

RIDING AND SHOWING

ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

The dictionary defines ethics as “the study of human conduct, with emphasis on the determination of right and wrong.” Ethics are concerned with voluntary actions; that is, the things you **choose** to do. The decisions you make regarding your horse and showing events affect how others view you, and reflect on your club, your county, and the 4-H Program as a whole. Be sure the decisions you make are ethical ones.

To help determine whether what you are doing is ethical, ask yourself the following questions:

- Will I need to lie about this?
- Does this harm the horse?
- Is this against any rule?
- If someone were watching me, would I not do this?
- Does this misrepresent me or the horse?
- Would I be unhappy if someone did this to me?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” don’t do it. It is not ethical.

To maintain your integrity and that of the 4-H Horse Program, follow these guidelines:

1. OBEY THE RULES.

Rules are made for a reason, and they are meant for everyone to follow. Don’t look for loopholes or ways to bend or stretch the rules. Play fair. Be sure you know the rules of the show, your county, and your state.

WHEN I COMPETE,

I have a performance goal...never a goal “only to beat someone else.”

I respect and learn from other competitors more skilled than myself.

I don’t criticize other competitors, officials, or judges.

I do my best today.

I have fun.

I stay home if I can’t follow the above rules.

Adapted from a presentation by Doug Householder, Ph.D., Extension horse specialist, Texas A&M University, at the 1997 National Youth Horse Council Meeting

2. BE HONEST.

Any time you have to lie, you are being unethical. Don’t lie, and don’t do anything that you would later want to lie about or hide.

3. TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOUR HORSE.

Make sure your horse has adequate food, water, and shelter and keep it in good health with correct grooming, parasite control, vaccinations, foot and dental care, and basic safety. Proper care also means that you use humane training methods. Any mistreatment or abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the 4-H Program.

4. DEMONSTRATE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.

Good sportsmanship is a part of being ethical. Be gracious and courteous whether you win or lose. Help others who are in the competition with you. Don’t run down other members, and don’t blame the judge for your performance. Never blame your horse if you don’t do well. Jerking on the reins or spurring the horse in anger are poor images to project of yourself and 4-H. Your attitude is important not only in the show ring, but in all aspects of life.

5. KEEP COMPETITION IN PERSPECTIVE.

Winning is not the main goal. Rather, strive to do your best, to learn, and to grow. Compete against yourself and the course instead of other members. Have fun. If you don’t enjoy what you are doing, maybe this isn’t the right activity for you.

6. MAINTAIN PROPER ADULT INVOLVEMENT.

Remember that the main goal of 4-H is youth development. Parents and other adults are there to help and teach you, not to do your work. Help them to focus on what is best for all the kids and the program, not just on you. Do as much as you can yourself.

WARM-UP ARENA ETIQUETTE

At a horse show, you'll have opportunities to use warm-up space. The warm-up ring is usually overcrowded, so following these simple rules can help make it a safer and more beneficial place.

- All horses work in the same direction.
- Trainers, leaders, and helpers remain **outside** the arena.
- Don't mix longeing and riding in the same arena.
- Don't mix carts and mounted horses in the same arena.
- If you ride a mule, donkey, or pony, remember that some horses are not familiar with these kinds of animals and may be frightened. Be respectful and careful when warming up together.
- Don't cut others off into the rail or crowd the rail, moving others off.
- Communicate with those around you, especially if you are having trouble.
- Do not halt and/or back up without warning those around you.
- Keep two horses' lengths between you and the horses to the side, front, and back.
- Be in control; if you're not, you're not ready to be there.
- Keep your language and comments appropriate.
- The 4-H Code of Conduct applies at all times.
- If your horse has a tendency to kick, put a red ribbon in its tail.

IN THE SHOW RING

Remember that all contestants are doing their best to be seen by the judge. Be respectful of the riders around you. Adhere to the same guidelines in the show ring as in the warm-up arena, and add the following:

- Don't try to "squeeze" into a space in line where there isn't space.
- Don't be afraid to enter the arena first.
- When working a pattern, stay away from those who are lined up whenever possible.
- Be ready and waiting for the judge's signal for you to begin.
- Wait for the judge to acknowledge you before you begin your pattern and before returning to line when you finish your pattern, unless the judge requests otherwise.
- Be sure your exhibitor number is clearly visible.
- If you are too close to another exhibitor, don't hesitate to circle safely and find your own space on the rail.
- Do not dismount in riding classes.
- Ask a steward or judge for permission if you want to be excused.
- Be sure your horse is prepared for the horse show environment (clapping, chairs moving, people climbing bleachers, and so on).

CHOOSING A QUALIFIED RIDING INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER

Finding the perfect riding instructor is not an easy task! The right instructor helps you become a safe, confident handler and rider, no matter which discipline you choose. Two of the most important elements of riding are **safety** and **fun**. If either of these is missing, then you have the wrong instructor. It is worth the time and energy to find the right trainer/instructor so you can be safe and successful.

Before you begin your search for an instructor, decide what your goals are, both for yourself and your horse. You also must decide which **discipline** or type of riding you want to pursue: English or Western. English includes jumping, hunt seat, saddle seat, dressage, and eventing. Western offers pleasure, stock seat, Western games, reining, cutting, and others.

Determine what your best learning environment is. Some instructors have a busy, active barn; others a quieter, laid-back atmosphere. Also, you can choose group or private lessons. Some people like having other riders around them who have the same goals. Others like to have the instructor's undivided attention.

Find an instructor who really understands horses and is experienced in your chosen discipline. An instructor must have people skills as well as horsemanship abilities and must be able to help students achieve their goals. Not all good trainers are good instructors. A good instructor must not only understand the horse and the chosen discipline, he or she must also know how to teach.

To begin your search for a riding instructor, ask friends, local horse clubs, 4-H leaders, veterinarians, and farriers for referrals. Talk to other horse owners and find out which instructors have worked well for them. Check with riders currently learning from an instructor to find out about his or her ability to teach and train. Also, try the Yellow Pages or a Horseman's Directory.

Follow the guidelines below when searching for an instructor.

PERSONALITY

Is it easy for you to talk to this instructor about yourself and your horse's needs? Does he or she answer your questions in words that you can understand? Is the instructor's personality a

good match for yours? Discuss lesson programs, student goals, and riding styles with the instructor.

FACILITIES

Don't just telephone barns—visit them. Make sure you check an instructor's stable and other facilities to see whether the environment is safe and clean. Walk around and look at the conditions that you and your horse will be working in. A good facility's upkeep reflects the owner/instructor's sense of pride.

Safety is paramount. A good teaching facility has a firm helmet rule: everyone is required to wear a helmet when mounted, including the instructor. Don't accept the excuse that a "professional" doesn't need a helmet. This is not a correct message to give to students.

OBSERVE THE INSTRUCTOR

Watch the instructor give a lesson. This will give you valuable insight into the instructor's methods and style, and save you considerable time and money in the long run. Are you comfortable with the instructor's teaching style? An instructor who screams at students, berates them, or is condescending is not the one you want!

If an instructor will not allow you to watch a few lessons before making a decision, you may want to look elsewhere.

REPUTATION

Does this instructor have a good reputation among peers and other horse people? What do the instructor's current students think? Talk to these people and find out.

LOCATION

Decide how far you are willing to travel to get lessons. Is the instructor's facility within that range? Some instructors will consider coming to your place. Find out if this is a possibility.

COST

Ask instructors how much they charge for a standard lesson, and decide whether you can afford their rates. Ask how long their standard lesson is. Most instructors give an hour lesson, but some may go only 45 minutes; make sure you are getting what you pay for. Also, check to see if they give group lessons, as they may be less expensive.

REFERENCES

Ask for written references, and then check them. A good instructor/trainer is happy to supply you with several references. If he or she will not or cannot give you references, move on.

Be sure you feel comfortable with all arrangements you make with the instructor. It is your responsibility to make sure you get your time and money's worth, and that the instructor upholds his or her end of the agreement.

SHOWMANSHIP

The purpose of showmanship is to teach courtesy, good grooming, poise, confidence, and how to fit, train, and handle your horse. Showmanship is a demonstration of the member's ability to show the animal to its best advantage at halter. The animal's conformation is not considered.

Your horse should be well-groomed, clean, and clipped according to breed. The horse also should be well-trained to the required routine and well-mannered, so that it stands quietly and alertly while in the class.

Practice leading, turning, stopping, backing, and setting up your horse. Practice often for short periods of time. Five minutes a day is better than 1 hour, once a week. A properly trained horse will walk, trot, stop, back, set up, and turn with forward motion—all with little or no "pull" on the lead.

EQUIPMENT

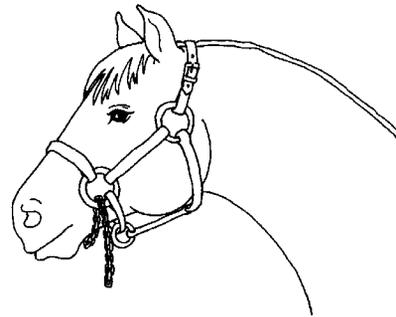
The *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574)

explains in detail the proper tack and equipment to use in showmanship. The tack you use to show your horse should be clean and properly adjusted.

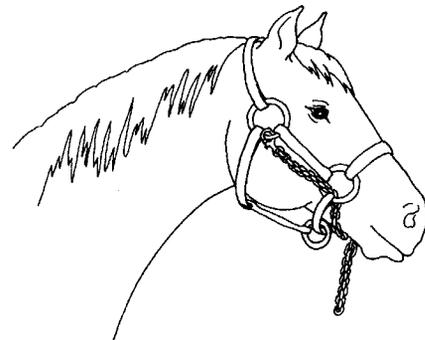
If you show in hunt or saddle seat attire, you may show with a halter or show bridle. If you show with a double bridle, you may use either the snaffle or curb reins for leading. Put the other set of reins over the horse's neck near the withers.

When you show in Western attire, you may use a halter of leather, web, or rope. The lead should be 6 to 10 feet long. No matter which halter or bridle you use, make sure that it fits properly and has a throatlatch.

If used properly, lead shanks with chains attached are permissible for safety or control. The chain may be run through the ring on the side of the halter or through the ring on the bottom,

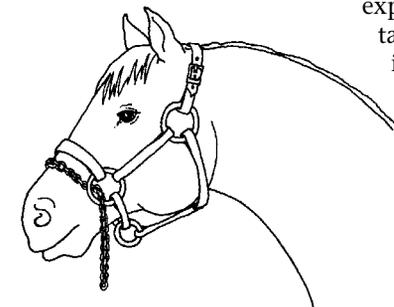


CHAIN UNDER CHIN

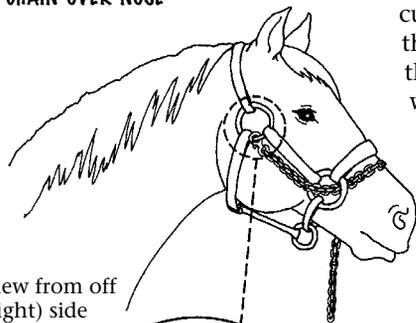


then over the nose or under the chin to the other side. With a very long chain, you may run the excess up the off cheek. If your chain is too long, you may double it back through the bottom ring and snap it back to itself. In all cases, the snap should face out.

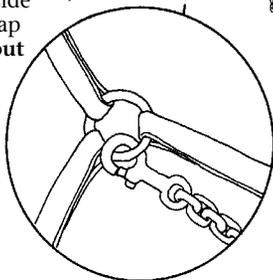
When leading your horse, do not put your hand on the chain. A chain approximately 15 to 24 inches is long enough. Don't yank or jerk on the lead shank, especially if you have a chain under your horse's jaw or over its nose. A chain is a poor substitute for good training. Be sure you practice with your show equipment at home before you use it at a show.



CHAIN OVER NOSE

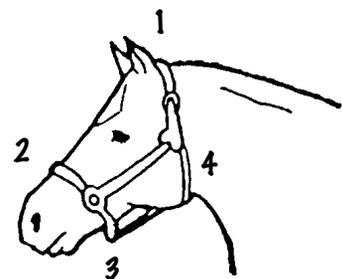


View from off (right) side with snap facing out



1. Crown directly behind the ear
2. Noseband halfway between eye and nostril
3. Chin strap 1-1½" below jaw
4. Throatlatch not snug but no looser than 1"

PROPER HALTER ADJUSTMENT



ATTIRE

The correct attire for showmanship is clearly defined in the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574). Choose clothes in colors and styles that are comfortable for you. Be sure your clothes always are clean and well maintained. To add extra spark, choose clothes that compliment the horse as well as yourself.

ATTITUDE

To be successful in showmanship, you must have a correct and positive attitude. (Remember that attitude is scored.) You should convey to the judge that you are proud of yourself and your horse. The first minute or two of a member's entrance into the ring tells the judge more than you can imagine. Always be alert, cheerful, bright, and smiling without being fake or overdone.

SHOWMANSHIP MANEUVERS

There are several maneuvers that the judge can request in showmanship patterns. Maneuvers should appear effortless and seamless, one move blending with the next. Points are deducted if a maneuver is not done correctly. You need to understand exactly what is expected for all movements and how to teach your horse to do them.

LEADING

The most basic showmanship maneuver is leading the horse correctly. When leading, you should walk ear-to-ear with the horse and about an arm's length from the horse's side. The horse should not lag behind you or surge in front of you. Look where you are going, not back at the horse or down at the ground.

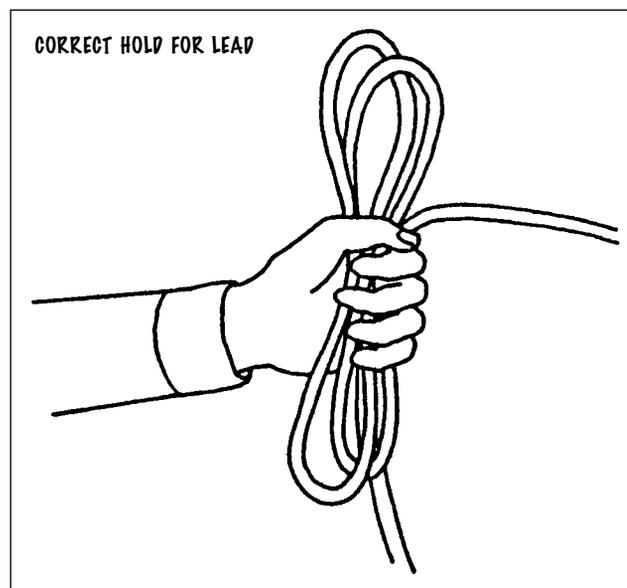
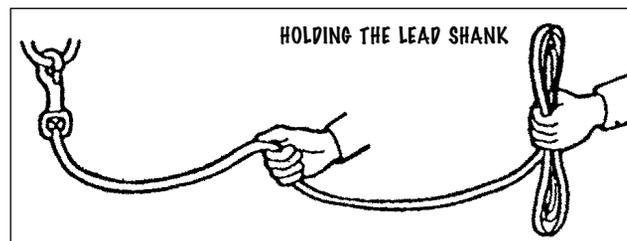
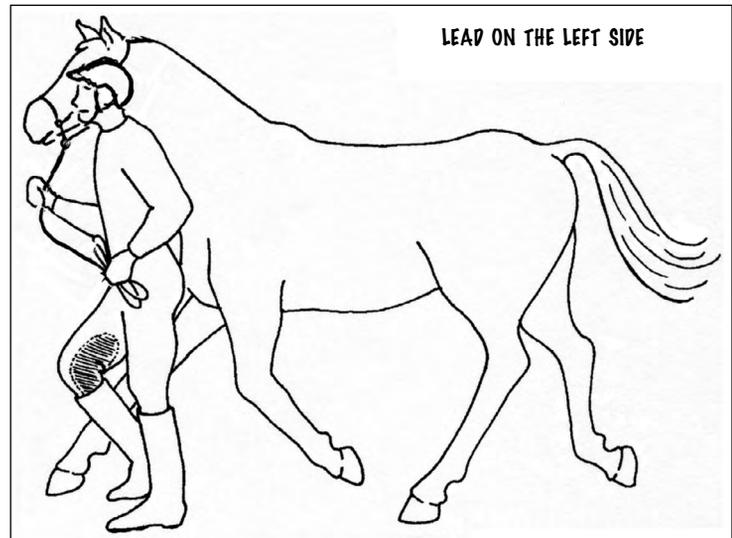
Hold the lead shank 8 to 18 inches from the halter with the excess lead shank folded in a figure eight. When leading from the near side, the lead is in your right hand and the excess in your left hand. When leading from the off side, the lead is in your left hand and the excess in your right hand. Never coil the lead, and do not fasten it with a rubber band in a figure eight.

