PNW 488

Hunt Seat & Jumper Manual

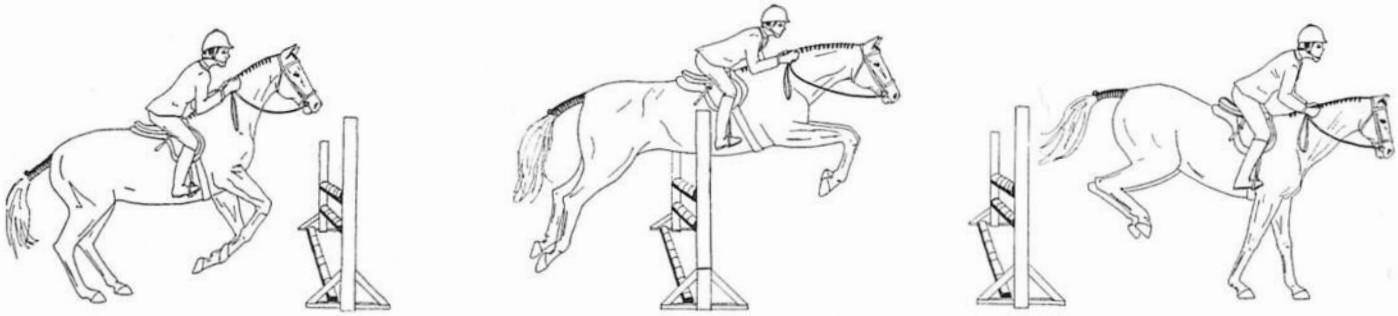
Learning to Jump with Your Horse

Marian Crumb

A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication
Idaho - Oregon - Washington

Hunt Seat & Jumper Manual

Learning to Jump with Your Horse



A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication

Idaho - Oregon - Washington

The author—Marian Crumb grew up on a large cattle and sheep ranch in western Oregon. She taught high school there for 12 years and also became a 4-H horse leader. A taste of jumping at a clinic one weekend broadened her interest, so she took lessons, read, attended clinics, and started competing. After 13 years of 4-H horse leadership and a move to northern Idaho, her backyard hobby became a full-time job. She now works with students of all ages, teaching horsemanship and giving clinics. Her students have won in open, breed, and 4-H shows. Her own competition in horse shows and training was cut short by a back injury, however.

Acknowledgments—The following individuals reviewed this publication:

Bradford J. Jeffreys, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development, Oregon State University

Jennifer Leach, 4-H Area Agent, Cowlitz County, Washington State University

Mary Newman, Oregon 4-H Leader and Horse Judge

William Shane, Extension 4-H/Youth Specialist, University of Idaho

Shirley Watson, Assistant Manager, Oregon State Fair 4-H Horse Show

Cover photo by **Heidi Kellams**

Contents

Introduction 5

Before starting to jump 7
- Get the proper basic equipment and get used to using it 7
  - Bits 7
  - English saddles 8
  - Recommended types of jumping saddles 8
  - Other types of English saddles 9
  - Other equipment 9
- Wear proper clothing 10
  - ASTM-SEI F1163-88-approved helmet 10
  - Tall hunt boots 10
  - Breeches 10
- Practice basic skills and exercises 10
  - Working area 12
  - Other equipment 12
  - Thoughts on training 12

Steps in learning to jump 15
- Jumping position 15
- Cavaletti work 17
- Cavaletti with a jump 19
- Jumping without cavaletti 21
- Adding variety to the jumps 22
- Additional notes 28

Common mistakes: Their causes, results, and how to correct them 29

Summary of common mistakes 35

Appendix A: Classes that require jumping 37
- Hunter seat equitation over fences 37
- Jumper classes 37
- Hunter classes 38

Appendix B: Warm-up exercises 39

Suggested additional reading 44

Introduction

This manual is designed as a supplement for 4-H project members wanting to jump in the Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fence classes and others who want to learn how to jump but may not have a qualified instructor available to teach them. The manual is not intended for use by beginning riders on green horses working alone. The material covered will deal only with the basics of good equitation and jumping. Finer details of learning to jump can be found in many books and magazines, some of which are listed in the bibliography.

This manual contains suggestions that should lead to the most secure seat for jumping and to success with the least problems. The form you will achieve is the one most generally accepted, tried, and true. The author makes these suggestions from her experience in showing, taking lessons from instructors with different techniques, studying books on the old and new methods, including fads, and working with youngsters and adults for more than 30 years.

When properly done, jumping can be great fun for the horse and rider. It helps the rider develop a more secure seat, improve horsemanship, develop self-confidence, and gain a sense of accomplishment. Jumping can make an average rider an above-average rider. Jumping makes the horse more balanced, collected, and agile, and is great for conditioning when started slowly.

You should have a good foundation in hunt seat equitation before beginning jumping. Learn the proper techniques of equitation on the flat first, then go into jumping training. You will be much more successful and not end up with problems with the horse. You will find the time spent to learn techniques will be time well spent in the end.

Learning the basics so well that they are automatic is good for both horse and rider because this will give each great confidence in the other. Remember, only a confident horse and rider working together as a team can jump well and look good going over fences, especially when in the ring being judged.

There are no simple shortcuts to riding success. If you try shortcuts you will actually end up spending more time correcting problems. If you have had to use gimmicks such as any type of martingale, correct the faults that make the martingale necessary. If your horse gives you any trouble, stop and make sure you are not the cause. Most of the time these problems are the rider's fault.

If an instructor is available, start with one whose students have become good, balanced riders and whose techniques and results you respect. You may have to pay for a few lessons at first, but those few lessons will do wonders in getting you started correctly. If you can not afford too many lessons, then be a good, quiet observer. The poorest way to start jumping is to face a 2-foot jump and try to make the horse go over it . . . and hope you stay on.

As you know from western riding, if you have five different instructors or leaders, they may tell you five different ways to do certain things, like teaching a horse to back. This is true of hunt seat equitation and jumping instructors, unless they are from the same school. Each instructor has his or her own personality, philosophy, and goals, and each individual's teaching method will reflect this.

If one instructor's method doesn't suit your personality, philosophy, or goals, find another instructor. No one way of teaching is the exact way for everyone. Find what works for you

and your horse with the best results and least problems.

Judges will also look for different techniques. Do not try to change your technique to suit the judge, but correct it if it is definitely improper. Some of the judging differences may be due to fads, and fads come and go quickly.

Not all horses or riders have the physical or mental attributes to be good jumpers. Many 4-H'ers want to become good riders, but some do not want, or do not have, the patience to spend the time to learn the basics.

Crashes, refusals, or runouts occur at some time to those who have not done their "homework." In such situations, you may see some fancy acrobatics as riders try to stay on. If this happens to you regularly, maybe both you and your horse need to pursue another skill, such as trail riding.

Your horse may also be too young or not in good physical condition. A horse should be at least 4 or 5 years old before going over jumps. Before then, its joints, especially the knees, are not mature enough to take the stress of jumping.

Most ponies can handle jumps easily. For their height, they can outjump horses. Stroller, a Connemara pony, was an individual silver medal winner in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. Another Connemara pony of only 13.2 hands, Little Squire, jumped over 6 feet and won the National Open Jumper Championship with an adult rider. Few ponies and few horses are this capable.

After learning the basics, you should be ready to start learning to jump. Saddle up, and with the reins in one hand and this manual in the other, head for the arena. At the end of 4 months practicing at least twice weekly under instruction or good help, you and your horse should be a safe, confident, and steady jumping team at 2 to 2½ feet. Without an instructor, this may take you longer. Some talented riders with an athletic horse and good instruction may be able to jump 3 feet easily.

Remember, as you teach your horse how to jump, you will

- Improve your horsemanship
- Develop confidence in your equitation and your horse
- Improve your horse's balance, agility, and condition
- Gain great satisfaction in your accomplishments, however small
- Have fun with fellow 4-H members learning to jump

Before starting to jump

Get the proper basic equipment and get used to using it

Bits

Snaffle bit. This is the best bit to use for training, western as well as English, and should be the only bit used. If the horse will not respond to the snaffle, the horse is not ready to go on to another bit. The thicker the mouthpiece, the kinder the bit and the more the horse will want to obey.

Be sure the bit you use is a true snaffle, such as the D-ring, egg butt, O-ring, half or full cheek, or straight bar (figs. 1, 2). Do not use so-called snaffles such as the Tom Thumb, Argentine, Cowboy, half gag, etc. These are really curb bits, not snaffles.

True snaffles have the reins attached directly to the mouthpiece, regardless of the type of mouthpiece. They may have a single or double joint in the middle, be a straight bar, or twisted mouthpiece. For showing, get yourself a regular hunt bridle that has the laced reins and a cavesson (fig. 1).

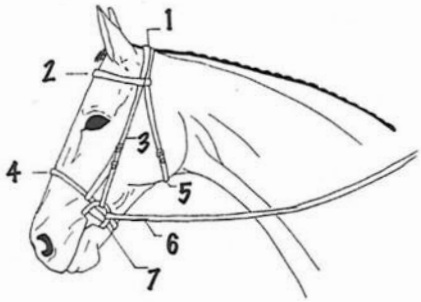


Figure 1.

Hunt bridle and its parts: (1) crown piece/headstall, (2) brow band, (3) cheekpieces, (4) cavesson, (5) throat latch, (6) snaffle rein, (7) snaffle bit (D-ring shown).

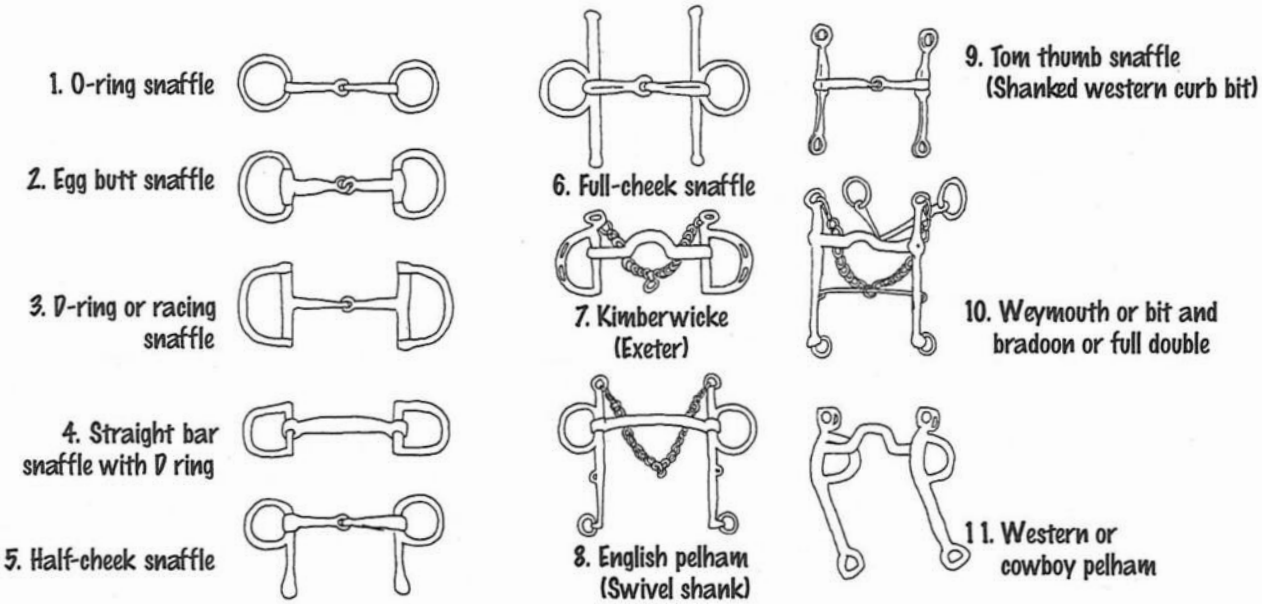


Figure 2.

Different types of bits. Numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 are jointed snaffles.

Other bits. Curb bits such as Pelham, full double, or Weymouth may be used, but they have two sets of reins, which are confusing for some riders to use. Kimberwicke bits may also be used. They have a single laced rein, and they will offer a little more control than the snaffle. When the reins are put in the bottom slot, the Kimberwicke acts like a mild curb bit. If you feel you must use the curb bits until you get more confident and relaxed, be extremely careful that you do not bang the horse in the mouth or hang on to the reins for balance.

English saddles

There are a number of different types of English saddles (figs. 3, 4). The forward seat or jumping saddle is best. Sit in a saddle before you buy it. Try it out for balance by standing up in the stirrups.

Be sure that the saddle is not too big or too small for you. For proper fit, there should be only about 3 inches of saddle in front of and in back of the rider. Most teens use a 16- or 17-inch saddle. Juniors may need a 14- to 16-inch saddle. Small adults may also use the 16-inch and up to a 17½-inch saddle.

Even some of the jump saddles are made so that it's hard to be balanced over the horse correctly, and you have a tendency to get left behind. In these, the lowest spot in the seat is too far behind where the stirrups hang.

This feeling may also be due to the conformation of the horse's back, such as high withers. This may slant the saddle back so that the cantle is too low. This puts the rider into a "chair" seat, that feeling of being left behind. This makes it hard to learn to jump. A liftback saddle pad or a lollipop pad will lift the back end of the saddle up to make it more level. For practice you can use a small hand towel folded up.

Just as in western saddles, English saddles have different width trees. Feel underneath between the saddle and horse, and be sure the saddle fits properly. If it does not, it may rub the horse's withers on top or pinch on the sides and make the horse's back sore. The horse may then start rushing or refusing on you. For safety's sake when jumping, be sure that the stirrup bar is left open. Judges may even check for this in a class.

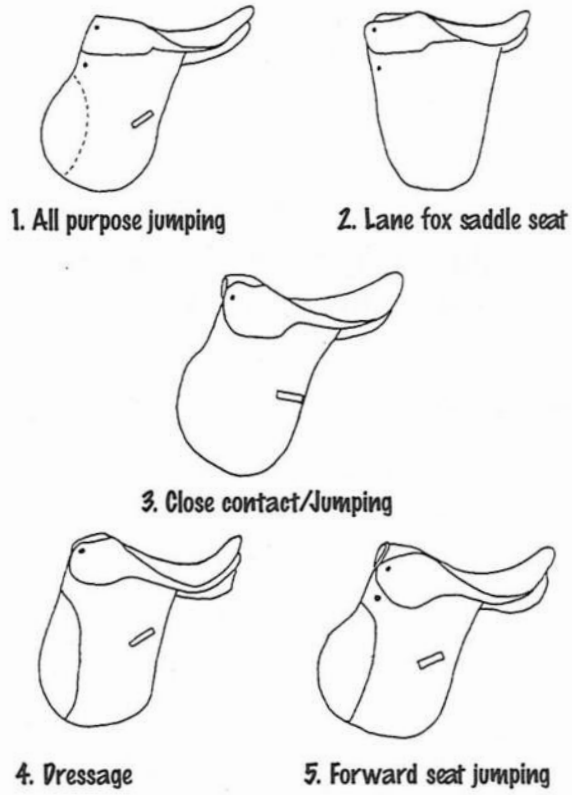


Figure 3.
Different saddle types.

Recommended types of jumping saddles

Forward seat. This saddle (fig. 3, no. 5) puts the rider more forward over the horse's center of balance, allowing the horse's hindquarters maximum freedom for jumping. These saddles usually have suede on the padded knee rolls. Some may even have a small roll behind the rider's legs.

This type of saddle may encourage riders to grip too much with the knees, which causes the lower leg to be away from the horse's side. For this reason, riders who want to be really good, and some judges, prefer the close contact version of the forward seat saddle.

Close contact. This saddle (fig. 3, no. 3) is flatter in the cantle and does not have padding in the knee rolls or suede at the knees. If you learn to ride in the close contact saddle, you will be a better rider in the end.

These saddles offer less bulk holding you in the saddle and getting in your way. You must have a better natural balance and base of support to ride these well. A weak rider will slide all around on them, upsetting the horse.

