

Online HorseCollege



Student Workbook

3.R.04 Basic Riding

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Basic Riding 3.R.04 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

Basic Riding Introduction

This workbook covers the basics of riding. This includes covering the basics of a balanced position while riding, where to use a whip, how to identify and determine the correct trot diagonal, hazards you may encounter and riding attire.

Many of the topics covered in this workbook will improve your basic knowledge which in turn will make you more effective in the saddle.

Position

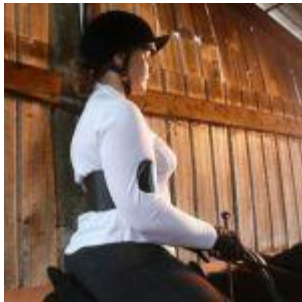
Your security in the saddle and the effectiveness of your aids depends greatly upon your position when riding. Your position and seat when mounted should be such that you can maintain your balance in all gaits, in both directions and still give the necessary aids to guide and control that horse.



Starting from the top, whilst riding your focus should be in the direction you are travelling (not looking down at the horse).

Your shoulders should be level with the chest open. To achieve this think that you push your rib cage out. This will bring your shoulders back without 'pulling' them which will create tension.

Your spine needs to sit in line with the horses' spine and your weight should be carried evenly on both seat bones.



Shoulders should be positioned over the hips so that you're not leaning forward, drawing your weight out of the saddle.

Your elbows should be by your side and the forearm should form a straight line which runs from the elbow, along the forearm, down the rein to the bit in the horses' mouth. This will allow for good communication to the horse. Hands hold the reins with your fingers closed around them and thumbs positioned on top facing upwards, with an even contact on the reins.



From your hips your legs drape around the horses' ribs and your lower leg should stay in contact with the horses' sides all the time, but not squeezing or gripping

Stirrup lengths even, with your stirrup iron sitting just behind your toes, on the ball of your foot with your heel dropped down so it becomes the lowest point in your body. Toes pointing forward.

Riding

Your seat should follow the horses' movement in walk, canter and sitting trot. In rising trot (when every second beat you rise up out of the saddle) you will need to time your rising so that you're up out of the saddle on the correct diagonal.

Diagonals

Trot diagonals are when you time the rising trot so that you're out of the saddle when particular pairs of legs move. Remember the trot has 2 beats and the legs move in diagonal pairs, so the right hind leg moves with the left front leg and the left hind leg moves with the right front leg.

To be on the 'correct diagonal' you should be out of the saddle when the outside front leg comes forward and places on the ground, which means you will be in the saddle as the outside front leg comes back under the horse to be lifted again.

So to clarify, if your travelling on the right rein (travelling to the right) you will be rising when the left front leg comes forward. If your travelling on the left rein (travelling to the left) you will be rising when the right front leg comes forward.

There are two reasons it is desirable to ride on the correct diagonal-

- 1) To work both the left and right muscle groups of the horse
- 2) By being on the correct diagonal you are positioned to be sitting in the saddle at the best time to give the horse a leg aid because that is the best phase of the horses' movement when it will be able to carry out what your leg aid has asked.

Should you find yourself on the incorrect diagonal i.e. you're sitting when the outside front leg is forwards, to change yourself onto the correct one you need to stay seated in the saddle for an extra beat (up, down, up, down, down) and then return to the normal rhythm of rising trot (up, down, up, down, up etc).



This rider is on the correct diagonal. You can see she is rising as the right shoulder/front leg is coming forward.
(See the video for more a visual explanation)

Riding (cont.)

Warming Up & Cooling Down

Like us, horses need appropriate warming up and cooling down to prepare them for exercise and prevent injury. Your warming up routine should be relevant to what you plan to work on in that riding session for example, it would be appropriate to warm the horse up in walk, trot, canter and over some trot poles in preparation for jumping.

The purpose of cooling down the horse is to bring the heart rate back down towards a resting level (28-45 bpm). An example of an inappropriate cool down would be cantering on a loose rein around the arena, the horse may be relaxed but its not a routine that will lower the heart rate. The amount of time you take to cool your horse down will depend on how strenuous the exercise was.



