

*Teaching the horse to  
give to pressure!*

## **Part Two** "Go and Whoa"



"Go" is first because on horseback (just as when riding a bike) "Forward is your friend." Think about how difficult it is to steer a bike just as you are starting off and have almost no forward motion. How do you encourage forward? With your legs. Your legs energize and activate the horse's hind end – his drive train (the horse's engine is in the hind end). Your legs are the key to controlling not only the pace but the direction of the horse's movement. How do you make your legs effective?

A horse's natural instinct is to resist pressure. If you pull on a horse's tail it is unlikely that he is going to back up, and the first time you push against the sides of an uneducated horse with your leg he is likely to resist the pressure. The harder you press, the harder he resists. It is the release of pressure that a horse is seeking, and you must learn to use this to your advantage by releasing the pressure as soon as you feel the horse shift away from the pressure. This is especially important while the horse is learning new responses. Horses aren't like cars. Your horse shouldn't need your continuously active leg aid to sustain his forward movement. If you have to keep an active leg (your foot on the accelerator) all the time, you aren't developing a sensitive feel on a horse or a sensitive horse. If you are a beginning rider, the best way to learn is on a well-schooled horse who will give you the correct response when you ask correctly. Learning to ride on a "school master" is similar to having training wheels on your first bike.

Therefore, as you learn to use your leg, we encourage you to begin to use it with a rhythmic tapping motion that asks with pressure and follows the "ask" with the release of pressure. Your tap might need to be quite firm and energetic to get a response on some horses and may



*"Absolute request and get an absolute response" (Lendon Gray) which you immediately reward. It is your responsibility to be with your horse. Responsibility means the "ability" to respond.*

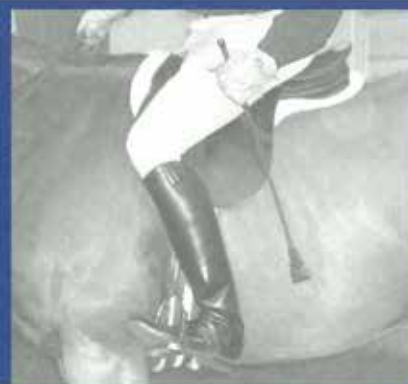
even require re-enforcement with a crop. Other horses will naturally respond to very light pressure. Your goal is to educate every horse you ride to respond to a light pressure. As you learn the various leg aids that you will use to send your horse where you want him to go, you avoid developing a gripping, nagging leg through the use of a rhythmic tapping leg. A tapping leg teaches you to apply and then release pressure, a habit that will be refined later to an imperceptible squeeze followed by a release of pressure. Remember at this level of riding you are trying to develop the correct muscle memories and patterns of behavior in your own riding to create clear communication with your horse.

Before we discuss the specific aids, let's remember that when working with your horse you must always make an "absolute request and get an absolute response" (Lendon Gray),<sup>2</sup> which you immediately reward. It is your responsibility to stay in unity with your horse as he responds. Responsibility means the "ability" to respond. This is imperative! The horse must understand what you are asking—and it is your job to make that clear—and you must reward the horse's slightest effort to do what you have asked.

For example, if your leg "asks" the horse to move forward and he does, then reward him by releasing the leg pressure. If he doesn't move forward with enough energy, then you "ask again." But if your horse should disregard your request, you MUST be prepared to "tell" him to move forward by reinforcing your leg aid immediately with your stick.

"Ask, ask again, then tell" – Remember an absolute request must get an absolute response! You must be ready and able to cope with the response and go with it. Follow your horse forward! Don't punish his forward response with a restrictive hand or your seat.

*A strongly used aid is meant to clarify the expectations, not to punish the horse or allow you to vent your frustration.*



Lendon Gray also recommends you keep the following thought in your mind while riding.

