



TRAINING TIPS

MASTERING FLATWORK FOR SUPERIOR JUMPING

By Farah Rezeika

MASTERING THE ART OF JUMPING REQUIRES MORE THAN JUST CLEARING OBSTACLES. IT DEMANDS A SOLID FOUNDATION IN FLATWORK. BY FOCUSING ON SOME SCALES, RIDERS AND HORSES CAN ENHANCE THEIR JUMPING ABILITIES AND ACHIEVE GREATER SUCCESS IN THE ARENA. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE WILL EXPLORE HOW EACH SCALE, INCLUDING RHYTHM, SUPPLENESS, CONTACT, IMPULSION, STRAIGHTNESS, AND COLLECTION, CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WELL-ROUNDED AND ACCOMPLISHED JUMPING TEAM.



Rhythm

A consistent and even rhythm is the backbone of successful jumping. By maintaining a steady tempo, the horse can find balance and build power for each jump. Practicing over poles on the ground can help develop and fine-tune the horse's rhythm, ensuring a solid foundation for successful jumping efforts.

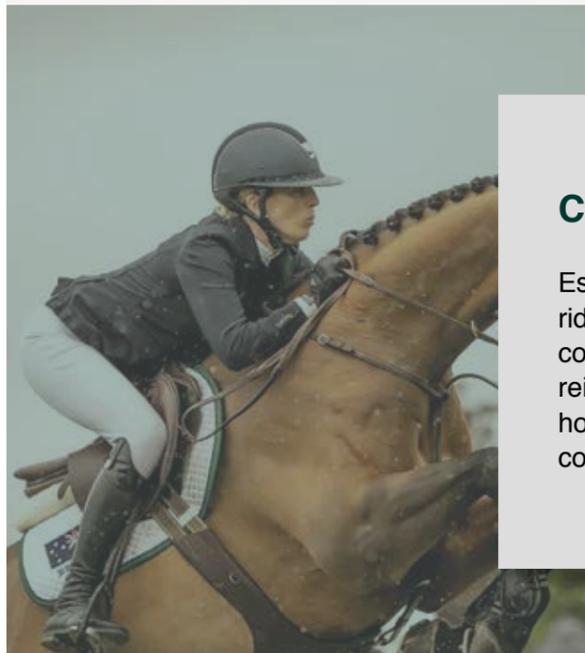
Suppleness

Suppleness plays a crucial role in both injury prevention and jump performance. Through bending and lateral exercises, riders can improve their horse's ability to flex its spine and joints, promoting flexibility and responsiveness to rider aids.



Contact

Establishing a soft and elastic connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth is essential for effective communication. A good contact extends beyond just the reins; it involves the entire body and how it influences the horse. A balanced seat and secure lower leg over jumps contribute to a harmonious contact.



Impulsion

A responsive and active stride, rather than a rushed one, is vital for maintaining impulsion. Proper containment of the horse's energy, similar to a bouncing ball, allows the rider to meet each jump with a controlled and powerful takeoff.



Straightness

When riders focus on keeping their horse straight, all four legs move evenly and the horse's body stays square. This balanced approach to the jump makes takeoffs and landings smoother, reducing the chance of hitting rails and allowing the horse to clear the jump with confidence and precision.



Collection

While shortening strides might suffice for lower jumps, higher jumps require collection. This involves bringing together the elements of good training: impulsion, contact, straightness, suppleness, and rhythm. A supple horse with free shoulder movement allows the rider to maintain control without compromising power. Gymnastic exercises like grids and raised poles further enhance jumping technique. 