These saddles then are good for more-advanced riders. Adult riders just learning to ride and jump may wish the security of the knee rolls and deeper seat of a forward seat saddle, and graduate to a close contact saddle later.

All purpose. This saddle (fig. 3, no. 1) is more versatile and is used by many for trail riding and flat work in addition to jumping. It is modified slightly with straighter flaps and a deeper seat. It may have padded knee rolls. Some riders use this type of saddle for beginning dressage or for 3-day eventing.

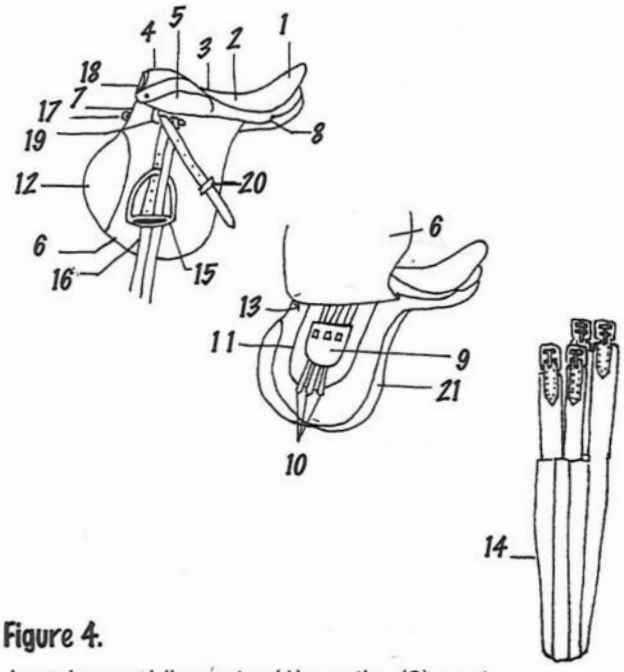


Figure 4.

Jumping saddle parts: (1) cantle, (2) seat, (3) waist, (4) pommel, (5) skirt, (6) flap, (7) panel, (8) lining, (9) guard, (10) billet straps, (11) sweat flaps, (12) knee roll, (13) point pocket (for point of tree), (14) girth, (15) irons, (16) stirrup leather, (17) dees, (18) gullet, (19) stirrup bar, (20) stirrup leather loop, (21) leg roll.

Other types of English saddles

Dressage. This saddle (fig. 3, no. 4) has a shorter, deeper seat with straighter flaps. Some will have suede at the knees or knee rolls. The saddle is designed for a specialized style of riding that lets the rider keep his weight to the rear to use leg pressure at or behind the girth for bending, collection, and work off the hindquarters.

Park, cut-back, saddle seat, or Lane fox show. This saddle (fig. 3, no. 2) is designed with a cut back pommel and straight flaps. It sits farther behind the withers so that the rider can shift his or her weight to the rear to free up the front shoulders, allowing more animated action. This saddle is used for saddle seat and not for jumping. It is ridden with long stirrups.

Other equipment

Breast plate or breast collar. One may be needed to hold the saddle forward where it belongs.

Saddle pad. A good pad of felt, sheepskin, or other material is necessary to protect the saddle from sweat and to help absorb some of the jarring from jumping.

No martingales, tie downs, or draw reins. These are crutches that advertise your lack of "homework" on the flat. If your horse needs these to be ridden over jumps safely, then the horse needs more flat work and the rider needs a more balanced seat.

Wear proper clothing

ASTM-SEI F1163-88-approved helmet

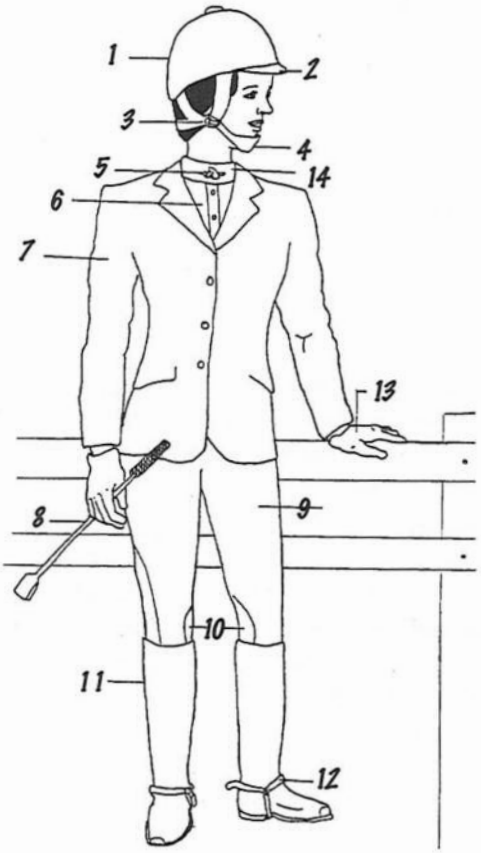
This helmet will have the approval seal inside the headpiece. It has the attached harness and soft flexible bill (fig. 5).

Tall hunt boots

These can be tall hunt boots of either rubber or leather, tall lace-up paddock boots, or field boots (fig. 5). They save pinched calves, which are caused by the legs moving. Absolutely do not use tennis or street shoes.

Breeches

Breeches have leather or self knee patches to help keep your legs from moving (fig. 5). This will help prevent sores on the inside of your knees. Breeches should be worn during all practices. Junior riders may wear jodhpurs with jodhpur boots. Jeans will bunch up under the knees, twist, or ride up and rub spots on the insides of your knees. The seams of the jeans can rub sores.



Practice basic skills and exercises

1. Learn to direct rein or plow rein, not neck rein, with your horse giving to the bit, relaxed in the jaw and neck, and not resistant in any way. Work to develop steady hands and soft contact. Riders need to learn proper use of their hands (quiet and gentle, communicative) to become truly good riders. Hands, along with seat, legs, and attitude, are the means of communication between the horse and rider.

   For a horse to have a responsive mouth, the rider's hands and body must be relaxed and able to communicate. The horse can feel your true, innermost feelings from your hands through the reins to his mouth. He can feel your attitude toward him and life in general. He knows if you are afraid, nervous, calm, impatient, aggressive, etc.

   Remember, the horse reflects the way the rider rides and feels. So the horse reflects your riding, good or bad, and your training or lack thereof, good or bad. You develop these basic skills through lots of proper relaxing and balancing work on a longe line.

   Longeing (longe is pronounced like sponge) is an exercise and training method where the horse is controlled by a long line or rope attached to a halter, longeing cavesson, or bridle (fig. 6). The handler stands in the middle of a circle and guides the horse around at the desired gait of walk, trot, or canter/lope in both directions, using voice and/or whip as directional aids.

   Longeing is great for teaching discipline to colts and allowing them to burn off excess energy before getting down to serious work.

Figure 5.

Proper clothing for the young rider (the whip, spurs, and gloves are optional): (1) approved ASTM-SEI helmet, (2) flexible brim, (3) harness, (4) chin strap, (5) stock tie pin, (6) ratcatcher shirt, (7) hunt coat, (8) whip (optional), (9) breeches, (10) knee patch, (11) tall hunt boots, (12) spurs (optional), (13) gloves (optional), (14) choker or stock tie.

It also helps condition a horse while developing balance and a relaxed, rhythmic gait.

Longeing is very useful for helping riders to learn to ride in balance and relaxed rhythm with the horse and to develop a good secure seat and leg and a good set of hands. Without a good, solid seat and good legs, you won't have communicative hands. Longeing is also used to help riders learn to post and hold the jump position without upsetting the horse.

2. Use the correct hunt seat position at all three gaits, practicing until you can do this naturally and with ease. Be able to change from one gait to any other smoothly, quickly, and quietly on command, with no fuss or resistance.
3. While posting correct diagonals, learn to drive with your legs. Teach the horse to give to leg pressure, such as right leg behind the girth and left leg at the girth when turning to the left, turns on the forehand, lateral work, etc.

   When you apply both legs, the horse must learn to go forward. If he doesn't, use a crop to reinforce the leg until he learns. Be careful not to deaden the horse's sides by constantly banging at him with your legs. Ask him once, and the second time back it up with the crop. You want the horse to respond to lighter and lighter leg aids.

   In the beginning, for some horses, you may need to carry a crop at all times to get across the idea that you mean what you're asking. Be determined, quiet, and firm but not harsh. Do not use spurs unless you have good leg control. The skills learned at this stage will be useful later on in keeping the horse going straight to the jump.
4. Do some exercises on horseback (figs. 6, 7, 8). Practice them with the horse standing still, then at a walk, a slow trot, posting trot, and eventually the canter. This helps you develop balance, confidence, good secure seat, and proper leg position. Be sure your weight is down in the heels with ankles relaxed at all times.

   Do the following: Rotate one arm, then both arms, in large circles forward, then backward. Stretch one arm at a time above the shoulders while stretching down the leg on the same side. While keeping leg position and balance, touch left hand to left toe, to poll, to right toe, and to forward toward the horse's elbow. The rider's toe is actually behind the front part of the girth. It should stay there all the time, especially during the jump.

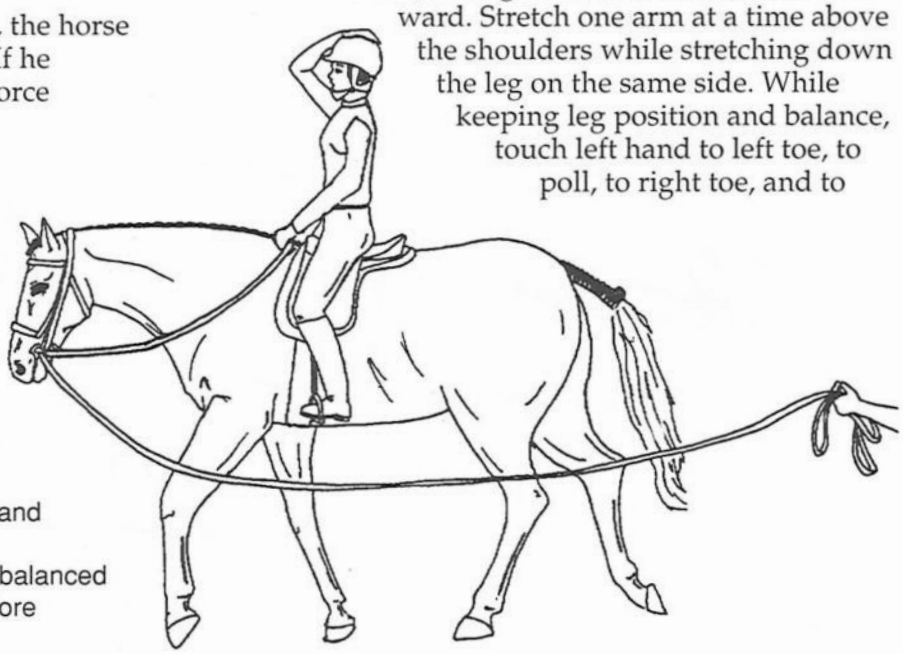


Figure 6.

Doing gymnastic exercises on a longe line, or by yourself, at the walk then trot is excellent for building a good secure seat and leg position and for conditioning and strengthening the muscles while developing a confident, relaxed, balanced position. These are essential before starting to jump.

When the rider is standing or sitting up, the line should be straight from the ear through the shoulder, hip, and heel. Ankles are relaxed, toes up, heels down and out. The ball of the foot is on the iron.

Notice that when the rider is balanced correctly over his or her feet, the stirrup leather is straight down. It may not be parallel to the girth if the girth is angled

When longeing with a snaffle, pass the longe line through the ring on the handler's side, over the poll, and snap it to the offside snaffle ring. Change sides when you reverse directions.

rump. Change hands and repeat the exercise. These will help you to relax, go in rhythm with the horse, and be in balance.

5. With an assistant helping you and with the horse on a longe line, ride without stirrups. Ride all three gaits, including a posting trot. Keep the legs and feet in position as though the feet were in the stirrups. The exercises in figures 6, 7, and 8 are also good to do without stirrups.

Working area

1. Work in a flat area, preferably enclosed, and on soft ground. Jumping on hard ground is hard on a horse's legs and feet.
2. Don't jump when the ground is wet, slippery, or rocky. Accidents can happen too easily.

Other equipment

1. Obtain six poles, at least 4 inches in diameter and 12 feet long, to be used as cavaletti poles on the ground.
2. Obtain four or more poles, at least 12 feet long, to be used for jumping. Boards are not good because they split and can cause injuries.
3. Obtain jump standards, or something upon which to set the jump poles. You will need to be able to adjust height every 3 or 4 inches. The jump standards should allow the poles to fall in the direction you are jumping if they are hit hard. The jump should look solid, not flimsy.
4. Obtain extra poles for ground lines and side rails.
5. You should arrange access to a variety of jumping equipment for later advancement.

Thoughts on training

You are now ready to start learning to jump. If your horse is new to jumping, you are now the teacher. Can you remember your favorite teachers in school? How did they correct your mistakes or help you solve problems? I am sure they did not use a bat! They had great understanding and patience with you until you did learn. You are now in the teacher's shoes.

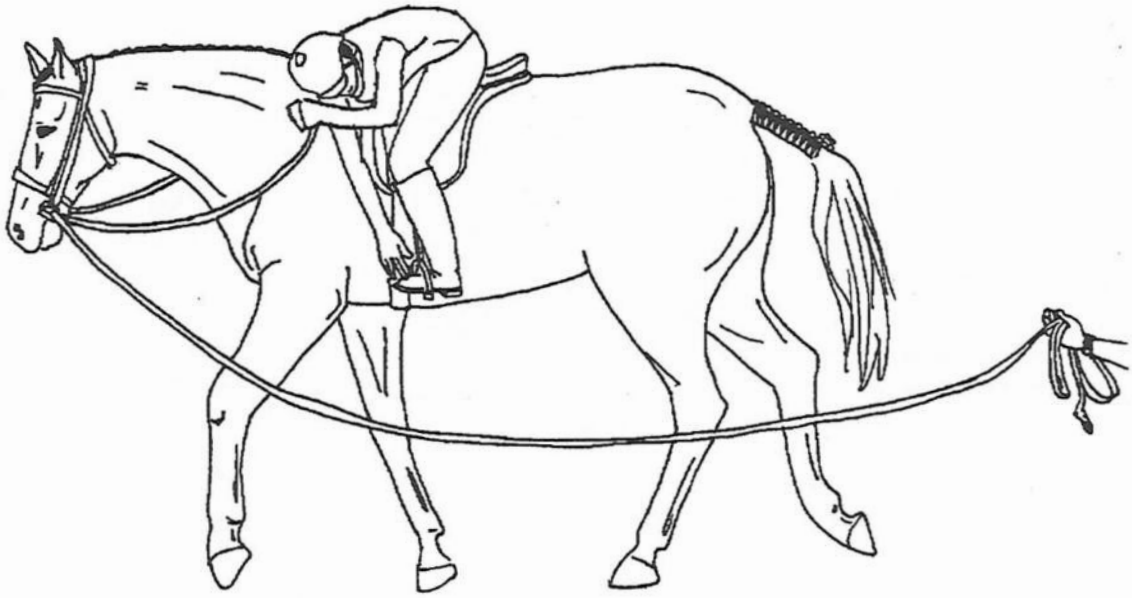


Figure 7.

Practicing gymnastic exercises on a longe line at the walk and trot. These toe touches help riders stretch and relax the muscles while also helping to build confidence, balance, and strength. Riders from 4 to 80 years old can do these. Be sure that your opposite leg does not move and jab the horse.

Figure 8.

Practicing fun things such as patting your head while rubbing your stomach in a circle while being longed is a great way to teach riders to relax, learn to post, and learn to move with the rhythm of the horse. Another fun exercise is to circle one arm forward and the other one backward, then reverse.