*"The duller the horse the less leg you should use and the hotter the horse the more leg."<sup>3</sup>*

What she means is that you will never teach the dull horse to be responsive to a light aid if you are constantly grinding your leg into his side and getting little or no response. This type of riding will create a horse that is even duller and more disrespectful to the rider's aids. You must discipline yourself to do what is necessary to get the "absolute response to your absolute request" promptly. This may require a very short, sharp, forceful use of an aid for a time or two, but this is much fairer to your horse than constant nagging aids that never reward through a release of pressure. Absolute requests leave no doubt about what you are asking the horse to do and allow him an opportunity to show his understanding and respond because the aid is used and then REMOVED. This will save him from the confusion and frustration of constantly applied aids. The hot horse needs more leg only because he needs to become comfortable with and accept your leg resting on his side before he will be mentally calm enough to interpret the increases and decreases of pressure of a leg aid. To a certain degree you are trying to desensitize this type of horse to the presence of the leg, or as Pat Parelli would suggest, you are playing the "Friendly Game".<sup>4</sup> A horse cannot respond to subtle leg cues if he is in a panic at the leg's mere presence against his side.





*The holding leg and urging leg look identical. They are both used at or very slightly behind the girth.*

*Holding Leg*



*Displacing Leg*

## The Leg Aids – Creating Energy

### Urging Leg = GO

The 'Urging Leg' is used in unison with the horse's hind feet. As the name indicates, it is used to ask the horse to move forward and to continue moving forward. At the walk, if you stay with your horse's movement as your hip rises and falls, your leg automatically is placed against the horse's side at the proper time for use. The amount of leg varies from horse to horse. One horse may need nine ounces, another four ounces and another just the thought of a leg being applied in the proper rhythm creates a response. Each animal is a unique individual. *(Remember: A horse is a horse—the mechanics are mostly consistent from animal to animal—but the "amount" varies from individual to individual.)* Again, depending on the individual you may need to use four ounces of pressure, barely feel the horse's side, or give it just a thought. By being aware of your horse's behavior and response to your application of the aids, you will be able to feel what is needed and how much.

If you find that you need to use more than four ounces of pressure to get a response then you are probably riding a "dull" horse. If it takes 9 ounces of pressure to get the response you want, then make sure to apply those nine ounces quickly and sharply and immediately release the pressure when your horse responds. You want every horse you ride to respond to four ounces of pressure or less, and only you can create this type of responsiveness.

Always offer the horse your respect, and expect an equal amount of respect back from him. You cannot be fair to your horse if you are

reacting out of anger or frustration. A strongly used aid is meant to clarify expectations, not to punish the horse or allow you to vent your frustration. When you have lost your patience or your temper, it is time to get off and put your horse away before you destroy the trust and respect that you have already achieved.

### Holding Leg = HOLD A SHAPE

The 'Holding Leg' is still. It forms a wall. It does not move with the motion. It is used to block (hold) a space. It shows the horse the limits of where you would like his feet to move or not move. Riding through a corner an inside holding leg would help the horse stay upright by preventing him from falling to the inside of the turn. When applying a holding leg, you push your knee down towards the ground and allow your weight to drop down the back of your calf with the ball of your foot settling into your stirrups as if you were standing on the ground. This blocked energy needs a place to go, and that is to your outside rein. *(Remember the "X", page 13.)*

### Displacing Leg = MOVE SIDEWAYS OR MOVE AWAY

The "Displacing Leg" is used to ask the horse to move off his natural path. When moving straight forward, a horse's hind foot follows the path of the front foot, creating two rows of footprints. With the use a displacing leg, you can ask your mount to move his feet to the side away from the pressure. A key to this leg aid being effective is being sure you have cleared a space for the horse to move into. You do so by releasing several ounces of pressure on the opposite side (opposite leg). This indicates the direction of the desired movement by opening a "door" for the horse to move into.



