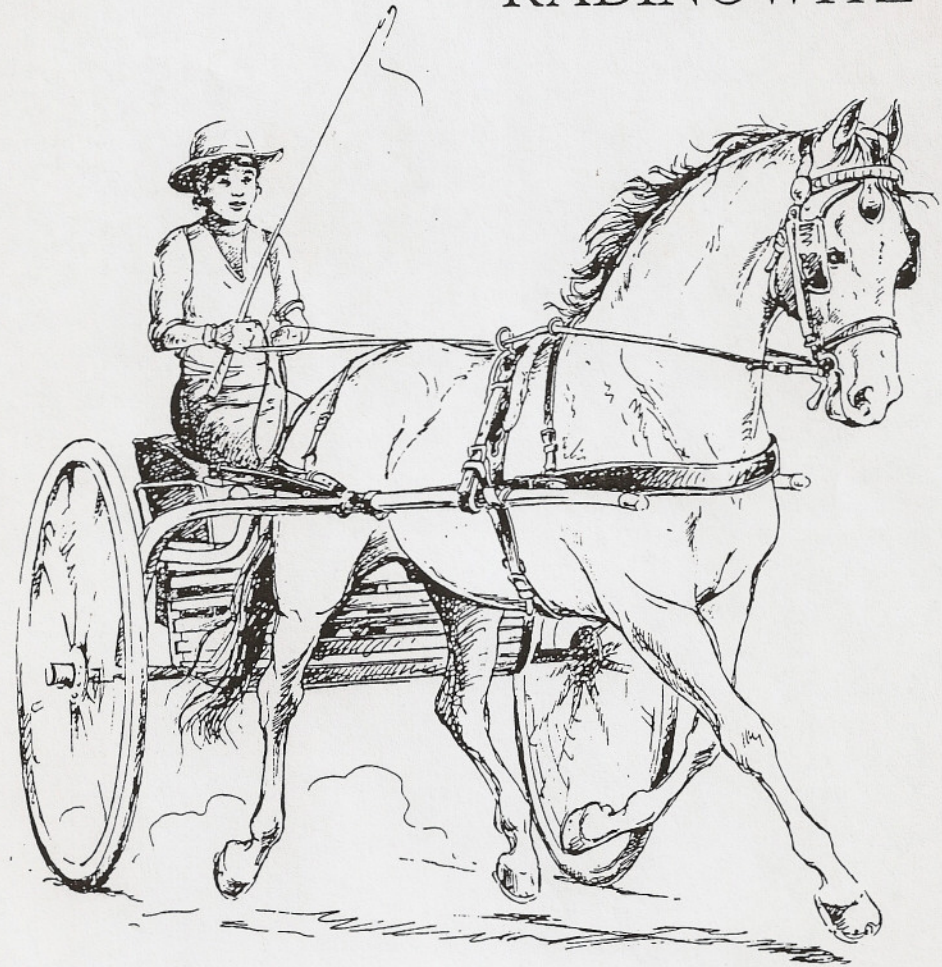


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Pat Lamprey (3)

DRIVEN DRESSAGE with the SINGLE HORSE

SANDY
RABINOWITZ



SF
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Rabinowitz

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	1
Chapter	Page
1 DRESSAGE DRIVING: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
2 DRESSAGE PRACTICE	3
3 ARENA IN WHICH TO PRACTICE	3
4 EQUIPMENT FOR DRESSAGE DRIVING	5
5 BITS FOR DRESSAGE	5
6 THE AIDS	11
7 BEGINNING OBJECTIVES	13
8 TRAINING YOUR HORSE FOR DRIVEN DRESSAGE	14
9 HORSES THAT AVOID BIT CONTACT	24
10 TRANSITIONS	26
11 THE GAITS	27
THE WALK	27
THE TROT	27
THE HALT	30
BACKING (THE REIN BACK)	31
12 FIGURES TO PRACTICE	33
13 WHAT YOU SHOULD PRACTICE VARIOUS LEVELS OF COMPETITION	38

Chapter	Page
14 SCHOOLING YOUR HORSE: "GROUND WORK" AND "WORK UNDER SADDLE"	39
15 TIME SPENT PRACTICING DRESSAGE	47
16 WARMING UP FOR DRESSAGE AT A SHOW	49
17 A SAMPLE TEST AND HOW TO DRIVE IT	49
18 WHAT A DRIVING TEST CAN REALLY BE LIKE	52
19 HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A GIVEN HORSE	54
20 WINNING	55
21 RECOMMENDED READING	56
22 APPENDIX I Current Dressage Tests	A1
23 APPENDIX II Setting Up Your Own Dressage Arena	A10
24 APPENDIX III A Glossary of Terms Used in Driven Dressage	A13

CHAPTER 1

DRESSAGE DRIVING: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (in the U.S.A.)

Dressage driving is a newly recognized discipline in the world of equestrian activities. Although a few European countries applied principles of classical dressage to the horse in harness before World War Two, driven dressage did not become recognized in an official way until 1969. At that time, the Duke of Edinburgh, President of the *Federation Equestre Internationale*, (F.E.I.), organized a committee to write the first international rules for driving competitions. The resulting rules outlined a new type of driving competition based on the format and F.E.I. rules for Combined Training. Three phases of competition were established for Combined Driving that correlated directly with the three phases of Combined Training Events: dressage, cross country and stadium jumping. The three driven phases are: driven dressage, a marathon including hazards, and an obstacle course.

Originally the rules of Combined Driving were written for teams of horses competing at the international level. But as the various participating countries began to organize national driving events that included divisions for pairs and single horses and ponies, a larger group of competitive drivers was introduced to the new discipline of dressage driving.

In the United States of America, the American Driving Society recognized driven dressage in 1976 when it adapted the then current F.E.I. rules for Combined Driving for use in the United States. At that time the A.D.S. formed its own Combined Driving committee.

Since then the sport of Combined Driving, and the discipline of Dressage Driving have gained rapidly in popularity. Annual events have been established in New England, the Southwest, the West Coast and many other parts of the country. Driven dressage classes are now offered in many pleasure driving shows. In some large shows a dressage class is a prerequisite for the grand championship.

To establish and preserve a high standard for dressage driving in the U.S.A., in 1983 the A.D.S. appointed a special dressage committee made up of individuals with backgrounds in classical dressage as well as driving. This committee wrote (and continued to write) new dressage tests to establish a more gradual progression of goals for the various levels of competition (Training, Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced).

As more people compete in Combined Driving events and in dressage classes offered at pleasure shows, it is becoming apparent that the better dressage tests are being performed by drivers with a strong background in classical dressage. In order to attain the high standard of performance that has been demonstrated by dressage riders, these drivers have realized that they must adopt aids used under saddle and modify them for their work in harness. They have had to be innovative, considering that they must make do without the leg and seat as aids. In

addition to schooling their horses in harness, they are longeing and long-reining them as well as riding them (or having them ridden) to improve their performances. It has become apparent that to succeed in dressage driving, one must incorporate classical dressage techniques.

CHAPTER 2

DRESSAGE PRACTICE

Practicing for dressage is hard work. It demands a great deal of concentration from you and your horse. In order to do well, you must pay attention to every stride that your horse takes and strive to improve it. Before you start, you should have a good mental picture of what you are aiming for. Since the objectives are the same in ridden and driven dressage, make an effort to observe shows, lessons, and clinics where dressage, (in harness or under saddle), is being performed. I would also recommend that you take regular dressage lessons. If at all possible, take lessons from someone with expertise in driven dressage. However, if you can't find someone with this specialized background, a good riding dressage instructor can help evaluate your progress. If you have access to a video camera, make use of it. It is an extremely valuable tool for self-evaluation.

