

Online HorseCollege



Student Workbook

**3.R.24 Lunging the Rider
Walk & Trot**

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Lunging the Rider: Walk & Trot

3.R.24 Assessment Information

Students are to complete Riding 3.R.13–16 online assessments prior to attempting Riding 3.R.21-24 and to follow all recommended safety considerations.

Practical assessments for Riding 3.R.21-24 are as follows:

- A) Horses for Lunging
- B) Lunging Equipment
- C) Lunging the Rider: Mounting & Dismounting
- D) Lunging the Rider: Walk & Trot

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

SISSEQS303A Teach the fundamental skills of riding

- Plan fundamental riding sessions
- Brief participants
- Conduct riding sessions
- Complete post-session responsibilities

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

Lunging the Rider: Walk & Trot Introduction

This workbook carries on from the last to delve into lunging the rider in walk and trot. The information provided predominately looks at lunging a beginner rider for their first time in the 2 paces mentioned. Included are listed activities which can be helpful in developing the rider at 2 paces. But we also look at some important considerations for teaching, the benefits for lunging a rider and how to appropriately progress a rider onto more difficult tasks.

Considerations for Teaching

Firstly when preparing to teach a rider you need to gain some information on the rider's background. Without this information you will not be able to make accurate or safe decisions regarding what horses to use or what subjects to teach:

- age
- experience (if any)
- medical conditions
- riding discipline interests, goals and/or aspirations

When teaching an individual or group rider there are aspects you need to keep in mind to make sure you address the needs of participants and provide value in the lesson.

Physical	Some people may ride for fitness or to develop new skills. Consider the physical fitness of the rider/s and the physical demands of the lesson. A novice rider who has just learnt two point jumping seat will not have the physical strength in to be able to hold this position long.
Emotional	Coaches take on different roles under this title, a coach can be an advisor, counsellor, friend, mentor and motivator. Because these roles are incorporated into a coach's role it means from they need to understand that there will be emotional aspects which may influence a rider's performance.
Psychological	People may ride for social interaction and a sense of belonging, to develop new goals and a sense of achievement. As a coach you will need to identify these needs of the riders to better tailor lesson to suit participants (i.e., a rider who rides in a group for social interaction may lose interest if group numbers dwindle or if lesson become competitively focused).
Individual	Individual needs should not be forgotten in group lesson situations. Teaching styles may need to be adapted to suit different participants in a lesson and the individuals goals should not be forgotten or dismissed. Every individual in a group should be provided an equal opportunity to practice a skill.
Group	The main consideration regarding groups is safety. Some establishments have limits on the size a group can get with up to eight riders being the common maximum (though in some countries it is not uncommon to have 20 riders). Group lessons require sharper organisation and anticipation of actions on part of the coach.

Benefits of Lunging a Rider

The beginning rider should learn and practise sitting in balance and moving with the horse on the lunge. This is because the lunge will allow the rider to do so without having the concern about steering and controlling the horse.

Spending time on the lunge although time consuming will help the rider to develop a more secure and independent seat and in the nervous rider will assist in building confidence.

Lunging will allow the rider to practise exercises while the horse remains under the control and guidance of the instructor who can recognise and deter potential problems in regards to the rider's progression and safety.

Quiet, established horses are essential for working with riders on the lunge. Lunging horses should be experienced and responsive to the handler on the lunge before they are lunged with a rider. They need to respond to the verbal commands of the handler and maintain a steady rhythm and tempo in all three paces.

General/All purpose saddles are suitable for beginner riders who are learning the basic skills of riding and controlling the horse. All purpose saddles will allow the rider to work in either upright or jumping positions without the need to change saddles.



Progression

When working with beginner riders it is important to progress them in a way which will encourage skill development and confidence. A skill or exercise can be progressed to make it more challenging by modification (adding or removing elements e.g. cones) and by attempts at a faster pace (trying the exercise in trot). Exercises and skills become more demanding in faster paces because of the different movement of the horse, the horse covers more ground more quickly and it requires the rider to be more effective with their aids (i.e., accuracy, timing) and position.