*If you have to stop your horse with the reins, then just use one rein to turn the horse sharply and cause his hind legs to step across each other.*

*Open your hip angle and use your upper body as the "sail" to bring your "boat" back to you.*



### **The Rein Aids=Whoa? Not Really!**

Your horse really is like your car in one way. Your hands on the steering wheel make sure your car goes in the direction you want to travel, just as your hands on the reins shape the path your horse travels. But you don't pull back on the steering wheel to stop your car, and ideally you shouldn't have to pull on the reins to stop your horse. A jockey who wants his horse to really dig in and give more power and speed – PULLS ON BOTH REINS – to increase the power as in a more tightly coiled spring. Pulling steadily on both reins allows the horse to engage both hind legs with more energy and create more forward thrust. If you have to stop your horse quickly using the reins, then just use one rein to turn the horse sharply and cause his hind legs to step across each other. This will successfully break the drive train.<sup>5</sup> This technique is just to get the job done – it is not the ideal of communicating effectively with your horse.

To stop your horse, you should stop your own body by allowing your energy to sink down and around the horse through to the stirrup. Think of your upper body as a sail that when full of wind carries the boat. Open your hip angle and use your upper body as the "sail" to bring your "boat" back to you. This is the feel you are striving for. The reins channel your horse's energy the way banks of a stream direct the flow of the water.

We are asking you to begin riding on a loose rein for two reasons. First, your horse can develop his ability to find his own balance within each gait without relying on your hands. Second so that you can develop your position and body control without accidentally balancing on the horse's mouth. Even though you will have loose reins you will still want to focus on following the gesture of the horse's head and neck with your arms. The trot doesn't have a balancing gesture but the walk and canter require the horse to use his head and neck to maintain his balance just as you swing your arms while walking. It is important to develop the feel of following while riding on loose reins. Because your hands will not be in direct contact with the horse's mouth at all times, you will have the opportunity to develop a hand that asks by applying pressure and then rewards by releasing pressure just as you are learning to do with your leg. We call this motion a check-release. Because you are on loose reins you will have to move your hand in order to make a momentary connection with the horse's mouth. Move your hand slightly to the outside and ask the horse to give his head and neck in that direction for a moment, then follow this by immediately returning your hand to a neutral position. This is the check-release or the "ask and reward". You are asking your horse to slow by using the outside rein and causing him to slightly disengage his hind legs. (He will bring one hind leg across in front of the other, stopping his forward motion). Later when you ride on contact, the outside rein will be your primary connection to the horse's energy. You are developing that muscle pattern now.





*Remember:  
two separate  
hands—a left side  
and a right side,  
separated by a  
sheet of glass.*



*Neutral hands*

*Opening rein*



### **Neutral Hands=NON-DISTURBING**

You have a left hand and a right hand. The left hand stays on the left side of the horse's neck. The right hand stays on the right side of the horse's neck. Pretend there is a sheet of glass that runs along the horse's mane separating the two sides. Your hands are quiet, steady, and considerate, and they work independently of your body.

The bit lies still in the horse's mouth. When applying a rein aid, try to feel the corners of the horse's mouth. The corners of the horse's mouth are where the horse is most sensitive and responsive. Rein length: Your hands should be in front of the withers with your elbows at the point of your hip. *Remember: two separate hands—a left side and a right side, separated by a sheet of glass.*

The arms are relaxed, elastic. There is a straight line from bit to elbow when seen from the side and from above. The elbows oscillate with the movement of the horse's neck. *(Remember: from the waist up your body and shoulders mirror the movement of the horse's shoulders.)*

### **Opening Rein or Leading Rein = COME THIS WAY**

The opening rein is used to lead the horse in a specific direction or into a specific space. It indicates to the horse that you want to turn but does not inhibit the forward motion in any way. It is primarily used to ask for large, slow, sweeping turns and as a signal showing the desired path. You move your hand/arm a couple of inches in the direction of the desired movement and then return to the neutral position. Remember: If you take (move) 2" on the left side you must give (move) 2" on the right side—this allows the horse to move his neck freely. The "inactive" hand is following the shape of the neck and allowing the turn as you

ask the horse to move in a new direction. *(You'll know this feeling well if you ever drive with both hands on the steering wheel of your car or a bike's handlebars. When one hand initiates the turn of the steering wheel the other hand attached to the wheel must follow along.)* This action is not very obvious when you are riding on loose reins, but you need to be aware of it now. Develop the habit, and it will carry over when you begin to work on contact.