The horse needs to move briskly beside you and travel in a straight line. To teach a horse that does not lead alertly alongside you or tries to lag behind, carry a long whip for a few days and use it to teach the horse to move forward. Holding the whip in your left hand, ask the horse to walk.

If the horse does not respond promptly or begins lagging, reach around behind you and tap the horse's hindquarters with the whip to encourage it to move forward. A whip is also useful in teaching a horse to trot beside you.

A verbal cluck helps teach a horse to obey. The horse will soon understand that this is a signal to move forward.

Be sure you practice leading from both the near and off sides of your horse. A judge may ask older members to lead from either side at the walk or trot.



BACKING

When a pattern calls for a back, the horse should promptly back the requested distance in a straight line. Four steps is considered one length, counting the steps of the front feet. A half-step at the end of the back to even the feet is not counted as a step. At the end of the back, the front feet should be within half a hoof's length of being even. Be sure you back the proper number of steps.

To teach a horse to back, give the horse the command "Back." Then apply pressure on the nose with the halter using light tugs. Avoid a steady pull. At the same time, push on the point of the shoulder with a whip handle or short stick. The instant the horse responds, reward it by releasing the pressure. At first, ask for just one back step at a time. As the horse responds correctly, ask for more steps. To teach the horse to back straight, back it along a fence, wall, or barn aisle.

TURNS

Most patterns use degrees to tell you how far you need to turn.

One-quarter turn = 90 degrees

Half turn = 180 degrees

Three-quarter turn = 270 degrees

Full turn = 360 degrees

The direction of the turn is the direction the horse's head moves.

HAUNCH TURNS

In a haunch turn, the horse pivots on its hindquarters with energy and impulsion. Properly done, a haunch turn must have forward motion, meaning the nonpivot hind foot moves around in front of the pivot foot. The pivot foot is the inside hind foot. When doing a right haunch turn, the right hind foot is the pivot foot. When doing a left haunch turn, the left hind foot is the pivot foot.

Unless the turn is less than 90 degrees, always turn the horse away from you. Therefore, a right haunch turn is done from the near side of the horse. A left haunch turn is done from the off side of the horse.

The horse has to learn to pivot on the correct hind leg and hold its pivot foot in position. To teach a right haunch turn, follow these steps:

1. Walk toward the horse's throatlatch and get the horse to move away from you with the horse's left front foot crossing over its right. Cluck or tap the horse's shoulder to get the horse moving.
2. Your hand needs to be a few inches from the halter to have control of the horse's head. Ask the horse to move slightly

forward and around. Don't let the horse bend its neck; keep its body straight.

3. Lift the lead shank to transfer the horse's weight to its hocks, then go into the turn. Use the lead shank to guide the horse's head slightly forward and to the right, using your hand to tap the shoulder to move the horse away from pressure.
4. Just before the horse drops weight onto its left hind leg, move the horse forward one half-step to place weight on the right hind foot. Keep moving the horse and bring the the left foot forward. With practice, the horse will learn to pivot on its right hind foot and bring its left hind foot forward on its own.

For a left haunch turn, repeat the above steps, reversing sides and directions.

Remember that when you are in a showmanship class, you may not touch the horse during a haunch turn.

FOREHAND TURNS

In a forehand turn, the horse pivots on its forequarters. A forehand turn should be done with forward motion, not by backing around the pivot foot. The pivot foot is the inside front foot. When doing a left forehand turn, the left front foot is the pivot foot. The nose turns to the left and the hip swings to the right. In a right forehand turn, the right front foot is the pivot foot, and the horse's nose goes right with the hip swinging left. To perform a right forehand turn correctly, the handler must move to the off side of the horse.

To teach a horse how to do a left forehand turn, follow these steps:

1. Facing the side of the horse, take the halter in the left hand to hold the head up.
2. With your right hand, touch the horse lightly about 4 inches behind the girth where the heel will act when you are mounted. At the same time, pull the horse's head slightly to the left. The horse will move its haunches to the right.
3. The left forefoot, acting as the pivot foot, may step up and down, but it should remain as nearly as possible in the same spot. The right leg must step around in front of the left.
4. Do not ask for too much of a turn to start with. Take only one or two steps, and then reward the horse by rubbing its neck. By adding a few steps at a time, the horse will eventually be able to make a complete 360-degree turn on the forehand.

To teach a right forehand turn, repeat the above steps, reversing sides and directions.

The right foreleg acts as the pivot, and the left foreleg steps around in front of the right.

In a showmanship class, you are allowed to touch your horse when asking for a forehand turn; still, you should strive to teach your horse to do this maneuver without having to touch it.

SIDEPASSING

Sidepassing is a maneuver in which the horse moves to the side with no forward motion. The forequarters and hindquarters should move together. The front foot on the side opposite the direction of travel must cross over in front of the other front foot. The hind feet should also cross over in front, but they can be brought side by side.

Horses do not normally sidestep on their own. They must be taught to do this movement. First, make sure the horse knows how to do haunch turns and forehand turns.

To sidepass to the right, stand on the near side of the horse and press on the neck and side at the same time. Concentrate on making this a forward motion with front and rear feet crossing over in front. To sidepass to the left, stand on the off side of the horse and repeat the motions.

In a showmanship class, you may touch your horse when requesting a sidepass. However, as with forehand turns, try to teach your horse to do this without touching it.

SETTING UP YOUR HORSE

When you set up your horse for inspection or standing in line, it should have all four feet square or stand according to breed type. Keep the horse's head up and its weight on all four feet. Keep the horse alert and posed at all times.

When teaching your horse to set up, the most important thing is to establish a pattern and be consistent. Set the hind feet first. Use the right hind foot as the plant foot. Then, position only the left hind foot. Only one hind foot ever moves in this procedure. Move the left hind foot forward or backward to position it beside the right hind foot. Set up the front feet second. The right front is the logical foot to place next because of the diagonals of the horse. Set the left front foot last.

Pull down on the lead shank to move the hind feet. Lift up on the lead shank to move the front feet. If you do this consistently, the horse will know which feet you are trying to move at all times.

When you are training your horse, if it does not want to move its hind feet or does not respond well, back the horse up and lead it forward several times until the horse moves

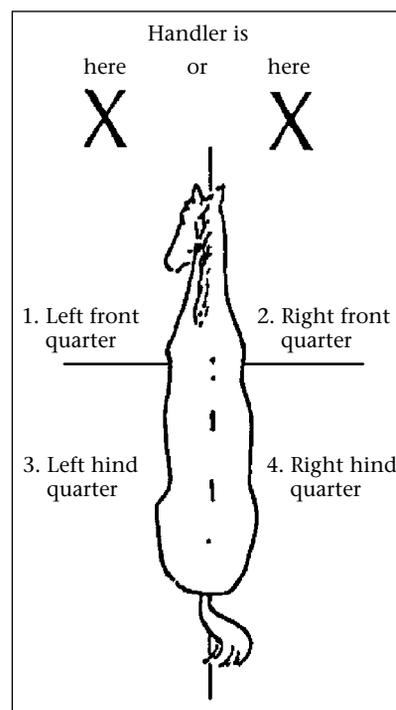
when you ask it to. Always lead the horse forward or back it into position.

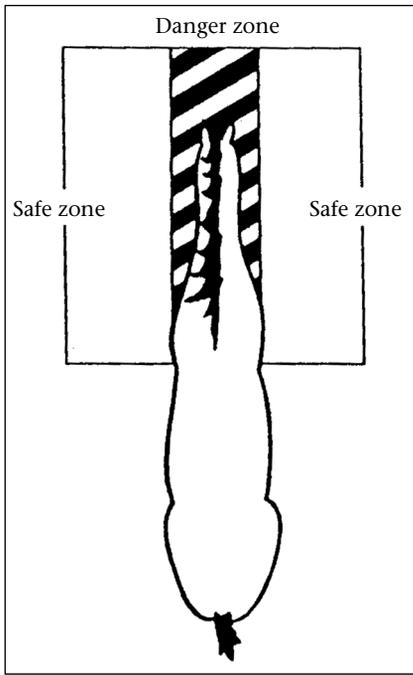
If your horse does not respond well when you are trying to set up its front feet, pick up the foot and move it into position or tap the foot you want to move with your toe. You must train the horse to set up properly on its own, though, because you may not touch the horse to set up during a showmanship class.

As soon as the horse is set up correctly, release all pressure to let the horse know that it responded properly. Present the horse to the judge.

INSPECTION AND THE QUARTERING SYSTEM

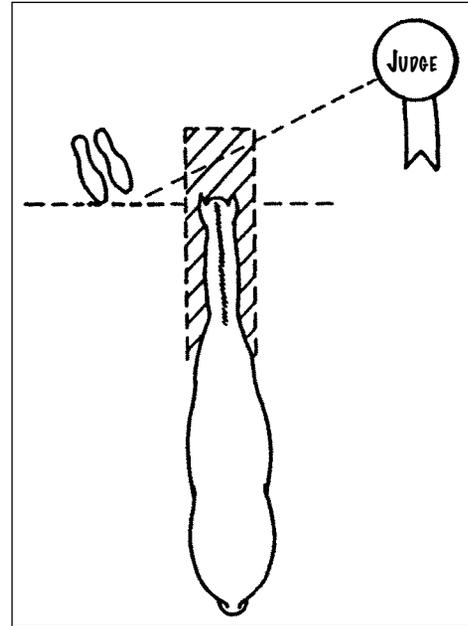
When the judge inspects the horse, you must respond promptly and correctly to the judge's movements around the horse. Use the **quartering system**. Mentally divide the horse into four quarters. When the judge is in one of the front quarters, you should stand on the opposite side of the horse from the judge. When the judge is in one of the hind quarters, you should stand on the same side of the horse as the judge. For example, when the judge is in the right front quarter, you must be in the left front quarter, keeping an eye on the judge. When the judge is in the right hind quarter, you must be in the right front quarter.



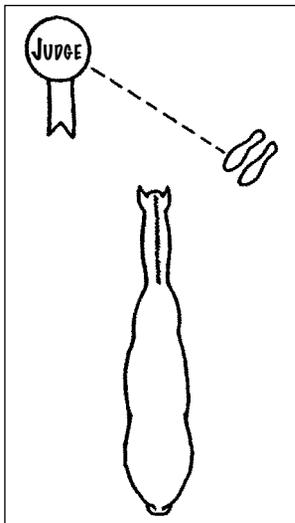


As the judge moves around the horse, you should change sides when the judge is at the heartgirth and when the judge crosses the tail and the nose. Move quietly and promptly with as little commotion as possible, using only three or four steps and keeping eye contact with the judge. Do not change hands on the lead when you change sides.

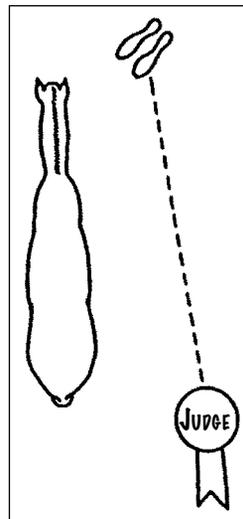
Stand facing the horse at a 45-degree angle off the horse's shoulder, in front and to the side of the horse's head. Never stand directly in front of the horse in the "danger zone."



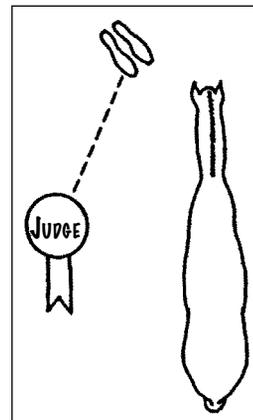
Diagonal position to see off hind foot and whether gelding has "let down." Shaded area is unsafe.



Check 1: Handler should be on the opposite side of the horse when the judge is in front of the horse.



Check 2: Handler should be on the same side as the judge when the judge is beside or behind the horse.



Check 3: Handler must keep eye contact with the judge at all times.

SHOWMANSHIP PATTERNS

Learn to read and follow patterns correctly. You must understand exactly what the judge is asking for and try to analyze what the judge is expecting. If the pattern states “Back 6 steps,” that indicates the judge is probably a stickler for perfection and precision, and you need to make sure you back exactly six steps. If the pattern calls for a 180-degree haunch turn, then that is exactly what the judge is looking for. If you turn more than 180 degrees or less than 180 degrees, you will have points deducted from your score.

You must execute a pattern exactly as diagrammed. Some judges like to use cones or markers in their patterns. Make sure you are on the correct side of the cone per the drawn or spoken pattern. Getting too close to or too far from a cone disrupts a maneuver. Walking around or knocking down cones are major faults in showmanship. If the pattern calls for you to walk or trot at a cone, this means to pick up the walk or trot when the horse’s front feet are even with the cone.

Think ahead, and plan out your pattern. Follow these helpful tips to prepare:

- Read the pattern aloud several times.
- Draw the pattern on a sheet of paper to help memorize it.
- Walk the pattern without the horse and physically do the required maneuvers.
- Look to see where cones (or other markers) are set up in the arena, and visualize where the horse must be in relation to them during the pattern.
- Watch other people do the pattern (but be sure you know whether they are doing it correctly).

See the sample Showmanship pattern on the next page.

CLASS PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

The class procedure and scoring are well defined in the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574).

EXPECTATIONS

All judges have similar expectations. They look for contestants who have “done their homework” and are able to do all maneuvers and other requested elements properly. Straight

lines are extremely important. Horses should travel and set up straight. Crooked lines detract from the performance.

Remember these showmanship pointers:

- Show 100 percent of the time you are in the arena.
- Pay attention at all times.
- Do not allow your horse to rest a foot.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude.
- If you have a nervous or fractious horse, move to the end of the line so you do not interfere with other horses in the class.
- Maintain proper etiquette at all times in the show ring.
- Practice ahead of time. By learning all the basic showmanship maneuvers, you will be able to perform to your best potential.

CLASS PROCEDURE

Enter the arena as directed by the judge, ring steward, or announcer. Keep at least one horse length behind the horse in front of you. If necessary, pass on the inside and return to the rail. Be aware of the judge’s position at all times.

Walk ear-to-ear with the horse, about an arm’s length from the near side. Hold the lead 8 to 18 inches from the halter in the right hand with the end folded in a figure 8 in the left hand. Do not coil the lead or fasten it with a rubber band in a figure 8.

If instructed to line up, do so side-by-side leaving 6 to 8 feet between horses, if possible. This allows the judge to pass safely between horses and have a good view of your horse. Quickly stand the horse square, balanced, or stretched, consistent with the breed and your attire. While in line, do not let your horse circle you. Always turn the horse away from you for turns 90 degrees or more (quarter turn).

If asked to move to another position in line, back out quietly, and promptly lead to the new place. Speak to the animal to prevent it from becoming startled when another horse is moved nearby.