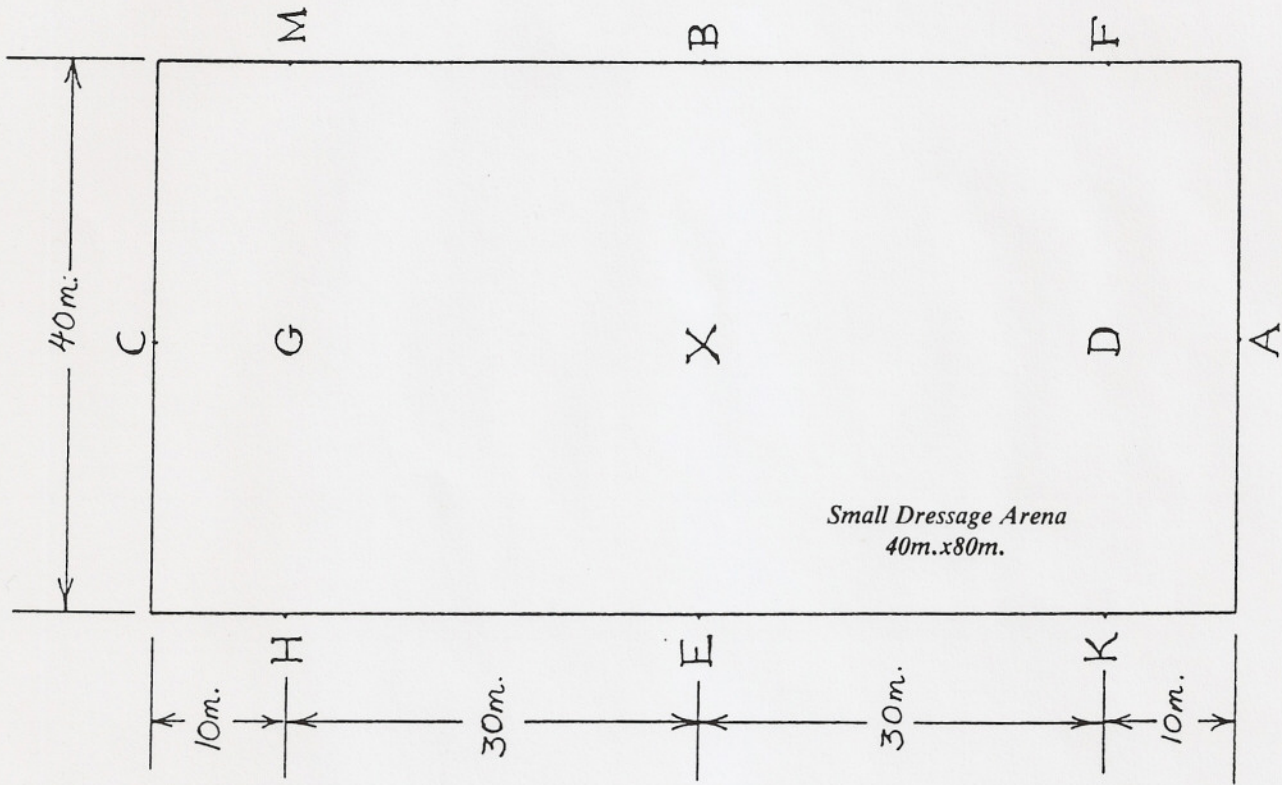
If you practice consistently you will improve. Don't expect miraculous changes overnight. It may take months for your horse to understand exactly what you want of him. However, in the long run, dressage practice will benefit you and your horse in all phases of driving: the obstacle course, marathon, and pleasure driving, as well as dressage tests.

CHAPTER 3

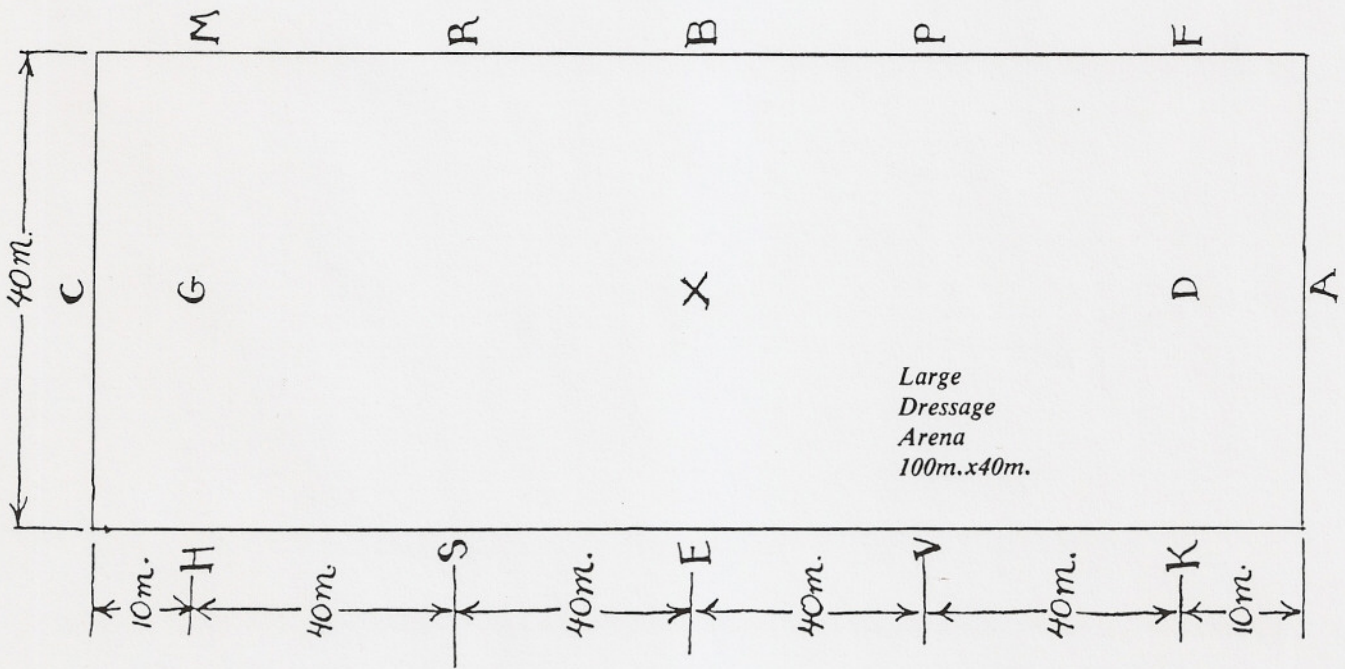
ARENA IN WHICH TO PRACTICE

You can practice dressage just about anywhere, on the trails, roads and fields. But when you want to practice the individual movements of a test, work in a large field or ring. In order to visualize the correct size of the figures required, you should mark out a dressage arena and post the dressage letters in their proper position.

There are two standard sizes for dressage arenas: 40 x 80 meters (fig. 1) and 40 x 100 meters (fig. 2). The smaller arena is generally used for Training and Preliminary tests. Intermediate, Advance and F.E.I. level tests are held in the larger arena. For those who wish to or must set up their own arenas, full instructions are given in the Appendix II, pages A 10-13.



(fig. 1)



(fig. 2)

CHAPTER 4

EQUIPMENT FOR DRESSAGE DRIVING

All that you need for practicing dressage is a simple, sturdy harness that fits your horse well, (see fig. 3), a solid but lightweight cart, gloves and a driving whip. Do not use an overhead check or a martingale. They are not allowed in competition. A side check is permissible, but it should not be used to keep your horse's head up artificially. It should have enough slack to allow your horse to stretch out his head and neck at the walk. Be sure your driving bridle has a properly fitted cavesson, (see fig. 4) (regular or flash). They are mandatory for dressage tests.

The cart you use should be lightweight to allow your horse to move as freely as possible while in draft. A cart that seats you high enough to see over your horse's back is preferable to a vehicle that confines you to a good view of your horse's tail.

Since you must use a driving whip for dressage, choose a whip that is long enough to allow you to easily reach your horse's shoulders from either side of your seat. If you are not familiar with using a whip with much of a thong (lash), use a whip with a short braided "point" at the end. If you wish to use a whip with a thong, practice on objects other than your horse until you are skillful at *touching* what you are aiming for.

Always wear comfortable gloves when you drive your horse. Leather gloves provide you with a good grip on the reins most of the time. However, if you plan to drive when it is raining, rubber gloves, (the dish washing variety) or knit string gloves prevent wet reins from slipping.

