

(2) Riding Level 1 Requirements

Modified August 30, 2008 (7:07pm)

- **Have Passed Groundwork Level 1**
- **All riding is done in an English saddle unless otherwise noted.**
- **Have viewed "Horsemanship Through The Ages, Vol #2" and completed question sheet.**
- **Can identify these points of the horse:**
 - ▶ withers
 - ▶ mane
 - ▶ tail
 - ▶ hoof
 - ▶ croup
 - ▶ barrel
 - ▶ hock
 - ▶ chestnut
 - ▶ shoulder
 - ▶ poll
 - ▶ hip
 - ▶ girth line
 - ▶ throatlatch
- **Can identify some grooming tools and what they are used for.**
 - ▶ dandy brush
 - soft bristle
 - medium bristle
 - stiff bristle
 - ▶ massage brushes or rubber currys
 - different types
 - ▶ metal curry comb
 - ▶ shedding blade
 - ▶ hoof pick
 - ▶ mane and tail brush
- **Groom the horse well**
 - ▶ Brush in such a manner that the horse enjoys the process.
 - This is the time that you have for special bonding with your horse. Think about the way your presentation or the way you groom is feeling to the horse. Think about how you are setting up your ride here, how you really need to make friends with your horse at this time.
 - Pretend to be holding your heart in your hand and give the horse a massage with love.
 - ▶ Make sure there is no dirt in any place that the saddle will be putting pressure on your friend. Remember how uncomfortable it is to have a rock in your shoe, now think of the horse. He is 7 times more sensitive than we are. If something is poking him or her from underneath the saddle or in the girth area, do you really think the horse will be a willing partner in this ride?

- ▶ Picking up of all 4 hooves.
 - This part of the grooming process may include a picking out of dirt and rocks from the horses feet. Something I'd like you to do is to take time to pick up all 4 feet and examine them and feel the legs. The picking out of dirt is a traditional habit many people follow in their routine of preparing horses for a ride, but barefoot horses have different needs than shod horses. If your horse is barefoot, the dirt that is packed into the foot can actually go a long way to help the horse remain comfortable during your ride. As you grow in your horsemanship, please do some careful research on feet and the why's of shoeing, picking out dirt, and how living environment and diet all strongly effect your decisions regarding this issue of proper hoof care.
 - To pick up a foot: Start with hand way up on shoulder or hip and run hand down the leg with the thought of the horse picking up that hoof. Do not pinch or shove the horse. Notice whenever the horse thinks about picking up the hoof, so you can allow the horse to follow through by picking up his own hoof. We should not need to use any muscle to pick up that foot.
 - Allow the horse to move their leg as they stretch the muscles while they pick up the foot. Just place a hand on the leg and follow the horse's movement.
 - NEVER drop the horses hoof. When done with the foot, begin to feel like you would like the horse to understand that you'd like to put the foot down and both of you set it down together. Don't force the horse to place the foot down, and don't force the horse to place the foot where they would rather not.
- ▶ Demonstrate safety in walking around entire horse.
 - place a hand on the horse as your are walking around the back end.
 - NEVER walk under the horse's neck or under the hitching rail when the horse is tied.
 - Realize that the two safest places to be when walking around a horse's behind, is right up next to the behind, or so far behind that there is no possible way a kick could reach you.

- **Can identify 3 sets of eyes on riders**

- ▶ hips
- ▶ shoulders
- ▶ eyeballs

- **Can identify 4 types of aides.**

- ▶ body language
- ▶ seat
- ▶ rein
- ▶ voice

- **Can define what is meant by "phases" and "phasing up."**

- ▶ As we talk about this skill, please give some ideas great thought here. In general, horses want to "get along" and are very interested in a partnership with their riders. Horses like to be respected, successful and really enjoy learning new things as well as doing the job we ask of them. Our job as the human handler/rider with a horse is to remember that our gift of deductive reasoning and consequential understanding is greater and, therefore, holds great responsibility. If our horse is not responding to our aides as we ask them for things, we must always take responsibility on some level. Ask yourself: "Is my presentation clear?"; "Can the horse physically do this?"; "Is the horse in pain or confused?"; "Is there something 'broken' in

our feel or our relationship?"; "Is the horse's instinct of self-preservation taking over here?"; "Do we really have a relationship of mutual respect? Really?"; "Has the horse had an opportunity to learn all the 'baby steps' required to do this task?"; etc. Really think about the answers to these questions as you do your best to figure out what is happening and why the horse is not responding to phase 1 in all of your aides.

