

HOW TO BE A TRAINER (PART 13)

DRESSAGE FOR JUMPING (PART 3)

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IS IT NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO BE A PERFECT RIDER? THERE ALWAYS COMES THE TIME WHEN ONE ASKS HIMSELF, "WHY IS THE HORSE DOING THIS? WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?" THIS IS THE TIME WHEN ONE HAS TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING AND CHECK ONE'S AIDS AND THE HORSE'S REACTION. A REVISION NOW AND THEN OF THE **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RIDING** CAN BE VERY USEFUL.

POSITION OF REINS:

The **snaffle reins** run through a loose fist, between the little and the third finger and over the index finger, and are held in place by the thumb. The position of the hand is such that the thumb is always on top. The back of the hand should be in the line with the lower arm. The hands are held close to each other, and about the width of a hand above the wither.

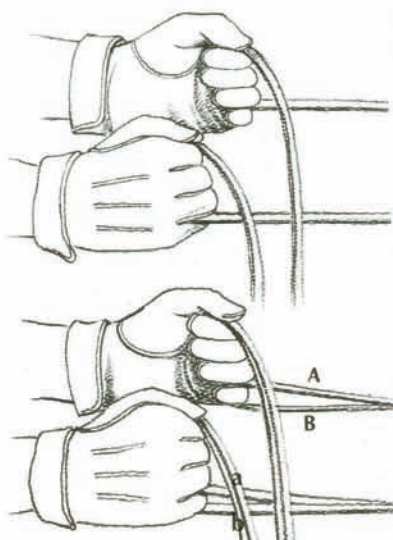


Fig. 1: Position of hands

The **double bridle** is made up of the curb bit and bridoon. The left (A) and the right (a) reins, connected to the curb, run between the little and the third finger. The left, connected to the bridoon (snaffle) (B), and the right rein (b), go under the little finger. Both reins join over the index finger, the thumb preventing them from slipping. The pressure of the snaffle-rein can be increased by closing the hand tightly and turning it slightly towards the body, with the little finger leading.

THE RIDER'S AIDS:

These are the leg, the hand, the seat, voice, spurs and whip. None of the aids are used on their own – always in conjunction with each other. It is therefore very important that they are used properly as the horse can easily get confused and upset.

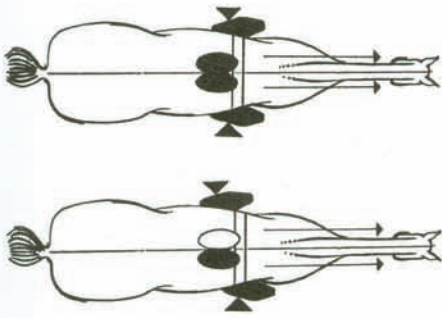


Fig. 2: The riding aids

THE USE OF LEGS:

The main forward driving aid is the **leg** which presses against the side of the horse. Seat, upper and lower leg, knee, and heel all act together, sometimes strengthened by the spur. The lower leg can lie on or behind the girth. The pressure should be reduced as soon as the horse responds to the aids as a constant pressure will deaden its reaction. Spurs are only used when they are really necessary. The whip and clicking of the tongue also aid the leg.

RESTRAINING AIDS:

These are mainly given with the reins, though these must be combined with pressure of the leg on the horse and a deep seat – that is to say, **restraining aids** must be supported by **forward aids**, and indeed **preceded** by them. There should be several give and take movements, **never a steady pull**. When the horse obeys the pressure of the hand the latter should be relaxed, the horse being thus rewarded.

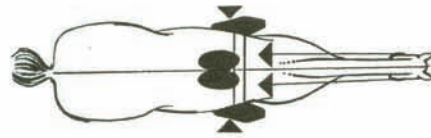


Fig. 3: Restraining aids

TIPS FOR USING REINS:

The rider can reward his horse, especially after restraining, through the release of pressure of the reins. He can either ease the reins by turning this hand so that the little fingers point towards the horse's mouth or to a greater degree by moving the hands forward.

It does not pay to jerk the horse's mouth if it does not react to the aids; the horse will only resist and get a hard mouth. It is best to try to get a response by giving and taking of the rein with a light hand.

The reins are kept in contact with the horse's neck on either side and then used to guide it. The head should be nearly vertical, with the ears parallel. The upper part of the neck is only bent if needed so far that the rider can see the nostril and eye brow.

The rein is usually only taken away from the neck when riding **unschooled** horses. For example it is used when the rider wants to make a turn of the haunches on the left rein. When riding a schooled horse the rein remains against the neck. When taking the rein away from the neck of the horse, it goes towards the hip of the rider and not the waist. When the reins remain against the neck, the weight is shifted slightly to the left, and right leg is behind the girth (harmony of aids).



Fig. 4: Harmony between aids

SEAT AIDS:

The rider uses his weight to shift the

center of gravity from one seat-bone to the other. The seat should be firm in the saddle, and the inside hip pushed forward and the knee lowered. The rider must not drop his inside shoulder and bend himself sideways as that would move the weight to the outside. The weight reinforces the leg and rein aids, especially when making turns on the forehand and haunches, leg-yielding and transitions to the canter.

THE RIDING OUT OF CORNERS:

The rider turns his horse to the inside, approximately three meters before a corner. When riding an unschooled horse, the right rein could be taken away from the neck for easier guidance. The horse moves steadily forward between the rider's legs. The inside leg of the rider is placed on the girth, and motivates the inner-leg of the horse (fig 5)

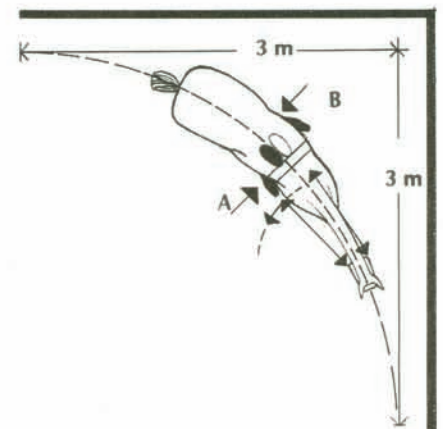



Fig. 5: Riding corners

The rider puts more weight on the inside seat-bone, pushes the inside hip forward and lowers the knee. The horse must not be allowed to let its hind-quarters swing out (B), this is controlled by the rider's outside leg which is placed behind the girth. The outside rein steadies the horse's neck so that it does not get too much of an inside bend. The horse and riders should be straight again shortly after the corner (about three meters). Remember that riding a good corner means a good performance after it whether dressage or jumping. 

Reference: This Is Riding by
Gunner Henlund