CHAPTER 5

BITS FOR DRESSAGE

Use a bit that is comfortable for your horse and effective for you. Because the aids that you will be using will require you to take a firm contact on one or both reins, select a mild bit, or mild setting on a bit with multiple settings, to avoid hurting your horse's mouth. However, if you find yourself in a "tug of war" with your horse, try a slightly stronger bit or the next setting on a bit with multiple settings. It will be more comfortable in the long run for you and your horse if your horse respects the effect of the bit. As your dressage training progresses you will be able to select a milder bit because your horse will become more balanced and responsive to the aids. Never use a severe bit for dressage. A severe bit may temporarily restrain your horse, but in the long run your horse will become numb to its effect and you will not have solved your pulling problem. A good dressage performance is never obtained

by inflicting pain and fear on your horse. The A.D.S. prohibits the use of bit burrs, twisted and wire bits, or other severe bits in dressage tests.

A snaffle bit is suitable for dressage work. In fact, in ridden dressage, the snaffle (plain—no twists, etc.) is the only bit allowed until third level! Although there are snaffles designed specifically for driving (the half cheek, and the four-ringed Wilson snaffle), you can use any of the plain riding snaffles for driven dressage (hollow mouthed, mullen mouthed, Fulmer, loose ringed, eggbutt, rubber, etc.). (see fig. 5) If you choose a riding snaffle bit rather than a more traditional driving snaffle bit, you possibly may be penalized in the Presentation phase of a combined driving event. However, if your horse performs well in that particular bit, use it. A good dressage test will more than compensate for lost points in Presentation.

Many people prefer to use the Liverpool driving bit. Of the many driving bits with multiple settings, (Buxton, elbow, Tilbury, etc.), the Liverpool bit is the most commonly used for driving single horses. The Liverpool has four settings for the reins ranging from very mild to extremely severe. Only use the mildest settings. (see fig. 6) If your horse is a hard puller you may want initially to attach the reins to the middle bar setting. Eventually, with proper dressage training, you should be able to switch the reins to a milder setting.

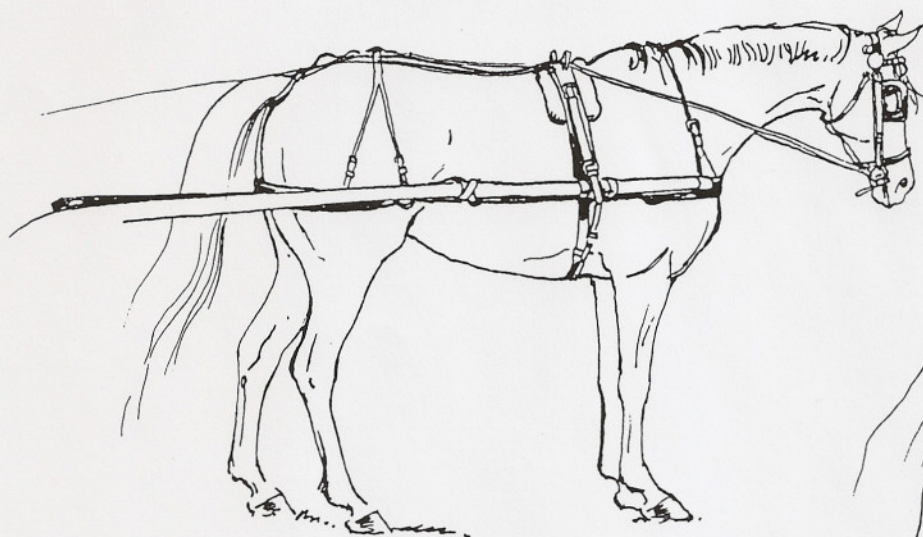
Before you attach the curb chain on the Liverpool bit always twist the chain until it is flat and smooth. Then attach it loosely enough to allow several of your fingers to slip in between the chain and your horse's jaw.

While some horses accept the Liverpool, other horses resist it, even in its milder settings. If your horse is uncomfortable with the straight bar of the Liverpool try a jointed-mouth bit instead. There is a Liverpool made with a snaffle mouthpiece. (see fig. 7) This bit is a good compromise if you want the look of a Liverpool and the effect of a snaffle.

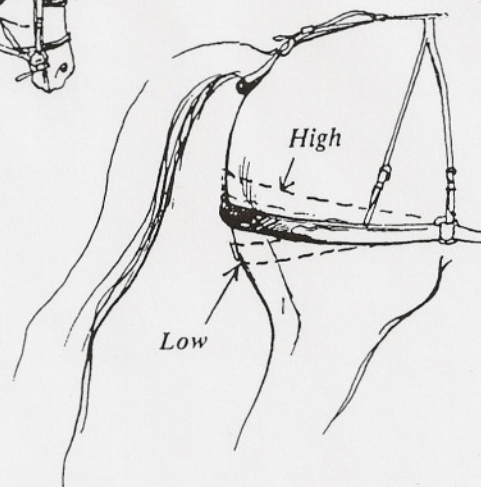
If your horse plays excessively with the bit, opens his mouth wide, or sticks out his tongue, he may be a candidate for a dropped or flash noseband. (see fig. 8) In conjunction with a snaffle bit, these nosebands are very effective in stopping this type of horseplay and getting your horse's attention back to you. However, before you use such a device, make sure that your horse's mouth problem is not due to your own rough handling of the reins, tooth or gum problems, an incorrect positioning of the bit in your horse's mouth, or the wrong size bit. (see fig. 9)

Whichever bit you choose, it may be a good idea to wrap it in leather, (unless it is a soft rubber training bit). Don't wrap a bit in latex rubber for this material can be abrasive to your horse's gums. By wrapping the bit, you will encourage your horse to gently chew and salivate, thereby maintaining a soft, wet mouth. Pay attention to the fit of the bit when it is wrapped. You may have to make an adjustment and let the cheek piece out a hole. Some horses with small mouths may not be able to accommodate the diameter of the bit when it is wrapped.

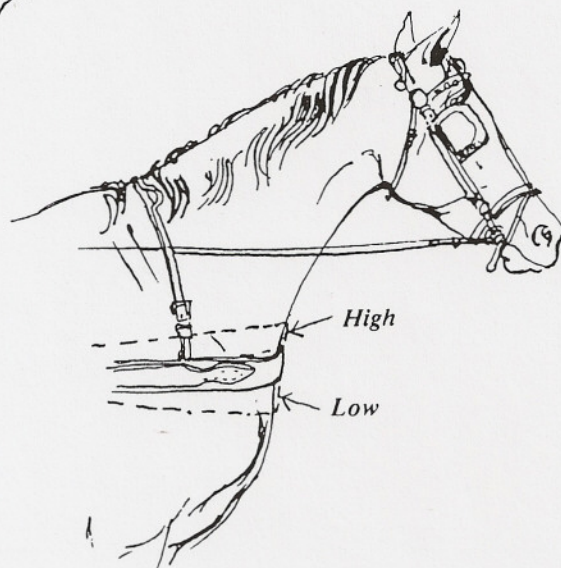
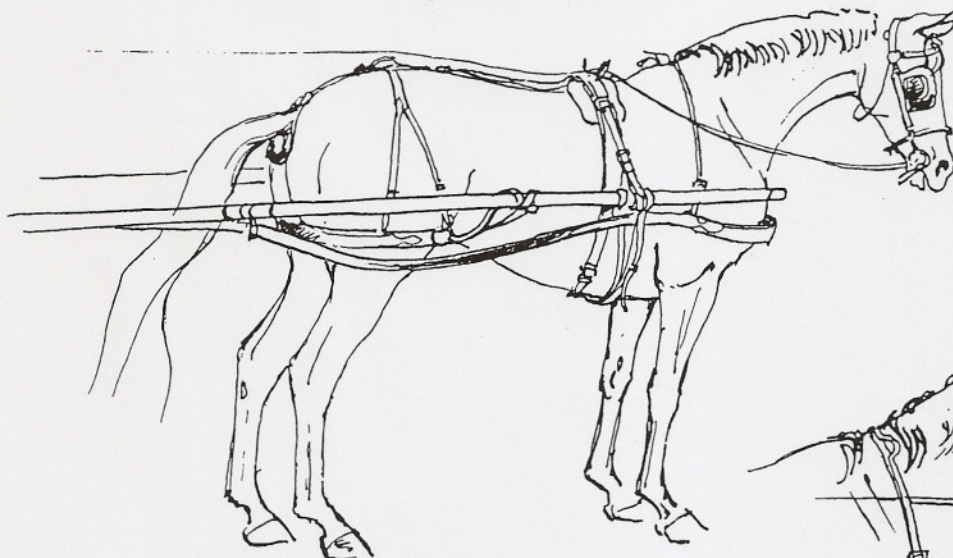
Neat harnessing