### **Two Direct Reins = STAY HERE PLEASE**

Two direct reins used together set the limits of the path you are traveling. Remember that two direct reins also keep the horse on the track by indicating the path of travel that the energy of your legs created. "Leg to hand"—remember the "X"! When riding on loose reins, bring both hands straight back until you make a connection with the horse's mouth. (It may be necessary to adjust your rein length slightly to accomplish this. Be sure it feels like you are pushing a wheelbarrow. Remember, the horse's mouth and his neck carriage are not disturbed in any way as you adjust the reins. This awareness from the beginning is most important so as not to have to break bad habits later. (See "Addressing the reins" in DVD II, Leg and Rein Aids). Then you immediately return your hands to a neutral position. You may have to do this more than once as the horse is decreasing his speed or coming to a halt, but the duration of the connection should be no longer than you would keep your finger on a hot skillet. Remember — ask and reward. If you don't release the pressure immediately, you aren't allowing the horse to respond and show that he understands.



*Be a good parent.  
Set the boundaries  
and expect respect,  
and you will get it.*

*One Direct Rein*



*Downward Transitions  
Sit in the Saddle,  
Voice, Leg Support,  
and Check Release  
with the hand only if  
needed.*

### **One direct Rein=SHORTEN AND TURN**

One direct rein is used at the foundation level to encourage the horse to shorten his stride and to make a tighter turn. This is the rein aid you will use when riding into a corner. The active rein hand moves directly back toward your hip. Remember: If you take (move) 2" back on the left side you must give (move) 2" forward on the right side. This allows the horse to move his neck freely. The "inactive" hand is following the shape of the neck and allowing the turn as you ask the horse to turn in a new direction. Again, this action is not very obvious when you are riding on loose reins, but you need to be aware of it now, so that you develop the habit of following the shape you are creating. It will be crucial to successful riding on contact. (Remember the steering wheel.)

### **The Sequence of the Aids**

Before we give you exercises to practice using the aids, you must understand clearly the sequence of their application in upward and in downward transitions. Remember that the correct habits you establish at this level will become instinctive. The process may seem mechanical, but learning a new skill means breaking it down and doing it step by step. This is part of learning any motor skill.

### **Upward Transitions**

#### **Voice, Leg, Reinforce if Necessary**

In an "upward transition" the use of voice command comes first. This is the "preparatory aid," and if you have taught your horse the voice commands while lunging him, he will grasp what you expect. "Ask" the horse to walk by saying the word 'walk' with energy in your voice. Be sure to be consistent and use the word for the gait you want just as you do while lunging—"Trot" for trot and "Canter" for canter. This will be important in both upward and downward transitions. The tone and energy in your voice allows the horse to know whether he is being asked to go forward or to come back. Then add your urging leg aid. If the horse fails to respond, check yourself and ask again. If there is still no response, then "tell" your horse by supporting your leg aid with a smack from a stick directly behind your leg. Remember the mantra: "Absolute request and absolute response followed by reward." Using the stick once effectively is much fairer to your horse than a clutching leg that nags at his side constantly.

### **Downward Transitions**

Open your thigh and your hip angle and slide down around your horse as you think about your weight dropping to the ground. Sit lightly in the saddle, use voice, leg support, and check release with the hand if your horse hasn't responded with the transition. Relax your energy and breathe with the horse. Use your voice in a soothing singsong manner. Again check your energy and breathing to make sure that you are relaying the proper message. Actually, using the voice almost



guarantees that you aren't holding your breath and stiffening your body. We are always working toward riding inside leg to outside rein, so start to establish that mental image now. Horses naturally tend to fall inward off the track in downward transitions, so begin to build the habit to ride from your inside leg to your outside rein that you will need as your riding progresses in sophistication.

If your horse has not responded to your sinking into the tack and using of the voice, then follow up with the check-release. Just as in upward transitions you must be prepared to "tell" your horse if you aren't getting the desired response. This may mean that your check-release is quite strong for a moment. You absolutely must be prepared to do what is necessary to be effective even if it seems momentarily rough. Be a good parent. Set the boundaries. Expect respect, and you will get it.