Using Whips and Crops

As explained in previous workbooks, the role of a whip or crop is to re-enforce the riders' aid, never as punishment. Depending upon which you are using, will determine where you apply it on the horse.

Dressage whips, which vary in length, but for example are approximately 1.2m, are used just behind the riders' leg. They are useful not only for asking the horse for more energy or forwards motion but also helping to re-enforce a sideways asking leg aid.

Crops are shorter, about 60cm in length and are applied to the shoulder of the horse, in front of the riders' knee. These are used for re-enforcing the forward asking leg aid.



Personal Equipment for Riding

The personal equipment and attire you use for riding needs to be safe and appropriate. Loose and inappropriate wear will increase the risk of incident/injury should you have a fall.

Appropriate Attire

Riding boots have a smooth sole with little grip which means your foot will come out of the stirrup easily, reducing the risk of getting your foot wedged in the stirrup. They're also enclosed which will provide your foot with some protection should you get stood on.

Long pants such as jodphurs or jeans protect your legs from the sun and from rubbing and/or pinching from the stirrup leathers (which results in nasty bruising). They will also provide your legs with some protection from abrasion, if you have a fall.

Shirts should have sleeves (for sun protection) and be tucked in. If your shirt is tucked in it cannot flap around and scare your horse.

Helmets should fit your head appropriately (as discussed in previous workbooks) and be approved to the recognised standard in your area.

Gloves are an optional piece of personal equipment (except in dressage competition, they are compulsory). There is a wide variety available and designed to give a better grip on the reins and reduce rubbing/blisters on the hands.

Spurs are also optional, and should only be used by experienced riders. Again there is a wide variety available and spurs with rowels (wheels) should spin freely.



Appropriate Riding Attire



Inappropriate Riding Attire

Hazards whilst Riding

When riding, whether it be in an arena or outside you will encounter, at some stage, various hazards including-

- other riders
- horses which are too close together
- aggressive horses (i.e. biting, kicking)
- horses misbehaving (i.e. rearing, bucking)
- fallen rider
- objects which may frighten horses
- environmental hazards (i.e. uneven surfaces, unsuitable fencing, slope of the ground, gates)

When riding in a group of horses its important to keep a safe distance between them. A minimum of 2 horse lengths between horses will help to keep you out of kicking or biting range. But keep in mind some horses will like more space than others and will exhibit behaviours such as laying their ears back or swishing their tail if another horse comes to close, so keep an eye out for these signs.

In the case of an emergency (for example a run away horse) bringing any other horses in the area to a halt will help to minimise the risk of other horses following or getting injured (horses being herd and flight animals are likely to flock after one another) .

It may also be useful to refer to your establishment's policies and procedures for detailed information on what to do in emergencies.