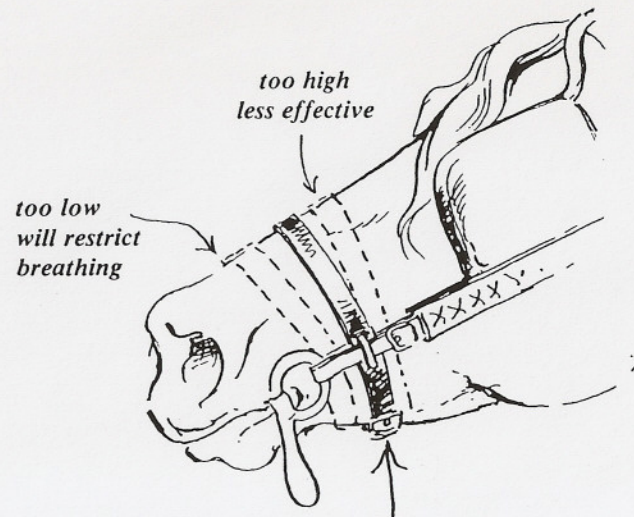
Breeching



Sloppy, loose harnessing



(Fig. 3)



*too high
less effective*

*too low
will restrict
breathing*

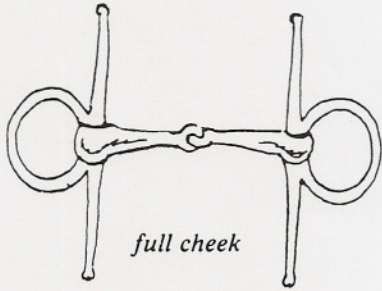
*Correct placement -
tighten enough
to allow two fingers
to slip between jaw
and cavesson*



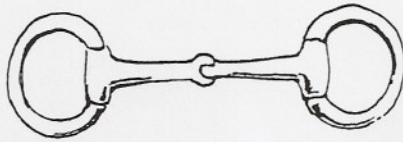
*A cavesson
that pulls the
cheek pieces
backward will
tilt a liverpool
forward. Cheek
pieces should be
attached farther
forward.*

(Fig. 4)

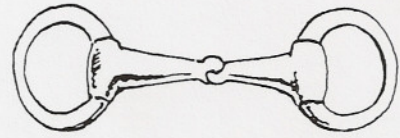
SNAFFLE BITS - ALLOWABLE



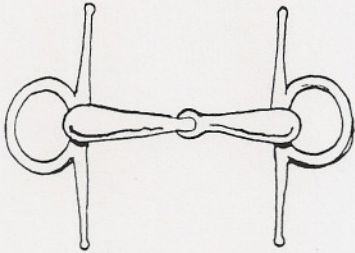
full cheek



eggbutt



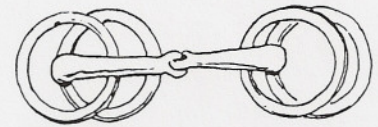
hollow eggbutt - thick or lightweight



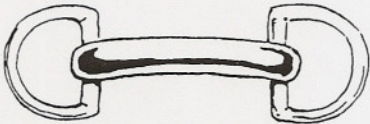
full cheek hollow mouth



rubber covered



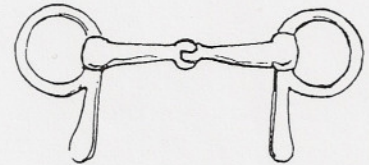
Wilson - 4 ringed



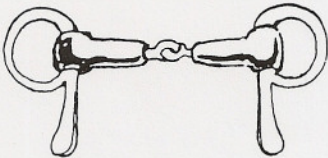
flexible soft rubber



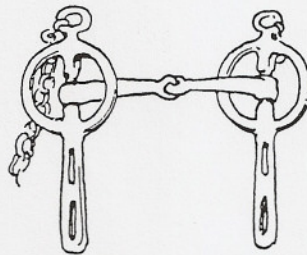
mullen mouth



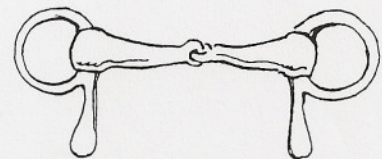
half cheek



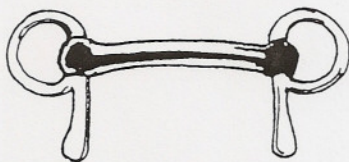
rubber half cheek



liverpool snaffle



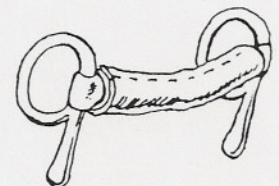
heavy mouthed half cheek



soft rubber half cheek



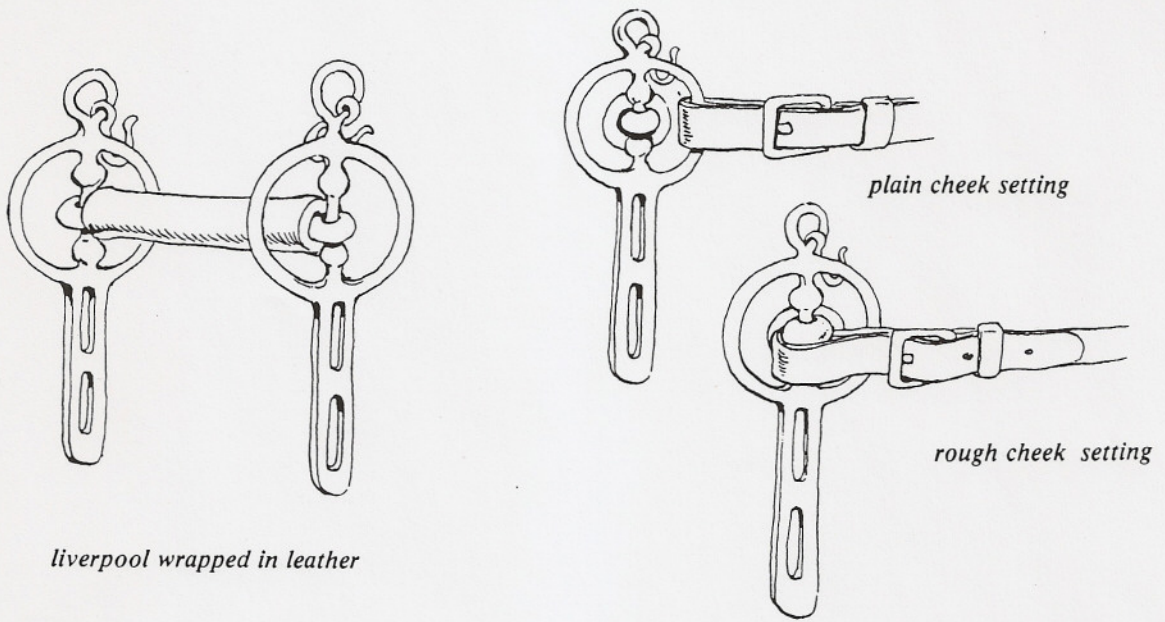
loose ring



half cheek wrapped in leather

*the wider diameter the mouth piece the milder the bit

(Fig. 5)