Progression of a skill and introducing more complex or difficult skills or exercises is imperative for the rider to advance their abilities. But skills and exercises should only be modified or changed to be more challenging when the rider can perform the current skill and task correctly. For example introducing canter to a rider who can barely rise to the trot will be unfavourable for the horse because the rider will bounce around on its back and unfavourable for the rider because there is a high possibility that they will fall off or lose some confidence.

New exercises need to be introduced in halt to allow the rider to concentrate fully on the task and to allow them time to practice without the horse moving under them (it also provides an opportunity for the rider to ask questions). Like horses the rider will need time to warm up muscles before executing difficult exercises or tasks or riding at faster paces. Once the rider has become confident, comfortable and can execute the exercise with minimal mistakes they can then progress to practicing at walk, then trot and canter (if relevant and appropriate).



Lunging Exercises

Lunging exercises help to build co-ordination, flexibility, confidence, balance and independent application of the aids (not to mention that most children love to play a fun game while riding!) Exercises can be modified and developed to suit the individual rider as age, fitness level and sex can affect the flexibility, balance and co-ordination of a rider.

There are no specific, strict exercises that a coach must use or that will guarantee improvement in a rider but there are exercises which are commonly used. Be creative and use your imagination in inventing new games, manoeuvres, exercises and drills. Young children get bored and distracted very easily so provide a reason or a story behind the exercise they are doing. For example you can have them imagine that to escape the dragon (or whatever they choose) they'll need to weave around all the cones without knocking any over or turn it into game where for every cone they get around without missing it or knocking it over they get 10 points (this also encourages them to want to progress and do the exercise better to that they get a higher score).



First Lesson Exercises

Some training exercises are more suitable for riders having their first lesson than others. Often these riders are stiff, tense, excited or nervous when the first get on so use tasks which will encourage them to relax and show them that they can move while they are on the horse without necessarily falling off. Once you have checked the rider and gear after they have mounted you can start with some simple exercises to encourage them to get settled. Remember to practice these in halt before moving the horse and rider. How you progress from these tasks will depend upon the rider.

Lunging a Rider in Walk

Once a rider is on the horse, with the stirrups adjusted, ready to go the first challenge they will be faced with is learning how to sit on and move with the horse in walk. This may sound quite easy and straight forward to the seasoned rider however some beginners may find it frightening and unbalancing.

Instead of moving straight into lunging the horse and rider, where they will be positioned a few metres away from you it can be a good idea to lead the horse off into walk so that you are close to provide assistance and reassurance to the rider. Remember you should never walk backwards whilst teaching so you will need to be glancing back and forth at the rider and where you are walking. As you and the rider start to become confident with sitting on the horse in walk you can progress to lunging the horse. Usually you will be able to tell if a rider is nervous or worried by their body language and behaviour however if you are unsure discreetly ask the rider. In using discretion you will avoid potentially embarrassing the rider.

The factors mentioned in the previous chapter will determine how much and the depth of information the rider can process especially if they are excited. Lunging in walk provides opportunities for the horse and rider to rest, for new information to be introduced and to practice skills that were found difficult at faster paces.

Whether or not you introduce the rider to the basics of controlling the horse in walk, whilst on the lunge will be a decision you make based upon the individual horse, rider and procedures of the riding establishment.

Below is a list of activities and ideas that can be used to encourage the rider to develop balance and basic navigational skills. Some of these activities should be practiced at the halt before being attempted in walk.

- patting the horse on the shoulder
- the rider using one hand to touch their knee, shoulder, head or toe
- the rider using both hands to touch their knee, shoulder, head or toe
- the rider using one hand to touch the opposite (i.e., left hand touches right knee) knee, shoulder or toe
- circle one arm held out from the body
- circle both arms held out from the body
- arms held out from the body and turn the upper body left to right and vice versa
- removing feet from the stirrups and re-finding the feet into the stirrups
- feet removed from the stirrups and point the toes up and down
- one foot removed from the stirrups and bring the heel up to the hip
- both feet removed from the stirrups and bring the heels up to the hips
- riding without stirrups (encourage the rider to maintain correct riding position)
- picking up and putting down items whilst on the horse (e.g., picking up a body brush off a drum and putting in down on the next one)
- stopping at every arena letter and saying an animal that starts with that letter (good exercise for young riders who tire easily and familiarising the rider with the arena, practicing the aids)
- turning and guiding the horse through cones or markers

Lunging a Rider in Walk (cont.)