Pose (set up) your horse with all four feet square or according to breed type. The horse’s head should be up and its weight should be on all four feet. Do not let the horse “go to sleep,” but do not do anything that will attract attention. A gelding may “let down” when standing relaxed; correct by moving him forward or back. You should not use your feet to touch the horse’s hooves to get it to set up, nor should you change hands on the lead to set up. If the horse moves out of position, quickly reset it. You may use quiet voice commands.

When the horse is set up, face the horse diagonally at a 45-degree angle off the horse’s shoulder. in front and to the side of the head, moving from side to side as necessary. Be in a position to see your horse and keep your eyes

on the judge without blocking the judge's view or standing directly in front of your horse. When the judge inspects your horse, respond to his or her movements with the quartering system.

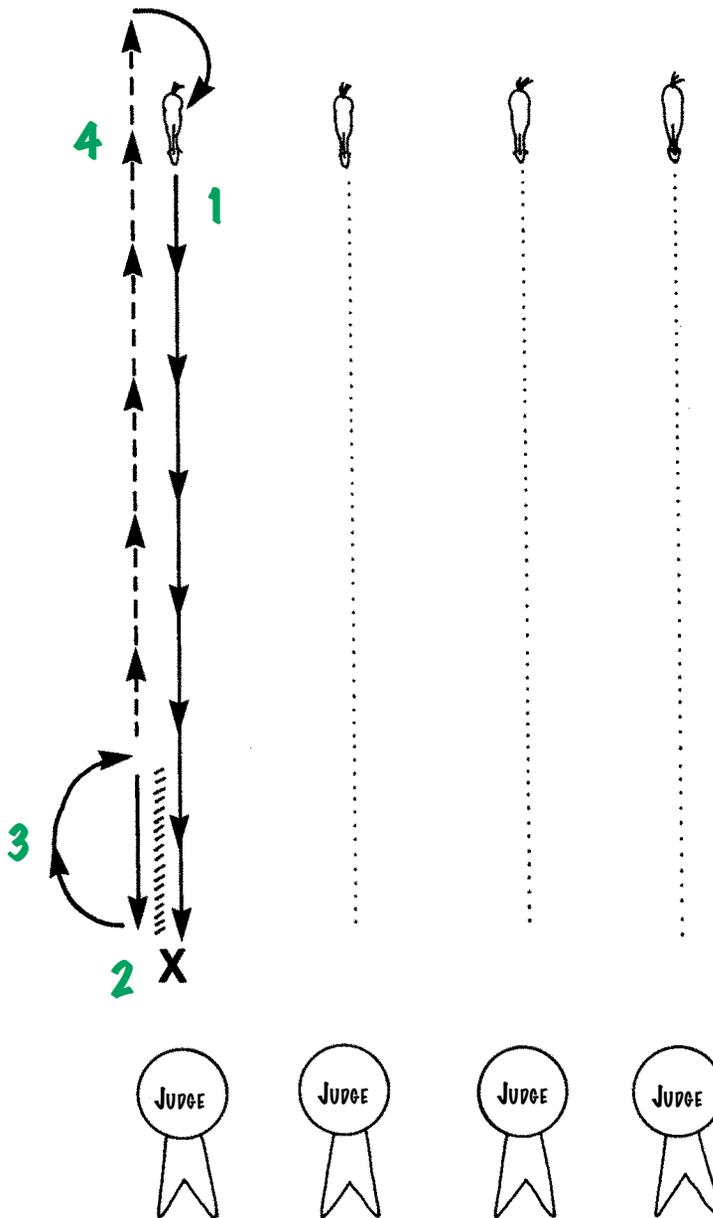
Change sides when the judge is at the heartgirth and when the judge crosses the tail and the nose. Step around the horse's head quickly and quietly, using three or four steps and keeping your eyes on the judge. Do not change hands on the lead when you change sides, and never stand in front of your horse in the "danger zone."

Listen carefully to instructions. When asked for your individual performance, follow the judge's instructions. Be ready to move promptly when signaled. Lines should be straight, and you should stay 5 to 7 feet away from the judge. Haunch turns and forehand turns should have forward motion. Turn the horse away from you if the turn required is 90 degrees or more. For turns less than 90 degrees, you may turn the horse toward you.

To back, face to the rear of the horse. In **Washington and Idaho**, do not change hands on the lead to back. In **Oregon**, changing hands on the lead is optional. Back the horse the requested distance in a straight line. Four steps are considered one length, counting the movement of the front feet. If the pattern includes "closing the back," return to your position at the start of the back and balance your horse.

You may touch your horse only when asked to perform sidepass or forehand turn maneuvers (or to smooth the mane or forelock). This means you must not touch your horse when asking for a haunch turn or back, nor pet your horse until the class is dismissed.

SAMPLE SHOWMANSHIP PATTERN



1. Walk out of line to Judge.
2. STOP, back one length, close the back, and set up for inspection.
3. When excused, do a 180-degree haunch turn to the right.
4. Trot back through the line, do a haunch turn 180 degrees to the right, and return to place in line at a walk.

SYMBOLS	
LOPE	—————>
TROT	- - - - ->
BACK	///////
WALK	—————>>>

PERFORMANCE

WESTERN RIDING

SADDLING

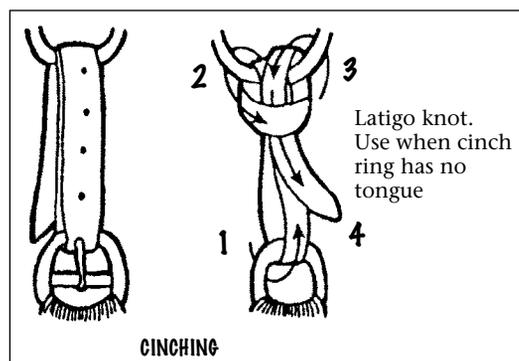
Always follow good safety practices. Clean any mud or dirt from the horse's back and heart girth, and brush down all the hair. Be sure the saddle blanket or pad and the cinch are clean.

Working from the near side, place the blanket well forward on the neck and pull it back into place to smooth the hair. Make sure the blanket is lying flat with no wrinkles.

Hook the right stirrup over the saddle horn. Lay the cinch(es) over the seat. Gently swing the saddle into position, making sure the cinch(es) and stirrup do not swing down and scare the horse. If the saddle is not in the correct position, lift it up to move it; never rough up the hair by pulling the saddle or blanket forward. Lift the pad slightly under the gullet of the saddle so that it does not press on the top of the withers.

Carefully move to the off side and let down the cinch(es) and stirrup. If the saddle has a double rigging, **always** fasten the front cinch first and the back cinch last. The saddle could easily turn under the horse if this is not done. When unsaddling, **always** unfasten the back cinch first, then the front one. A back cinch is not required. In fact, most equitation saddles do not have one.

Make sure the cinch(es) is not twisted. Then, return to the near side, reach under the horse, and pick up the cinch. Make two wraps with the latigo, and tighten it slowly until it is barely snug. Secure it with a cinch knot, the tongue of the cinch, or both. Put the end of the latigo in its keeper or tuck it into the knot.



Untrack the horse by walking a few steps or pulling each front leg forward as far as possible. This pulls the skin and hair away

from the girth and helps prevent sores. Never cinch a horse tightly at first, as it may become **cinchbound** (may try to lie down or bite).

The cinch should be snug but still allow a flat hand to slip underneath. Check it several times: after saddling, after untracking, and after riding a short distance. Some horses expand their girth area, then relax later.

The back cinch should be snug enough to barely touch the horse's body when it inhales, but not so loose that a back foot might catch in it. There must be a connecting strap between the front and back cinches.

Fasten accessory straps such as breast collars, tie-downs, or martingales last.

To unsaddle, reverse the steps. Unfasten accessory straps first, then the back cinch, and last the front cinch. Buckle the cinches into the latigo keeper or lay them over the saddle to keep them clean and out from under foot. Also, loop the latigo strap through the D-ring. You may remove the saddle and blanket together. Slip them toward the rear and off the near side.

BRIDLING

Put the reins around the horse's neck, or drop the halter's noseband off and refasten the crownpiece around the neck. With the halter rope draped over your right arm, spread the crownpiece of the bridle with your right hand and hold the bit in your left hand. You may drape the reins over the horse's neck to keep them off the ground.

Standing on the near side (never in front), hold the top of the headstall over the horse's forehead with your right hand. Let the bit rest on the fingers of your left hand. Use your little finger to move the curb strap back under the horse's jaw and your thumb to pry open the side of the horse's mouth in the space between incisors and molars. Press the horse's lips against its teeth if it refuses to open its mouth. Slip the bit between the teeth without hitting them. **At the same time**, pull the headstall up with your right hand.

Put the headstall over the right ear by gently folding or cupping the ear forward. Do the same with the left ear and pull the forelock from under the crownpiece. Fasten the throatlatch and run all the straps through their keepers.

Check the bit position and the tightness of the chinstrap (two fingers between the horse and the chinstrap is a common measure of correctness). The throatlatch should have slack

in it when the horse has its head in a normal position (use the same measurement of two fingers).

Unbridling is the reverse. Guide the bit out of the horse's mouth or let the horse drop it without hitting the teeth. Always be gentle when bridling and unbridling your horse. Some horses become head-shy from careless handling.

THE AIDS

Horses are controlled by hands (or reins), legs, weight, and voice. These four natural aids are the language riders use to communicate with their mounts. As a rider becomes more skilled and the horse better trained, the use of the aids becomes less and less noticeable. Good hands, correct posture, and proper use of legs and weight are the basic foundation in all styles of riding.

HANDS OR REINS

Good hands often are referred to as **light hands**. Contact with the horse's mouth should be as delicate as possible while still maintaining control. Hands should be quiet, not jerking up and down, forward and back, or sideways with the horse's motion. Your fingers should be relaxed until the reins are needed for turns, stops, or backing.

Gentle "give and take" pressure on the reins can ask the horse to lower its head into the proper position and relax its jaw. This flexes the horse at the poll, which allows proper action of the bit and helps collect the horse's body. Never use a steady pull to cue or control the horse, or its mouth could become hard.

Your upper arms should hang vertically from the shoulder. Your elbows should not be clamped to the body or pushed out to the side or rear. Keep a straight line from your elbows, through your wrists and hands, to the bit. This gives good leverage and lets your fingers and wrists do most of the work without moving your arms. Hold the reins just above and in front of the saddle horn.

LEGS

The rider's body is supported mainly by the seat bones, the feet in the stirrups, and—to a certain extent—the thighs. The lower legs should be alongside the horse, not thrust

away from its sides. They should be in the correct position to signal easily for increase of speed, stopping, collection, and moving the hindquarters.

Your legs should be directly under your body, with knees slightly bent and your weight on the balls of the feet. The stirrups should be just short enough to allow your heels to be lower than your toes by flexing the ankles. Never raise your heel to signal the horse; use your calves. Toes should be parallel to the horse or slightly turned out in a natural position. Your feet and legs should be as motionless as possible. Ride on the balls of the feet so you can get them free if the horse should fall.

A common fault is riding with the feet too far forward. This is caused by sitting on the tailbone instead of the two sitting bones. To correct this problem, tip your pelvis forward and move your whole leg out and back from the hip. Another method is to stand up balanced over your feet, then sit down by bending your knees without moving your legs or sitting back on the tailbone. Keep your heels down.

If you use spurs, know their purpose, and use them sparingly.

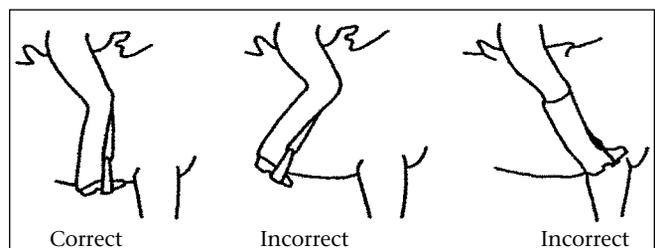
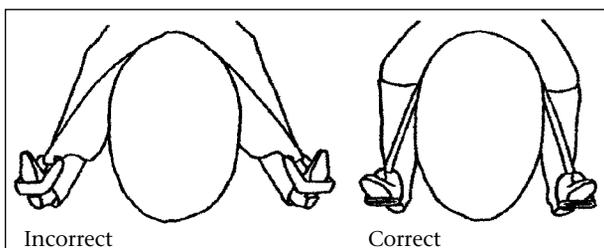
WEIGHT

A rider's weight should be balanced in the center of the saddle, not to one side or the other. Your shoulders should be straight across from one side to the other and not rounded. If your rein hand is too far forward, then so are your shoulder and upper body, resulting in more weight on that side of the horse. Sit up straight with head up, chin level, and eyes looking ahead.

Good posture does not mean that the body is rigid and stiff. A rider should be relaxed and supple to move gracefully with the horse. Good posture is a combination of sitting and standing, with your feet as a base under your body.

VOICE

A soft but firm spoken command or cluck given before rein and leg aids warns a horse to get ready for a stop, back, or change in gait. With a voice cue, you can use much lighter aids. You also can use your voice to calm, reward, or scold a horse.



MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING

For both the safety of the rider and the comfort of the horse, it is important that mounting and dismounting are done correctly. Never mount in a barn, near a fence, or under trees or overhangs.

First, check the cinch and tighten it if necessary. Stand on the near side and balance the horse on all four feet. Turn slightly toward the horse's tail or face the horse, but keep an eye on the horse's eyes and ears to be ready for any movement. Facing forward when mounting is unwise, as the horse can easily step off and leave the rider off balance or in a position to be kicked.

Adjust the reins evenly in your left hand with just enough contact to keep the horse from moving ahead. Place this hand on the neck in front of the withers; grasp a lock of mane or the neck. Put your left foot in the stirrup; push the toe of your boot against the cinch, not the horse's side, so you do not poke the horse with your toe. Brace your left knee against the saddle and grasp the saddle horn with your right hand. Your left leg and two hands form a triangle of support.

Spring up from your right foot with the left as a lever. Try not to hop up-and-down or pull with the arms. Hopping might startle the horse, and pulling may turn the saddle. Keep your body as upright as possible as your right leg clears the horse's rump. Your left leg and right hand support you enough to let you sit down lightly and smoothly. Adjust the reins and slip your right foot into the right stirrup immediately.

Do not permit the horse to turn or move away until you are seated and ask the horse to move.

Dismounting is exactly the reverse of mounting, except that to avoid getting hung up in the stirrup, your left foot first slides backward in the stirrup to clear it easily as your right leg hits the ground. For the same reason, shorter riders may swing the right leg over, lean across the saddle, slip the left foot out of the stirrup entirely, push back, and slide or jump lightly down.

To mount with romal reins, double the end in the left hand. After mounting, slide the bight under the rein hand to the opposite side. For a brief dismount, romal reins need not be taken down; the romal part may be looped behind the horn. Both split reins, or the near rein only, may be taken down. Never let go of the reins.

It is customary to bring romal reins over the horse's head to hold or lead the horse. If you use snaps, you may unsnap the rein on the near side, then gather your reins to lead or present your horse. If you are using split reins, take both reins down to lead your horse. If you

are asked to "dismount, present your horse, and remount," you need take down only the near rein.

HOW TO HOLD THE REINS

Use one hand for reining in Western equitation classes (and Western pleasure) if you are using a curb bit. You may not change hands on the reins, but may use either hand. Reins usually are held in the left hand. Split or romal reins are both acceptable.

When you use romal reins, the hand is around the reins with the quirt end coming out the top of the hand by the thumb. The romal is held in the other hand, with approximately 16 inches of rein separating the two hands. No fingers are permitted between the reins.