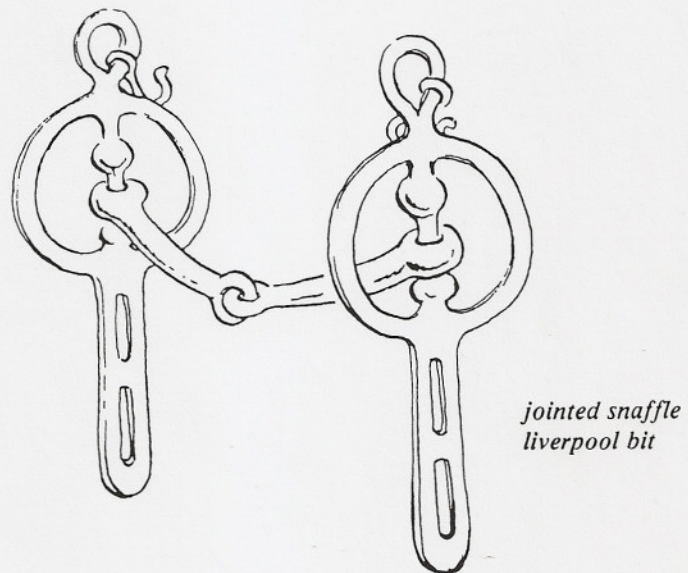


liverpool wrapped in leather

plain cheek setting

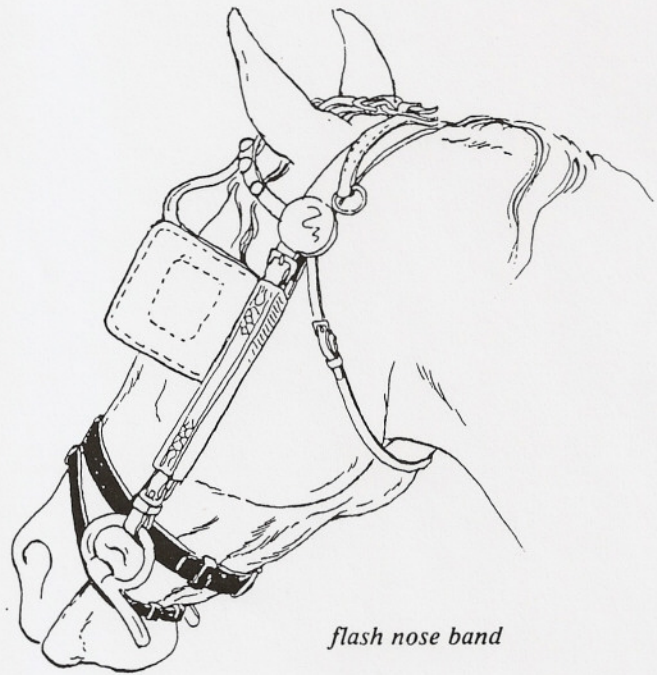
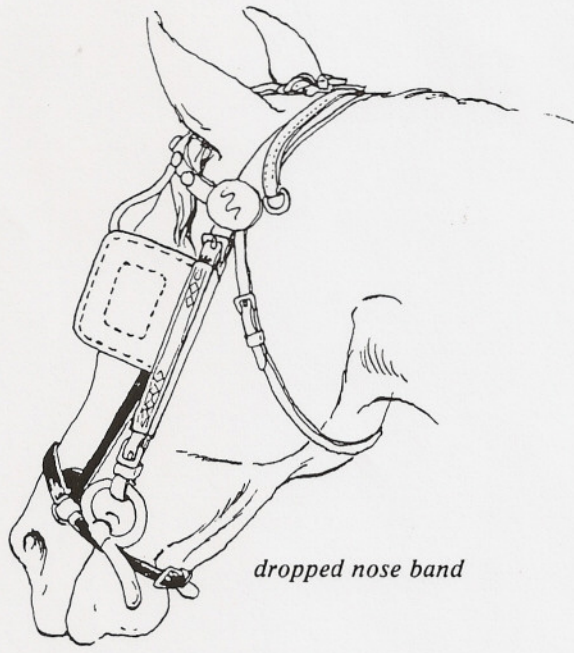
rough cheek setting

(Fig. 6)

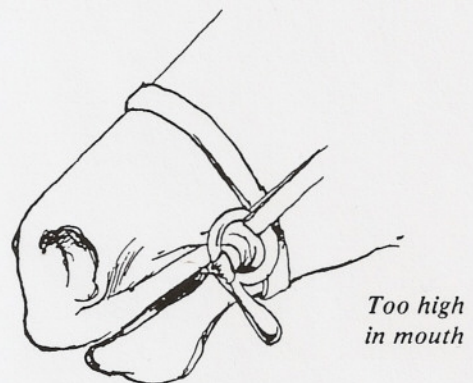
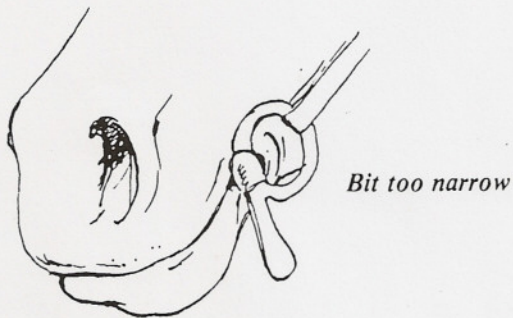
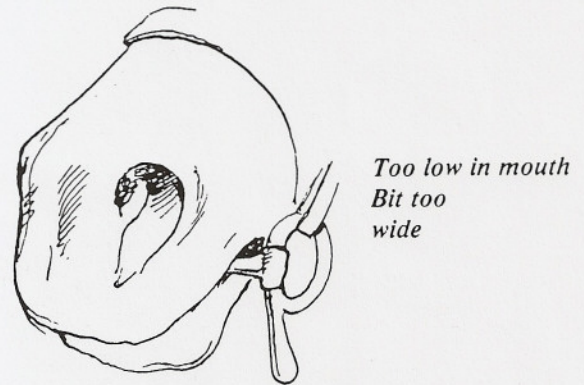
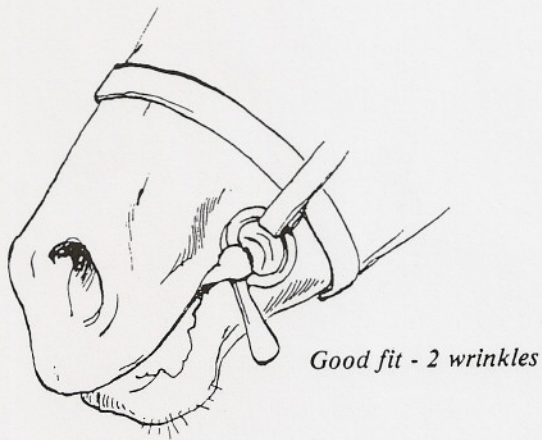


*jointed snaffle
liverpool bit*

(Fig. 7)



(Fig. 8)



(Fig. 9)

CHAPTER 6

THE AIDS

You have three means of communication with your horse: your hands, your voice, and the whip.

1. Your Hands

You communicate with your hands through the reins and bit. With sensitive hands you can carry on a constant dialogue with your horse—directing him, slowing him down, supporting him, alerting him, and rewarding or punishing him as necessary.

There are basically two methods of holding the reins. The more traditional method is to hold the reins in the left hand, helping with the right in making tight turns and in shortening the reins. The second method is to hold the left rein in your left hand and the right rein in your right hand at all times. Advantages of the traditional, one-handed method are that your right hand is kept free to use the whip without affecting the right rein and it is easy to shorten both reins quickly and simultaneously in an emergency. The disadvantage is that it is more difficult to manipulate both reins simultaneously, which dressage work demands. Drivers experienced in one-handed driving may be able to perform a nice test using this method. However, many beginning drivers or drivers inexperienced in dressage may find the two-handed method easier. With practice most drivers will find that it is not hard to switch from one method to the other when necessary.

Any method of holding the reins is acceptable in dressage competition. Therefore, use the method or combination of methods that gives you the most effective and sensitive means of communication with your horse. (see fig. 10)

2. Your Voice

As your horse cannot see you or feel your weight, your voice is an important means of communication. Be specific and consistent in your vocabulary. Find what word commands work best for you and stick with them. Your horse responds to your tone of voice as well as the command given. Therefore, when you use a word such as trot, say it energetically. When you command your horse to walk, say walk in a softer, lower tone of voice. To get your horse's attention and prepare him for a command, use his name before the command, e.g., "Sunny tr-r-rot!"

In addition to giving the basic commands, your voice should be used to reward, punish, or soothe your horse. "Good boy" or "Good girl" should be used when your horse properly performs a difficult exercise. An "Easy" or "Steady" at the right moment can help prevent your horse from shying.

Although the use of your voice is an allowed aid in driven dressage tests, try not to chatter incessantly. Judges will not like it and your horse will become insensitive to this important aid through overuse.