You can also post with your arms crossed in front of your chest, with your hands on top of your head, or with the reins held straight out from your shoulders. Work on keeping your back flat and your seat tucked under and on being tall and elegant-looking in the saddle. Think of having someone above you pull you up by your hair, or take a deep breath and breathe deeply.

If your horse gives you any trouble, stop and make sure you are not the cause. Most times, problems are the rider's fault. What was your attitude? When you are accusing the horse of being a dumb, stupid animal, what do you think he is calling his rider? If you have a hard time telling what is wrong, get competent help. Maybe you were trying to go too fast and too high for the horse. Maybe the horse just needed to be shown how to do it or maybe you gave him conflicting aids.

It is possible to train and ride a horse over jumps for years without ever having a refusal. The author has a 27-year-old mare who has never refused in 21 years of jumping.

If you have a new or green horse, finish basic training before starting to jump. The horse should be under control, relaxed, and obedient to the bit and legs at all gaits. If the horse is nervous, quite green, or too young, postpone learning to jump or use another horse. Head tossers, pullers, and horses that speed up or slow down when they want to need further training.

If your horse is nervous from gymkhana, he will be helped by much loose rein or dressage-type work in the arena and by work over cavaletti poles. Do not jump stargazers without improving the head carriage and getting them relaxed on the bit and confident in your hand.

Always end each session on a positive note, never with a fight or a knocked down jump. If necessary, go back over a cavaletti pole and praise the horse, then quit for the day if you seem to be having problems. The horse or you may be having one of those days. Do not make matters worse by trying to continue. Go trail riding instead. Relax. Have fun.

Fun games and practice can help learning. Some of these are thread reins, command skills, standing up in jump position the longest, and egg- or rock-in-spoon class.

If you or your instructor feel the horse needs to be punished, do so within 3 seconds. If you wait longer the horse will not know why he is being punished. Punish him quickly, then go on. Do the same for rewards.

Steps in learning to jump

Jumping position

The four parts of a jump are the approach, take off, suspension, and landing. Each part should be a smooth, continuous movement and as perfect as possible. Each part depends on the rider maintaining a perfect jumping position.

Learn the jumping position described in the following paragraphs, and start every day with a warm-up and exercises in this position. Picture this position in your mind. Start practicing this standing still, and then practice at a walk until you can hold the position for at least 20 steps without having to use reins for balance. This is called the two-point contact or position.

1. Rise in the saddle, dropping your weight into the heels, which are flexed down and behind the girth. Stirrup leathers are straight down, not forward or back. Ankles are flexed and relaxed, to be used as springs (fig. 9). Ball of the foot is on the iron. Stirrup length should be medium to provide security for the rider and freedom for the horse. Stirrup irons should touch the ankle bone when your leg is hanging out of the iron. Longer stirrups are used for flat schooling work when you need more leg on the horse to "drive" him. Shorter stirrups are used when jumping high to get more weight off the horse's back.
2. Roll knees in slightly for stability and light contact. To grip or tighten with your legs anywhere at all makes you stiff. It can lead to problems such as having your heels forced out and losing lower leg contact or rotating off the knees and letting your lower leg fly up, which upsets the horse. The inside calf of the leg is in light contact with the horse. Pinching the knees or lower leg can cause the horse to rush the jumps.

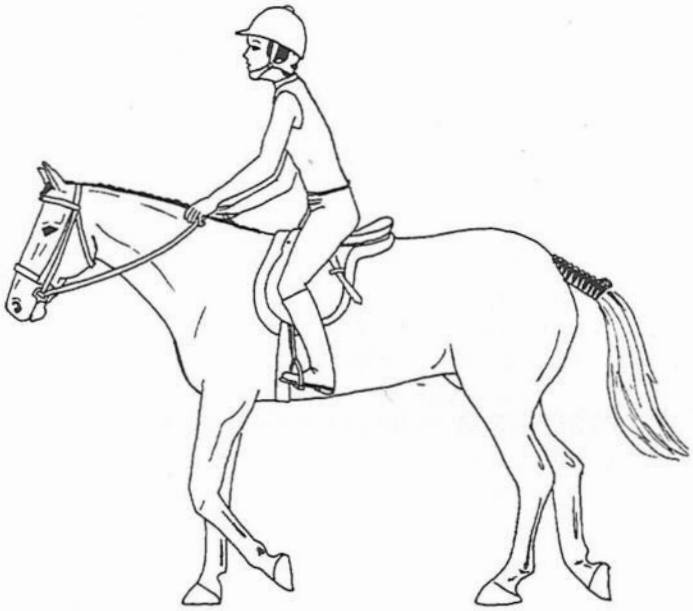


Figure 9.

This rider is practicing posting and standing up on her own with her hands in the correct crest release position. The ankles are very relaxed, toes up, knees against the saddle and not gripping while the rider looks straight ahead between the horse's ears. The seat is slightly out of the saddle. Note the straight line from elbow to bit.

The reins are short enough that the rider can easily correct the horse, if necessary, but not too short to interfere. If the rider is truly balanced and relaxed, she should be able to lengthen the reins and do all sorts of gymnastic exercises and not have the horse change pace.

3. The inside thigh muscles are flat against the saddle, ready to be used lightly when needed. The large muscles are forced to the rear. Toes will point out slightly. Some instructors say to point the toes naturally according to the rider's conformation, but

everyone does not fit the ideal position. Practice and strive to achieve the ideal. Doing stretching exercises for the thighs and crotch will help here. (See Appendix B.)

4. Now, crouch down as though starting to do a deep knee bend and lean slightly forward from the hips while staying balanced (fig. 10). This moves your upper body forward over the horse's neck. You may feel that your seat is sticking out, but it is not sticking out that much. This position prevents you from falling forward on your nose or backward on your seat. This is called the two-point position.

   You will be in a crouched position balanced over your horse. Bring your shoulders up as though trying to bring the shoulder blades together. Do not tighten your muscles. Be sure to bend at the hips, not the waist. If you have trouble at this point, get off the horse and do lots of deep knee bends on the ground to develop strength, balance, and position before going on.

5. Keep your back flat and relaxed with a slight hollow or arch. Keep your head up and look straight forward between the horse's ears. At first you may need to extend your hands along the horse's neck about halfway to his poll to aid in keeping your balance (fig. 10). If the horse has no mane, use a neck strap such as a belt or lead rope at least half way up the horse's neck. This keeps you from banging the horse's mouth if you get left behind while jumping.

   Practice this position on a longe line with your hands out to the sides. This will be tiring on the back muscles at first, but keep practicing and strengthening them. Exercises on the ground will help this. Riders who have trouble keeping their back flat should practice while thinking of having an ice cube or a spider down their back.

6. When going over cavaletti and jumps later on, you will use a crest release on the horse's neck. That is, you will place your hands forward, pressing on each side of the neck while holding a bit of mane in the

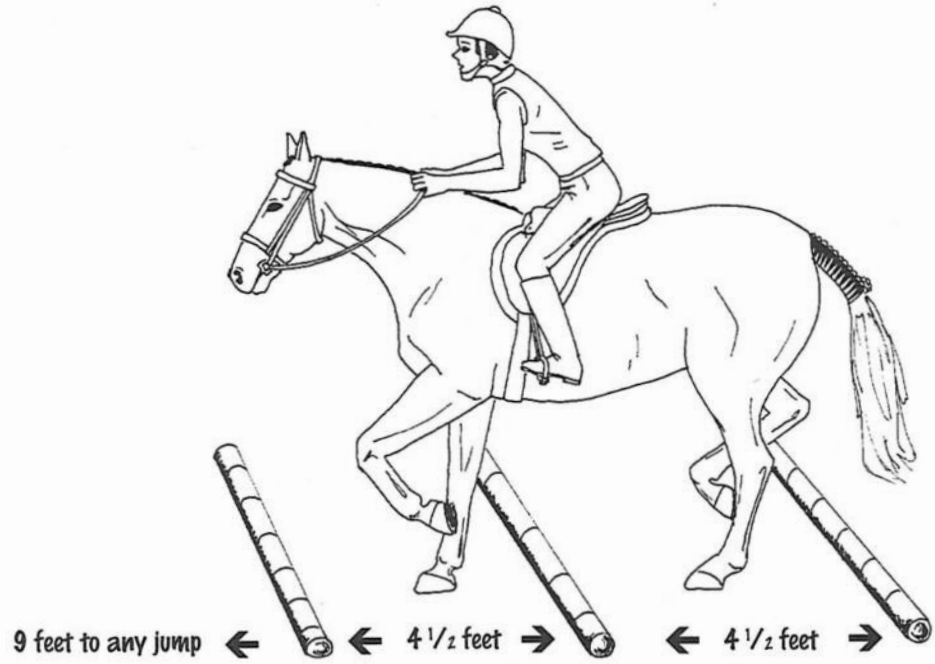


Figure 10.

This rider is practicing posting through the cavaletti to help the horse develop a rhythm as they trot over the poles. The poles are 4½ feet apart. With a lazy horse, the rider needs to use a driving leg. With an overly energetic horse, the rider needs to be very quiet and relaxed while posting. The bight of the reins and the braids are on the off, or right, side of the horse.

beginning. Your thumbs will be at the top of the neck so they can touch (fig. 10).

7. To sit down, ease yourself straight down on the saddle by bending your knees as though doing a deep knee bend. Do not sit back as you would on a chair. Sit on the crotch, not on the seat bones. Learn to sit down gently. If you bang the horse in the back as you sit, this will lead to problems such as causing the horse to rush the jumps. Practice standing up and sitting down at least 20 times, holding the standing position for 10 strides and the sitting position for five strides.
8. Practice standing and sitting while walking the horse, then while trotting. If the horse gets nervous or speeds up, sit down, calm the horse, and start over. Most likely, you did something that caused the horse to speed up such as gripping or having heavy hands. If your horse speeded up on its own, you and your horse need more training in the basics. Progress one step at a time. Keep your legs quiet and relaxed.
9. Learn to use legs to urge the horse forward if the horse is lazy. "Legs" refers to that part between the knee and ankle, mainly the inside of the calf. Keep your horse moving in a straight line at a steady pace. This is to keep the horse's "motor" going. Use legs equally. The legs are one means of communication between horse and rider, and they need to be developed.
10. Practice until the horse goes steadily and calmly, and you can hold the jumping position at all three gaits. A good exercise is to change gaits and directions while holding the jumping position. Without proper position at all times, you can not have proper control. Learning this well may take hours of practice, but you should practice until the proper position becomes automatic. You should practice this whenever you ride for pleasure, even when trail riding. Make your practice as perfect as possible. Only perfect practice makes perfect riders.
11. A good seat is developed by balance, not strength in gripping or hanging on the reins. "Standing up in the stirrups" exercises, including changing gaits and directions, will help you develop a good, secure, balanced seat (fig. 9). Do not use the reins for balance. Keep your heels down. These exercises are also great for developing strength in the legs for flat work before cavaletti work and as a daily warm-up.
12. As a rider, you should also learn some simple commands and what they mean when given by your instructor or helper: *Hands forward*—get them forward up the horse's neck and off the mouth. *Mane*—hang on to the horse's mane or neck strap halfway to the poll. *Legs*—squeeze or, if necessary, kick with determination. *Knees*—relax, lengthen them, don't grip or bring them up into the knee rolls. *Stand up*—straighten up to check balance and leg position. *Relax ankles*—toes up, heels down and out from the horse's sides. *Chin up*—look straight ahead, not down. *Ice cube* or *spider*—flatten back with chest up, shoulders back, and shoulder blades together.
13. Start every day with familiar things. Review what you did the day before, then go to something new only when you are ready. Be sure to warm up 15 to 30 minutes to get both you and your horse ready by being relaxed, supple, obedient, and working together as a team. If the horse is too frisky, it may take longer to get him to relax.

    Before riding, you may need to work the horse on a longe line until he calms down and starts listening. Sometimes riders also need to do 10 to 20 minutes of relaxing, stretching, and conditioning exercises before they mount to get rid of the day's tensions or exuberance. (See Appendix B, "Warm-Up Exercises.")

Cavaletti work

Cavaletti are jumps made of poles placed on the ground. Cavaletti work teaches the horse rhythm, balance, and agility. It lightens and relaxes the horse when done properly. You should start cavaletti work only when you are confident in the jumping position and when the horse is steady and calm and going forward readily from your "legs."

Cavaletti work can be tiring on a horse and on the muscles of the beginning rider so do not do

too much at the beginning; eight times over six cavaletti is enough. If your horse is fat or out of condition, go slowly. Do not let the horse canter through the poles. Start cavaletti work at the basic level.

1. Place one pole on the ground and walk your horse back and forth over the middle of it until the horse approaches it straight and continues straight over it. Then trot over it at a steady pace, maintaining jump position and looking straight ahead, not down at the pole. If you look down at the pole, your balance changes. The horse feels this and will stop to see what you are looking at. This is one of the main reasons that horses refuse jumps. Be sure to watch for this fault constantly.

   CAUTION: If the horse should try to go around or run out, always be ready to correct him quickly and quietly so he approaches in a straight line. Next time be prepared for this and think straight ahead. Keep an even contact on both reins and drive evenly with both legs. Correct all faults before they become habits. If the horse keeps ducking out, he may not be physically or mentally ready for jumping or he may not have confidence in your ability. Go back and build his confidence. It is much easier to stop potentially bad habits now than to have to take time to correct them later.

2. Approach the cavaletti straight at a posting trot. Four strides before the pole, take the jumping position as in figure 11 and trot over the pole, maintaining a steady speed. Hold this jumping position until at least four strides after the pole. Sit down gently, as if you were sitting on a fresh egg on the cantle. You will need to hang on to the mane or a neck strap at first to keep balanced. Whatever you do, do not hit the horse in the mouth with the bit. It will take him a long time to get over the hurt. Once hit, he will be hesitant.

3. A common riding problem to watch for is rising up to help your horse go over the jump. You may tend to rise up on your toes, lift your heels, stiffen or straighten your knees, and get ahead of the horse's motion. You must cure this bad habit before proceeding.

4. Gradually increase the number of poles on the ground, adding one at a time until you have at least six. Place them 4½ feet apart. This is the distance for a medium posting trot. Be sure the poles are the same distance apart. If a pole is kicked out of position, put it back before going over them again. Your

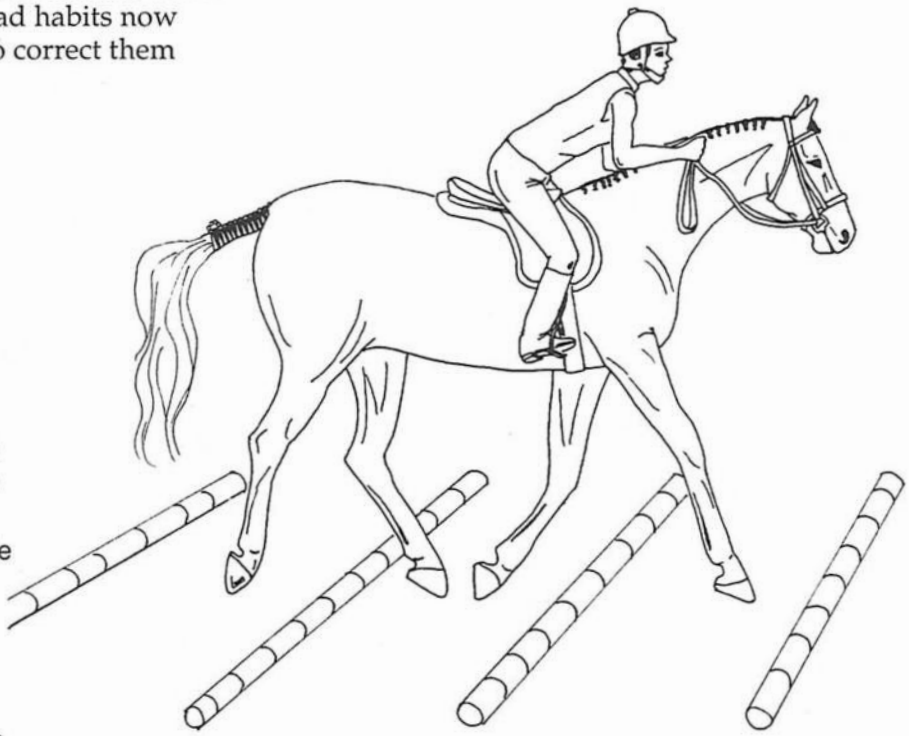


Figure 11.