- ▶ The phases can be defined as what we do with our aides as we are doing our best to help the horse understand what it is that we want from them.
- ▶ Phases might be described as: starting with a suggestion; then asking; then telling; then promising with a follow through.
- ▶ Phases might also be described as "turning up the volume" so the horse can hear and understand that we really are clear in wanting something done.
- ▶ Something to keep in mind: When we are constantly using our aides at a volume of 1, and expect the horse to understand the 3rd and 4th time we ask at the same volume; does this make sense? If you cannot hear what is being said on the radio, so you keep hitting the #1 volume button to try and hear better, will you ever hear and understand?
- ▶ Something else to keep in mind: When we are constantly using our aides at a volume of 4 or 5, and really would like the horse to respond at a 1; does this make sense? If you have a friend who yells at you with all they say, don't you generally start to tune them out? You ignore the yelling because of self-preservation. If that same friend were to suddenly whisper to you, you may hear them because it is so different from what was being done before, but you might miss it because you are used to tuning them out.
- ▶ The phasing up of aides and the way in which you can use them effectively is at the same time the most difficult part of horsemanship as well as the most rewarding part of horsemanship. Just keep trying and recognizing the horse's body language to allow the horse to help teach you what is effective and what is unjust.

- **Begin to understand the importance of the "release" in all the aides.**

- ▶ The release is the way that the horse is allowed the freedom of movement in which to achieve the request and at the same time is their reward for trying.

- **Can define and demonstrate turning principles using a helper on the ground.**

- ▶ Understands that the "eyes" need to always be planning way ahead of where the horse and rider are. At least 1 or 2 horse lengths ahead of current position.
- ▶ First phase - use **ALL** eyes to help the horse "see" where the rider plans to go.
- ▶ 2nd phase - continue 1st phase, and add a light rein aid to help the horse understand where you'd like to go. Once the horse shows ANY sign of responding, release rein aid, but continue "eyes."
- ▶ 3rd phase - still continue 1st phase, and add a firmer rein aid to help the horse understand where you'd like to go. Once the horse shows ANY sign of responding, release rein aid, but continue "eyes."
- ▶ 4th phase - still continue 1st phase, and really help the horse know you are serious about achieving your goal. Once the horse shows ANY sign of responding, release rein aid, but continue "eyes."
- ▶ Rider begins to recognize that being in timing with a horse's feet will go a long way in developing a better relationship and stronger partnership with their horse. When in timing with a horse's feet, the true athleticism between horse and rider can be expressed. Try this fun exercise. While walking - look left and turn right. Did you notice tension, a feeling of being off balance, confusion? Now think of the horse. When we ask them to turn right while their

left leading foot is the foot they are thinking about as they lift it off the ground for movement, do you think the horse might be feeling the same things you just did in our little exercise?

- **Can define proper seat position**
 - ▶ Ear lined up with shoulder, lined up with hip, lined up with ankle.
 - ▶ Toes pointing forward
 - ▶ Ball of foot set on the stirrup. At any time, at any gait, the rider should be able to place another person's hand between the stirrup and their foot and not crush it.
 - ▶ Leg: long enough to allow heel to be just a little lower than the toes.
 - ▶ Hands holding reins floating above the withers of the horse. Hands within a couple of inches of one another unless directing the horse to do something. (This is what I refer to as "neutral" position.)
 - ▶ A nice flexible bend in the elbow with a straight line from your elbow to your hands. A straight and flexible wrist is needed here.
 - ▶ Thumbs up, first 3 fingers wrapped around the rein and pinky falling below rein. Think of holding an ice cream cone.
 - ▶ A good flat back, no arch. Pretend a string is dangling you from the sky above.
 - ▶ It is clear to anyone standing on the ground where you are headed next. All your "eyes" are working effectively.

- **Can identify personal "center."**
 - ▶ Find belly button, place two fingers below it.
 - ▶ Find place on back directly opposite of the above site.
 - ▶ Center is generally in the middle of these two points.
 - ▶ Practice balancing on center at hitching rail.