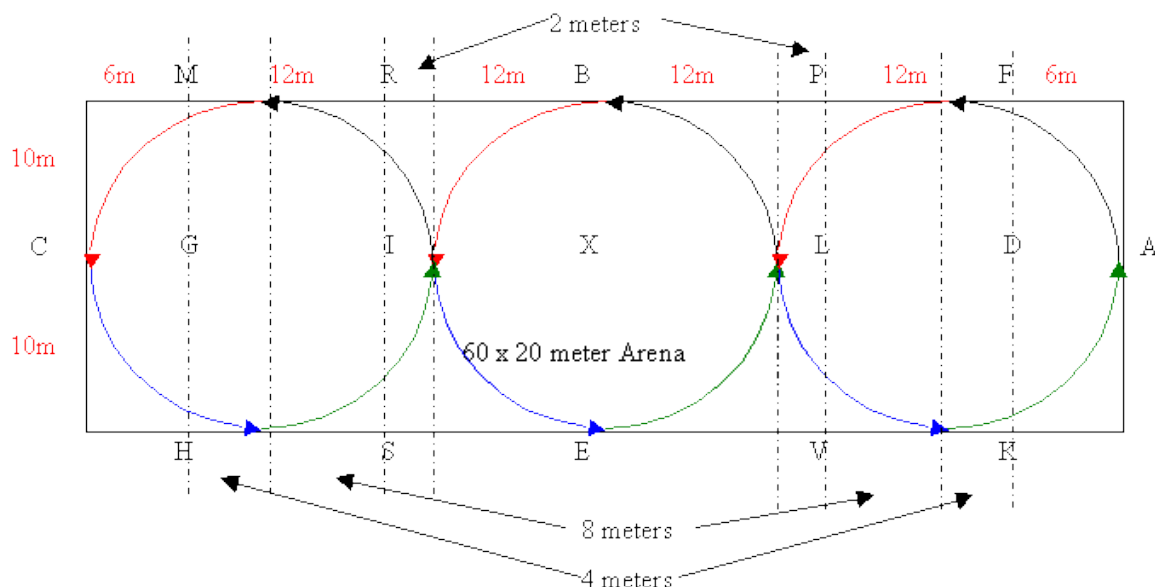
Circles

Circles are continual curved lines where the horse is ridden with constant bend. They improve lateral suppleness of the horse and co-ordination of the riders aids. Circle sizes can vary from 20m, 18m, 15m, 12m, 10m and 8m. A 20m circle is the largest that can be ridden in a 20mX40m or 20mX60m arena. The smaller the circle is the higher the level of difficulty in riding and maintaining the horse's way of going and line.

Circles can be commenced at most markers (depending on the size of the circle), for example a 20m circle, can be ridden at A, V, E, S, C, R, B, P and X. They are less commonly asked for at D and G. Twenty metre circles are never commenced at the corner markers F, K, H or M because starting at these letters would mean you would need to ride into the corner, which would make the circle of uneven shape and inconsistent size.

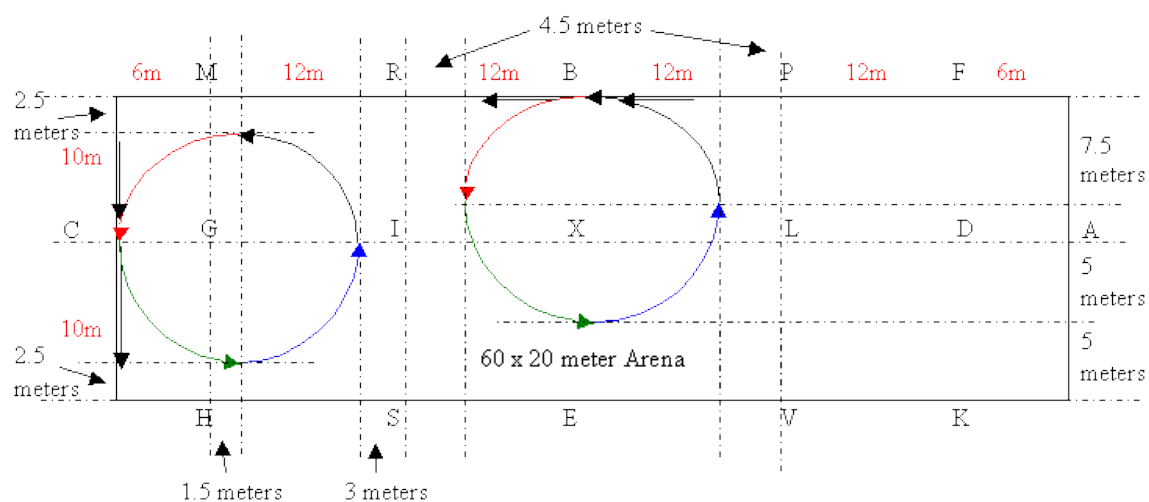
Circles smaller than 20m should be ridden in sitting trot (including voltes- see below). This is because as the circle becomes smaller the rider will need to be applying more weight and seat aids, also as sitting trot will allow the rider to maintain a constant, centred position.

A volte is a very small circle about 6m in diameter though sometimes than can be ridden bigger, depending upon the stage of training of both horse and rider. Executed correctly it is a valuable exercise for improving and testing the balance and suppleness. It is ridden in collected gaits as it requires a high degree of bend.