The rider is holding good jump position with the crest release while going through the cavaletti poles. When going over a jump, the rider's back will be almost parallel to the horse's neck. Be certain not to anticipate the jump by tightening up or trying to jump for the horse by rising up.

Note the rider's seat is only a little way out of the saddle. Her hip angle has been closed automatically by the horse's jumping over the jump. When approaching that first pole, hold the jump position and don't move.

horse should step exactly in the middle between poles. Ponies can easily learn to trot this 4½-foot spacing. These cavaletti are good for teaching short, choppy-strided horses to stride longer and more fluidly. Cavaletti also help nervous horses that rush or don't listen to their rider.

5. Only when you are confident and your horse is confident and steady, practice going through the cavaletti with the reins held out to the side. This is a check on your balance and correct jump position. Be ready to correct the horse if he should try to wander or change pace.

   Be sure you approach the cavaletti straight and at the desired steady speed. If not, circle and try again. You may do lots of circling. Go only when you and the horse are both ready. If your horse is lazy, wanders, rushes, etc., wait until later to do this maneuver.

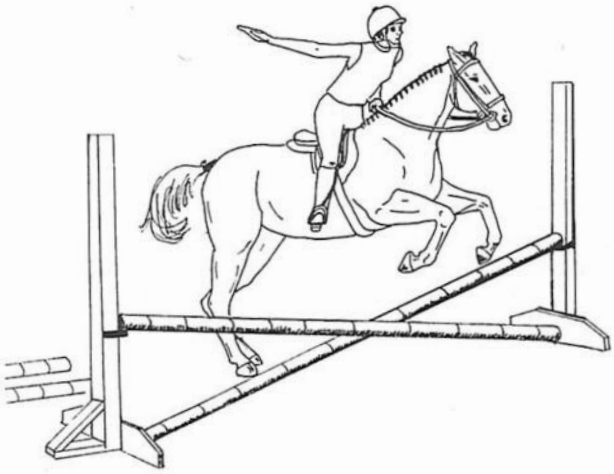
6. Now try posting all the way through the cavaletti, keeping light contact on the horse's mouth.

Caution for instructors/4-H leaders

On a rider's first jump you should constantly watch the rider's hands as he goes over jumps. When the horse thrusts himself over a jump, he stretches his head and neck down for balance. If the rider is not in proper position and balance, and not hanging onto the mane or neck strap, he will get left behind and will hit the horse in the mouth with the bit. The rider should not try to ride on contact. Slightly loose reins are a must during this early training (see figs. 10 and 11). Do not raise the jump until the horse and rider are relaxed and confident.

Cavaletti with a jump

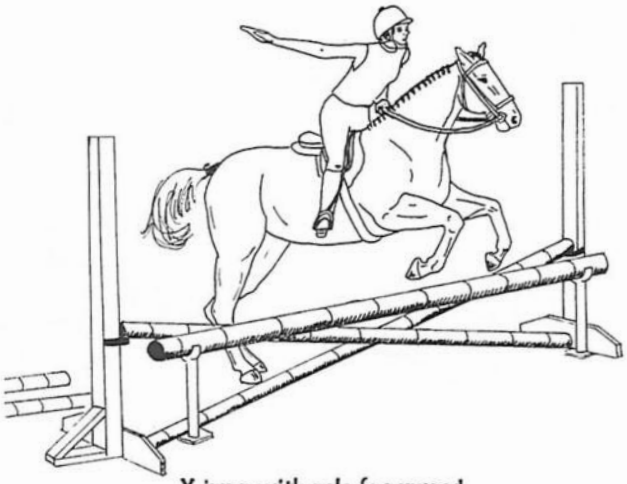
1. Place two standards 9 feet beyond the last cavaletti of four to six poles. (Remember, cavaletti are spaced 4½ feet apart.) Place one end of a pole on one standard and the other end on the ground by the other standard. Do the same with another pole and you should have an X jump about 8 to 12 inches high in the middle (fig. 12).



X jump

Figure 12.

After much practice—and when horse and rider are confident in each other—the rider can try jumping with longer reins to develop even greater balance and security. In the beginning, do this over a single low jump at the end of the cavaletti poles. When you can do it well, you know you have excellent form and balance. You can even go through the grid this way.



X jump with pole for spread

Figure 13.

By adding a horizontal pole you can make the X jump a wider spread. Horses in the beginning should learn to jump wide spreads rather than higher single vertical jumps.

You may first want to take your horse over the cavaletti and jump on the longe line, then ride him over them. As you improve and gain confidence, you can add a horizontal pole immediately beyond the X jump (fig. 13).

2. Always go over the middle of the jump. Look ahead beyond the jump. **Do not look down at the jump** or the horse will know you are not ready and will stop. He will feel your change in balance and the loss of driving aids in your legs. Keep the horse trotting after the jump at the same steady pace, going straight away.

   If you have problems, such as anticipating the jump, look off to the side at someone while going over the jump. To find and stay in the proper forward position, stand up in the stirrups. If you can not do this without extra effort, then you are not in proper position. Generally, you will find your lower leg is too far forward or back and your weight is not in the heels. I periodically ask riders to stand up to check for this. Keep knees relaxed and bent.

3. Raise the jump about 3 inches at a time until it is 24 inches high. This may take months to achieve or only a few weeks. Jump each height until both you and your horse are comfortable with it. The horse must be relaxed and confident, and should not attempt to run out or show other problems. When turning at the end of the jump to circle around and go over it again, change the direction you turn so you are not always going the same way.

4. Prevent your legs from swinging, particularly swinging to the rear, while going over jumps. Proper stirrup length helps correct this swinging and is necessary for proper contact. Keep knees relaxed and rolled in slightly (fig. 11). Gripping will make the horse rush if he is sensitive or eager.

5. Continue to practice over the cavaletti with one to several jumps. Let this amount of progress sink into the horse's mind before continuing. Use good judgment so as not to sour the horse.

   You can place your hands on top of the horse's neck, by the crest, or even hang onto the mane or neck strap for balance, if necessary. Keep doing this until you have good balance and a secure seat. Do not be afraid

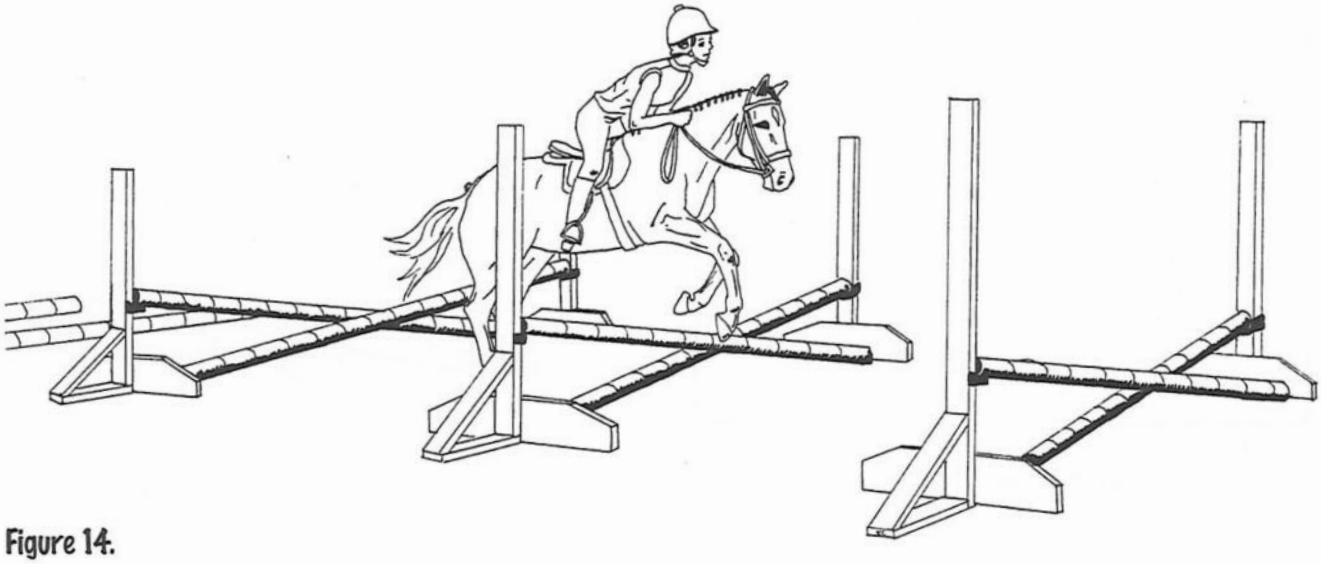


Figure 14.

Horse and rider are now ready to jump a series of cross poles after the cavaletti. The jumps are 9 feet apart. These are called a grid or bounce jumps. They are great for getting the horse to use his back muscles as he should, and they help the rider to stay in good jump position for a long time and not collapse after each jump.

You can set up six of these in a row, making each one 3 or 4 inches higher than the one before. You only want to go through these a few times because they can tire the horse's back muscles.

to use your hands this way for a full year if necessary—better this than hurting the horse's mouth. This is the first level of jumping, and some riders will do this into their second year of jumping or longer.

Hands are the hardest thing to learn and teach, and they come from a secure relaxed seat. Go slowly and learn good educated hands. This is where patience counts.

6. When you are confident, you may slowly raise the jump at the end of the cavaletti to 2½ feet. This teaches the horse to use his hind legs as he should.
7. When you are balanced and confident going over a single jump beyond the cavaletti poles, you may add another cross pole jump about 1 foot high and 9 feet beyond the last jump (fig. 14). When confident you are ready, you can add a third or fourth jump, each 1 foot high and 9 feet from the preceding jump. Collectively, these are called a grid. You can raise them one at a time, 3 or 4 inches, starting with the last jump in the grid.
8. The cavaletti should be used for warm-ups each day, even after you have started jumping without them. You may find that you will need to come back to them occasionally to sharpen up the horse or to work on your balance and get a more secure seat and good leg position. If the horse starts rushing jumps, refusing, etc., bring him back to cavaletti work with the jump. Cavaletti should be used for warm-ups for years. Do not abandon them too soon.

Jumping without cavaletti

1. Take away the cavaletti poles one at a time until you are trotting over a jump about 1 foot high by itself (fig. 15) with a single pole about 1 foot in front of the jump. This pole is called a ground pole; it helps the horse judge the distance for takeoff and the height of the jump.
2. When training is going well, try jumping at a slow canter for the first time. You will

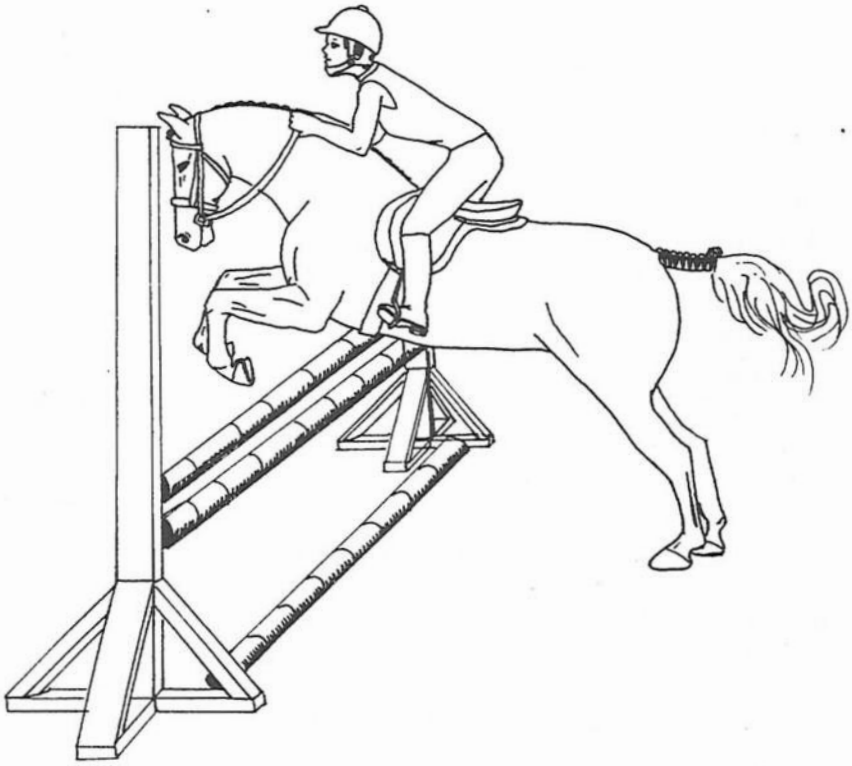


Figure 15.

This rider shows good beginning form going over a single jump. The horse is jumping flat over this jump, which is low for him. Grid work and spreads will help that problem and get him to round his back, called bascule.

Note the ground pole is just in front of the jump. This pole helps the horse know how high to jump. If the horse should rush the jump, you may put another pole about 7½ to 8 feet from the jump standard and trot over it (do not canter). *This rider should have her seat a little closer to the saddle.*

want to place a pole on each side of the jump, about a foot away from the jump. These are called ground poles. Having them in place helps the horse see the jump better. For training, have a ground pole before every jump on the side from which you will be approaching.

Initially, set any new jump 12 to 15 inches high. Again, you may want to longe your horse over the jump first, then ride him over. Watch the hands carefully. Maintain a deep, secure jumping position and keep your hands on the horse's neck or holding the mane. Be absolutely sure not to bump the horse's mouth or his back when landing.

3. Set up one or two pole jumps around the arena, each about 15 inches high, with a ground pole on each side of each jump. Trot over these. If your horse picks up the canter after the jump, bring him down calmly to a trot. You may need to circle the horse to calm and relax him and yourself before going on. Make sure you are in the correct position also. Keep the horse going at a steady pace.
4. Try these jumps one at a time at a slow, calm, relaxed canter when you feel confident and secure enough. If the horse seems nervous or wants to speed up, go back to trotting. Find out why he got nervous or sped up. Hurting the mouth or the back, being an overeager rider, or being out of position will cause the horse to speed up.

   When the horse gets used to these jumps, change their places around the arena. At this time, your jumps should be poles with which the horse is familiar. You will be introducing other types of jumps later.
5. Raise the jumps 2 or 3 inches at a time until they are 2½ feet high. Trot over them first, then canter. If the horse tries to run out or refuse, lower the jumps and work on developing a more secure and determined seat and leg.

   If the horse is lazy, use a bat behind your leg one stride before the jump, but not spurs. Be sure not to hit the horse in the mouth with the bit when you hit him with the bat. Do this by holding the reins and mane in one hand and the bat in the other.
6. Your horse may have trouble taking off too close or too far away from the jumps at first, or even jump too high. Ideally, the horse should take off about as close to the jump as it is high. For a 2½ foot jump, the horse should take off and land about 2½ to 3 feet from the jump. This is something that is usually corrected by jumping experience as the horse gains confidence in his rider and himself.

   For practice, place a ground pole about 1 foot from the base of the jump and another pole 7 or 8 feet in front of the base. Trot over these until your horse is jumping correctly. If he is still having this trouble a year later, get professional help.
7. Sometimes after jumping without cavaletti for awhile, you will have trouble with hand or leg position. If you do, set the cavaletti up and jump. Also do grid work with the cavaletti (fig. 14)—that is, set up a series of two, three, or even four jumps after the cavaletti, each about 15 inches high and 9 feet apart, which is a trotting stride. Raise these slowly to 2 feet high.

Adding variety to the jumps

1. Start at a low height with any new jump. If the horse is skittish or naturally shies at anything new, present the new jump to the horse as though it were a new trail obstacle to get used to. Place it on the ground, and let the horse walk around and smell it from all directions.