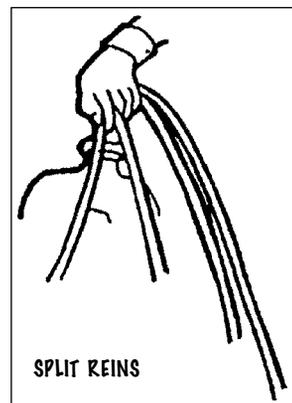
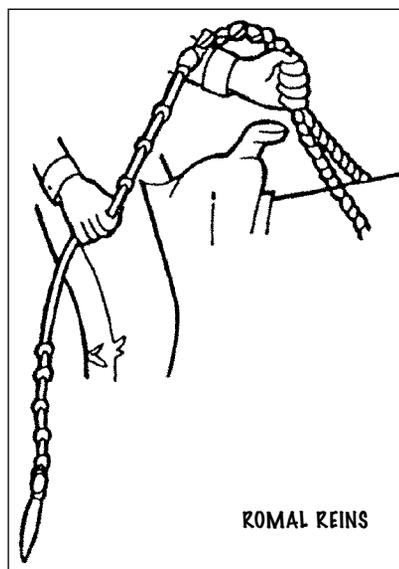
When using split reins, you may hold them the same as romal reins, with the free end in the opposite hand.

Or you may hold them with the palm facing

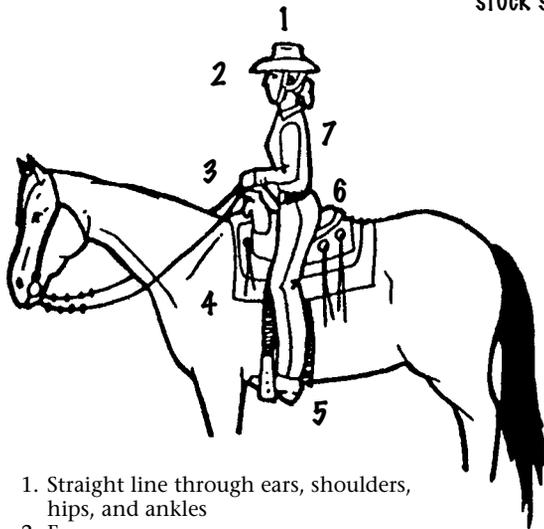
down and one finger between the reins, and the free end (**bight**) falling on the same side as the rein hand. The free hand should be kept free from the horse and saddle and held in a relaxed manner.

Roping reins (one single rein connected from shank to shank) are not allowed in performance. They are allowed and preferred in gaming.

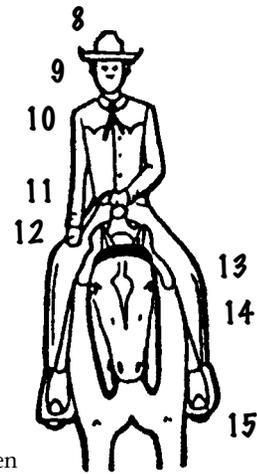
When you use a bosal or snaffle bit, you must use two hands on the reins. Hold split reins by crossing the reins between your hands so that both hands are holding both reins. Closed reins are allowed with a bosal. Mecate reins often are used when riding with a bosal, and they are highly recommended.



STOCK SEAT POSITION

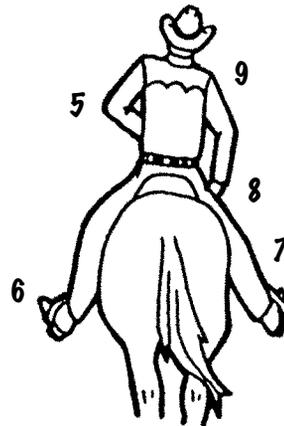
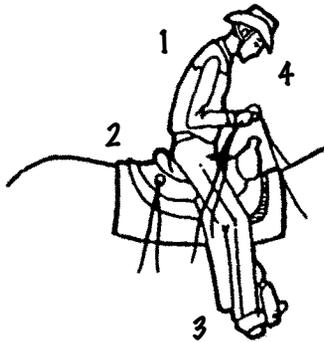


1. Straight line through ears, shoulders, hips, and ankles
2. Eyes up
3. Light reins, slight contact
4. Slight bend at knees
5. Heels down
6. Legs under body
7. Back straight



8. Hat straight
9. Eyes ahead
10. Shoulders even
11. Nonreining hand held in relaxed manner
12. Hand held slightly above and in center of saddle horn
13. Reins even
14. Legs close to horse from thighs to ankles
15. Toes pointed ahead

COMMON FAULTS



1. Back rounded
2. "Riding the cantle"
3. Feet forward
4. Looking down
5. Elbows out
6. Toes out
7. Legs away from horse's sides
8. Weight on one side

9. Shoulders uneven
10. Body twisted, leaning into rein hand
11. Body bent forward at waist
12. Heels up
13. Hand too high and held to one side
14. Reins uneven
15. Hand too high
16. Reins too long

The position of the hand not holding the reins is optional as long as your shoulders remain square. Hold that hand in a relaxed manner, free of the horse and equipment, but not hanging straight down. You may hold the ends of split reins or the romal to keep them from swinging and to adjust the length of the reins. Placing the hand on your thigh is acceptable. Your hands should not be right next to each other, as you don't ever want it to appear that you have two hands on the reins.

WESTERN GAITS

WALK

The **walk** is a four-beat gait, with the horse's feet hitting the ground one at a time.

Collect the horse by lightly picking up the reins and making contact with the bit. At the same time, squeeze lightly with the thighs, but do not let the horse move forward. With the horse brought to attention this way, use relatively light pressure with the calves of your legs to move it into a walk. Release the bit contact if the horse has been trained to go on a looser rein, but never let the reins hang slack. Follow the movements of the horse's head with your hand.

Encourage the horse to walk freely. Do not peck at the horse with your heels; your feet should be as motionless as possible. Flex at the waist to absorb the horse's motion in your lower body.

Jog

Jog is the term used in Western riding for a slow trot. A trot is a two-beat gait with diagonals (opposite corner legs) moving as a pair, striking the ground at the same time.

Collect the horse at the halt or walk and use more leg pressure to go forward at the jog. You may use a voice command or cluck first, depending on the horse. Adjust the rein tension to allow the horse to move forward at the desired pace.

Lean your body weight slightly forward from the hips as an additional aid, but come back to an erect position for a jog. Keep enough weight on your feet to absorb the motion in your ankles. Also relax the seat muscles, so the sitting bones follow the slight side-to-side motion.

In a **fast jog**, the horse is asked to increase the speed and frequency of its steps. In an **extended jog**, the horse noticeably extends the length of its stride without increasing the frequency of its steps.

In Western riding, as the speed of the jog increases, lean slightly forward, keeping contact with your thighs. Put more weight in the stirrups and keep your heels down to absorb

the impact in the ankles, knees, and thighs. Bring the seat slightly out of the saddle, rising slightly forward on your thighs, moving with the horse's motion.

LOPE

The lope is a three-beat gait. One rear foot hits the ground followed by the other rear foot and the diagonal front foot. Then the other front foot hits the ground. **Lope** is the term used in Western riding for a canter. During the lope (or at a faster gait, the **gallop**), the horse goes forward in a series of leaps. As it lopes, the horse's body is turned at a slight angle to the direction it is traveling.

In a circle, horses naturally lope on the inside lead. If the rider simply collects the horse and uses stronger leg pressure than is required for the trot, the horse will lope on either the right or left lead. The rider must guide the horse's body into the correct angle for the lead, using the reins and legs.

For the left lead, collect the horse at the walk and lift its head slightly to lighten the forehead. Do not lean forward. To angle the horse's body, move your right leg back a few inches and push the hindquarters slightly to the left. Follow instantly with enough pressure to push the horse forward into the bit, but do not allow it to speed up. At the same time, your left leg should put pressure at the cinch to increase forward motion. Your body weight should be nearly centered, with a slight shift to the right (outside) sitting bone. This lightens the left forequarter.

The horse should begin to lope from the walk without trotting. It may be necessary to rein the horse slightly to the right to help pick up the lead. Straighten the horse's head as soon as it picks up the lead.

Reverse the aids for the right lead.

Your hands and arms should be relaxed enough to move with the horse's head. Locked arms tend to make a rider rock forward and back in the saddle. Rigid posture is another cause of rocking. Your back must be supple at the waist.

With practice and experience, a rider can feel whether or not the horse is on the correct lead. When the horse's body is angled away from the leading side, the saddle moves forward in a slight spiral, and the rider's leg on the leading side is pushed ahead. For example, when the horse is on the left lead, the rider's left leg tends to move ahead.

Another way to check is to glance down, without tipping your head, at the horse's leading shoulder, which naturally moves forward. (Do not lean over to look.)

Left to itself, a horse often develops the habit of using one lead most of the time. It may refuse to take the unaccustomed lead entirely.

Ask for a specific lead even on a pleasure ride to avoid this problem. Using both leads also relieves strain on the horse's legs.

The **counter canter** (the horse leading with the outside leg in a circle, or the outside lead) is a good exercise to test the horse's obedience and improve its balance.

Lead changes

More advanced horses and riders may wish to try making smooth changes from one lead to the other. The easiest method is to drop to a walk or trot and immediately pick up the opposite lead. This is a **simple change**. Try to take as few steps as possible between leads.

Another technique is the **interrupted change**. Bring the horse to a complete halt, and immediately apply the correct aid to take the lope on the opposite lead. There should be no walking or trotting steps.

The third type of change is the **flying lead change**. The horse must change front and rear leads without dropping to a trot or walk. If the horse misses the rear lead, it is called **cross-centering, cross-firing, cross-leading, or disunited**.

When compared to an equal pattern using an alternate change, credit is given for a good flying change. However, a simple or interrupted change with no mistakes is better than a flying lead change done poorly.

STOPS AND BACKS

A good stop at every speed requires a definite set of aids to prepare the horse. Give the voice command "Whoa" first. Fix your hands in one position to set up a barrier with the bit. Then, push the horse into the bit by squeezing the legs.

Sit deep, nearly on the tailbone, without leaning forward or back, to absorb the shock and avoid being jerked forward. Grip with your thighs and put more weight on your heels to keep them low and underneath the body. Do not shove your legs forward, as this pushes your weight back on the horse's hindquarters and makes a good stop more difficult.

The horse should be trained to stop immediately when the reins apply pressure. Relax the pressure on the bit once the horse has stopped, but maintain contact.

To back, give the horse a signal to move by squeezing with your thighs. At the same time, create a barrier with the bit by setting your hand(s). The horse cannot move forward, so it backs. Relax the pressure on the bit as soon as the horse starts to back.

TURNS

Turning requires a combination of reins, leg, and weight. If the horse **neckreins** (turns with one hand on the reins), lay the outside rein against the horse's neck in front of the withers without pulling on the bit. Move your hand as little as possible, and try not to reach across the neck. Your outside leg should press against the horse's side to help push it into the turn. Your weight should stay upright in the center of the saddle.

If you are riding with two hands on the reins, pull the direct (inside) rein in the direction of the turn as lightly as possible. Two hands are not used with a Western curb bit. Move your hand back toward your body, not to the outside. Loosen the outside rein slightly and lay it against the horse's neck. Your legs and weight work the same way as in neck reining.

The **indirect rein aid** is used to move the horse's weight from one front shoulder to the other, bending only the head and neck. The rein makes a line from the inner side of the bit, across the front of the withers, to the rider's opposite hip. One use for the indirect rein is to keep the horse from cutting corners, while still bending properly in the corners.

WESTERN PLEASURE

Western Pleasure is an event judged on a horse's ability to be a pleasure to ride. To be a pleasure to ride, a horse must be broke and quiet, soft and smooth, and go with little restraint. In addition, the horse must meet the requirements of the class.

Western Pleasure—Pleasure Type and Pony Western Pleasure are class divisions and not separate events.

CLASS ROUTINE

Contestants show their horses at a walk, jog, and lope. They are worked both ways of the ring at all gaits. Horses may be asked for an extended jog. The order to reverse is executed by turning away from the rail. Riders should not be asked to reverse at the lope. After rail work is complete, entries line up as directed. Riders usually are asked to back.

SCORING PROCEDURE

Horses are judged on manners, performance, and suitability to give a pleasurable ride. A good pleasure horse has a stride of reasonable length in keeping with its conformation. The horse has enough cushion to its pastern to give the rider a pleasant, smooth ride. The horse carries its head in a natural position, not high and over flexed at the poll, or low with the nose out or over-flexed. The horse should be relaxed

but alert and ready to respond to the rider's commands without excessive cueing. When asked to extend the jog/jog-trot, the horse moves out with the same smooth way of going.

Faults

- Nervous at walk
- Jogging during walk
- Not performing a two-beat jog
- Failing to jog both front and back
- Wrong leads
- Breaking gaits
- Not performing a three-beat lope
- Pulling on the bit
- Hard or rough riding
- Throwing head
- Gaping at the bit
- Constant bumping the bit by rider
- Obvious schooling
- Not backing
- Rearing
- Inconsistent gait

WESTERN EQUITATION CLASSES

Entries are judged on ability, not how well-dressed they are. You simply need to be neat and clean, and follow the rules on appropriate attire (see the *4-H Horse Contest Guide*, PNW 574). Also be sure you know your county or local show rules.

CLASS PROCEDURE

Contestants usually enter the arena to the right in a counter-clockwise direction at a walk. They are worked both ways of the ring at a walk, jog, and lope. All gaits are required in both directions unless a pattern follows. At a lope, the horse should always be on the correct lead.

Stay on the rail unless it is necessary to pass a slower horse; pass on the inside (toward the center of the arena) and return to the rail. Reverse by turning away from the rail toward the center of the ring.

In addition to rail work, the show committee or judge may ask for patterns (individual performances). Patterns may include any of the tests listed in the Contest Guide. In addition, the judge may ask for advanced movements, questions from 4-H horse project materials, or both. Patterns should be posted. The pattern is only part of the class. Going off-course is penalized but does not result in disqualification.

After rail work is completed, line up as directed. If there is no pattern, riders are usually asked to back.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Riders should be able to perform not only the rail work demanded of them, but also any other tests the judge may request, including answering questions from project materials. Horses are required to back in a straight line in all classes.