### Exercises to develop the correct use of the aids.

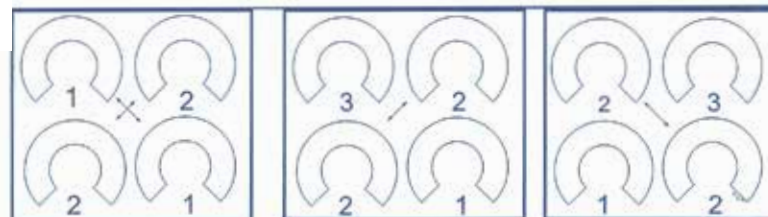
Urging Leg(s): Upward transitions – halt to walk, walk to trot, trot to canter. Don't forget to use the correct sequence of the aids! The urging leg aids are generally used simultaneously at or very slightly behind the girth.

#### Exercise 1

Halt to walk – use the voice command or cluck and then allow your hands to move forward slightly so that the horse has a comfortable place to go. Remember that the leg is tapping and the hands allow by following the head and neck gestures – an increase and then immediate decrease of pressure – no vise grips here!

#### Exercise 2

Walk to trot – increase your own energy level, and with a brisk tone of voice and urging legs, ask the horse to step forward into the trot. Remember that your hands must create a space for moving forward. Follow forward! Hands shouldn't inhibit or restrict the forward motion in any way.



*Trot*

*Left lead canter*

*Right lead canter*

### Exercise 3

Trot to canter – go from rising trot to sitting trot to reconnect and rebalance. To create a canter departure on a desired lead you must first prepare. The preparation begins with closing your inside leg to send the horse's weight and energy toward the outside rein so that he will be free to step off into the inside canter lead. Once you have completed and are maintaining the preparation, then draw your outside leg back to give the cue for the canter departure. Remember the canter has three beats. For the left lead the right hind initiates the gait, followed by the diagonal pair, and then the left leading leg. This reverses for the right lead, which begins with the left hind leg, followed by the diagonal pair, and lastly the right leading leg. Be sure you follow the horse's head and neck gestures at the very first canter stride. Your arms follow the forward energy you are creating with your legs. You don't want to ask the horse to go forward and then confuse him with hands that restrict his response. Follow the balancing gesture of the head and neck.

### Evaluation Questions

Use questions like these to evaluate your horse's response:

1. How quickly did he move forward? A count of one or a count of five?
2. How little leg pressure did it require? A thought, four ounces, or the use of the stick?
3. With how much energy did your horse respond? Too little, enough, or too much?
4. How long did your horse maintain the correct energy level at the gait before you had to use the urging leg aid again? Two strides, twenty strides, or a full lap of your work area?

*Notes*

---



---



### Holding Leg(s)

To hold the shape of the track you are riding, legs are normally used one at a time at or slightly behind the girth. Do all exercises first at the walk and trot. Add the canter when you are confident at the trot.

#### Exercise 1

Walk along a fence on a straight line and see whether you can keep your horse's body as straight as an arrow on the track with an inside holding leg.

#### Exercise 2

Now go outside of your ring and walk along a railing that is now on the inside of your track. We don't often do this, so you might find it more difficult for both you and your horse.

#### Exercise 3

Walk over striped rails and see if you can place your horse straight across any stripe you choose. You will use your holding leg(s) to make corrections in your horse's straightness. Imagine that you are passing a large ball back and forth between your legs.

#### Exercise 4

Set two parallel rails six feet apart and walk the horse through the chute you have created. Slowly narrow your chute to a two-foot width and continue to guide your horse straight through by primarily using your legs. Remember to insure good communication with your horse; stay focused on your intention. Keep your eyes on your focal point. Offer your horse a space to move into by softening your opposite leg.

### Evaluation Questions

1. How straight did your horse stay? Was it easier to stay straight going one direction on the fence?
2. To which holding leg was your horse more responsive?
3. How often did you have to use your holding leg when you had the fence as a support for straightness? Was it better when the rail was on the outside or on the inside of your track?
4. How much more or less often did you have to use your holding leg when working on the exercises on the fence than between the poles?

### Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



*One-quarter turn  
on the forehand.  
Keep eyes up!*



## Displacing Leg

This leg aid asks the haunches to move or stay in place. The active leg is positioned four to six inches behind the girth.

### Exercise 1

Start with a 1/4 turn on the forehand. Remember you are suddenly asking your horse to grasp a new meaning for the use of your leg. Rather than moving forward away from the pressure, you now want him to step sideways away from the leg. Begin by facing your horse at a wall to inhibit his ability to move forward and limit the amount that you will need to use your hands to correct any forward movement. Draw your displacing leg behind the girth, and with a tapping motion ask your horse to move his hindquarters away from the leg while his front feet stay almost in place. (*Imagine a small circle on the ground. The horse's front feet stay inside of it.*) Your non-active leg must relax and clear a space for your horse to move into. It should take about two steps for your horse to complete the turn and be parallel to the wall. Practice this first using the leg to which you feel your horse is most responsive. Practice in only one direction for a few sessions until you are sure your horse understands. Then introduce the turn off the other leg.

### Exercise 2

When you have perfected the 1/4 turn then try a half turn of 180° by starting and ending parallel to the fence or wall. These turns allow your horse to understand this new meaning of the leg aid in a quiet, controlled exercise. If the horse does walk off, ride out of trouble, guide the energy to the outside rein and close the outside fingers, while using an inside leading rein to contain the motion. This opening of the inside hand will set the limits for the horse.

## Evaluation Questions

1. Does my horse need more practice off one leg than the other?
2. Are his steps rhythmic and long, and does he step one hind leg across the other? (These are the qualities of a good turn.)
3. Do his front feet stay within a circle the size of a hoola hoop? (Walking forward 1/2 step is OK, but backing up should be avoided. If your horse backs up, be sure you aren't using your reins too strongly. This is a turn off the leg, the hands shouldn't be involved unless the horse tries to walk off.)

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

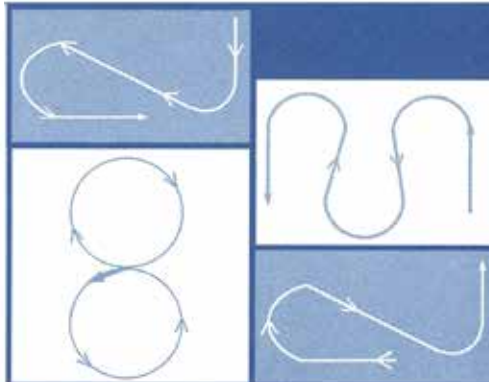
---

---

---

---

---



*Circles, half circles, half circles in reverse, figure eights and serpentine*

## Opening/Leading Rein

In large sweeping turns, the active hand moves outward and slightly forward and stays level, with the other rein hand not dropping downward at all. The following exercises are demonstrated in the Task Demonstration sections of the DVDs. See page 65 for more detailed explanations of these ring figures.

### Exercise 1

First try circles and figure eights that are two circles touching on a centerline. Remember to open the rein for a moment and then return the hand to a neutral position. You may have to use the aid more than once to achieve the desired result, but always return to neutral between "asks". Important: Your focus (eyes) must be the first indicator of the turn prior to using the reins, and you should maintain your focus throughout the turn. Be sure your shoulders follow the horse's shoulders.

### Exercise 2

Half circles and half circles in reverse allow you to combine straight lines with sweeping turns. Use the rail to help you establish your horse's straightness, which should help to keep your horse on the track of the half circle because he is already attentive to your holding leg aids. Remember to follow your horse's shoulders with your own.

### Exercise 3

Three loop, S-shaped serpentine are great exercises for practicing the use of the opening rein combined with a holding leg.