3. The Whip

The whip is rarely used for punishment. It is used to urge your horse on and direct him. To urge him on, flick

him lightly in the area of the shoulder. To ask him to move over, touch him on the side from which you want him to move away. In this way, you are using the whip the way a rider uses his legs. Horses vary in their sensitivity to the whip. A high strung horse may need only a light touch while a lazier animal may need a sharper reminder when he doesn't respond to a touch. Horses become insensitive to constant use of the whip, as they do to constant banging with a rider's legs. If your horse doesn't listen the first time you touch him, tap him a little harder. If he still doesn't get the message, a more forceful sting is in order. Always give your horse a chance to respond to a light touch before you resort to harsher use of the whip.

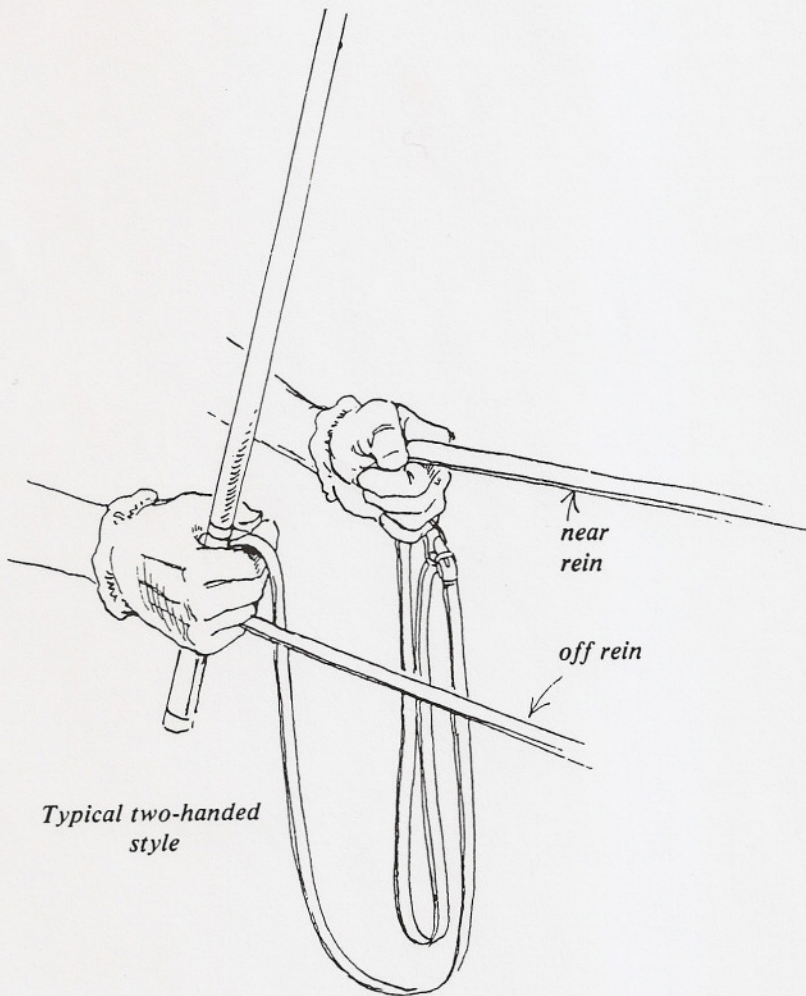
It is not a good idea to suddenly hit your horse hard on the rump with the whip unless he needs severe reprimanding for a deliberate disobedience. When you surprise a horse in this way, you run the risk of having a few boards kicked out of your cart.

If your horse is unafraid of the whip and understands its use, a light touch on this rump can be beneficial. It can encourage your horse to further engage his hind end, which will be necessary in latter states of training.

Many horses are afraid of the whip because their only previous association with it was punitive. "Whip-shy" horses as well as horses that have had no previous dressage training are usually confused, if not frightened, when you use the whip to ask them to move over. If you have a horse with either or both of these problems "whip training" from the ground can be very beneficial.

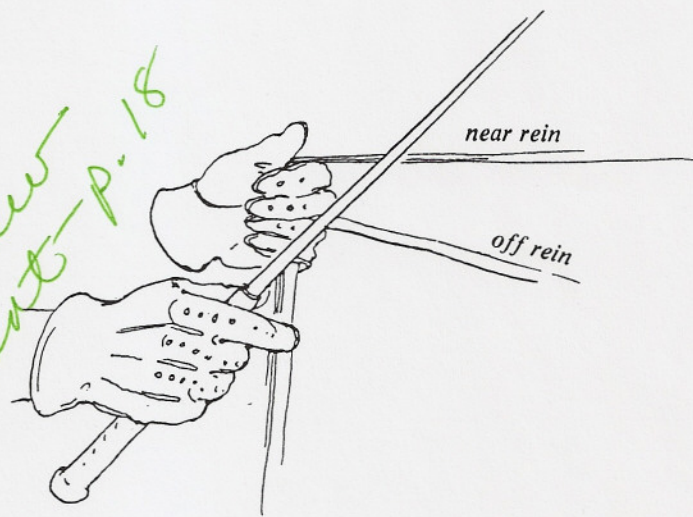
If your horse is fearful of the whip gradually accustom him to the whip's benign presence by carrying it with you around the stable while you groom, feed, etc. Once this has been accomplished you should ask your horse to move over, using a gentle touch of the whip as well as your voice. Say "over," firmly but gently. At the same time touch your horse on his side near the girth area with the whip. If your horse is not whip-shy and he does not respond to a light touch of the whip, gradually increase the severity of the aid until he moves over. Praise your horse if he responds. Practice this exercise from the ground until your horse understands what you want of him. Then you can practice asking your horse to move sideways, away from the whip, in harness. At first, work at the slower gaits. Reinforce the whip aid with the verbal aid, "over." Be patient, but persistent in your horse's training. Successful use of the whip to move your horse sideways is very important if you wish to progress in driven dressage.

All the aids can be used with varying degrees of firmness, from a very soft request or reminder to an insistent command. The degree of firmness depends on your horse's attitude and the situation. By using combinations of these aids, you can achieve a remarkably sensitive and effective level of communication. You can correctly bend your horse in corners and on circles, make smooth upward and downward transitions, and eventually get your horse "on the bit."



Typical two-handed style

see top view of variant - p. 18



traditional one handed method

(Fig. 10)

CHAPTER 7

BEGINNING OBJECTIVES

To progress in dressage you must keep in mind the following objectives as you train your horse and yourself.

1. Your Horse Should Be **Relaxed**.

You can tell that your horse is relaxed if he is moving calmly forward without stiffness or tenseness. A swinging back is a good indication of relaxation. If your horse's tail swings rhythmically from side to side as he walks or trots, he is relaxed.

2. Your Horse Should Be Relaxed and Go **Forward**.

Forward is a key word in dressage. Not a single movement, including backing, can be properly performed unless your horse always demonstrates a desire to go forward energetically.

3. Your Horse Should Be **Straight** At All Times.

Your horse should be straight whether he is at the halt or moving forward. This means that from tail to nose your horse should follow the track (real or imaginary) that you are directing him on. (fig. 11)

4. Your Horse Must Demonstrate Good **Rhythm** In His Gaits.

You should hear evenly spaced footfalls when your horse walks and trots. They should sound as regular as the ticking of a metronome. The tempo of the rhythm will vary from horse to horse. For example, a 17h. Clydesdale and a 13h. Hackney pony can both display good rhythm although their tempos will be very different. Good rhythm will result naturally if your horse is already relaxed, forward and straight.