Tests or patterns may consist of, but are not limited to, any combination of the following:

- Regular or extended walk, jog, or lope (on the correct lead or a counter lope)
- Perform figure eights, serpentines, circles, straight lines, or other specific patterns at any of the above gaits
- Simple, interrupted, or flying lead changes. (Juniors will not be asked to do flying lead changes.)
- Ride without stirrups, and drop and pick up stirrups
- Haunch or forehand turns (forward motion preferred)
- Sidepass or Two-Track
- Back up
- Stand for inspection
- Rollbacks
- Mount and dismount (Juniors will not be asked to mount, and riders will not be asked to mount or dismount in bareback equitation classes.)
- Balanced stops

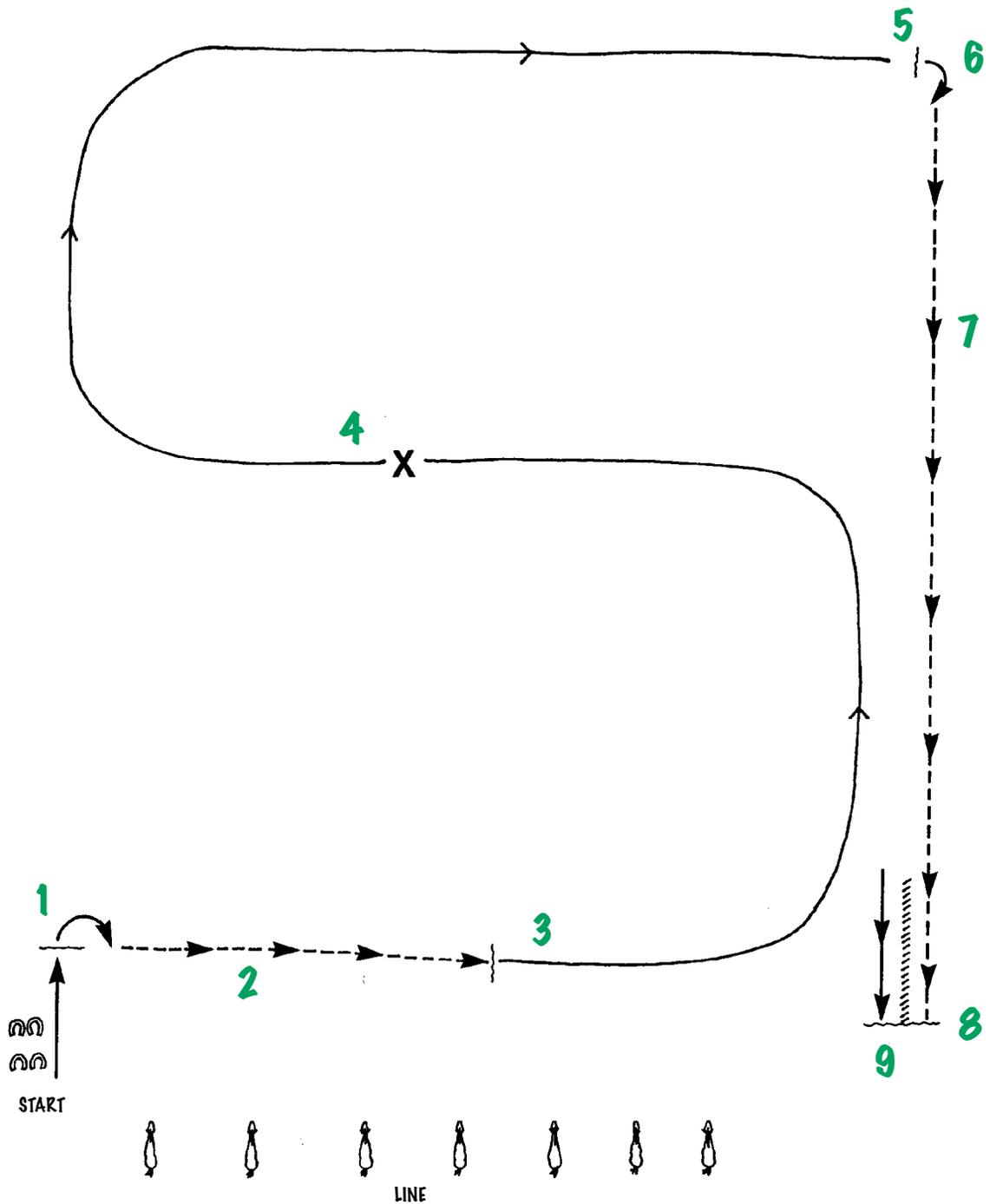
See the sample Western Equitation pattern on the next page.

WESTERN ATTIRE



1. ASTM-SEI-approved Equestrian helmet
2. Shirt
3. Belt
4. Western boots
5. Jeans or Western pants

SAMPLE WESTERN EQUITATION PATTERN



1. 90-degree right forehand turn
2. Jog trot
3. Lope—left lead
4. Optional change to right lead
5. STOP
6. 90-degree right haunch turn
7. Extended trot
8. STOP
9. Back two lengths and close

SYMBOLS	
LOPE	—————>
JOG	- - - - ->
BACK	///////>
WALK	—————>

ENGLISH RIDING (HUNT SEAT AND SADDLE SEAT)

For information on dressage, see 4-H 1311, *Oregon 4-H Dressage Project Manual* (Oregon State University Extension Service).

SADDLING

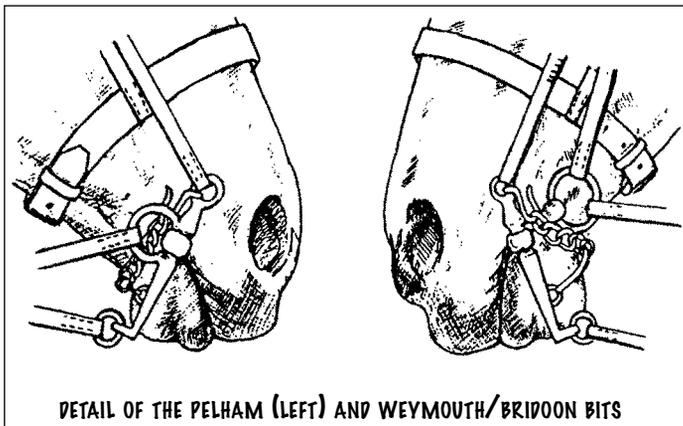
Inspect all tack for wear and proper fit before saddling and bridling. Make sure that all stitching is secure, and that the equipment and horse are clean of caked mud, sweat, and dirt.

Run up the stirrups before placing the saddle on the horse's back to keep them from swinging. Push them up the stirrup leathers so they lay against the saddle and the stirrup bars. To keep them from slipping down, fold the end of the stirrup leathers through the irons and make a knot. Place the girth over the seat of the saddle.

Working from the horse's left side, gently place the saddle on the horse's back, slightly ahead of the withers. Slide the saddle back into the proper position, allowing the horse's back hair to lie down smoothly. Be sure the girth doesn't fall off the saddle and startle the horse.

Move to the off side and gently drop the girth down so it does not startle or spook the horse. Return to the near side and face the front of the horse. Reach under the horse's belly and grasp the girth, bringing it slowly up onto the horse. Lift the skirt and fasten the billets to the girth buckles. Be sure to use adjacent billets. Tighten enough to keep the saddle on, and be sure to check before mounting and after riding a short distance.

Keep the stirrups run up until mounting.



DETAIL OF THE PELHAM (LEFT) AND WEYMOUTH/BRIDOOON BITS

BRIDLING

Always untie your horse before bridling and stand close to one side of the horse's head (preferably the left side). Keep control by refastening the halter around the horse's neck or looping the lead rope over the horse's neck.

Bidle quietly and gently, paying extra attention to the poll and ear area. Before you start, make sure the cavesson and curb chain are undone.

Place your left hand on the bit and your right hand at the top of the headstall. Place the first two fingers of your left hand under the bit. Keep your thumb free to open the horse's mouth if necessary.

Place your right hand with the top of the headstall either between the horse's left eye and left ear or up over the forehead toward the poll. Place the bit between the horse's lips and use your thumb to help open its mouth. The ideal spot for your thumb is between the incisors and molars, where the horse has no teeth. When the horse opens its mouth, guide the bit in, being careful not to bump the horse's teeth. At the same time, gently pull the headstall up with your right hand. While keeping the headstall tight, gently put the crownpiece over the back of the ears, one at a time, right ear first.

Fasten the throatlatch enough to allow a three-finger distance between the strap and the horse's neck. The cavesson should lie underneath the cheekpieces and should be adjusted to allow one to two fingers between the cavesson and the horse's jawbone.

If you use a curb chain or strap, it must lie flat and not be twisted.

If you are using a double bridle, fasten the curb chain making sure it fits between the curb bit and the bridoon. The bridoon (or small snaffle) causes a slight wrinkle in the horse's mouth. The Weymouth fits just below the snaffle.

Unbridle in the reverse order. Be careful not to bump the horse's teeth when you remove the bit. Be sure to unfasten the cavesson and one side of the curb chain before unbridling.

Always unbridle before you unsaddle, and remember that safety is always important.

MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING

Teach the horse to stand quietly for mounting and dismounting. Stay clear of fences or other obstacles when mounting. Be sure the girth is snug and that all equipment is fitted and safe.

Shorten the reins with the left hand enough to keep the horse from moving forward or backward and maintain a slight feel of the horse's mouth. Be sure the reins are of equal

length, so the horse will not move into or away from you when you mount.

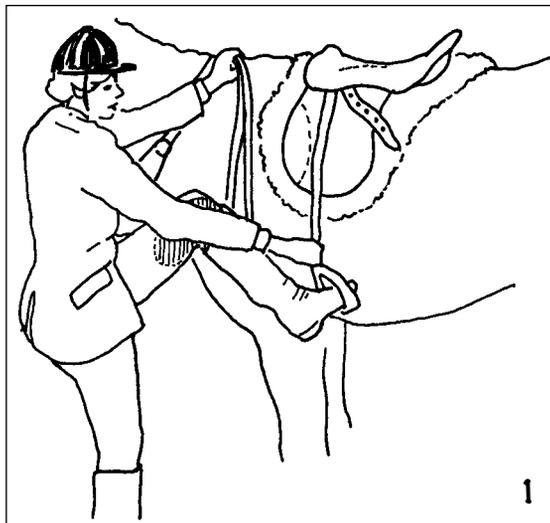
Stand with your left shoulder next to the horse's left shoulder, turning slightly toward the horse's tail or facing the side of the horse. Place your left hand, with the reins, on the horse's withers, grasping the mane. Turn the left stirrup toward you and put your left foot in, making sure not to poke the horse with your toe.

Facing the horse's side, push off with your right foot, grasp the pommel or cantle with your right hand, and swing lightly up and over the saddle, bracing your left knee against the saddle. As you swing your right foot over the horse's rump, be careful not to brush the horse.

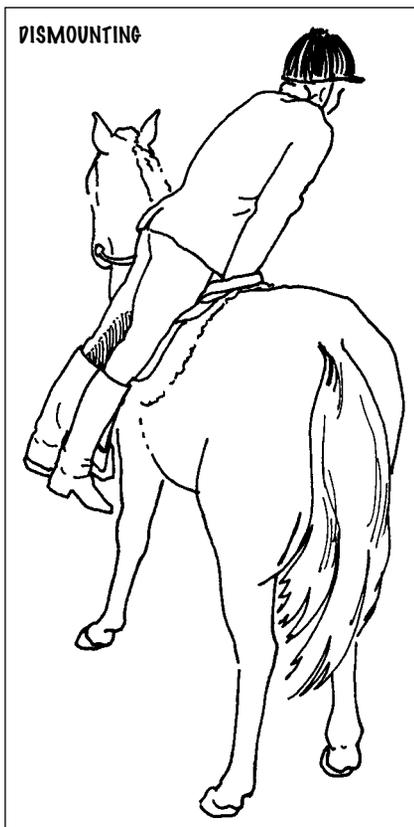
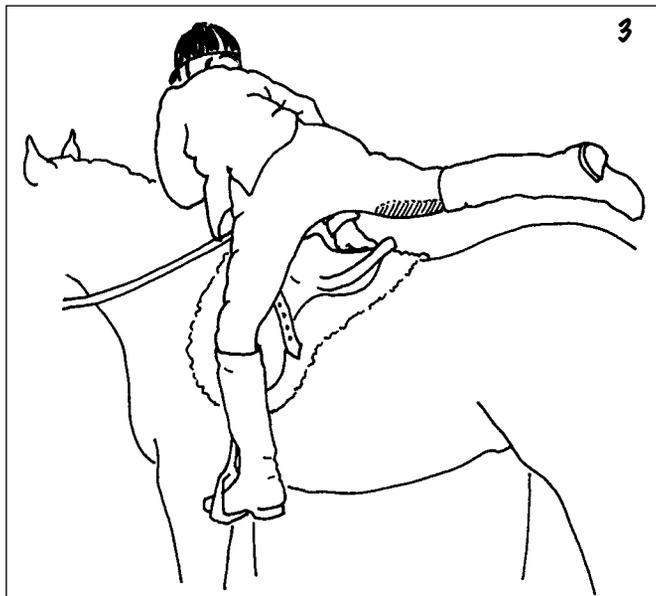
Place your right foot in the stirrup iron. Adjust the reins.

Dismounting can be done either by sliding down or stepping down. Begin either technique by putting both reins in your left hand and placing it on the horse's withers. Place your right hand on the pommel, and slide your left foot slightly out of the stirrup. Remove your right foot from the stirrup iron and swing the right leg over the horse's back without touching the rump.

Slide down by shifting your right hand to the cantle. Keeping the weight of your body on your hands, gently slide down. This method works particularly well for taller horses or shorter riders.



MOUNTING



To step down, continue the motion of the right leg swinging over the horse's rump. Step down, reversing the order of mounting. For safety, be sure you slide your left foot slightly out of its iron before you begin dismounting.

After dismounting, always run the stirrups up the leathers and lead the horse after the reins are brought over the horse's head. With a double bridle, it is safest to lead with the snaffle rein and keep the curb rein over the horse's neck.

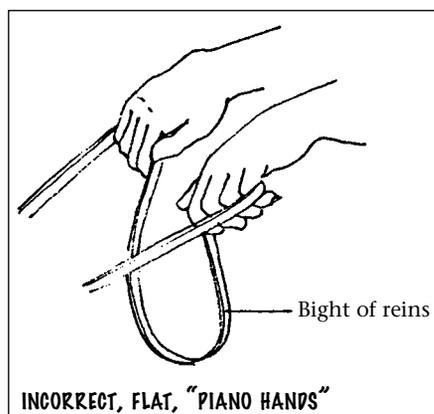
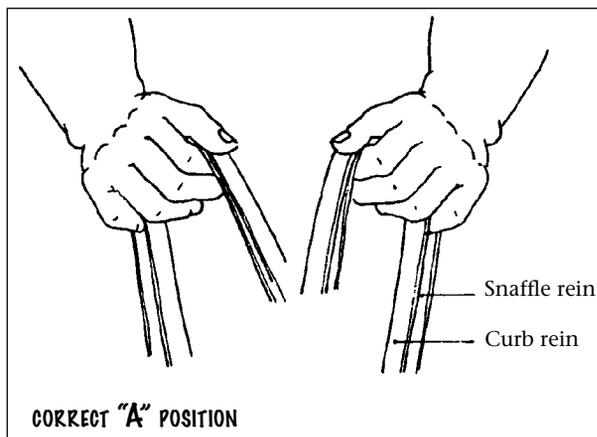
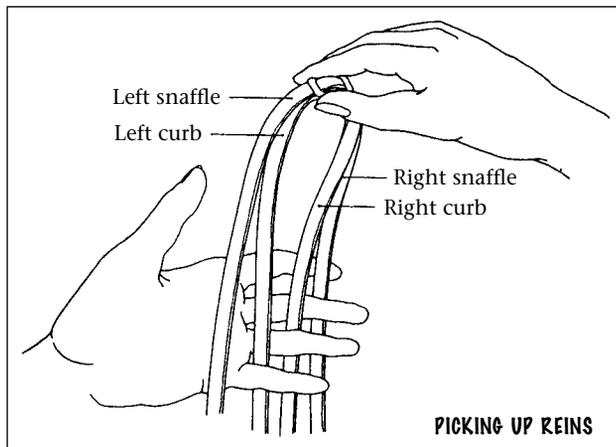
ADDRESSING THE REINS (PICKING UP OR HOLDING THE REINS)

When using single reins, as with a snaffle or kimberwicke, the rein goes between the ring finger and the little finger.

When using double reins, as with the pelham or double bridle, you need to know the correct procedure for **addressing the reins**. Let the reins hang evenly over the horse's withers with the snaffle rein buckle on top of the curb rein buckle.

1. Take up all four reins at the buckle in your right hand and hold them about 6 inches above the withers.
2. From the front, while keeping the reins in your right hand, insert all four reins between the fingers of your left hand and slide it down to the horse's neck. The little finger is between the left snaffle and left curb rein, ring finger between the left curb and right curb reins, middle finger between the right curb and right snaffle reins, and first finger on the outside of the right snaffle. The thumb is on the outside of the left snaffle rein.
3. Release the reins from your right hand and reach down to take up the right reins, drawing the bight of the reins up until you make contact with the horse's mouth. Separate the curb and snaffle with your little finger, snaffle on the outside.
4. Release the right reins from your left hand. Keep your thumbs on the reins to prevent slipping. Drop the bight to the off side.