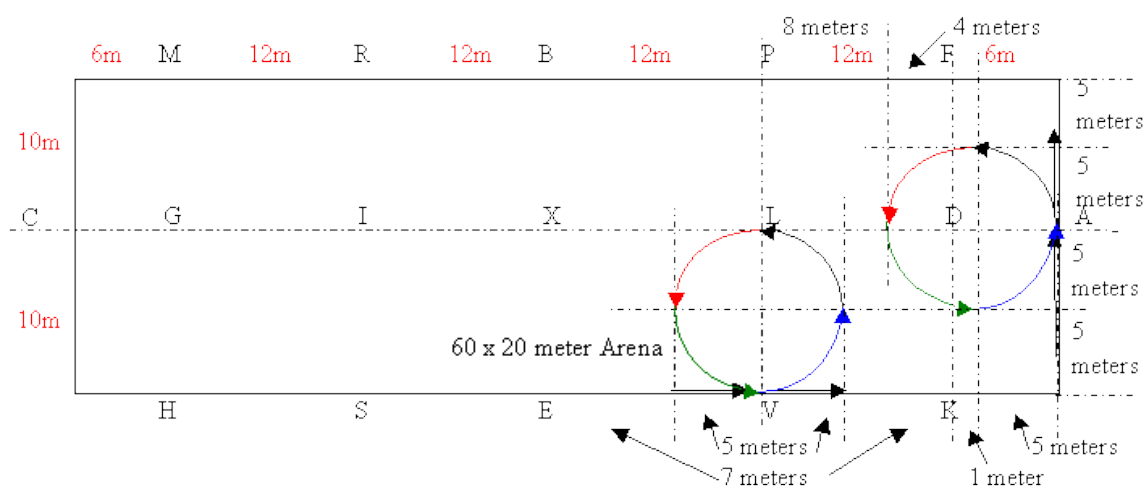
Common locations and size of 20m Circles.
This figure shows the metres between letters and the tangent points on the circles.

Circles (cont.)



Common locations and size of 15m Circles.

This figure shows the metres between letters and the tangent points on the circles.



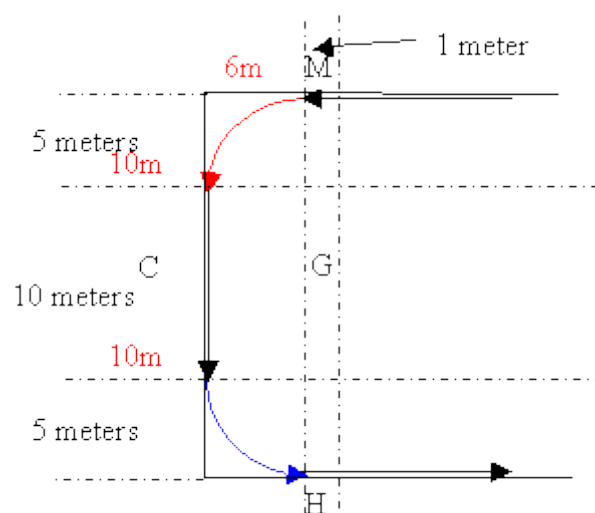
Common locations and size of 10m Circles.

This figure shows the metres between letters and the tangent points on the circles.

Turns and Corners

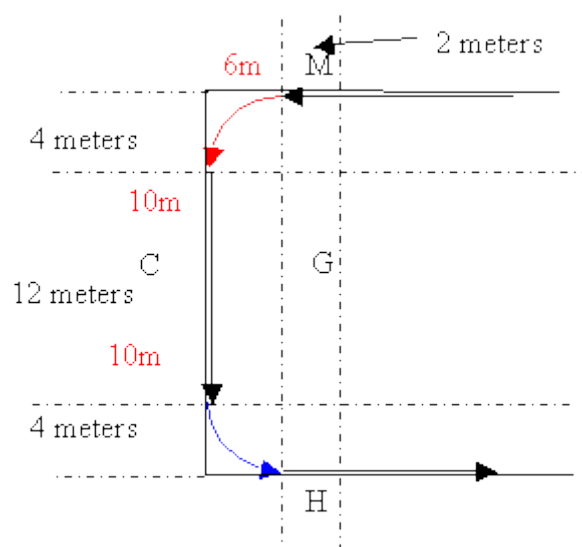
When riding turns and corners the hind-legs should follow the same track as the front legs with the inside hind taking more of the weight as it will be required to step under the body in the turn. The horse should bend throughout the length of its body to the same curvature as the turn or corner being ridden.