5. Your Horse Should Move Forward With **Impulsion**.

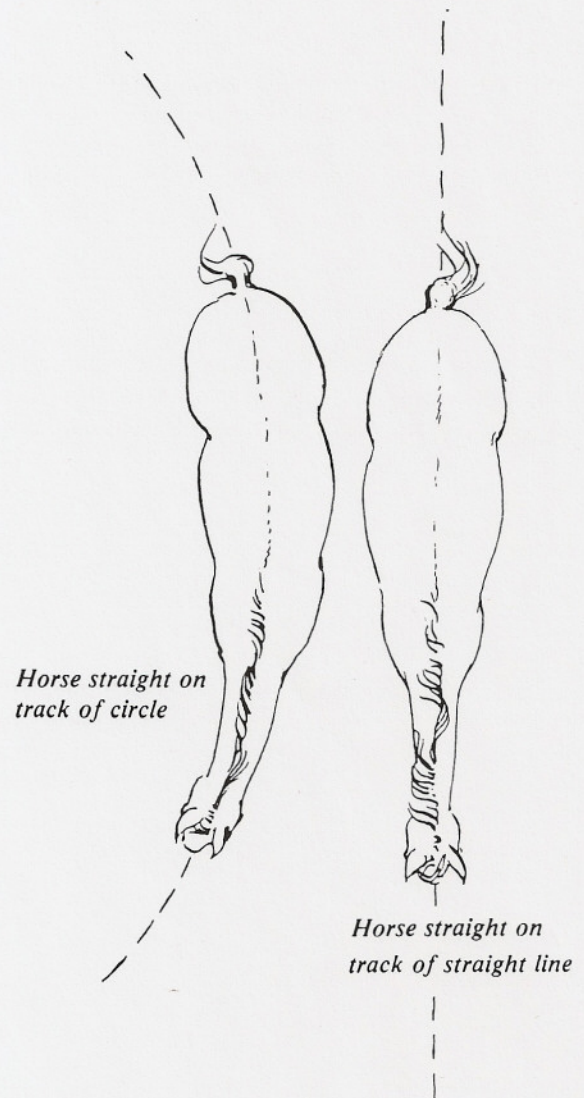
Whenever your horse moves forward he should actively use his hindquarters by stepping well under himself with his hind legs. When your horse (who is already relaxed, forward, straight, and rhythmical) springs energetically forward from well engaged hind legs, he is demonstrating good impulsion.

Since engagement of the hind-quarters is a necessary prerequisite of impulsion, the degree of impulsion that your horse demonstrates will become greater as his

training progresses. Correct dressage training will gradually strengthen your horse's hocks so that he may eventually use them to carry more weight and propel himself forward powerfully, demonstrating great impulsion.

6. Your Horse Should Accept **Contact With the Bit**.

As your horse moves forward rhythmically, with impulsion, he should take a light accepting feel of the bit in his mouth. He should not evade the bit, grab, or lean on it.



(Fig. 11)

CHAPTER 8

TRAINING YOUR HORSE
FOR DRIVEN DRESSAGE

The first step in the training process is to get your horse moving freely forward in a relaxed free walk and rhythmical trot of medium speed. At the free walk, you should encourage your horse to lengthen his frame by allowing him to lower and stretch out his head and neck. In both gaits, he should engage his hind-quarters well. You can tell that your horse is using his hindquarters properly if he tracks into or preferably over his front hoofprints with his hind hooves (at the walk, the overstep should be greater). Your objective, at this time, is to get your horse to loosen up and enjoy striding freely forward. Your horse's frame should be that of a horse trotting or walking at liberty. (see fig. 12 and 13)

This in itself may take weeks or months of practice.

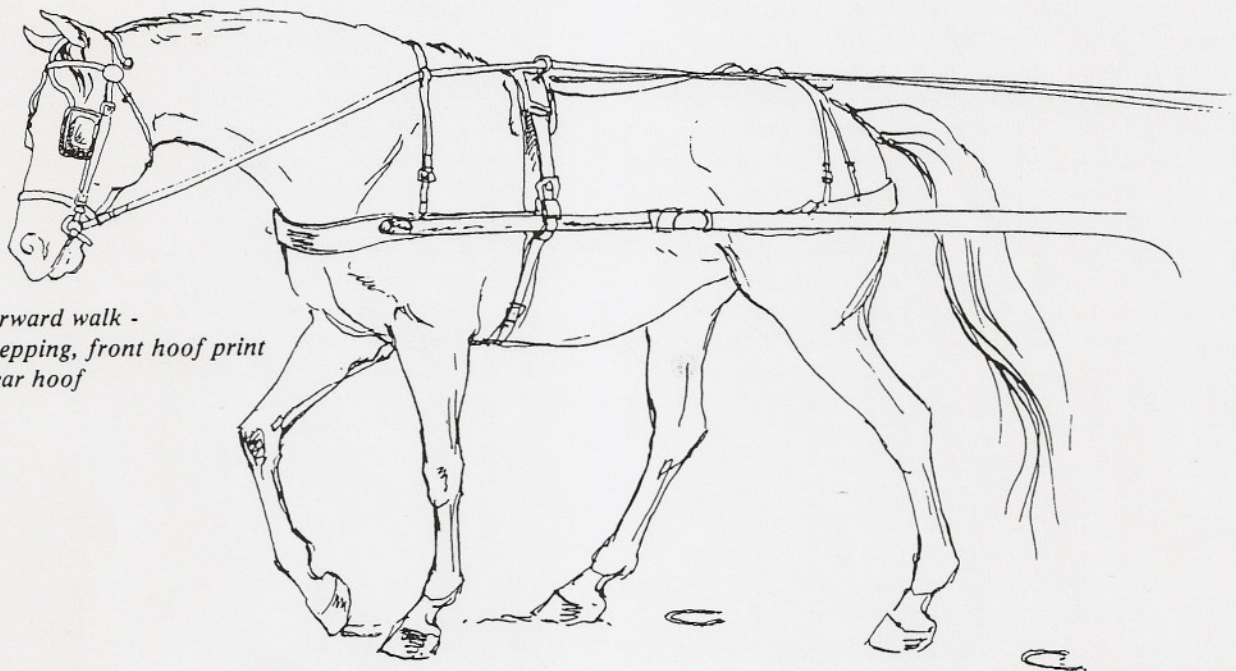
If your horse is tense and rushes, (see fig. 14), you must first relax him. Spend most of your time walking, occasionally asking for a slow trot. Talk to your horse in a soothing voice and concentrate on being as soft as possible with your hands. If your horse tenses up in a ring, take him on a quiet pleasure drive before you work in the arena. Be patient with this type of horse and reward him with a kind word whenever he eases up, if only for a moment. Reward is a very effective method of getting horses to relax.

If your horse is obviously too relaxed and he drags his feet, (see fig. 15), you will have to wake him up and get him to carry himself. Use your voice energetically. If that has no effect, use your whip. When you ask this lazier type of horse to trot, make sure that he steps into a lively trot from the walk. When you ask him to walk again, insist that it be an energetic walk. Your horse must be made to use his hind-quarters actively.

Once your horse is relaxed and forward moving, think about his rhythm at the walk and trot. At the walk, you should hear four distinct beats, none of the beats being louder than the others. These beats should be evenly spaced, i.e., 1..2..3..4, not 1.2...3.4. At the trot, you should hear two regular beats. These beats should be so regular and even that you could sing or hum a song along with them and they would serve as a metronome.

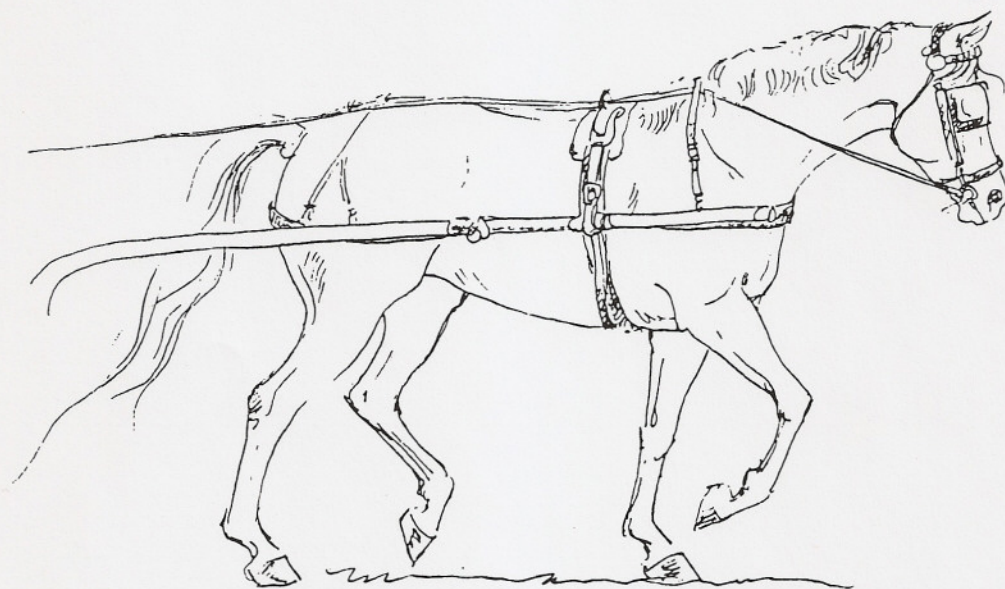
When you are satisfied that your horse is relaxed, forward moving and rhythmical, you should establish a correct "contact with the bit". "Contact with the bit" is the connection between your hands and your horse's mouth. This contact should be consistent and elastic. Since your reins aren't made of elastic, your horse should be soft in his jaw, and flexible at the poll. You must be flexible in your wrists, elbows, and shoulders in order to encourage and maintain this feeling.