When mounting, address the reins as in step 2 with the reins in your left hand, and then gather and address the reins after mounting.



ENGLISH GAITS

WALK

The **walk** is a definite four-beat gait and not a resting gait. The walk should be true and flat-footed, with the horse on the bit. You should be in the deepest part of the saddle and sitting straight up, with a vertical line running through the shoulders and hips to the back of the heel.

SITTING TROT

The **sitting trot** is a two-beat gait but slower than the posting trot. You should maintain a close seat and quiet hands.

POSTING TROT

The **posting trot** is mannerly, cadenced, balanced, and free moving. There should be light contact on the reins with the horse slightly on the bit and not showing resistance. You should be **posting** (rising with the rhythm of the trot) on the proper diagonals.

When riding the horse in a posting trot, relax, feel the horse's motion, and think "up and down" as it trots. The key is to keep your feet under your body, heels down, head up, and upper body only slightly forward. A close grip with your thighs and knees prevents your dropping into the saddle too quickly and heavily and getting bumped. Try to roll your thighs slightly inward to maintain proper position.

Even though the horse's head moves up and down during the trot, it's important that your hands stay quiet. You must not pull yourself up with the reins when rising. Your elbows should open and close the angle to the bit.

On the right diagonal, you are sitting in the saddle when the left front leg is on the ground or the horse's right shoulder is moving forward. On the left diagonal, you are sitting when the right front leg is on the ground or horse's left shoulder is moving forward.

When circling clockwise, you are posting on the left diagonal. When circling counterclockwise, you are posting on the right diagonal. In an arena, it's sometimes easier to remember "rise and fall to the front leg on the wall."

To change diagonals smoothly at the trot, either sit one beat or stand one bump or stride. When performing serpentines or figure eights, change diagonals in the center of the half circle or circle.

EXTENDED TROT

The **extended trot** (strong trot) should remain collected but show a lengthened stride. Your position at the extended trot is the same as the posting trot position.

CANTER

The **canter** is a three-beat gait. It should be smooth, with moderate collection, and correct and straight on both leads. Both the horse and you should show the ability to move on at the canter or to slow down without resistance. You might be asked to **extend the canter**, which is a lengthening of stride but not an increase in speed.

At the canter, your upper body position is halfway between that of the posting trot and the walk. At the extended canter, put more weight on the stirrups and lean slightly forward.

HAND GALLOP

The **hand gallop** is a faster gait with a lengthened stride, but you are still in control, staying in motion with the horse. You should assume the two-point position, leaning slightly forward with the seat out of the saddle. This allows your center of gravity to be over the horse's center of gravity.

INTERMEDIATE GAIT

The **intermediate gait** is performed by those breeds that do not have a normal two-beat trot (see "Gaited horses," page 13, for a more detailed description). Gaits performed by the various breeds range from a four-beat lateral gait to a four-beat diagonal pattern.

At the intermediate gait, you should assume a balanced seat, with your upper body slightly behind the true vertical ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch is often enough) and your heels an equal distance in front of the vertical.

Riders do not post the intermediate gait, but if a 4-H pattern calls for a posting trot and all aspects of the pattern are equal, then the rider posting correctly at the two-beat trot will be given preference.

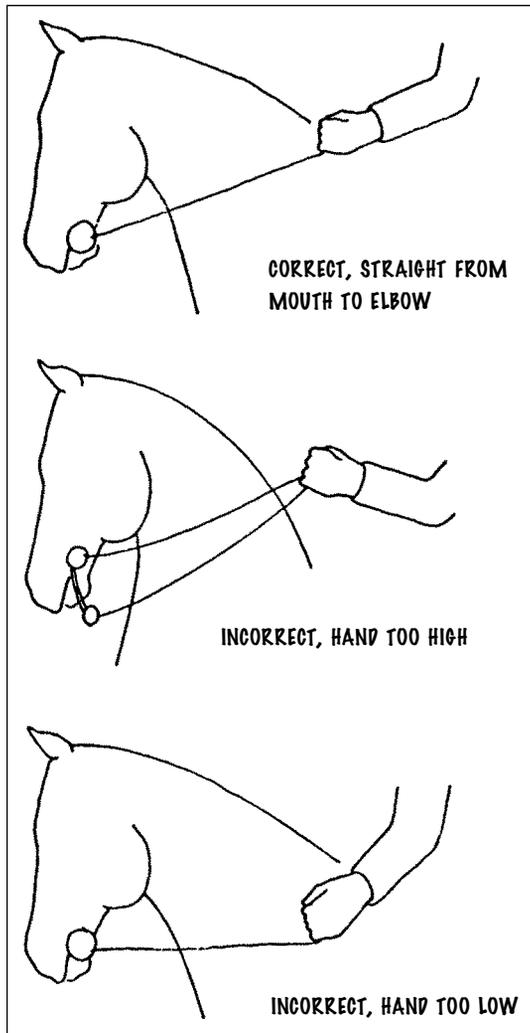
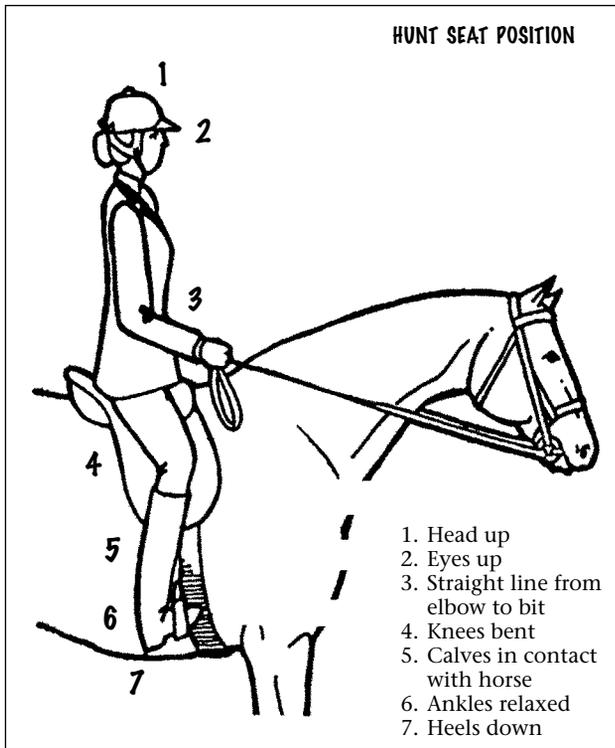
HUNT SEAT

For detailed information on jumping, see the *Hunt Seat and Jumper Manual* (PNW 488).

This style of riding suits a horse with free, forward movement and the aptitude for cross-country riding or jumping. Hunt seat allows you close contact with the horse, using balance and a slight grip. Learning the basics and proper techniques on the flat are important before attempting jumps.

BASIC BODY POSITION

The hunter saddle places you in a forward position where the horse is best able to balance the weight for an athletic performance. At the walk or slow sitting trot, your back is vertical. At the posting trot, or when galloping and jumping, you may lean slightly forward from



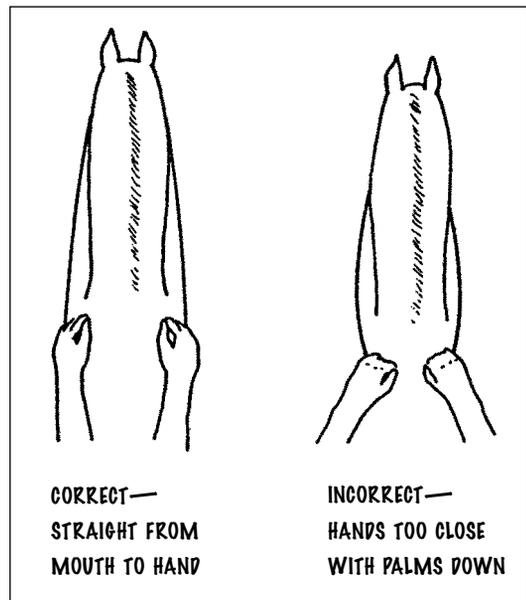
the hips. Posture for the canter position is in between.

At the posting trot, allow the horse's hip movement to lift you up on alternate (diagonal) strides of the two-beat gait. The movement should be easy for you and the horse.

Your legs are more bent than in Western, allowing your legs and heels to absorb the impact, especially when jumping. Eyes should be up and shoulders back but relaxed. Elbows should not extend beyond your back.

Adjust the irons to reach your ankle bone when you sit with your feet hanging free. The irons are shorter for jumping exercises. If the irons are too long, your legs will straighten out in front and your seat will move back out of position, especially when posting. The ball of your foot should be centered on the iron with the toe directly below the knee, pointing out at about the same angle. Your knee should lie in the depression behind the knee roll with your leg contacting the horse just behind the girth. When your leg is in the correct position, the stirrup leathers should hang vertically. Your ankles should be flexed towards the horse and show suppleness, with the heel lower than the iron.

Your hands should be slightly apart and in front of the horse's withers, knuckles 30 degrees inside the vertical, and making a straight line from the horse's mouth to your elbow. Your hands should form an "A," sloping toward each other slightly. Keeping your lower arms straight but supple allows contact with the horse's mouth with very slight movement of your hands, wrists, and fingers.



HUNTER HACK

The hunter hack class combines both flat work and jumping. The hunter hack horse should move as a hunter under saddle horse, with free, long-striding forward motion. It should demonstrate good manners, being both obedient and responsive.

The class begins with flat work. Horses are required to walk, trot, and canter both directions of the ring. All horses are also required to hand gallop one direction of the ring. No more than eight horses are permitted to hand gallop at one time. Excessive speed is penalized. A halt from the hand gallop usually is requested also.

After the flat work, exhibitors are asked (one at a time) to jump two fences in a line. The horse should go willingly at a steady pace, in a straight line. A refusal to jump is considered a major fault but not a disqualification. Jump heights should follow the state standards for Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences.

Often, the judge will ask for the hand gallop after the jumps, then a halt, stand, and walk off on a loose rein.

SADDLE SEAT

A horse with higher head carriage and a more animated way of going is well suited for saddle seat. Common saddle seat breeds include the American Saddle Horse, Arabians, and Morgans. The style conveys elegance and emphasizes the proud appearance of both horse and rider. The rider should give the impression of effective and easy control.

BASIC BODY POSITION

Your seat should be comfortably placed in the deepest part of the saddle. There should be a slight bend at the knees. Place the iron under the ball of your foot, with even pressure on the entire width of your sole and the center of the iron. The irons should touch the point of your ankle joints when your legs are hanging loosely out of the irons. Foot position should be natural, with the heel slightly lower than the toe.

Your lower leg should hang vertically, with knees pointed forward. Grip lightly with your thighs. There should be a straight vertical line from your shoulder through your hip and back of your heel. Your back should remain straight, ribs pulled up from the belt. Shoulders should be relaxed and hands even with your elbows.

Hold your hands in an easy position, just above the withers, approximately waist high, with your elbows just in front of your body. Elbows should be relaxed and hands elastic and supple. Reins should show contact but be light and effective. Use the snaffle and curb independently, and adjust them quietly as the

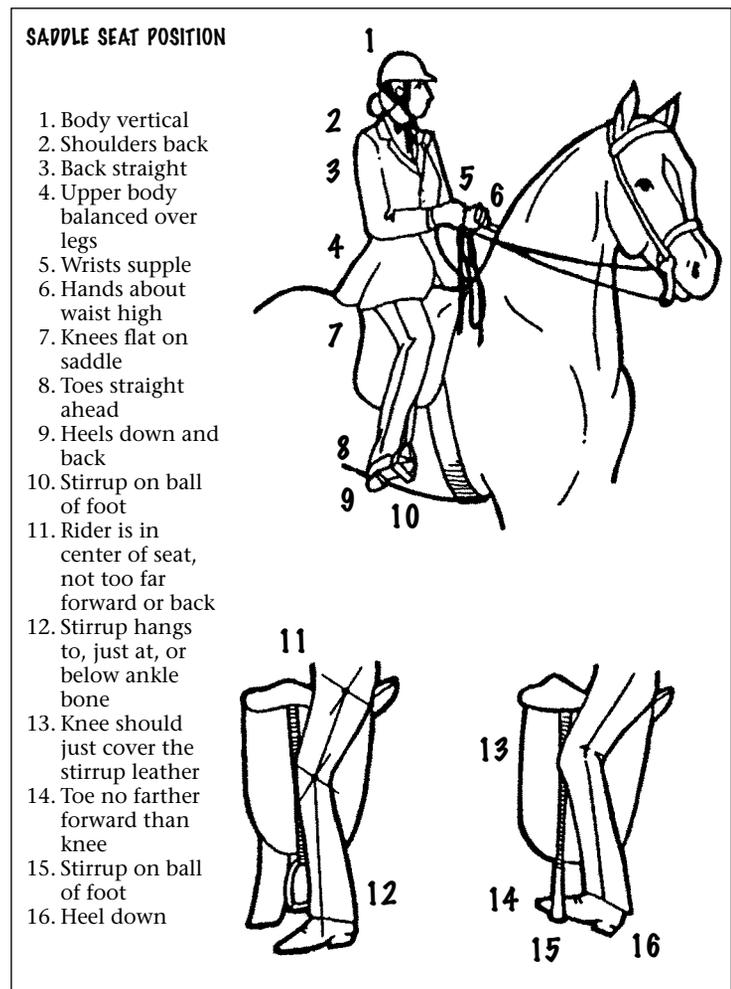
horse performs to maintain light contact and collection. Your wrists should be somewhat arched and higher than your knuckles, which turn in about 30 degrees.

The hands are held at a proper height so that, as the horse collects and elevates, you maintain firm, elastic contact with the horse's mouth. Height of the hands is dependent on your body type and the horse's individual head carriage. You should give the illusion of "bringing the horse to you" and not "going to the horse." Rein and hand position vary as the horse's head moves.

The saddle seat horse has a naturally high head carriage. So, the hands are carried high to maintain the straight line from elbow to bit.

Your upper body remains erect in all gaits. At the trot, your body rises only slightly while posting, with your hips under your body. The trot always is performed posting. At the walk and canter, your seat stays close to the saddle and you go with the horse in an easy and supple manner. Your legs should remain quiet at all gaits.

Do not allow the horse's head to fall out of the bridle, but maintain collection and a true four-beat walk.



ENGLISH PLEASURE

CLASS ROUTINE

Contestants show their horses at a walk, trot, and canter. They are worked both ways of the ring at all gaits. Horses may be asked for an extended trot. The order to reverse is executed by turning away from the rail. Riders should not be asked to reverse at the canter. After rail work is complete, entries line up as directed. Riders usually are asked to back.

SCORING

In hunt seat, the entry is judged on suitability to purpose, head carriage, gait, and control. Bit contact should be maintained.

In saddle seat, the horses are judged on performance and ability to give a good pleasure ride with emphasis on style, manners, and gait. Bit contact must be maintained.

Faults

- Wrong lead at the canter
- Excessive speed or excessive slowness
- Charging
- Excessive throwing of the head
- Going sideways
- Switching tail
- Bad manners
- Failure to back
- Horse bent to outside of the ring

ENGLISH EQUITATION CLASSES

See the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574) for rules and guidelines on appropriate hunt seat, dressage, and saddle seat attire. Also be sure you know your county or local show rules.

CLASS PROCEDURE

Contestants usually enter the arena to the right in a counter-clockwise direction at a trot. They are worked both ways of the ring at a walk, trot, and canter. An extended trot may also be requested. All gaits are required in both

directions unless a pattern follows. At a canter, the horse should always be on the correct lead.

Stay on the rail unless it is necessary to pass a slower horse; pass on the inside (toward the center of the arena) and return to the rail. Reverse by turning away from the rail toward the center of the ring. Saddle seat riders may reverse to the outside. Riders should not be asked to reverse at the canter.