Each is a test of the horse's suppleness and should be ridden as a quarter of a circle, for example a corner ridden in the end of the arena will be a quarter of a 10m circle. The depth the corner is ridden will depend upon the horse's training. Turns and corners are valuable for improving straightness, suppleness, engagement and rider coordination.



10m Corner.

This figure shows the metres between letters and the tangent points



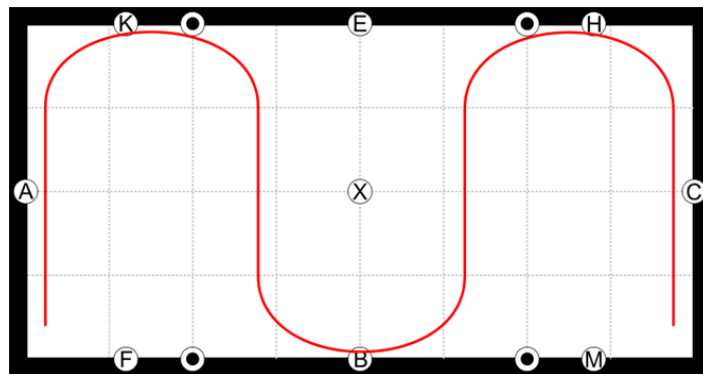
8m Corner

This figure shows the metres between letters and the tangent points

Serpentines

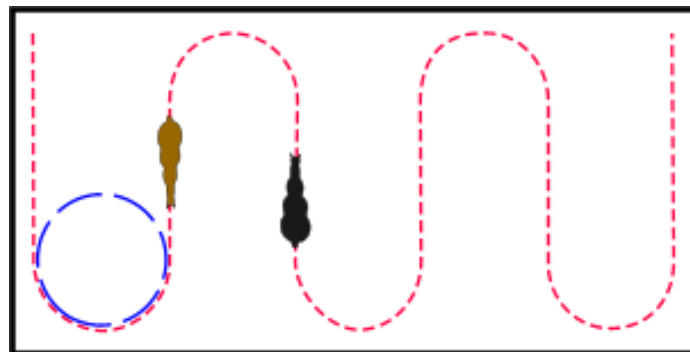
Serpentines are an 'S' shaped figure and may help to develop looseness or collection, which depends upon the size and number of loop. In the rider they improve co-ordination, accuracy of the aids. The shape of the loop can vary some may have long sections of straight lines which join each loop or curved part together and can also turn or loop back on themselves.

They can be ridden in all 3 paces/gaits again, riding them in canter will present a greater degree of difficulty as a change of lead/leg will be required or higher level dressage tests may require counter canter. It is important to remember to aim to keep all loops of equal size and shape to improve the quality of the work.

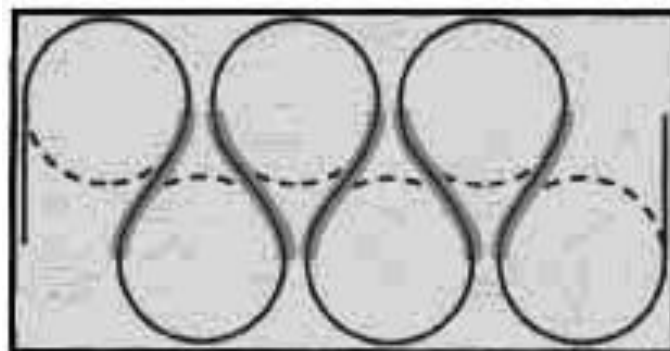


3 loop Serpentine in a 20m X 40m Arena.

In a 60m X 20m arena the loops would be sized as half, 20m circles with shorter straight lines joining between the loops.

