

THE ART OF CLASSICAL DRESSAGE RIDING

THE TROT

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THE TROT DEFINED A “TWO BEAT” GAIT WHERE DIAGONAL LEG PAIRS MOVE SIMULTANEOUSLY FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SUSPENSION. THERE ARE FOUR MAIN TYPES OF TROT: THE WORKING TROT, THE MEDIUM TROT, THE EXTENDED TROT, AND THE COLLECTED TROT.

HOW TO EXECUTE THE TROT:

Start in the walk, tighten abdominals and deepen the seat, keep upper body straight, close both calves on the horse's side, maintain rein contact but yield slightly and finally relax seat and calves.

NOTES:

There are 2 ways for the rider to ride the trot - rising or sitting.

The rising trot is performed when the rider rises and falls in time with the horse's legs. The rider rises when the outside front foot is forward and sits when the outside front foot is back. **“Rise and fall with the leg on the wall”** is an easy way to remember when to rise and when to sit.

The sitting trot is often difficult to master because the horse's trot is generally bouncy. When sitting the trot, the rider remains in the seated position throughout. It is imperative for the rider to relax and allow the seat and hips absorb the concussion of the horse's hooves.

PURPOSE OF THE TROT

To develop stamina, muscle strength and rhythm.

To warm up the horse's muscles prior to exertion.

COMMON ERRORS IN EXECUTION

The horse loses rhythm.

The rider restricts the horse's movement with a rigid hand.

The rider posts on the incorrect diagonal in the rising trot.

The rider creates tension in the horse's back by sitting too hard in the rising trot.

The horse lacks energy.

The horse's step is more vertical in nature illustrating tension in the back and neck.

The rider becomes tense in the sitting trot consequently bouncing and making the horse tense.

FREEDOM AND REGULARITY OF THE TROT

1. The trot is a pace of 'two-time' on alternate diagonal legs (near left fore and right hind leg and vice versa) separated by a moment of suspension.

2. The trot, always with free, active, and regular steps, should be moved into without hesitation.

3. The quality of the trot is judged by the general impression, the regularity and elasticity of the steps—originated from a supple back and well engaged hindquarters—and by the ability of maintaining the same rhythm and natural balance even after a transition from one trot to another.


4. The following trots are recognised: working trot, collected trot, medium trot and extended trot. (Classical dressage also recognises the school trot. It is the ultimate in collection and the precursor to a good passage and great piaffe passage.)

4.1 Collected Trot. The horse remaining on the bit moves forward with his neck raised and arched. The hocks being well engaged maintain an energetic impulsion thus enabling the shoulders to move with greater ease in any direction. The horse's steps are shorter than in the other trots but he is lighter and more mobile.

4.2 Working Trot. This is a pace between the collected and the medium trot in which a horse not

yet trained and ready for collected movements shows himself properly balanced and, remaining on the bit, goes forward with even, elastic steps and good hock action. The expression 'good hock action' does not mean that collection is a required quality of working trot. It only underlines the importance of an impulsion originated from the activity of the hindquarters.

4.3 Medium Trot. This is a pace between the working and the extended trot but more 'round' than the latter. The horse goes forward with clear and moderately lengthened steps and with an obvious impulsion from the hindquarters. The rider allows the horse remaining on the bit to carry his head a little more in front of the vertical than at the collected and the working trot and allows him at the same time to lower his head and neck slightly. The steps should be even and the whole movement balanced and unconstrained.

4.4 Extended Trot. The horse covers as much ground as possible. Maintaining the same cadence he lengthens his steps to the utmost as a result of great impulsion from the hindquarters. The rider allows the horse remaining on the bit without leaning on it to lengthen his frame and to gain ground. The forefeet should touch the ground on the spot towards which they are pointing. The movement of the fore and hind legs should be similar (parallel) in the forward movement of the extension. The whole movement should be well balanced and the transition to collected trot should be smoothly executed by taking more weight on the hindquarters. 

Source of the article

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