In addition to rail work, the show committee or judge may ask for patterns (individual performances). Patterns may include any of the tests listed in the Contest Guide. In addition, the judge may ask for advanced movements, questions from 4-H horse project materials, or both. Patterns should be posted. The pattern is only part of the class. Going off-course is penalized but does not result in disqualification.

After rail work is completed, line up as directed. If there is no pattern, riders are usually asked to back.

Tests or patterns may consist of, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hand gallops
- Figure eights at the posting trot or canter
- Extended trot
- Sitting trot
- Dropping irons for limited time
- Forehand or haunch turns
- Serpentine at the canter or trot
- Picking up the reins in line
- Back
- Halts

Check the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574) for class specifications.

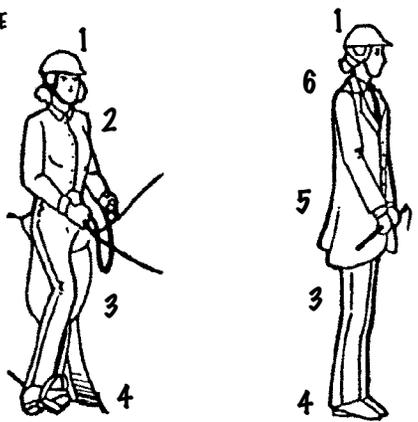
Transitions should be smooth, circles round and equal. Riders should be able to perform the pattern off the rail. Lines should be straight, and serpentine should be of equal size with the horse bending in the proper direction.

Control, balance, and good transitions create a winning ride. Rough transitions, lack of impulsion, and not maintaining control are penalized.

See the sample English Equitation pattern on the next page.

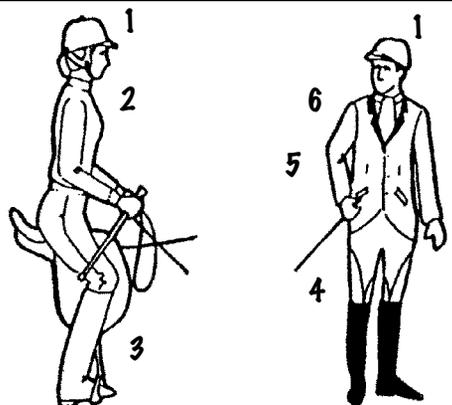
SADDLE SEAT ATTIRE

1. ASTM-SEI-approved English hunt cap helmet
2. Tailored shirt
3. Kentucky jodhpurs
4. Jodhpur boots
5. Saddle coat
6. Shirt and tie



HUNT SEAT ATTIRE

1. ASTM-SEI-approved English hunt cap helmet
2. Turtleneck sweater
3. Boots
4. Breeches
5. Hunt coat
6. Stock tie and pin



TRAIL HORSE CLASS

A trail horse needs the ability to travel through, over, and between obstacles with an inquisitive desire to go forward that doesn't compromise its calm and relaxed way of going. It should approach each obstacle squarely, with authority and correct form, while maintaining a willingness to be responsive to its rider with no resistance.

Credit is given to the horse that negotiates an entire course efficiently and in a timely manner. The good trail horse is skillful, attentive, and confident. It gives one the impression of being sure, safe, and a pleasure to ride.

Trail horses are required to work over and through obstacles at a walk, jog/trot, or canter/lope. They should be on a reasonably loose rein without undue restraint.

In a trail class, the horse is judged on performance, way of going, responsiveness, willingness, and general attitude with emphasis on manners. Horses are penalized for delaying or taking too much time approaching or negotiating the obstacles, and the judge may advance the horse to the next obstacle. A horse is not marked down for sniffing or looking over an obstacle, as long as the horse is under control and proceeds without undue delay. Head, ear, and nostril movement show that a horse is curious.

TRAINING A TRAIL HORSE

Trail classes are no longer simple tests of how a horse would behave on the trail. Today's trail classes are more like obstacle courses that test the horse's agility and responsiveness. The courses require a high degree of body control and athleticism.

Members are not required to participate in trail. You should have practiced and mastered basic obstacles before exhibiting at any competition. Before you attempt to execute a trail course, be sure you have taught your horse these movements:

- Move away from leg pressure
- Turn on the forehand
- Turn on the haunches
- Sidepass
- Move one foot at a time in any direction
- Stop promptly, as soon as the command is given
- Back easily and slowly in all directions

When your horse can do all of these movements willingly, you should be ready to attempt most trail obstacles. When you start practicing with obstacles, **go slowly**. Your horse needs to build confidence and trust.

Show the horse what you want it to do, and work from the ground first.

Vary the obstacles. When practicing, work one obstacle, go do something else (like railwork), and then come back and do the obstacle again. Once your horse can do something well, don't keep repeating it. Expose your horse to as many things as you can. The more you expose your horse to while practicing, the less apprehensive it will be when faced with new obstacles in a class. Go out for trail rides often and try natural obstacles.

To be good at trail, you must persevere and practice often. Eventually, your horse will learn to obey your cues, to place its feet where you want them, and to go forward without resistance.

SHOWING IN A TRAIL CLASS

Before you show, read the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574). Make sure your tack and attire are correct, neat, and clean. Use the guidelines for the seat (English or Western) that you will be riding. Groom your horse to look its best.

Read the instructions for the course carefully and know the pattern. Ride through the course in your mind, and plan how you will negotiate each obstacle.

During the class, concentrate but relax and breathe normally. Your horse can sense your uneasiness. Many horses do fine at home but not in competition purely because their riders are nervous. Ride quietly. Shifting your weight or moving your arms or legs can send the wrong message to your horse or put your horse off balance.

Don't rush. Let the horse settle between maneuvers. If you make a mistake, don't get frustrated. You may do the rest perfectly. If you approach an obstacle that your horse has refused before, remain calm and ride positively.

If you have to dismount, be sure to check the cinch and bridle before you get back on. Your horse must stand while you mount.

Take note of which obstacles your horse does well and which need improvement. After the show, return home and practice the things that challenged you the most.

RECOMMENDED OBSTACLES AND TESTS

Obstacles you might encounter in a trail class include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gate
- Walk, jog, lope, or lead over poles, logs, brush
- Bridge, plank, or platform

- Back through poles, barrels, cones
- Mailbox
- Mounting and dismounting from either side. (Juniors will not be asked to mount.)
- Sidepass
- Ride through water
- Walk up to or past plastic, paper, or canvas
- Put on or remove coat/slicker
- Drag or carry an object

- Serpentine or jog arounds
 - Forehand or haunch turns
 - Tie quick-release or bowline knot
- You also might be asked to answer questions from the 4-H Horse Project materials.

See the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574) for dimensions and proper setup of trail obstacles. The *Contest Guide* also lists obstacles that are not allowed.

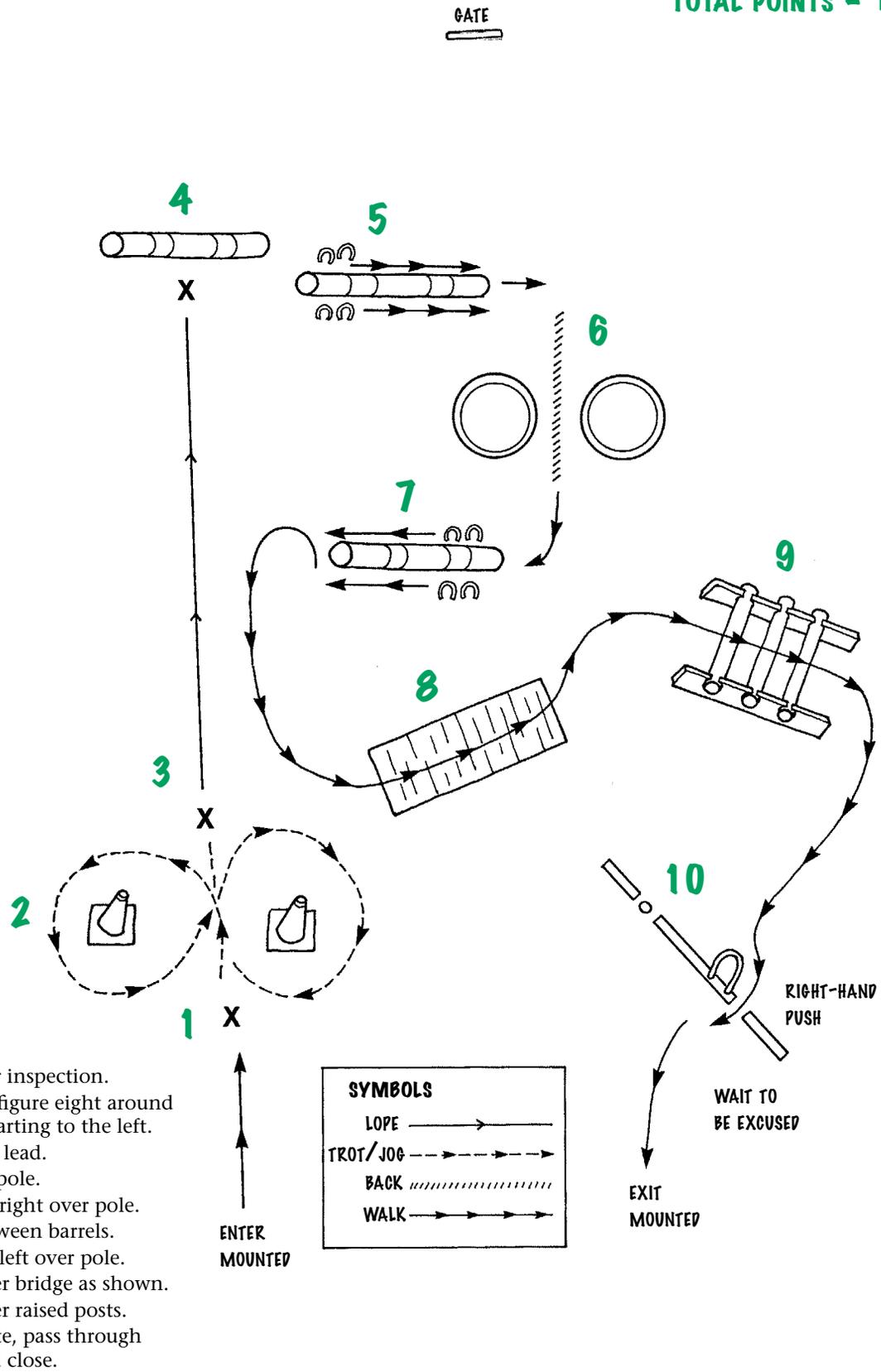
TRAIL HORSE DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE QUALITIES

TRAIL	GOOD	MINOR FAULTS	MAJOR FAULTS	ELIMINATION OR DISQUALIFICATION
Walk/jog/trot/lope/canter (on the course)	Ground-covering Flat-footed Good attitude		Wrong lead Break of gait	
Control obstacles Gates Back-throughs Sidepasses Turns on forehand and/or haunches Serpentines	Smooth Good position Responsive to aids	Slight touches Slant sidepasses Wide positions Slow responses Poor head position	Knock-down of elevated elements Stepping out of confining elements Losing gate Fussiness and extreme tension Refusals Pulling rather than pushing gate (unless specified)	Off course*
Agility obstacles Walk-overs Trot or lope cavalettis Bridge	Attentive Careful Willing	Slight touches Too hesitant Failure to stay on center lines	Knock-downs Refusals Failure to maintain gaits Off side of bridge	Off course*
Calmness obstacles Water Plastic Brush Plants Carrying objects	Steady going Alert Careful, but willing	Tense over or through obstacles Nervous when carrying objects	Jumping over or stampeding through obstacles Spooking when carrying objects Refusals	Off course*
General				Western: two hands on reins; more than one finger between split reins; fingers between closed reins Illegal equipment Bleeding mouth Cuing horse in front of cinch or girth Failure to attempt prescribed course Lameness

*Off course is defined as: (1) taking an obstacle in the wrong direction; (2) negotiating an obstacle from the wrong side; (3) skipping an obstacle unless directed by the judge; (4) negotiating obstacles in the wrong sequence; or (5) not following the correct line of travel.

SAMPLE TRAIL PATTERN

SR. TRAIL HORSE COURSE
TOTAL POINTS = 100



1. Stand for inspection.
2. Trot/jog figure eight around cones, starting to the left.
3. Lope left lead.
4. STOP at pole.
5. Sidepass right over pole.
6. Back between barrels.
7. Sidepass left over pole.
8. Walk over bridge as shown.
9. Walk over raised posts.
10. Open gate, pass through gate, and close.

GATES

It is your job to position the horse so the gate may be worked properly and easily. The sidepass, haunch turn, forehand turn, backing, and neck reining are all used in working a gate.

Ride up parallel to the gate and as close to it as possible, or ride up a few steps away from it and sidepass over. Always push the gate away from you unless it is unsafe or the pattern directions specifically state otherwise.

You can walk forward through a gate or back through it. If you walk forward through it, stand facing the latch. If you back through it, stand facing the hinges.

You should try to keep a hand on the gate at all times, but it is better to let go than pull the gate over or frighten the horse.

Sit up as straight as possible while working the gate. If you lean too far, you can dig the horse in the side and push it away from the gate. Remember, the simple shift of weight is sending an opposing message to your horse.

When you have finished working the gate, sidepass a step or two away from the gate if the pattern allows.

Patient practice is a must!

Push and walk through gates

Begin by standing parallel to the gate facing the latch. Open the latch with your hand nearer the gate. Back a few steps slowly, keeping your hand on the gate, until the horse's head is past the gate standard. Push the gate away from you, and, using neck reining, move the horse forward through the opening. Once your knee has passed the end of the gate, begin pushing the horse's hindquarters around until the horse is facing the opposite direction (the hinges). Sidepass over (and back if necessary) to close and latch the gate.

Push and back through gates

Begin by standing parallel to the gate facing the hinges, but with your hand beside the latch. Open the latch with your hand nearest the gate. Sliding your hand along the gate, walk the horse forward until its tail is beyond the latch gate standard. Push the gate away from you. Push the horse's hindquarters through the gate, then back a few steps. When your knee has passed the end of the gate, push the horse's hindquarters around the end of the gate until it is facing the opposite direction (the latch). Sidepass over to close and latch the gate.

Pull and walk through gates

Begin by standing parallel to the gate facing the latch. Open the latch with the hand nearest the gate. Pull the gate toward you as your horse sidepasses away from it. When the gate is well open, move your horse forward until your knee is just past the end of the gate. Using your legs and reins, turn the horse around the end of the gate and then walk

forward through it. Sidepass away from the gate to pull it shut beside you. Then take a few steps back until you can latch the gate closed.

Pull and back through gates

Begin by standing parallel to the gate facing the hinges. Open the latch with the hand nearer the gate. Pull the gate toward you as your horse sidepasses away from it. Make sure the gate is well open. Back your horse until your knee is past the end of the gate, then turn the horse around the end of the gate and back through the opening until the horse's head is past the gate standard. Sidepass away from the gate, pulling it closed. Step forward to latch the gate.

Rope gates

Maneuver through a rope gate much as you would a "solid" gate. Make sure the horse's body is far enough through the gate before you make a turn to close the gate. Be very careful when working a rope gate that the rope does not loop down and catch a stirrup or foot. If your horse becomes frightened, be sure you let go of the rope immediately.

SIDEPASSING

Most trail courses include one or more obstacles that require the horse to sidepass (see page 123 for a description of a correct sidepassing maneuver). The sidepass should be smooth and continuous. Look in the direction of travel, and remain in the center of the horse as much as possible (although a slight weight shift to the side opposite the direction of travel is acceptable). Staying straight and balanced in the saddle will make your cues more subtle, the movement smoother, and the performance better.

Practice sidepassing without a fence line or other barrier. Working in a box-shape pattern is an excellent exercise. Walk forward a few steps, halt, and then sidepass to the right. Back up a few steps, halt, and sidepass to the left, completing the box. This exercise helps make the horse responsive to leg cues and weight shifts.

