



THE ART OF CLASSICAL DRESSAGE RIDING

HOW CAN I COMPETE IN DRESSAGE?

By Emmad Eldin Zaghloul

THINK OF DRESSAGE COMPETITIONS AS A “TANGO” DANCE COMPETITION. IMAGINE ONLY ONE INTEGRATED COUPLE ON THE STAGE SHOWING OFF THEIR SKILLS, TWO PARTNERS DOING THEIR BEST WITH PASSION TO IMPRESS JUDGES AND THE AUDIENCE. COMPETING IN DRESSAGE IS EXACTLY THE SAME, THE TEAM IS YOU AND YOUR HORSE IN A CERTAIN AREA CALLED DRESSAGE ARENA ACHIEVING CERTAIN MOVEMENTS IN ORDER, THE ARENA SURROUNDED BY A CREW OF JUDGES AMONG DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SPECTATORS AND BOTH OF YOU AND YOUR HORSE HAVE TO IMPRESS THEM ALL.



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Next step is developing your **“Equitation”**, the way you use your natural aids (hands, legs, seat and voice), and the different artificial aids (whip, spurs, etc.)

You have to understand that good contact with your horse is not all about good hands but also good legs, good seat and mainly good mind.

Next step is all about your knowledge and understanding of the horse gaits (walk, trot, canter) and different types of each and how to achieve transitions between each pace and the others and between each type and other types, as well as the other movements of the horse, like rein back, pirouette and lateral movements, etc.

Teach your horse in the dressage arena, at least once weekly to adjust your riding, straight lines, diagonals, curved lines, different sizes of circles, etc. That will push you to plan your riding and follow weekly and monthly training plans.

Plans must be according to the training scale of Dressage or **“The pyramid of training”**: Rhythm, Relaxation, Connection, Impulsion, and Straightness and, at the top, Collection.

Last step is improving your riding and your horse’s skills by using trotting poles, gymnastic jumping, and riding in different arenas and then you are ready to execute simple Dressage tests.

Remember, every time you ride, you are dancing the **“TANGO”** with your sweet Lovely equine partner. 🐾

NOW IMAGINE FURTHER, CAN YOU DANCE WITH YOUR HORSE?

First of all we have to talk about your relation with your horse. You have to know that your horse is not a tool, a machine or a piece of equipment. Your horse is not only your friend but also your partner, you have to love your horse, spending enough time with him, not only riding and training but also talking to him, playing together when he is free in the paddock, brushing and petting him. You have to know why sometimes horses are very calm and sweet with their grooms and the opposite with their riders.

Next point to discuss is riding in the correct position, which I can summarize in two main points. First of all is a straight vertical line passing through the rider’s ear, shoulder, elbow, seat ending at the heel perpendicular to the ground. Second is a straight sloping line starting from the rider’s elbow to the arm, hand, straight with the reins ending at the bit in the horse’s mouth. Remember this, if you want to control your horse, then you must control your body.



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