressage tests you can be penalised for it.

Aids (cont.)

Artificial Aids



Spurs-

Are worn on a riders' heel and are used to re-enforce a leg aid. The spur should never be used as punishment and only be used by experienced riders.



Whip-

Held in either hand a dressage whip is used behind the riders' leg to re-enforce a leg aid, not as punishment.



Crop/Cane-

Held in either hand a crop is a short whip used on the shoulder to re-enforce the leg aid, not as punishment.

Extension Lesson

Using a suitable horse,

- From a halt, which hind leg is first to step off into walk?
.....
- Watch a horse in canter and see if you can determine which canter leg/lead it is on.
- Watch a horse in trot. Can you see the leg sequence?

When a horse is cantering on the right lead/leg, which is the first foot to touch the ground in the sequence?

.....

When a horse is cantering on the left lead/leg, which is the last foot to touch the ground in the sequence?

.....

Using a suitable horse practice the application of your aids.

Y/N

- | | |
|---|-------|
| Can you apply a leg aid without leaning forwards? | |
| Can you use your reins without leaning forwards? | |
| Can you use a rein aid whilst cantering? | |

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above, go back and practise them until you can answer 'Yes'.

Watch an experienced rider. Can you see them giving any aids to the horse? Or are their aids so subtle they've become almost invisible? Explain below.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Recommended Reading

Fundamentals of Riding- Charles Harris

The Principles of Riding- German National Equestrian Federation

EFA Dressage Rule book (2008)

References

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