   One new jump I start with is a colored rug or table cloth lying on the ground so the horse can walk over it. Let the horse know you are determined that he will go over it eventually.

   Once the horse is walking over the new jump calmly, put a pole underneath it on the side and raise it up a little bit. Raise it a few inches at a time as long as the horse will jump over it quietly and confidently. The horse must have confidence in you and go over it the first time without any hesitation.

   Be sure the horse approaches and leaves the new jump going straight. Do not let any bad habits develop. Anticipate anything that

might go wrong and be ready to correct it before the horse can think of it. Be ready with sure control on the reins and maybe a bat to back up your legs. If the horse continues to shy he will not make a good reliable jumper.

2. Now is the time to add width to a jump by putting another jump about 1 foot in front of it and lower (fig. 16, right-hand jump). Keep spreading the jumps until they are at least as far apart as the back jump is high.
3. Add variety also by setting up combination jumps (fig. 16). These are two or three jumps taken together as a series. The average horse stride is 12 feet, so combination jumps are placed in multiples of 24 or 36 feet. Even ponies can learn to jump these easily.

   Combinations are tricky. You and your horse must both be alert and keen, and you must stay in jumping position throughout. This is a good exercise for developing a secure seat.

- Place two jumps about 36 feet apart and take the two together, trotting over them first, then cantering. These should be taken at a slow to medium canter for a short horse. When trotting, if the horse picks up the canter after the first jump, let him canter over the second, then drop to a trot. Don't upset the horse by trying to bring him back to a trot. Jumps 36 feet apart can be taken at a trot or canter.
- Eventually you can place a third jump about 36 feet from the second, and take the three in a line together. In some arenas you may not be able to get three in a line and have room to maneuver at the ends.
- Now place two jumps about 24 feet apart and take the two together, with one stride between as in figure 16. If there is room, try jumping three, four, or five in a row, either

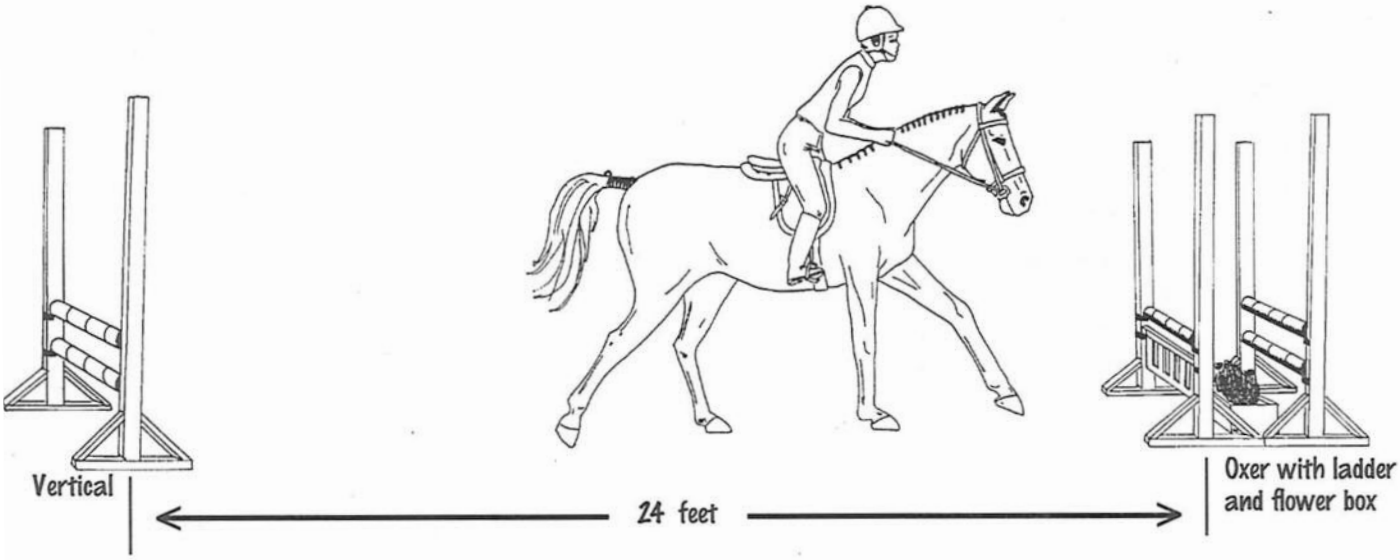


Figure 16.

The horse and rider confidently jump a one-stride (24-foot) in-and-out or combination jump while cantering. The left-hand jump is called a vertical jump. This jump is a post and rail. It has only one set of standards.

The right-hand jump is called a spread, or, in this case, an oxer, as it has two sets of standards to make the single jump. The flower box between the standards helps give the horse a sense of depth. It is not advisable to use the box with the beginning horse until the horse is confident in jumping. The ladder may be another pole.

The rider holds the two-point position between jumps. When the horse jumps up over the jump, the rider's hip angle will close automatically, and her back and the horse's neck will be parallel unless the rider does something to upset the horse. The vertical jump can be jumped from either direction. Oxers can only be jumped from one direction.

24 or 36 feet apart. Do this only when you feel very confident.

- When you are really confident, you can try a series of two or three 12-foot in-and-outs or combinations in a row at a canter. Your horse has to hop in and out to jump these, so you are pretty capable when you can do this.

4. Add variety by jumping empty oil barrels, straw bales with a pole on top (be careful that the horse does not catch a shoe in the baling twine), or a thick solid plank (not a board). Start these low and at a trot, then a canter.

   Drape colored cloth or canvas over a jump. Use odd designs and bright, electric colors, or stripe the poles. Variations are bull's-eyes, florals, brush, brick or rock walls, picket fences, garden gates, and scenes (fig. 17). Each jump must look solid, but the horse must be able to knock it down in the direction he is jumping.

5. You are now ready to set up a course of about eight low jumps (fig. 18). Take them first at a trot, then a canter. You can go through a course before mastering all those combinations above. This should take you to the end of the year. If all is going well, you should be able to jump 2 feet 6 inches easily.

   Do not try to do more than this in one year. This is a lot for even some professionals to do on a green horse. Do not worry if you are still working on combinations at the end of the second year. If you continue jumping for years, you will still be working on them.

6. Rather than go any higher at this time, work on combinations, spreads, variety of jumps (fig. 17), and riding without stirrups. The horse and you have learned a lot; be content. Congratulate yourself on a job well done if no problems have developed. Now work on perfecting hands and having a willing, calm, obedient jumper.

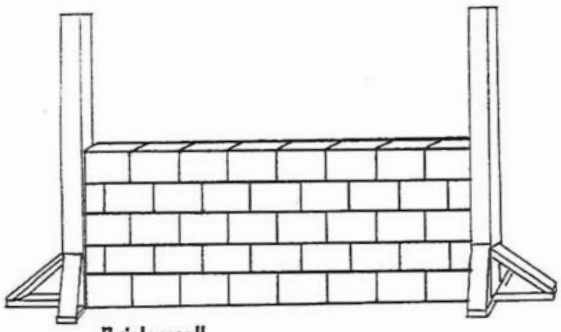
7. Do not be ashamed if you are still using hands on the neck or mane at the end of the first or second year. Intermediate level jumping is steadying the hands on the horse's neck. You should not be going much over 2 feet if you have to use the mane regularly.

8. For a change from jumping in the arena, go on a trail ride and find some downed logs at the right height to jump.

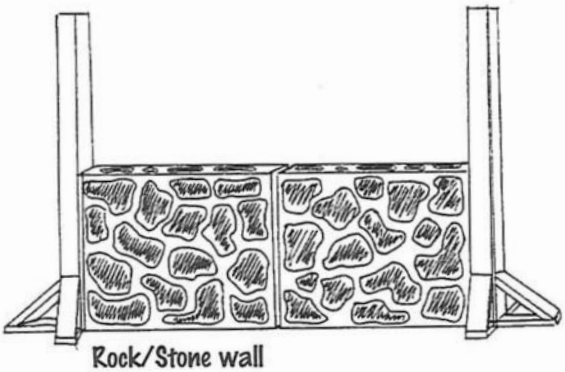
9. Try to get as much experience riding different jumping horses as you can. This will make you a better rider.

10. Add variety by moving the jumps to different places in the arena. Try placing four of them in an X shape and jump them in different order.

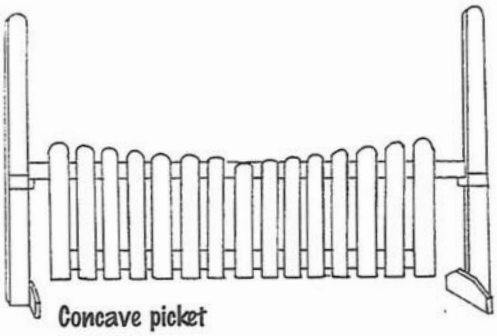
11. A good exercise is to jump a jump, turn back in a few strides and jump it again. Turn sharply and jump another one. Continually mix up the order of jumping.



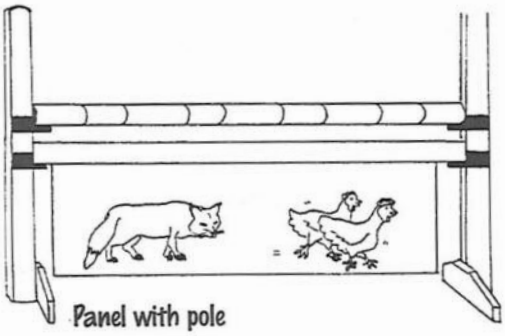
Brick wall



Rock/Stone wall



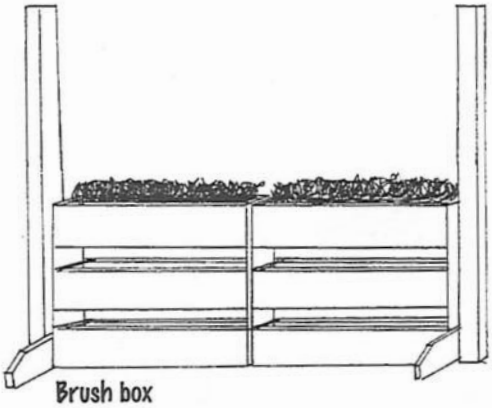
Concave picket



Panel with pole

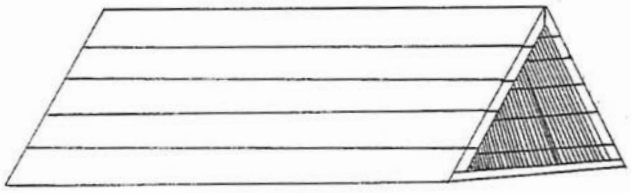
Figure 17.

Examples of jumps that can be made easily with a little bit of work. Be sure to use solid lumber. The standards are 4 by 4s about 5 feet tall. If you plan on jumping higher you may make them 6 or 7 feet tall. Jump cups are made to fit on a 4 by 4 with holes drilled in them every 3 or 4 inches for raising or lowering the jumps.



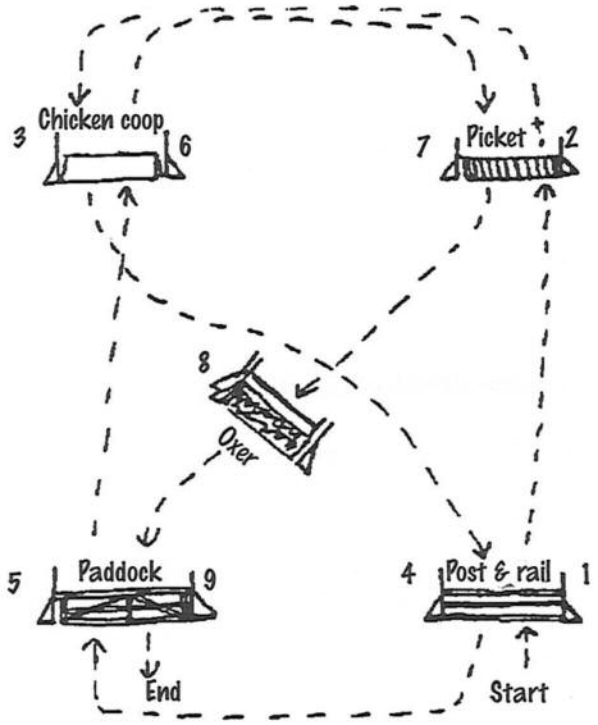
Brush box

Road closed/Barricade



Coop

Course 1



Course 2

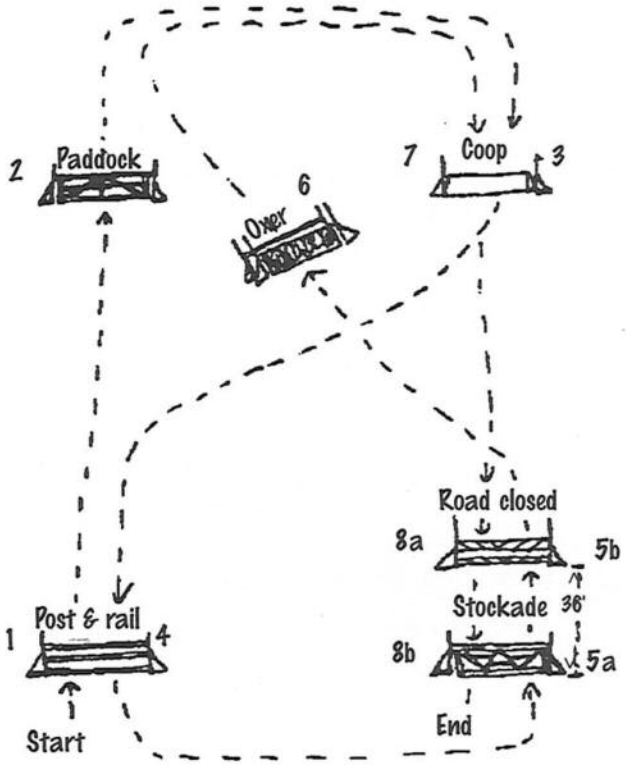


Figure 18.

Jump courses and obstacles going from simple to more complex.

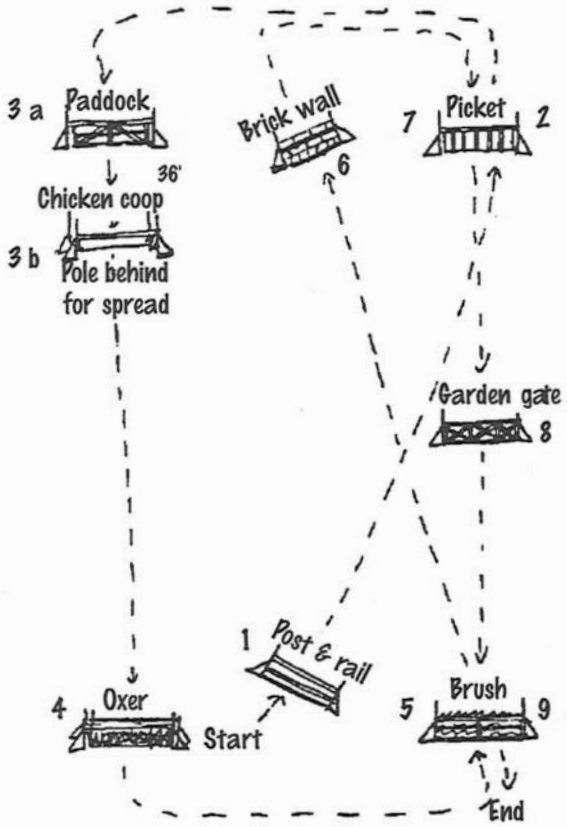
Set up a course with flowing lines for Hunt Seat over Fences Class so that the horse can have an even pace, seeking the center of the jump. You want solid-looking jumps to encourage the horse to go cleanly. Obstacles are to be natural looking—those found in a hunt field. Triple bars, hogs back, striped rails, targets, square oxers, and hinged chicken coops are *prohibited*. Ground lines are recommended for all obstacles.