- stepping over a single pole on the ground
- guiding the horse between two poles on the ground
- around the world (performed in halt). The rider holds the saddle and moves their legs so that they progressively turn their body around on the horse. A good game for children (Good for balance and flexibility)
- transitions into halt
- transitions from halt to walk



Lunging a Rider in Trot

Once the rider is comfortable and has practiced the demands of rising to the trot in walk it will be time to give them a go at trotting. Upon having the rider trot for their first time it can be a good idea to do only a few steps the first time so the rider can get a feel for what it is like. You may also find it appropriate to have the rider do these first steps in an exaggerated sitting trot position with the shoulders held back, holding onto the pommel or monkey strap to minimise bouncing. These initial few steps of trot can be introduced leading the horse so that you are close by.

There are pros and cons to both sides of whether to introduce sitting trot or rising trot first to the beginner rider. The most important thing is that the rider stays safe whilst riding and that the welfare of the horse is paid attention. In large part it may depend upon the rider as to which is learnt first. Some beginners will have the co-ordination and strength to perform a regular, consistent rising trot whilst others may only be able to get out of the saddle every second beat.

It can be useful to introduce 2 point position should you encounter a rider which has particular difficulty in getting out of the saddle for rising trot (this should be introduced in halt and walk prior to trot) or as progression for a rider who has good strength and co-ordination in rising trot but is not quite ready to ride off the lunge.

Here are a list of activities (varying in difficulty) which can encourage development of rising, sitting trot, 2 point seat, balance and confidence in trot. Again some of these activities should be practiced at the halt before being attempted in walk.



- riding with one hand on the hip
- riding with both hands on hips (rising trot should be consistent before attempting)
- patting the horse on the shoulder
- the rider using one hand to touch their knee, shoulder, head
- the rider using both hands to touch their knee, shoulder, head
- small periods of sitting trot (a good way to introduce sitting trot without the rider bouncing too much)
- alternating between sitting and rising trot
- 2 point seat
- riding in 2 point with hands on hips
- alternating between rising trot and 2 point seat
- alternating between sitting trot and 2 point seat
- trot diagonals (rising trot needs to be established)
- turning and guiding the horse through cones or markers
- guiding the horse between two poles on the ground

Lunging a Rider in Trot (cont.)

- stepping over a single pole on the ground (2 point should be established first)
- trot poles
- riding without stirrups
- riding without stirrups with hands on hips
- transitions from walk to trot (the rider should be able to perform rising and sitting trot with hands on hips before being allowed to hold the reins)
- transitions from trot to walk (the rider should be able to perform rising and sitting trot with hands on hips before being allowed to hold the reins)



When to Allow the Rider off the Lunge Rein

The policies, procedures and insurance of a horse riding establishment will have some influence over when a rider is allowed to begin riding a horse off the lunge line, if they are required to begin on the lunge at all.

In the interests of safety of riders and longevity of lesson horses teaching riders on the lunge rein to begin with is paramount. A rider will usually be ready to come off the lunge and as such ride and control the horse themselves when they are able to guide and control (transitions into and out of canter included) the horse in canter. This does not mean that they have to be riding like an elementary dressage rider, but they need to have enough balance and security to be able to influence the horse without losing their seat.

A rider's readiness to begin riding off the lunge can be gauged by performing exercises such as transitions and maintaining circle size and shape during paces whilst they are still on the lunge line. Similar exercises can be practiced once they are off the lunge to increase their confidence.

Remember it is in the rider's best interests to progress them at a pace they are ready for as over facing a rider with exercises that are too advanced can be detrimental to their progression.



Extension Lesson

What could be some pro's and con's of teaching a rider sitting trot before rising trot?

Pro's:-
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Con's:-
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What could be some pro's and con's of teaching a rider rising trot before sitting trot?

Pro's:-
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Con's:-
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Recommended Reading

Publication:-

Beginning Coaching 4th Edition

The Principles of Riding

Authors:-

Australian Sports Commission

German National Equestrian Federation

References

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