- **Can ride bareback without holding on with hands, on lunge line, for 10-20 minutes doing "Simon Says" type stuff.** (Windmills, airplane, reaching for the sky, reaching for toes, touching croup, giving the horse a bear hug, etc.)
 - ▶ Can tell when a front leg is flying forward by feeling the shoulder.
 - Say "now" to the tester as the leg that they have named is flying forward.
 - ▶ Can tell when a back leg is flying forward by feeling the hips and barrel.
 - Say "now" to the tester as the leg that they have named is flying forward.
 - ▶ Rider can experiment with other things they feel from the horse as a foot is beginning to fly forward. Feel the barrel, the hips, etc of the horse, what body parts of the rider are being influenced as the horse is moving these parts. Take time and really begin to feel how their foot movement moves us.

- **Can define and demonstrate how to effectively start a horse.**
 - ▶ **No room for error here!!!!!!** All your body language and other aides must clearly indicate that you wish to go forward. If they are not, how can you expect the horse to understand the difference between stopping and going.
 - ▶ In first phase - look with great intent in the direction you will be traveling **AND** bring your hands forward so there is **NO** pressure on the horse. Both of these **MUST** be performed well and clearly. Think about going toward something.
 - ▶ In 2nd phase - All of the first phase aides are still in place, but bring more life into the upper body. Think about the horses feet moving.
 - ▶ In 3rd phase - All of the first and second phase aides are still in place, but a very light release

(the release is the action that will allow the horse to go forward - not a squeeze) with one leg is added.

- ▶ In 4th phase - continue 1st and 2nd phase aides, but a more active release with one leg is added.
- ▶ In 5th phase - continue 1st and 2nd phase aides, but a slight tap and release with the heels is added.

- **Can define and demonstrate how to effectively stop a horse.**

- ▶ **No room for error here!!!!!!** All your body language and other aides must clearly indicate that you wish to stop. If they are not, how can you expect the horse to understand the difference between stopping and going.
- ▶ In first phase - rider looks down with the eyes in the head (not the entire head), and thinks about the horse stopping their feet.
- ▶ In 2nd phase - rider continues to look down and think about stopping, gently sucks the belly button toward the spine and gently pulls in some rein, then mostly releases these aides (a half-halt).
- ▶ In 3rd phase - rider continues first phase, sucks belly button into the spine with a bit more firmness and adds a bit more firmness with the reins. Once the rider notices the horse trying to stop, release the aides and allow the horse to come to a full stop. (Could be a 2nd half-halt)
- ▶ In 4th phase - rider uses one rein to ask horse to disengage the hindquarters in a one-rein stop.
- ▶ If the horse makes the mistake of trying to take a step forward before the rider has asked, go directly to phase 3 to promise that you will follow through on executing a stop.

- **Can ride the horse at a walk around arena, keeping horse on the edge 1 time one direction, do a direction change across the diagonal, and walk around the edge of the arena 1 time in the opposite direction.**

- ▶ Rider uses inside leg aide and release as well as outside rein aide and release effectively.
- ▶ Rider plans well for change of direction. (See Ex. 32 in *101 Arena Exercises* by Cherry Hill)
- ▶ Rider understands how to accomplish the change of direction across the diagonal
 - Use the proper diagonal without asking.

- **Can ride the horse at a walk through 5 cones down center of arena, and back again.**

- ▶ Rider is effective in using seat aides before going to too much rein aides. Always keeping in mind that phasing up is the way to achieve the goal.

- **Can ride the horse at a walk around the arena, keeping the horse at the edge and halting at the letters as they are called out by the tester.**

- ▶ Rider must keep horse in the track of the arena - no cutting corners or being off the edge.
- ▶ A part (any part) of the horses body must be AT the letter.
- ▶ Must hit 7 out of 10 letters.
- ▶ starting and stopping aides must be used effectively.

- **Some Safety rules**

- ▶ Never run near, around or up behind a tied horse.
- ▶ Never throw anything or act silly around a tied horse or a horse being ridden by someone else.
- ▶ Never allow any trash or papers to blow around a horse.
- ▶ Keep all younger siblings away from the horse until they are old enough to understand some basic safety rules.
- ▶ Never wear any dangley jewelry around a horse. This includes dangle earrings, necklaces and

bracelets.

- ▶ Always wear a helmet when you ride a horse.
- ▶ Always wear shoes that have a firm toe covering, a relatively slick sole and a slight heel when riding or working around horses.
- ▶ It's a good idea to always wear long pants when riding.

Note: Any required videos are available to borrow from Robin. Any recommended reading is the responsibility of the student to acquire. Many of these books are available at the local library.