Courses should have at least four different types of jumps. Jumps should be 16 feet wide with wing-type standards. Standards should be at least 12 inches higher than the obstacle. Rails should be at least 4 inches wide. The top element must be securely placed so a slight rub will not cause a knockdown.

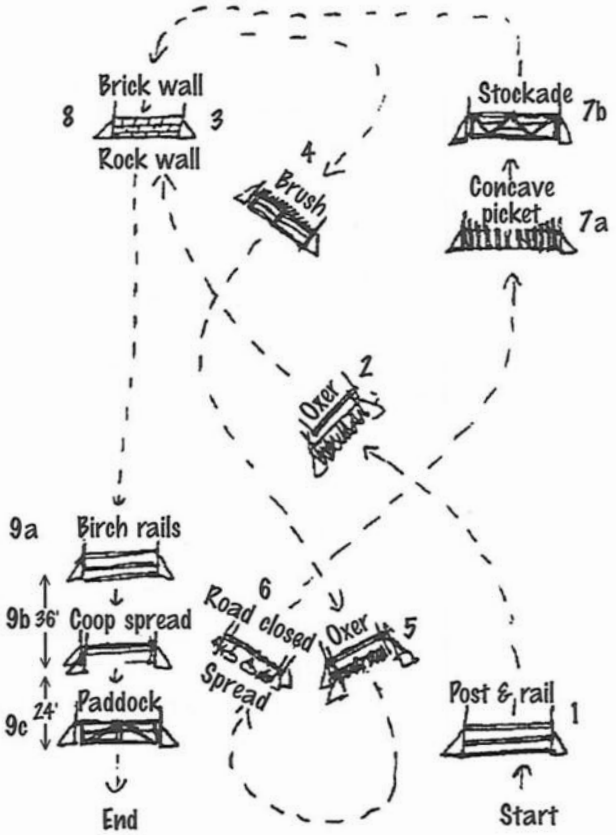
At least one change of direction is required; two are sometimes required in some classes.

There should be at least one combination jump set 24 or 36 feet apart. If the horse refuses the second element of a combination, the rider must go back

Course 3



Course 4



and take the two jumps as one. In-and-outs are never used at the start of a course.

Course 1 can be made even more simple by omitting the jump in the middle (8). There are no in-and-out or combination jumps. Make your first jump a very simple, inviting jump like post and rail, the lowest and easiest jump.

Course 2 has a 36-foot in-and-out. In-and-outs are multiples of 12 feet: 12 feet is a bounce jump (advanced), 24 feet is one stride, 36 feet is two strides. They may be shortened to 21 feet or lengthened to 39 feet. These look like hard courses to remember, but look at fences 1 through 4 as one series in a circle, then 5 through 9 as a second series, and it becomes easy to memorize.

Course 3 has more variety of jumps and a little tighter turn going from fence 6 to fence 7.

Course 4 has tighter turns. This course can easily be made more challenging by making fence 5 a double 24-foot in-and-out with two changes of direction.

Additional notes

1. When your horse does well, give him a pat. He loves attention and praise like a person does, and he will be more willing to try to please. Do not end the session on a bad note. Do something good, praise the horse, then quit.
2. To get the horse to use his front legs better, work him over tighter combinations spaced 21 or even 18 feet apart, if you can handle them.
3. To get the horse to use his hind legs, use spreads and do much change of pace in flat work. Flat work means schooling without jumps.
4. When you are doing quite well, don't let yourself and the horse get sloppy and do things like jump crookedly or lazily. Also, don't do too much drilling or you will bore the horse. To keep him in condition, do lots of outside work. Practice once a week over low jumps after he is going well. Have relaxing breaks between sessions.
5. Riders who can't get the feel of the rhythm and balance should close their eyes for short periods of time and count rhythmically in time to the horse's steps. They can also close their eyes and have someone work them on a longe line.
6. If the horse falls, the worst thing you can do is hang onto the reins. Let go of the reins and get clear of the horse.
7. Don't overshow your horse by entering too many jumping classes and pleasure classes in the same day or by entering classes beyond your ability.
8. When going into your first few classes, concentrate on one or two points only, like heels or hands. This helps to calm you. Trying to remember too much may cause you to forget everything.
9. If you have a lack of equitation classes in 4-H in your area, you should ride the jumper classes as if you were in hunter seat equitation classes. Have the attitude of being judged all the time.
10. Sometimes it pays to have a confident, experienced rider take a green horse over new jumps the first few times at a new place or at a show so that he learns he has to go over the jumps. New riders should be put on an experienced, steady jumper for their first few shows or classes.
11. As you ride in an equitation class, you should appear to be in complete control of the horse at all times. You should be poised and alert yet relaxed with head up, eyes looking straight ahead, shoulders back, and hips, knees, and ankles bent (fig. 16).

Common mistakes: Their causes, results, and how to correct them

Rider blaming the horse when it is the rider's fault

Caused by—Riders who don't want to accept responsibility for their own mistakes, who are quick-tempered, impatient, or do not want to take the time to learn the basics.

Results—Many refusals or runouts are caused when something is not right and the horse knows it. When the horse is smarter than the rider, he will refuse rather than risk a fall or crash into the jump. Refusals also mean the flat work is at fault.

Correction—If the horse does something wrong, do not be in a hurry to punish him. He may just need to be shown how to do it better, or your aids may not have been clear to him. Punishment may only confuse him or make him nervous.

When everything is right but the horse refuses, drive him forward with the legs and/or bat and, if really necessary, spurs. Impress on the horse that refusals are a no-no.

If the horse should run out, bring him back to the jump quickly and really mean for him to go over it. If you do it quickly enough, and only give the horse four or five strides before coming straight to the jump, he will not have time to think about refusing. If you are really observant, you can see or feel the horse hesitate several strides before he starts to refuse or run out, and you can correct him before he refuses.

Be sure nothing is physically wrong with the horse before going on. Be sure you are not causing the refusal with heavy hands, sitting down hard on the horse's back, etc.

Never jerk a horse in the mouth to punish him. Use legs or bat or both.

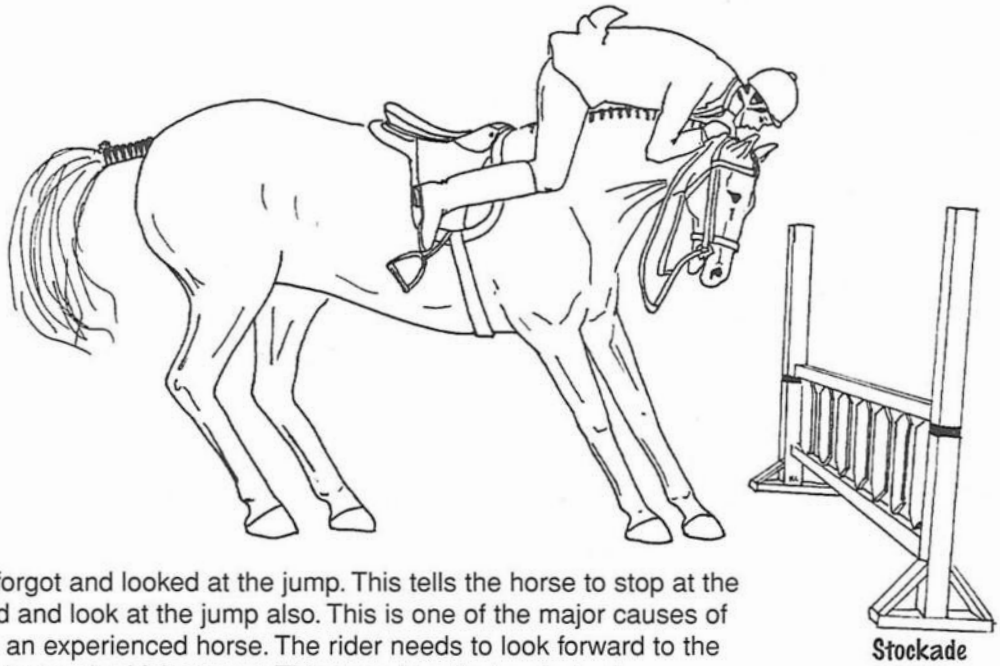


Figure 19.

This rider forgot and looked at the jump. This tells the horse to stop at the last second and look at the jump also. This is one of the major causes of refusing in an experienced horse. The rider needs to look forward to the next jump, just as in driving a car. This jump is called a stockade.

Rider looking at the jump or "ducking" at the fence with the upper body

Caused by—Beginning rider not confident. Rider not maintaining correct jumping position. Lack of determination, failure to practice basics perfectly, and lack of riding time.

Results—Horse stops before the jump (fig. 19). This is one of the most common causes of horses refusing, even among experienced riders. Looking down changes your balance, and the horse can feel this.

Correction—Go slow and gain confidence. Practice maintaining correct jump position longer. Look beyond the jump at some point straight ahead and 3 or 4 feet above the top of the jump.

During practice, your instructor may ask you to close your eyes before the jump, so you can't anticipate and upset the horse. Or pretend an ice cube has been put down your back: Bring your shoulder blades together and lift your chest, but be careful not to tighten up or stiffen your body.

Hitting the horse in the mouth with a bit

Caused by—The rider not in the correct position, being out of balance, caught behind the motion, feet too far forward, reins too short, bringing the hands back, or not being positive and balanced in the jump position.

Results—The horse feels he is being punished for going over the jumps and he will start refusing, throwing his head up, and hitting you in the head. This results in a hollow back, and the horse will not jump well. The horse needs his head free for balance. He may lose his sense of timing and crash jumps.

Correction—Go back to more flat work on a longe line to get a more secure seat. Practice jump position more, then do cavaletti work to develop a more secure position. Hang onto the mane or neck strap longer. Do not go past the cavaletti stage until this is corrected. Use longer reins and put your hands way forward on the horse's neck. Be ready to use reins and legs to prevent a runout.

Banging the horse on the back when landing

Caused by—The rider being out of condition, not sitting down gently, getting caught behind the motion, having feet forward, and not being in, or holding, correct jumping position.

Results—Horse will rush jumps, get nervous, want to refuse, and run out.

Correction—Remember to hold the jumping position for four strides after the jump and then sit down gently. Do not go past the cavaletti stage until this is corrected. Do more flat work and longe work.

Not enough weight in the stirrups

Caused by—The rider pinching knees in to grip horse, having stirrups too long, trying to put knees into knee rolls, lack of confidence.

Results—Leads to insecure seat, feet banging the sides of the horse, gripping with the knees, and losing stirrups. This causes the heels to go up along the sides of the horse. This upsets him, and makes him want to rush, get nervous, and maybe refuse or run out.

Correction—Concentrate on weight in the heels by bringing the toes up and letting the legs, especially the ankles, be relaxed. Have your knees relaxed but rolled in, calves firm against the sides of the horse. Be sure your heels are under you, not forward or back, and that the stirrup leathers are straight down. Go back to more flat and cavaletti work until this is corrected. Do more flat or longe line work to develop security. Don't try to put your knees into the knee rolls if they don't fit.

Ineffective use of the legs

Caused by—Rider not determined and not coordinated; not using enough legs or not knowing how to use legs. Not enough time spent riding correctly.

Results—Allows horse to be lazy and strung out, to stop, to use his hindquarters incorrectly, to run out, to be jerky, and to be a sloppy

jumper. The horse loses his sense of rhythm and timing for taking jumps correctly. Horse will learn the rider is just a passenger.

Correction—Do more flat work in which you guide and drive the horse with your legs. Get the horse responsive to the legs, and, if necessary, use the bat to back up the legs. Your horse will never make a good jumper without responding to the legs readily. Do more work on a longe line with lots of transitions. Do more work with change of gaits and direction. Basic dressage helps both horse and rider.

Rider uncertain about jumping

Caused by—Not enough basic work. A previous accident or bad experience may have caused the rider to lose confidence.

Results—The horse may refuse completely, become lazy, or run out.

Correction—Build up your confidence and determination by more flat work for a secure seat, then try cavaletti and low jumps. Ask yourself if you really want to jump or prefer to take up another project for awhile. The horse knows better than you. Admit it if you're not enthusiastic about jumping. Don't risk the possibility of ruining your relationship with the horse and maybe having a bad accident.

Rider getting left behind or leaning to one side of the horse

Caused by—The rider does not have enough determination and balance. Rider has a weak and stiff side.

Results—The rider jabs the horse in the mouth while trying to stay on, which leads to greater problems. This upsets the balance of the horse, causing knockdowns, runouts, or refusals.

Correction—Do more flat work. Especially work on the longe line without stirrups. Do more standing up exercises, and change of direction. Work more on your weak side while being longed.

Horse taking off too far from the jump (too soon) or too close (propping or chipping)

Caused by—Horse is green. You are trying to advance too fast for the horse's ability.

Results—You are unseated or thrown forward or backward, banging your nose on the horse's neck or jabbing the horse in the mouth. Your horse may also crash into the jumps.

Correction—The horse just needs more slow cavaletti work with spreads, changing the distance between spreads slightly. Spend more time working on the grid.

This can also be corrected by taking lots of jumps and by laying a pole on the ground one stride before the jump. Get professional help if this continues. You need to learn to judge distance to the jump and how to adjust length of stride to reach the takeoff point.

Reins too short

Caused by—Rider not being confident and balanced, insecure seat, or rider being afraid, making him stiff and tight.

Results—The horse wants to go even faster and becomes more nervous because short reins prevent him from using his head and neck for balancing. This frustrates and intimidates the horse, causing him to lose heart. The horse will start jumping with a hollow back and his head in the air, or he will start refusing.

Correction—Rider needs to go back to longeing work to develop a secure seat and get very relaxed. Rider needs to build up confidence in himself and the horse. Do not progress until rider can do loose-rein arena work.

Reins too long

Caused by—Allowing the reins to slide through fingers. Just lack of experience.

Results—If the reins are too long, the rider loses control of the horse. The horse will

wander, may take the jump off-center or at an angle, or may run out.

Correction—Shorten just enough so as not to jab the horse's mouth while maintaining control of the horse. Mark or tie a knot in the reins. Do lots of riding on a slightly loose rein in the beginning. You may need to wear gloves.

Rider getting overanxious and jumping ahead of the horse or having seat too far out of the saddle

Caused by—Being in too fast a gear and too uptight.

Results—Rider may get thrown over the horse's head, bang his nose on the horse's neck, cause a knockdown, or discourage the horse. Horse becomes nervous.

Correction—Go back to work on the longe line or cavaletti and work on gymnastics. Relax and get more confident. Do lots of flat work, warming up a longer time. Jump a series of four to six jumps set 9 feet apart for trot strides or 12 feet apart for cantering strides. This will slow down both the horse and rider.

Not checking the horse when he starts to speed up

Caused by—Not being ready, not concentrating, not enough experience.

Results—Horse may be speeding up because he fears getting banged in the back, etc. Horse loses rhythm, timing, and may crash jump and become uncontrollable if this is allowed to continue. Usually the rider is causing the horse to speed up.

Correction—Be sure you are sitting down quietly when landing. First get the horse to respond to a give-and-take motion quietly and calmly, then try to jump. You may need to work off more excess energy in the beginning doing flat work. Do lots of change-of-pace exercises and changing of speeds of cantering. Be sure you are not tightening up or anticipating the jump.

Horse rushes the jump at the end or bucks

Caused by—Rider tightening up somewhere, being anxious; a nervous or exuberant horse. Tack hurting horse, or rider out of balance.

Results—The rider gets left behind and bangs the horse on the back when landing. Rushers are also the product of hard and heavy hands. This comes from an inexperienced and insecure rider unconsciously tensing up before a jump, pulling the reins, and not using his legs. The horse may try to take over and speed up. The rider hangs on more, and the horse really becomes nervous and may even get frantic.