## Evaluation Questions

1. Did my horse turn his head and neck slightly in the direction of my opening rein?
2. How little pressure did my horse respond to?
3. Did I need to use the rein aid more than once?
4. Did my horse continue to follow my focus after the initial "ask" with the opening rein? Was my horse able to maintain the rhythm and pace of the gait while making the turns?

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Two Direct Reins

Transitions within a gait (such as ordinary trot to slow trot) as well as downward transitions between gaits will allow you to set the limits of the path you are traveling and contain the energy you have created with your urging legs. Downward transitions between the gaits: trot, walk; walk, halt; canter, trot, slow trot, walk, halt; etc., require you to concentrate on the sequence with which you use your aids so that you develop the correct habits and muscle memory. Remember which rein is designated as the outside rein. There is always an outside rein. This is the wheelbarrow effect. You have two direct reins, so you also have a inside rein and an outside rein. You are always riding the "X". Don't give up on it. This way your horse will always have an idea about direction. Both reins keep the bit still in the horse's mouth.

### Exercise 1

Rising trot to slow sitting trot – use your voice in a calm fashion, (sink into the saddle) open your hip angle, and create the "sail" (see page 31) with your upper body that will help draw your horse back to you. The two direct reins will help limit the amount of forward motion if needed.

### Exercise 2

Slow sitting trot to walk – Just as in Exercise #1 use a calm voice, open your hip angle, and with your upper body, create the sail that will help draw your horse back to you. The two direct reins will again limit forward motion if needed.

### Exercise 3

Walk to halt and later slow sitting trot into the halt, without going through the walk. The aids and mental images are the same as those for Exercises #1 and #2 above. See page 63 for more exercises.

## Evaluation Questions

1. Which transitions are easiest for my horse?
2. In which transitions does my horse respond before I even use the two direct reins?
3. Is there a particular transition that requires me to use my rein aids strongly?
4. Do I remember to release immediately every time if I have had to check? How prompt is my horse to respond?
5. Which transitions do I need to prepare for earlier and do more gradually? (Your horse may have to go through the posting trot, sitting trot, and walk to get to the halt.)

## Notes

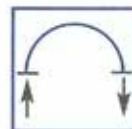
## One Direct Rein

### Exercise 1

Riding a rectangle along a wall you will use one direct rein at a time to help straighten your horse and then an inside direct rein to help shorten his stride slightly in preparation for the sharper turn of the corners. Remember that the outside rein needs to allow the horse's head and neck to bend to the inside by following the bend.

### Exercise 2

Use ground poles and set them as if you are trotting or cantering a jump into one corner and then out of the next corner.



## Evaluation Questions

1. Does my horse stay straight on the wall through his head and neck with little or no correction? (Remember you use a holding leg first and then support it with the direct rein)
2. When I use the one direct rein, does my horse respond by shortening his stride slightly and turning his head and neck slightly toward my active rein hand?
3. Into which direction does my horse naturally look more comfortably?
4. Do I have to correct his straightness more to the left or the right?

5. Do I remember to follow the bend in my horse's head and neck by allowing my outside rein hand to move slightly forward (so I don't inhibit his ability to respond to the inside direct rein)?
6. How much pressure does it take for my horse to respond? How many strides does he maintain the bend in his body before I have to remind him again?

*Notes*

---

---

---

---

---

---

These are a few exercises you can use to develop your ability to use the aids to communicate with your horse effectively and to educate him to the meaning of the aids. You will find that using the evaluation questions regularly will help you become a "conscious" rider. A good rule of thumb is that if you use an aid and don't get the response you want, then continuing to do that same thing longer and harder is not likely to get the result either. Stop ASKING!!!!!! Take a breath, TELL your horse what is expected, and immediately reward the response. You don't want to become white noise that your horse just tunes out **NOR** do you want to be a perpetual nag who drives the horse crazy. Sometimes you must be forceful enough to get the correct response even if you are momentarily rough. You may have to use your crop or a very strong check-release. This should never be done in frustration or anger. You must calmly but clearly tell the horse what is expected. You should treat your horse with the same empathy you would give a three-year old child but with the same expectation of respect for rules and boundaries that effective parents demand of even the youngest of children.