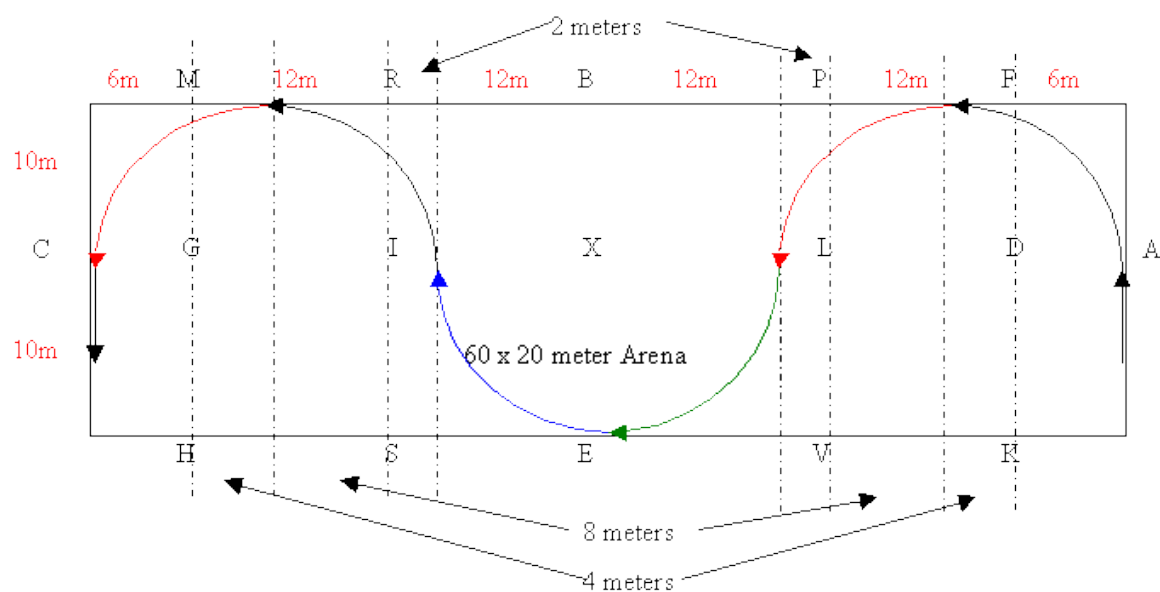


5 loop Serpentine



5 loop Serpentine with the loops turning back on themselves

Serpentines (cont.)



3 loop Serpentine in a 20mX60m arena.
The loops form 3, half 20m circles.

Figure of Eight

This figure can also be ridden as a change of rein and involves riding two circles side by side. In dressage tests it is usually asked for at the X marker (one circle on either side of X). Circle sizes vary according to the horse's level of training.

It is important to remember to allow for a brief moment of riding the horse straight before moving from one circle to the other to allow time to change bend and position. It is also at this time when you would change your trot diagonal.

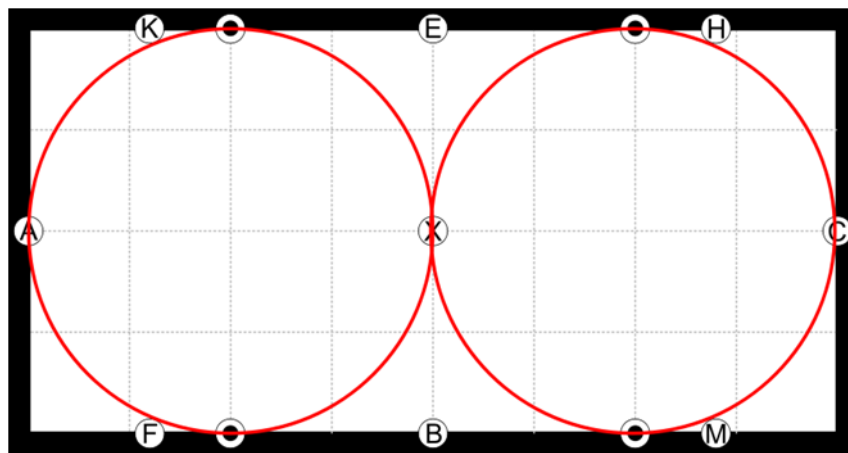


Figure of 8 in a 20mX40m Arena.