Correction—Horses that rush need relaxing exercises with a relaxed rider. They should not fear the bit and should respond to it well. Rushing may also be caused by an injury or hurt back.

For some horses—the nervous type, barn sour, or herd-bound—this may be their nature. Sometimes the bucking can be corrected by the rider raising one rein up in the air to keep the horse's head up after landing.

Longeing the horse helps burn up excess energy. Circle the horse as many times as necessary until he is calm and relaxed again. Do not jump until both horse and rider are calm. You may find you have been pushing the horse too much. Slow down. Do something else, like trail ride, for a change.

Starting to jump without sufficient warm-up

Caused by—Rider in a hurry to jump. It is so much fun!

Results—This causes strained, pulled, and sore muscles in the horse, or the horse may become careless.

Correction—Warm up at least 15 to 30 minutes with proper exercises. Some gymnastics are good. This gets both you and the horse in the proper frame of mind. It gets both of you limbered up, in balance, calm, relaxed, and working as a team.

Knocking down jumps; ending practice session with a failure, a fight, or other bad situations

Caused by—Rider tensing up somewhere and not relaxing. Hanging on to the bit to stay in balance on the horse. Horse heavy in the front end or lugging on the bit.

Results—Leaves the horse thinking about how bad jumping is or in a fighting mood. The horse may get careless because he is bored, tired, sore, etc.

Correction—Go over a low jump or even just a cavaletti pole, then quit for the day or do something more pleasant, like trail riding. You may need to lay off for a week or two and let the horse rest. End each session happy with praise for the horse. Take the horse over wider spreads to get him lighter in front. More grid work also helps.

Slowing down, almost stopping, or stopping at the jump, then leaping over

Caused by—Lazy or timid rider not determined enough or rider looking down. The rider may be looking at the jump, not really determined to go over it, or may be pushing the horse too fast.

Results—Rider can be thrown off balance and knock down jump.

Correction—Horse needs more cavaletti work. Rider needs to be more determined, have more drive with the legs.

Trying to jump too high when the horse and rider are not experienced

Caused by—Overeager rider.

Results—May overtax the horse's muscles, which leads to discouragement and souring the horse. Rider also may not be skilled enough and hindering the horse.

Correction—Be content to work at lower heights. All techniques of good form are learned on jumps of 2 to 2½ feet. Slow down; do more trail riding. You may even find some low logs to go over on the trail.

Jumping too many jumps in one day or jumping too many times a week

Caused by—Overeager rider!

Results—Stiffness, soreness, boredom, and carelessness.

Correction—Start with about 15 low jumps per day and increase to 25 jumps per day later on (but only low ones), depending on the individual horse, its condition, and its health. Work on your equitation or trail ride.

You should only jump 2 days per week in the beginning and maybe 3 days later on, including the day of showing. When experienced, you may need work only once a week over five or six jumps. The rest of the time, just keep the horse in good condition so as not to sour or bore him.

Horse jumping too high over the jump

Caused by—Lack of experience on horse's part or perhaps a spooky horse.

Results—Horses do this in the beginning before they have learned to judge heights. Doing this wastes energy. It is perfectly normal.

Correction—Just doing more cavaletti work with jumps at the end, gaining experience, being quiet, and jumping spreads.

Legs that swing back and forth or bang against the horse's sides

Caused by—Not enough basic flat work and longe line work, or rider out of condition. Not enough correct (perfect) practice.

Results—Leads to heels coming up and insecure seat. This is upsetting to the horse and causes him to become nervous and to rush.

Correction—Go back to more flat work on a longe line, warm-ups, and gymnastics to get a more secure seat and leg. Concentrate on putting more weight in the heels. Do lots of standing up exercises on a longe line, then without irons.

Gripping too tight with the knees

Caused by—Insecure, unbalanced, or nervous rider or unbalanced saddle.

Results—Unsettles the horse and causes him to rush jumps, run out, or refuse.

Correction—Relax the knees and build your confidence and security. Do more warming up and beginning work, especially longe line work, and more standing up exercises, keeping knees out from the saddle. May be caused by a poorly fitting saddle that puts you behind the horse's motion. Use a lift back saddle pad or lollipop pad.

Knees out or elbows flopping away from the body

Caused by—Not enough correct flat work. Rider trying to help horse jump.

Results—Causes lack of secure seat; leads to upsetting the horse.

Correction—Return to work on the basic hunt seat position on the flat.

Hands too high or too low

Caused by—Lack of enough work on proper hunt seat position.

Results—You lose the delicate control over the horse, and this puts the body out of position.

Correction—Have a friend watch for this. It is hard to see this yourself. Reach toward the horse's mouth in some cases. Go back to more longe line work, and concentrate on the proper position.

Horse dangling the front legs

Caused by—Lazy horse and not enough spread work.

Results—Horse may have to jump an extra foot higher to miss the jump, wasting energy.

Correction—This is very hard to correct. Practice on wide spread jumps of 2 or 2½ feet high and spreads of 3 to 3½ feet. Experience is the best teacher. Practice over a series of jumps as in the grid.

Trying to correct horse or changing position just before he jumps

Caused by—Rider not being ready. Horse wanders due to lack of rider's direction and ability. Reins may have been too long.

Results—Very upsetting to the horse. Results in lots of accidents.

Correction—Do all correcting and adjusting several strides before the jump, circle, and come into the jump only when ready. Do not interfere with the horse once he starts to take off or you will end up in real trouble. Leave him alone and he'll do his best to be careful and clear the jump. He certainly doesn't want to hurt himself. Concentrate and practice correct jumping position and guiding the horse with your legs.

Bending at the waist and not the hips; rounding shoulders

Caused by—Rider is not in proper jump position.

Results—Rider will be out of balance, and horse will want to refuse or run out. Rider falls onto horse's neck. Rider may get hit in the nose or chin.

Correction—Practice correct jump position longer. Have someone watch your jumping.

Summary of common mistakes

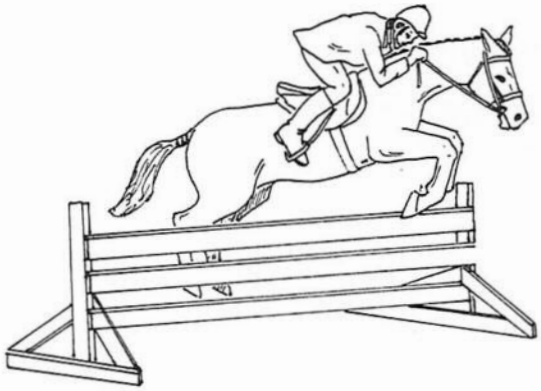


Figure 20.

This rider is exhibiting four of the most common faults in beginning jumpers: gripping with the knees, bringing heels up and back, looking down at the jump, and rounding the back. The horse's ears show that he is not too happy. Horses that keep jumping as well as this one with these problems are gems.

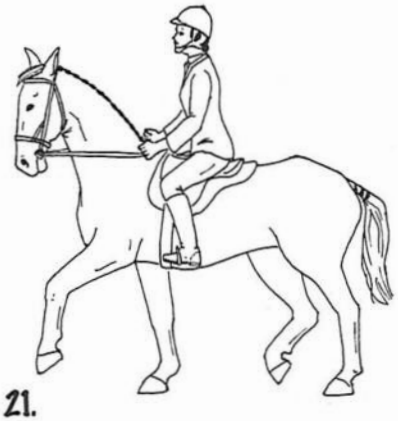


Figure 21.

This rider shows tension all through her body as she approaches a jump. The tension goes from her tight neck through her shoulders, elbows, wrists, fingers, back, thighs, calves, ankles, and toes. This tightness and her clamping on the saddle make the horse want to go forward while he fights her hands, sets his jaw, stiffens his neck, and tenses his whole body. This makes the rider more tight. The tug-of-war between horse and rider will only end when the rider relaxes!

The rider's insecurity may be due to the horse's being too sensitive, too fresh, or just too much horse for the rider. Don't even think of looking at cavaletti or jumps under these conditions.

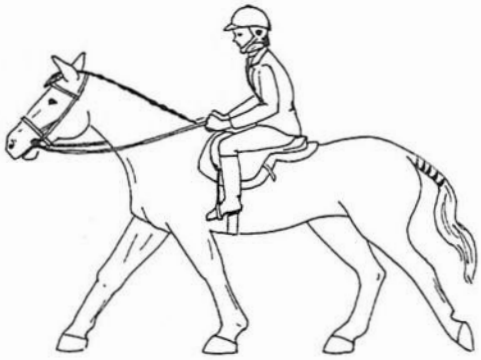


Figure 22.

You can tell this rider is unsure from her cocked, tight wrist, rounded back, and tight shoulders. She is looking down and sitting too far back on the saddle (chair sitting from being behind the motion of the horse). Her knees are gripping up, her heels are up, her toes are down, her reins are too long, and her feet are too far forward. This rider needs much more flat work to develop balance and confidence.

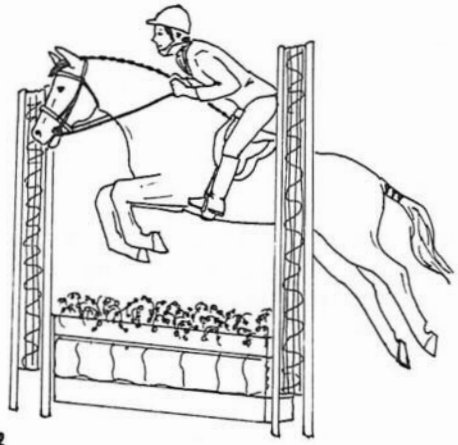


Figure 23.

This rider is trying to jump for the horse. She has stiffened her legs and risen too far out of the saddle. Her feet are too far forward so she is having to hang onto the horse's mouth to stay in balance. This horse may also have rushed the jump when the rider straightened and stiffened her legs. As a result, the rider had to brace against the horse with her feet forward and hang onto the bit. This situation may also have been caused by an overeager rider.

Happy jumping, horse and rider.
May all of your jumps be clean.

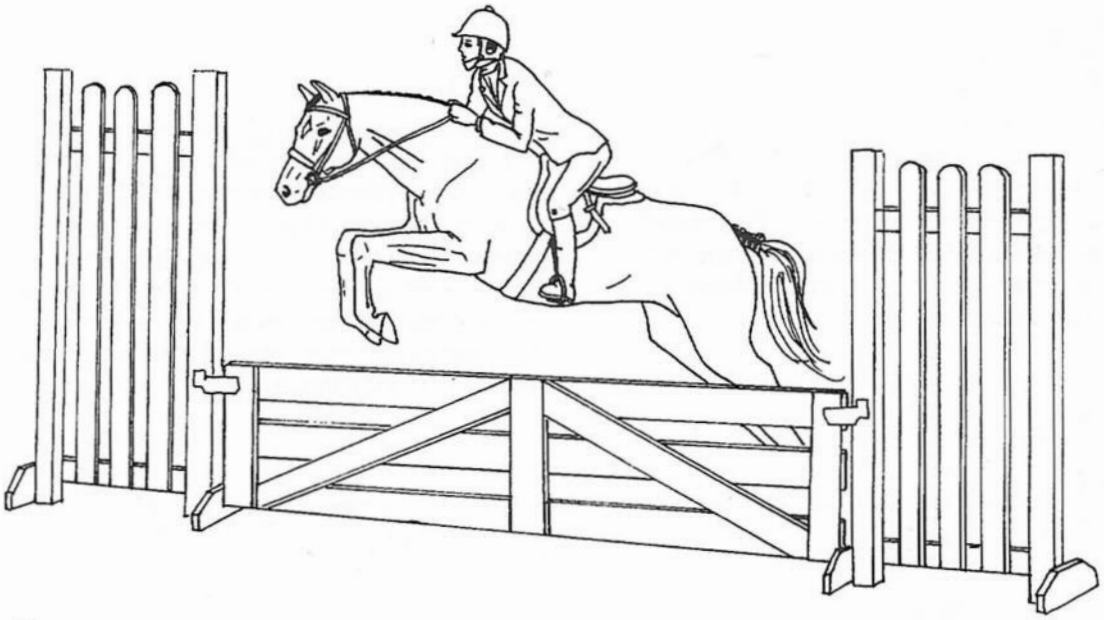


Figure 24.

Ah, lovely! Years of perfect practice, patience, and perseverence have paid off in a perfect, relaxed, confident, bold, and graceful form of horse and rider jumping together as a team. This shows a paddock gate jump with wing standards on the side. The horse's knees are up nicely and together, the back is rounded, and the horse is looking forward to the next jump.

Appendix A: Classes that require jumping

Basic descriptions are from the current AHSA rule book. The author has added notes to help in 4-H classes.

Hunter seat equitation over fences

The rider is being judged only on the seat and hands. Any horse that is suitable for hunter classes and capable of performing the required class routine over fences is acceptable. Of course, a horse that jumps well, smoothly, and is easily controlled makes the rider look good.

The rider should have a workmanlike appearance, with seat and hands light and supple, conveying the impression of complete control should any emergency arise. Hands should rest lightly on the crest of the neck during a jump (distance up the neck depends on the rider's ability). Otherwise they should be slightly apart, over and in front of horse's withers, making a straight line from the horse's mouth to the rider's elbow. Knuckles should be 30 degrees inside the vertical.

Eyes should be up and shoulders back. Toes should be up and at an angle best suited to the rider's conformation. Ankles should be flexed, heels down, and the calf of the leg in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth. The iron should be on the ball of the foot.

The rider is to keep an even hunter pace throughout. Excessive speed is to be penalized. Regulation snaffles, pelhams, and full bridles, all with cavesson nosebands, are recommended. Most places allow Kimberwickes as you have a slight curb bit with only one rein. In 4-H locally we do not allow martingales or tie-downs of any kind because this is an equitation class. Check your local or state rules on the use of bell boots, splint boots, and bandages.

The following will result in elimination: (1) fall of horse or rider, (2) three cumulative refusals, and (3) riding off course. You may in some places be eliminated by loss of stirrup, trotting while on course, and loss of reins.

There should be at least eight jumps with one change of direction. There should be one combination jump with at least one oxer. The course diagram must be posted at least one hour before the class starts, and one practice jump must be available at that time. Riders are not to practice over the jumps set up in the arena. In 4-H we have set the maximum height in equitation at 2 feet 6 inches. Check your state's contest guide or rulebook for variations in the maximum height allowed.

Jumper classes

Jumpers are scored mathematically, based on penalty faults incurred between the starting line and the finish line. Penalty faults include disobedience or refusals, falls, knockdowns, touches in some classes, and time penalties for some tables. The form of the horse or rider does not count. To start the course, a signal is sounded and the competitor has 1 minute to cross the starting line.

To determine the winners in a jumper class, one of four AHSA tables is used.

Table I

Classes that use Table I are called touch classes. In Table I, time does not count for any purpose other than for entering the arena and starting the jump course. Touches and knockdowns count. All horses start with 0 faults and try to end with 0 faults. Horses are placed in order of lowest scores. Ties for first place *only* are broken with a jump-off in which one-half of the jumps are raised 3 or 4 inches.

Errors are scored as follows:

Touch of obstacle by horse's body behind stifle	½ fault
Touch of obstacle by horse's body in front of stifle	1 fault
Touch of standard, wing, or markers by horse or rider	1 fault
Knockdown of obstacle, standard, or markers	4 faults
First disobedience or refusal, including circling	3 faults
Second cumulative disobedience or runout	6 faults
Third cumulative disobedience or runout	Elimination
Fall of horse or rider, starting before judge's whistle, failure to start by 1 minute after whistle, riding off course, deliberately addressing or showing an obstacle to your horse, exceeding time limit	Elimination

Table II

Table II is for knockdown classes. Faults and eliminations are scored exactly as in Table I, except touches are not penalized. Classes are scored on faults and time. Time of the first round is used to break ties only. In the event of equal faults in a tie, you can use the time of the first jump-off to break ties.