To train a horse to sidepass over a pole, begin by stepping over a pole on the ground. Center the pole under the horse's body, just behind the rider's leg. Look in the direction you will go and sidepass off the pole. Be sure you work both directions. As the horse improves, approach the pole by sidepassing to it. To provide more difficulty, sidepass around turns or elevate the poles.

If you are working a box made of poles, work first with the horse's front feet inside the box, then with the hind feet inside the box. Sidepass to the corner of the box, then use a turn on the forehand or a turn on the haunches to negotiate the corner.

BACK-THROUGHS

To perform a back-through successfully, your horse must be able to back in a straight line as well as in circles or around objects. Since turns or changes of direction may be required in a back-through, your horse must also be able to do forehand and haunch turns. The back should be slow but smooth and consistent, with fluid steps. Make sure your horse is always in a good position and never against an obstacle.

Look slightly back and down without leaning to verify your position. Choose one side to watch; looking from side to side shifts your weight and throws your horse off balance. Keep your legs close to your horse to give support and control its body movement. If a correction is needed, make it while the horse is taking a step backward. This makes the correction more subtle and prevents an over-correction.

Begin your back-through training with two parallel poles set on the ground 4 feet apart. Walk forward between the poles, halt, and back straight out. Go slowly. Take a step or two, then hesitate if necessary before taking more steps. To help keep the horse from rushing, do not always completely back out. Stop before reaching the end, then walk forward and out.

When your horse can back quietly, smoothly, and straight without hitting the poles, you can move on to more difficult exercises. Instead of walking forward between the poles, walk to one end, turn your horse into position, and then back through the poles. Elevate the poles or back between barrels or cones.

Teach your horse to back through an "L." Back the horse until its hind feet are centered in the turn. Turn on the forehand to move the horse's hindquarters 90 degrees. Hesitate, then turn on the haunches to move the horse's forehand 90 degrees. This should position you for the final straight back movement.

To back around barrels or cones, use the same technique. Back straight, then hesitate, and use a forehand or haunch turn to position the horse properly for the next backing action.

BRIDGES

Bridges come in a variety of styles. Whatever you practice on at home, make sure it is strong enough to support the weight of the horse.

You may be asked simply to walk over a bridge, or you could be asked to stop on the bridge. Advanced patterns may call for turning on a bridge or even backing off a bridge.

Your horse should approach the bridge calmly but alertly. Try to get your horse to lower its head and inspect the bridge before stepping onto it. (Most horses do not do this naturally, so one idea is to put a little grain on the bridge.) Apply light pressure with both legs to encourage your horse to move forward, and use all your aids to ask the horse to walk confidently straight over the bridge.

WALK-OVERS, TROT-OVERS, OR LOPE-OVERS

These obstacles are staples of the modern trail course, and they come in an endless variety of designs. Your horse should be able to negotiate any pattern, at any gait, smoothly and calmly. Knocking poles is a fault, so your horse should pick its feet up and go through cleanly.

Approach at the center and lean slightly forward. For walk-overs, give your horse its head and let it put its head down and look at the obstacle.

Begin training your horse over these obstacles by placing several poles on the ground and walking over them. Vary the distance between the poles so your horse learns to look and pay attention.

As your horse becomes more comfortable with the exercise, trot over the poles, and finally do lope-overs. Start with straight lines, and then add bends or turns. You can also elevate the poles or use logs or rails.

JUMPS

Make sure your horse knows the difference between a jump and a walk-over. For a jump, gather the reins up a little, and squeeze with your legs to keep the horse centered and moving forward with impulsion. Give with the reins as the horse jumps, and flow with the horse over the jump. Be careful not to jerk the reins when landing.

The horse should jump willingly and cleanly.

GROUND TYING

When asked to ground tie, exhibitors should take the reins off of the horse's head and lay them on the ground. When split reins are used, it is only necessary to take one rein down. When romal reins are used, reins should be unhooked (if possible) from one side of the bit to **avoid forming a loop that the horse may step in**. If reins cannot be unhooked from the bit easily, they may be left on the neck with the romal laid around the horn (not the reins over the horn). English reins may simply lie on the horse's neck or be unbuckled.

HARNES DRIVING

Being able to harness drive your horse increases its value and gives you more ways to have fun together. You can drive your horse regardless of breed, type, or gender, as long as it is at least 2 years of age and mentally and physically capable. You can drive light horses, draft horses, ponies, donkeys, mules, or minis.

You can drive a horse for pleasure on trails or country roads. If showing is your choice, there are Pleasure Driving classes or Combined Driving events. Timed driving events or gaming classes also are options, depending on your county and/or state.

Basic driving equipment consists of a harness and a vehicle or cart. The driving style and the breed and size of horse determine what type of equipment you need.

Driving your horse increases its usefulness and gives you a head start working with a young horse before it is physically able to carry a saddle and rider. Driving teaches obedience and develops the young horse's mouth so it learns to be "on the bit" and to flex and bend. Driving also develops the horse's muscles, especially the hindquarters, chest, and legs. Most of all, the young horse and handler have the chance to work in cooperation, which is the basis of all future training.

Each breed of horse performs differently and has a distinct style of moving while driven. Check current breed publications for driving specifications for your breed or type of horse.

For information on training and driving the horse for 4-H classes, refer to the *4-H Driving Manual* (PNW 229).

You can find rules regarding classes, tack, and attire in the *4-H Horse Contest Guide* (PNW 574).

WESTERN GAMES

TRAINING REQUIRED FIRST

In early training, it is recommended that the rider use two hands. This helps balance the horse and teaches correct turning and bending. Two hands are allowed in 4-H Western Games.

Before training for games, your horse should be able to do the following basic skills:

1. Lope on the correct lead on cue
2. Execute a willing, balanced stop
3. Give to the bridle (including bits, hackamores, etc.). This means the horse is able to flex at the poll in response to pressure on the reins rather than resisting. Also, the horse should follow the bit when asked for turns with a **direct rein** (the rein held outward in the direction of the turn).
4. Respond to leg aids. The horse should be able to yield to leg pressure, including aids for sidepassing.

Once a horse has acquired these skills, you are ready to begin working on gaming.

GAMES TRAINING

Always work on level ground. When working at speed, make sure the horse has proper footing.

Familiarize the horse with the properties and equipment used in the events and how to negotiate them correctly. Start with one

barrel, pole, or cone, and walk the horse up to, around, and away from it. It is generally advised to turn the horse a few feet out from the property, creating a **pocket**. As training progresses and the horse is going at faster gaits, it must lean into the turn and be balanced. To avoid knocking down the equipment when going fast, the horse should be taught the spacing at a walk. This also helps discourage the horse from “diving” into the pocket.

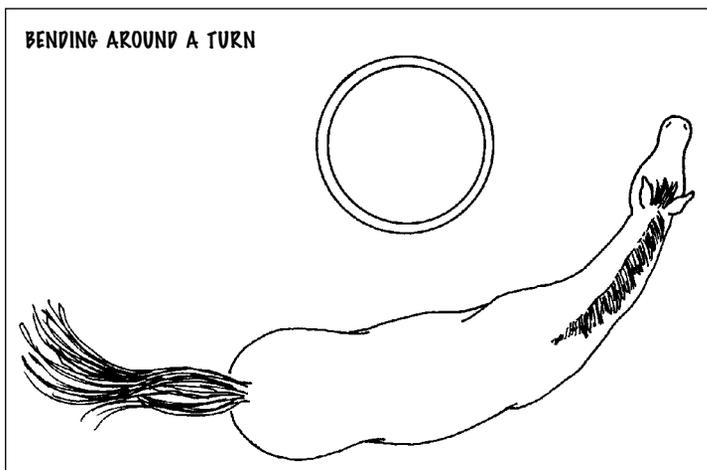
In all phases of training, you must use proper leg aids. When turning, your inside leg should be just behind the girth to bend the horse around the turn.

Once the horse is turning readily around the equipment, begin working on patterns, usually barrels. Work at a walk until the horse is familiar with the pattern. Progress to a trot, remembering to use the same turning base or pocket. When a horse is working smoothly with a relaxed attitude, you can move to the lope. At this point, when a change of lead is required, use a simple change (slow to a trot, then ask for the other lead). Vary the events you practice to keep the horse's interest.

When a horse is well balanced loping through the course, gradually increase its speed to a gallop. If the horse remains balanced and under control, you then can ask for more speed. If you begin to have problems, return to a walk and trot to reinforce training. Never trade speed for a quality ride.

At this point, your horse should be capable of handling the course at maximum speed. In the process of teaching a horse gaming skills and patterns, repetition is the key. But once the horse knows what is required, it is important that you not ask it for speed over and over, day after day. Though your horse learns by repetition and it is a necessity in training, you can sour a horse by overdoing it. Know your horse, and use common sense in the length of your workouts.

The difference between an average games horse and a top, willing competitor is that a top horse enjoys running the course. So, make training and running the events a pleasant and fun experience. Avoid jerking on your horse's face or using spurs, crops, or gimmicks that hurt your horse. These aids are for correction, not discipline.



RIDING THE WESTERN GAMES HORSE

Your method of riding can directly affect your time score. You should be balanced with the horse, with your head and eyes looking forward. Looking back to see whether a barrel, pole, or cone falls can easily throw your horse off stride. Keep your feet in the stirrups throughout the ride.

When coming to a turn, sit down deep in the saddle to help the horse gather itself. Avoid

holding on to the cantle of the saddle when turning or stopping, as this puts too much pressure on your horse's kidneys and puts you off balance. While turning, use your inside leg behind the girth. As your horse is coming out of the turn, raise slightly out of the saddle to free the hindquarters.

Always keep in mind that your horse should enjoy games. Keep your hands as light as possible and guide your horse through the events. Reward your horse with praise or pats after a satisfactory performance.

PLEASURE TRAIL RIDING AND CAMPING

TRAIL RIDING

Trail riding can be a fun way to enjoy your horse and the outdoors, but you need to follow a few safety and etiquette guidelines.

Safety and pleasure begin with a dependable, well-mannered horse. Be sure you know your horse well and can predict how it will react in various situations. A nervous horse is far more difficult to handle away from familiar surroundings. Train your horse at home to confront new and strange objects quietly and calmly. If your horse becomes frightened, remain calm, speak to it quietly, steady it, and give it time to overcome its fear.

Make sure your horse is in good physical condition and is shod. You may need to work up to taking long rides or tackling strenuous terrain. Think of your horse first and make sure you do not overtire it.

Vary your gaits, and don't canter for long periods of time. Speed is tiring and unsafe, not only for the horse but for the rider as well.

Be sure all equipment fits well and is in good repair. Use a clean, thick saddle blanket or pad. The cinch should be snug, but not extremely tight. Check the cinch before starting up or down steep grades. Use a breast collar or crupper if necessary to keep the saddle in place. A back cinch can help as well.

Do not tie reins together. In an emergency, you may not have time to get the reins off over the horse's head (or it may not be safe to do so). Reins not tied together just fall, and you can get hold of one or both of them.

Never ride alone. Ride with someone you know to be experienced and thoughtful. In larger groups, elect someone who knows the trails as "trail boss." The trail boss determines the pace and the route.

Wait until all riders are mounted before you move off, making sure you always mount and dismount on the uphill side. Keep at least one horse's length between you and the horse in front of you. Watch for tree limbs that could hit your horse in the face.

Ride balanced and erect to avoid tiring the horse or making its back sore. When riding downhill, keep your body perpendicular to the horse. When riding uphill, move your weight off the seat and forward, as in jumping, to help the horse. On long rides, dismount and lead your horse for a few minutes each hour. Periodically loosen the girth, let the horse rest, and then retighten before mounting.

If you meet other horses or hikers on the trail, find a wide part of the trail and pull off to allow them to pass safely. If the trail does not widen and you meet another horse on the trail, then as you pass, turn your horse's head slightly toward the other horse's head (this angles the hind end farther away).

Water your horse along the trail, if possible. Ride across rivers diagonally, facing upstream. Never cross rivers during high water. Avoid wet or boggy places, and back out immediately if the ground seems soft.

Do not leave the trail. You might suddenly come upon holes, unsafe surfaces, sharp objects, or bees' nests off the trail.

When riding during hunting season, make lots of noise and wear bright-color clothing, such as a fluorescent vest and orange hat.

Carry the following items:

- Sturdy halter and lead rope
- Pocket knife
- Hoof pick
- Wire cutters
- Canteen
- Basic first-aid kit
- Bad-weather clothing (slicker)
- Litter bag

Other handy items to carry:

- Hobbles, if your horse is trained for their use
- Emergency shoeing tools or easy boot
- Cell phone (carry on you, not in a pack)
- Lariat
- Pieces of leather or baling twine for repairs
- Dry matches
- Energy bar
- Flashlight

CAMPING

Camping with your horse can be a lot of fun, but it requires careful planning. Think about where you will camp and where you will ride. Make sure that you have permission to ride on private lands, and that you follow all regulations for riding on public lands and taking your horse into any water. Check the weather forecast: take appropriate clothing, and consider cancelling your trip if the weather prediction is bad. If you are going to use a pack animal, make sure you get expert training on how to pack properly.

Make lists of what you need to take both for you and your horse. Take everything suggested above for trail rides. In addition, you will need the following:

For you:

- Sleeping gear (tent, sleeping bag, air mattress)
- Clothing to last the entire trip
- Cooking utensils
- Food
- Shovel and axe

For your horse:

- Feed (hay and grain)
- Water bucket
- Grooming tools
- Rope
- Tack

You can pack all your gear on your horse or a pack animal, or have a vehicle take it all and meet you at your camp.

It is nice to be able to set up a camp and take rides out from it each day. A good campsite should have access to water, grass for grazing, and a place to secure the horses. It should also have a flat place for you to sleep and a good place to do the cooking.

When you reach camp after a ride, take care of your horse first. Cool it out and give it small amounts of water at a time until it is satisfied. Groom it well and give it a small amount of hay. Give it a normal feeding of hay and grain later. Place your saddle blanket or pad where it will dry out. Cover all your gear at night to protect it from weather and wildlife.

You will need a way to secure the horses at camp. There are five common ways to do this: corrals, picket lines, tethering, hobbles, and tying to trees.

Corrals are best if they are available. Some horse camps have permanent ones you can use.

Some people carry portable ones that set up quickly. It is possible to make a corral by tying ropes from tree to tree at about chest height.

A **picket line** is a rope tied between two trees above wither height. Tie horses on the line about 10 feet apart using a quick-release knot.

Tethering is tying a horse with a long rope to a stake or tree. This is not the best method for most horses. Horses easily become tangled in the rope and get severe rope burns. Before you use this method, make sure your horse is savvy about ropes and that there is always someone keeping on eye out for problems.

Some people tie their horse to a tree to secure it in camp. This method is not preferred, as the horse can damage the tree. The horse also can wind itself around the tree, leaving it no room to move. If you have to tie to a tree, it is best to tie to a strong overhead branch. Leave enough slack in the rope for the horse to reach its nose to the ground.

Hobbles are straps used to tie a horse's front legs together. You should allow 8 to 10 inches of slack. Hobbles prevent most horses from running off, although some horses learn to move quite well in them. Be sure your horse is completely broken to accepting hobbles before attempting to use them. It is a good idea to train your horse to accept hobbles, because it will be less likely to panic if it gets its feet caught in wire, rope, or brush.

However you secure the horses, make sure they are away from your campsite. They attract flies and are rather smelly.

When you leave camp, make sure you clean up well. Be sure any fires are out and drowned. Pack out all litter with you. Do not bury anything, because animals will dig it up. Remove all unused hay, and scatter manure. Leave your campsite looking natural and better than it did when you arrived.