In trot you would change your diagonal over X, where the two circles meet.

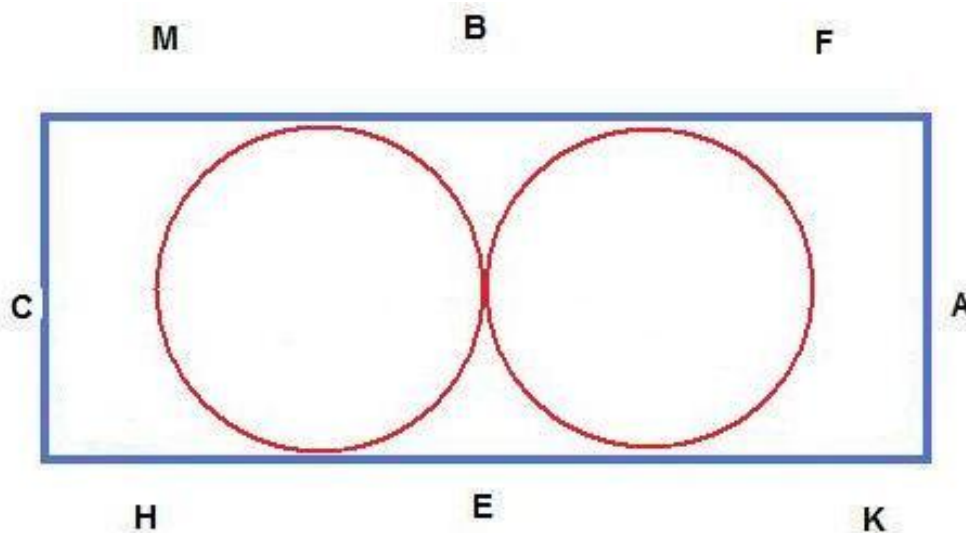


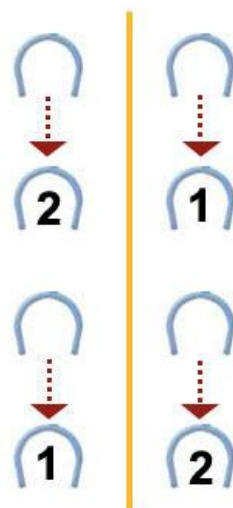
Figure of 8 in a 20mX60m Arena.

Halt, Rein Back & Groups

A halt is when a horse is brought to a stop and remains immobile. A rein-back is when the horse steps backwards. The legs step backwards in diagonal pairs.



Halt.



Sequence of legs for Rein-back.

Riding towards or away from a group of horses

When riding towards or away from a group of horses its important to remember to do so at a slow pace. Doing so at a faster pace may cause the other horses to go into 'flight' mode.



Extension Lesson

Using a suitable horse practise the following-

- position and seat	.....
- trot diagonals	.....
- turns and corners	.....
- serpentines	.....
- circles	.....
- half circle return to the track & reverse half circle return to the track	.....
- figures of eights	.....
- rein-back	.....
- halt	.....
- riding towards and away from other horses	.....

Which of the following hazards to you encounter whilst riding?

Y/N

Uneven surfaces

.....

Unsuitable fencing

.....

Other riders

.....

Gates

.....

Objects which may frighten horses

.....

Aggressive horses

.....

Sloping ground

.....

Whilst watching another rider, can you identify whether they are rising on the correct diagonal?

Describe below how you warm up and cool down your horse when riding.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Ask another rider what techniques or exercises they use to warm up and cool down their horse and write below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Recommended Reading

Fundamentals of Riding- Charles Harris

Progressive School Exercises (for Dressage and Jumping)- Islay Auty

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Horses- Sarah Montague and PJ Dempsey

The Principles of Riding- German National Equestrian Federation

References

Pg. 3-7 & 9	Google Images
Pg. 9	http://www.travelblog.org/Photos/836735.html
Pg. 11	Wikipedia
Pg. 7	http://www.webpeak.com/~tony/dressage/graystonestretch.jpg
Pg. 8	http://everyrider.typepad.com/photos/uncategorized/pampos02_2.jpg

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