Table III

Table III is for faults converted into seconds classes. Certain faults incurred when jumping an obstacle, such as knocking down a boundary flag, putting a foot in a water jump, etc., are penalized by adding 4 seconds for each occurrence. The first round is timed and the penalty faults in seconds are added to the time.

Table IV

In Table IV, the first round is not timed. Faults and eliminations are scored as in Table I. In case of equality of faults in the first round, there is a jump-off for first place only. Touches do not count in the jump-off, and time determines the winner.

Hunter classes

Regulation snaffles, pelhams, full bridles, and Kimberwickes with cavesson nosebands are allowed. Boots, wraps, and bandages are prohibited. The horse is judged on an even hunting pace, manners, and jumping style together with faults and way of moving over the course. The horse is also jogged unmounted for soundness. All horses are to be serviceably sound. Manners are to be emphasized.

Judges must penalize unsafe jumping and bad form over a fence, whether touched or untouched. Faults to be scored are missing a lead change, switching leads, kicking out, spooking, pinning ears, ringing tails, not jumping in the center of the fence, knockdowns, refusals, trotting on course, bucking, stopping, dangerous jumping, circling on course, showing an obstacle to the horse, and light touches or rubs. There are no ties or jump-off in a hunter class.

There are a variety of hunter classes. Hunter hack is not truly a jumping class. It is judged as a regular pleasure walk, trot, canter class with two low jumps to go over at the end, one horse at a time. This class is judged on the horse's obedience.

Appendix B: Warm-up exercises

To be a good-to-excellent rider who the judges (and your horse) appreciate, you need to be in good physical and mental condition. To do your best as a team, both you and your horse need to be relaxed, balanced, supple, happy, eager, confident, and trusting in each other.

You warm up your horse before jumping, so you need to warm up yourself. These exercises are designed to enable you to sit more comfortably on the saddle and ultimately to be in perfect form so you can communicate with your horse more effectively.

These exercises are excellent for all styles of riding, including western, trail riding, dressage, running, cutting, and endurance riding. The author uses them on all students and 4-H'ers having problems with tension, stiffness, and anxiety, all of which can affect the horse.

Before mounting and riding, warm up for at least 10 to 15 minutes doing stretching, relaxing, and conditioning exercises. Take even longer if you are tight, nervous, out of condition, or have a muscular body type. If you are tight and out of tune, it is like trying to rock to a waltz!

If you are having trouble riding, stop, get off the horse, and do some of these exercises to help you loosen up. I have students do this fairly often to calm themselves when the horse seems to be getting excited about jumping.

Deep breathing

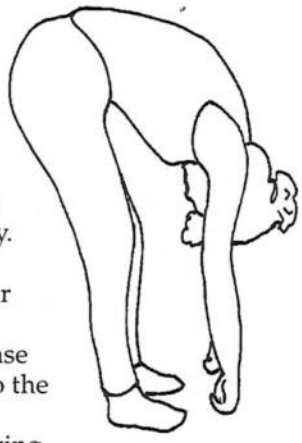
Relaxing can be helped by deep breathing. Take in a deep breath and imagine that it is filling your lungs and stomach and even going down into your boots. Then breathe out and imagine the breath is going out even through your fingers. Holding your breath for 5 to 10 seconds helps you to relax. (When jumping, be sure to keep breathing in rhythm with the horse. Some people get so excited they forget to breathe.)

Exercises

You may want to hold each exercise to the count of 30 for "muscle memory." Start with 15 seconds and work up to 30 or even 60 seconds. Repeat each stretch up to five times. After each exercise, take a deep breath, hold it for 5 seconds, and release it slowly, saying to yourself, "relax."

Spend more time doing those that help you the most. Be careful not to stretch too hard in the beginning to avoid soreness or injury. You can do the stretches in the morning when you get out of bed. Your aim is to be relaxed and feel better, especially just before getting on the horse.

1. Hang forward from your hips.



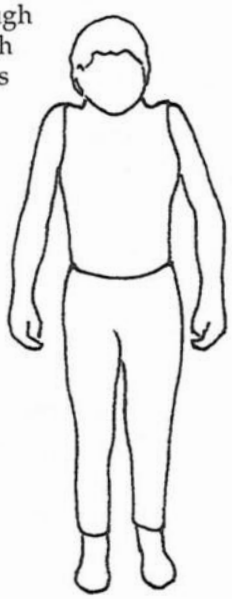
The knees should be slightly bent and the body from the hips up totally relaxed. Let your head hang limply. As your fingers hang down, think of all your anxious, nervous, frustrated, mad, or tense thoughts draining into the ground through your fingers like water flowing out a hose. With each slow, deep breath, notice how your knuckles are getting closer to the floor. You may need to hold this stretch 2 or 3 minutes. When you slowly return to standing, come up like a cat with its back arching.

2. Straight, elegant stance with seat tucked under.

Your stomach should be flattened, knees slightly bent, shoulders over your hips and ankles, and seat tucked under. You can also pretend someone is holding you up by the hair. This exercise is necessary for people with swaybacks or weak backs. It also helps body functions such as breathing and digestion and helps your mental attitude. You hold this elegant stance with seat tucked under while doing all the rest of the exercises.

3. Shoulder relaxes and stretches.

Raise your shoulders as though trying to cover your ears with them. Release your shoulders by trying to bring the shoulder blades together in back and then slowly lower your shoulders. This exercise is good not only for horseback riders, but excellent if you have a tension- and headache-producing job or attitude.



4. Relaxing shoulder stretches and elegant feeling.

Raise your shoulders then squeeze your shoulder blades together behind you; hold. Feel your chest muscles being stretched. Remember elegant stance and seat tucked under.

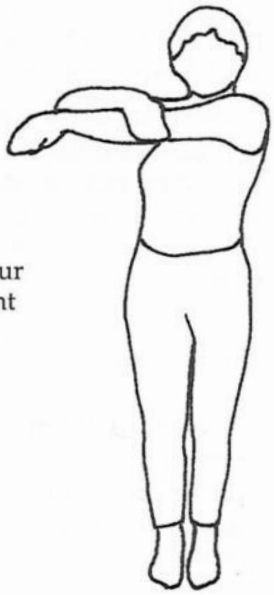
5. Arm circles.

Relax your shoulders and make 10 big, slow circles with your arms, first backward then forward. If you can, circle one arm forward while you circle the other arm backward; change directions. This is a good exercise to repeat during jumping if you get tight and tense.

6. Shoulder and upper arm stretches and relaxes.

6a.

Grab your left elbow with your right hand and pull it across your body; change hands and repeat on the other side. Try to keep your elbow level with your shoulder. Keep the elegant stance.



6b.

Hook your right arm under your left arm and use the right arm to pull your left arm across your body. Change arms and repeat. Be sure you're holding the elegant stance.

6c.

With your hands behind your back, grab your right elbow with your left hand. Pull the right arm across your back. Change hands and repeat.

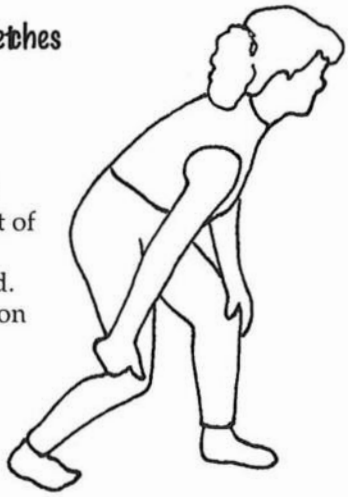
6d.

With your right arm up and your left arm down, try to touch your fingers or hands behind your back. Change hands. You'll notice one way is easier. Work on the stiffer side to loosen up.

7. Thigh and calf stretches and conditioning.

7a.

Place your left foot about 2 feet in front of the right foot and facing straight head. Put your left hand on the left knee for stability. Keeping both heels flat on the floor, use your right hand to push your right knee as close to the floor as you can. Hold. Change legs and repeat. This exercise helps keep the heels down and relaxed while riding. When riders have trouble keeping their heels down while posting or jumping, I have them get off and do this series of exercises. It has worked miracles for some riders who say they can't! If one ankle is weaker or tighter, work on that side more. Is your back flat and seat tucked under?



7b.

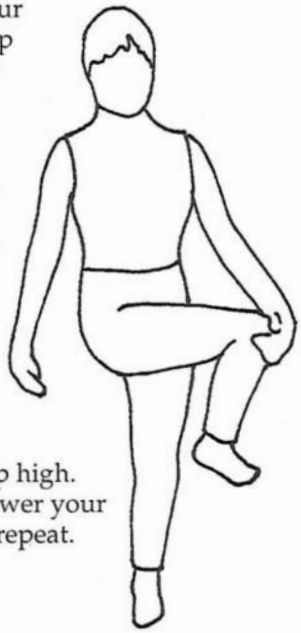
Lean over your right knee with your left leg stretched out to the side as far as it can go. Feel a stretch in the left thigh. Repeat on the other side.

8. Chair sit

Stand with your legs about 2½ to 3 feet apart. Squat down deeply from the elegant stance and hold. This helps your posting posture and builds up posting muscles. Feeling elegant?

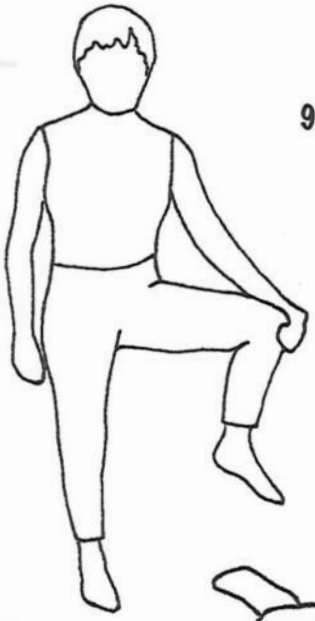
9. Stork stand series.

This series loosens your hips and thighs to help you ride more loosely and elegantly on the saddle. The first two stretches can be done while you lie on your back, and the third while you lie on your stomach.



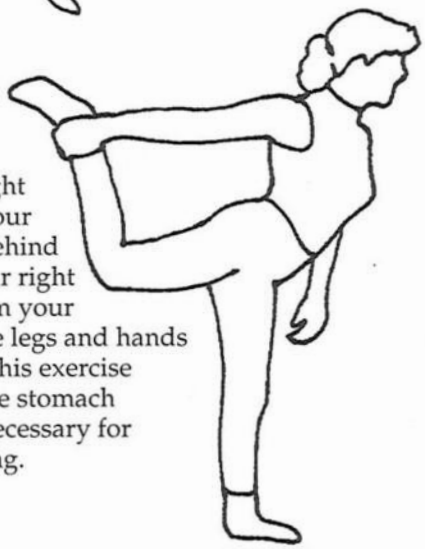
9a.

Grab your right knee with your left hand and pull the knee across your body, keeping your knee hip high. Release and slowly lower your leg, change legs, and repeat.



9b.

Grab your left knee with your left hand and pull the knee out to the side at a 180-degree angle. Hold, release slowly, change legs, and repeat.



9c.

With your right hand, grab your right ankle behind you. Pull your right leg away from your body. Change legs and hands and repeat. This exercise conditions the stomach muscles so necessary for proper posting.

10. Seated butterfly stretch.

These are for inner thighs and hip joints. They can help you sit on the saddle without pinching with your inner thighs and knees, especially if you have a very round horse.

10a.

Sit up very straight with your shoulder blades back, stomach muscles pulled in, knees flat on the floor, soles of feet together. Grabbing your ankles, try to touch your toes with your forehead, bending especially from the hips.

10b.

Now try to touch your forehead to your left knee and hold, then to your right knee and hold.

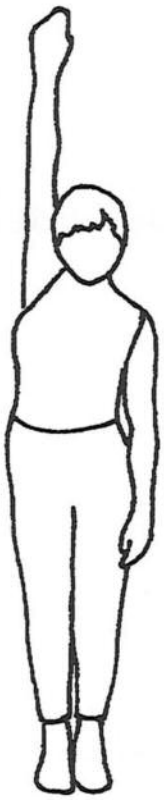
11. Calf stretches and conditioning, then total relaxation.

11a.

Lying on your back, bend your knees slightly. Push your back flat to the floor and hold. Now raise your right leg straight up at 90 degrees to the floor, trying to point your toe toward your knee. Hold for a few seconds, then slowly lower your right leg to the floor, taking about 20 seconds. Change legs and repeat. This exercise builds up calf and stomach muscles.

11b.

Stretch the right side of your body by imagining that a rope is attached to your right fingers and right heel and that you are being pulled apart. Keep the right toe pointed toward the right knee. Hold 30 seconds. Change sides and repeat. You can also do this exercise while standing. It is good for correcting crooked riding. If the rider sits on her left side, have her stretch the right side of her body.



11c.

Totally relax by pretending that you are nothing but a skeleton lying on the floor. Watch out you don't go to sleep. I did once! Now slowly get up. You should feel totally relaxed and loose like a hula dancer. Now keep that feeling and attitude and your horse will love you for it throughout your ride. You should be able to get much more from your horse because it will be more relaxed and happier to please you.

Suggested additional reading

Abbey, Harlan C. 1970. *Showing Your Horse*. Cranbury, New Jersey: A. S. Barnes and Co.

American Horse Shows Association, Inc. 1994-95. *Rule Book*. New York: AHSA, 220 East 42d St., NY, NY 10017-5806.

British Horse Society. 1988. *The Manual of Horsemanship*. Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England: British Horse Society.

Morris, George H. 1981. *George H. Morris Teaches Beginners to Ride*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc.

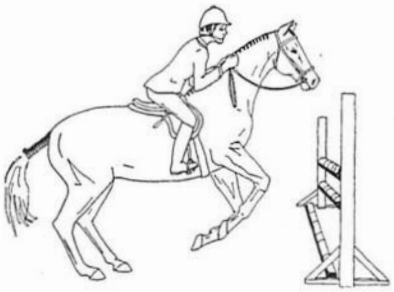
Morris, George H. 1971. *Hunter Seat Equitation*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co.

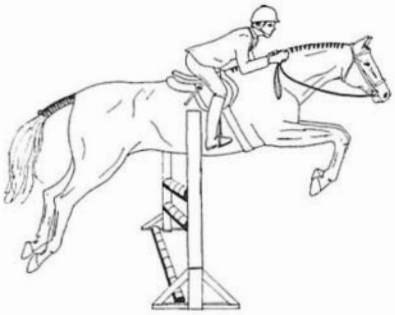
Practical Horseman (monthly magazine). Uniontown, Penn.: Gum Tree Store Press.

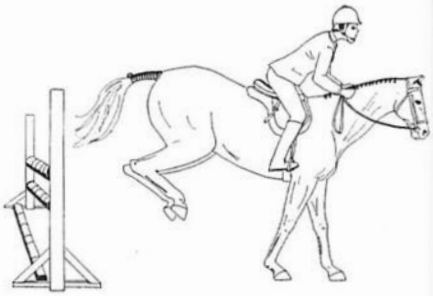
Richter, Judy. 1983. *Horse and Rider from Basics to Show Competition*. New York: Arco Publishing, Inc.

Swift, Sally. 1985. *Centered Riding*. New York, New York: St. Martin's-Marek.

White-Mullin, Anna Jane. 1984. *Judging Hunters and Hunter Seat Equitation*. New York: Arco Publishing, Inc.







Pacific Northwest Extension publications are jointly produced by the three Pacific Northwest states—Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Similar crops, climate, and topography create a natural geographic unit that crosses state lines. Since 1949, the PNW program has published more than 400 titles. Joint writing, editing, and production have prevented duplication of effort, broadened the availability of faculty specialists, and substantially reduced costs for the participating states.

Published and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by University of Idaho Extension, the Oregon State University Extension Service, Washington State University Extension, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

The three participating Extension services provide equal opportunity in education and employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran as required by state and federal laws. University of Idaho Extension, Oregon State University Extension Service, and Washington State University Extension are Equal Opportunity Employers.

Published June 1995, Reprinted April 2002, July 2004, March 2006 **© University of Idaho** **$5.00**