In the lower levels of competition, your horse will be expected to accept light contact in the "working" gaits. The "working walk" is distinguished from the "free walk" by a light and steady contact with the bit. To



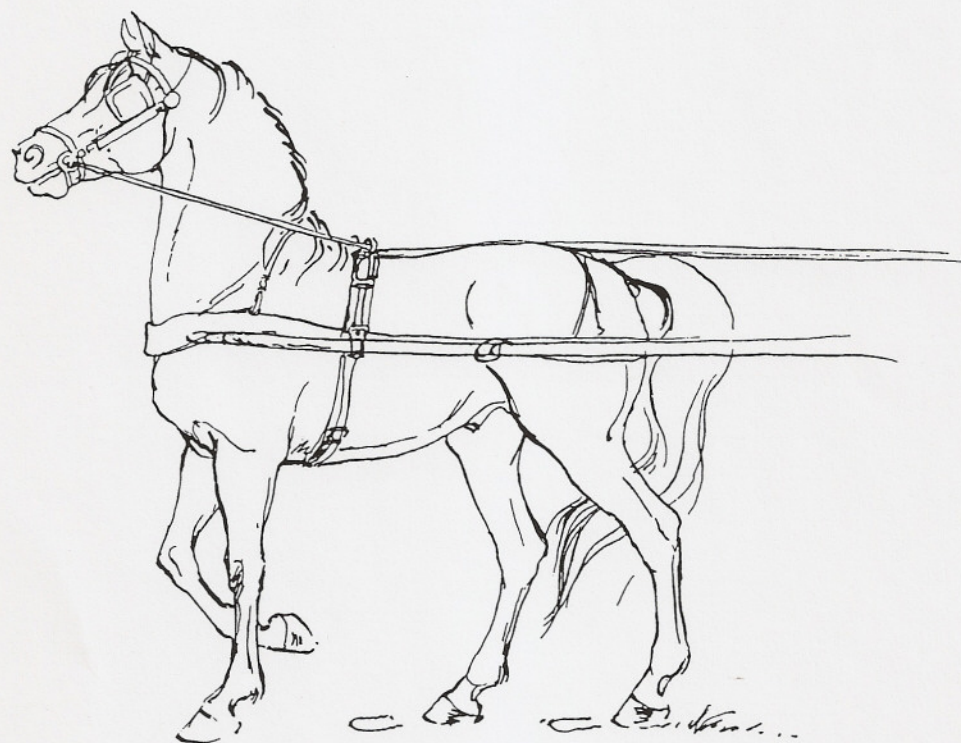
*free forward walk -
over stepping, front hoof print
with rear hoof*

(Fig. 12)



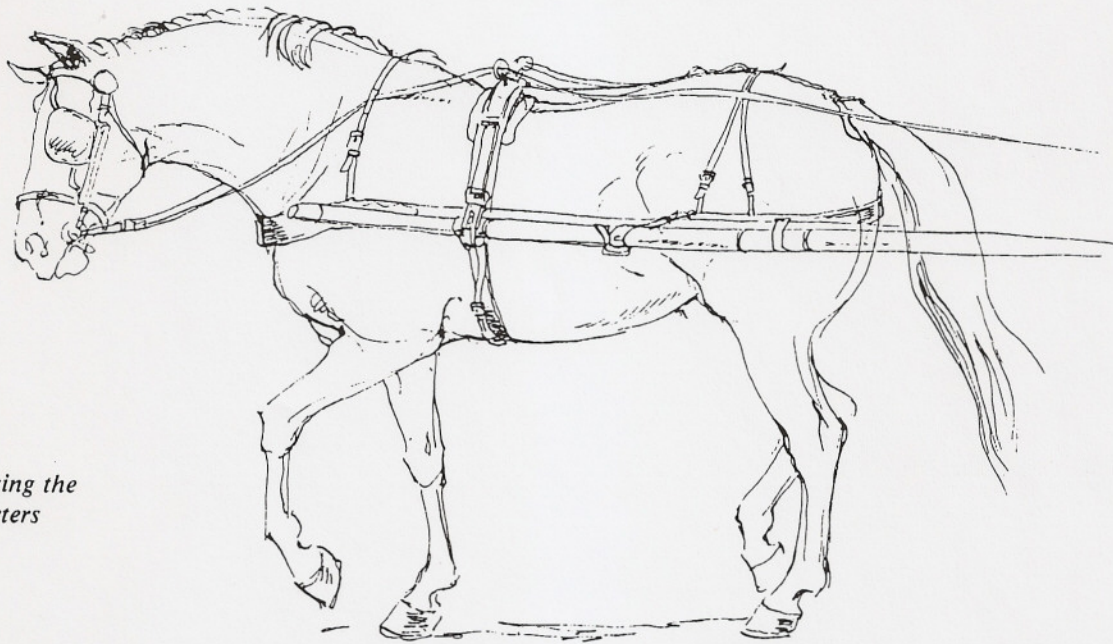
working trot - good frame for novice horse

(Fig. 13)



*short restricted walk - not tracking
into or over front hoof prints with rear hooves
not relaxed*

(Fig. 14)



*not engaging the
hind quarters*

(Fig. 15)

achieve a basic working walk or trot, your horse must learn to accept a light, even contact with the bit in addition to being relaxed, forward, straight and rhythmical. Later on, as your horse progresses in his training and competes in higher levels, he will be expected to go "on the bit" at the working trot.

Being "on the bit" differs from accepting contact with the bit. When a horse is "on the bit", he demonstrates a greater degree of hind-quarter engagement, roundness of frame, and balance. (I will discuss "on the bit" later in this book.)

Contact with the bit varies from one horse to another. When driving a horse with sensitive bars, you may need to apply very little pressure on the reins to achieve a correct elastic contact. With other horses, you will have to take a firmer hold of the reins in order to obtain an equally correct contact. Horses vary considerably in their sensitivity to bit pressure.

Ideally, your horse should accept and seek light, equal pressure from the bit on both sides of his mouth. In reality, it takes quite a lot of work to achieve this goal because most horses are one-sided. Your horse may go quite pleasantly in one direction and will be straight, his head and neck following the track that you are driving him on. He will bend through corners and circles very easily in this direction, yielding to the slightest touch of the inside rein. This easy side is called your horse's "hollow side."

When you drive your horse in the opposite direction, he will be very resistant to your aids and won't accept an even contact with the bit. This is very evident when you attempt to turn or circle him in his stiff direction. He will lean on the inside rein, avoiding contact on the outside

rein, and will "fall into" the turn with his inside shoulder, pointing his head and neck away from the direction of the turn. Just as people are left-handed or right-handed, most horses are left-sided or right-sided. A left-sided horse will find it uncomfortable and difficult to bend his spine and stretch his muscles going to the right, and likewise the right-sided horse will be stiff going to the left. (see fig. 16-19) As with human athletes, you will have to perform certain exercises to limber the stiff side. Work under saddle, longeing exercises, and long-reining will be very beneficial at this point. I will discuss these methods a bit further on. In harness, you have a valuable rein action at your disposal to help remove stiffness in the horse. It is called the "half-halt."

The "half-halt" is a quick pull and return to light contact with one rein or both reins at once. This action serves to break your horse's resistance to the bit and further engage his hind end. If your horse won't slow down, several half-halts with both reins in rhythm with his trot will be more effective in slowing him down than a constant pull. By half-halting, you are being both demanding and giving. With the quick pull, you demand your horse's attention. With the immediate return to a light contact, you give your horse the opportunity to be soft for a moment. Most horses will soon learn to stop pulling and seek the softer alternative that you provide him within a half-halt.

The half-halt is applied unilaterally (with one rein) to straighten the one-sided horse. Since the one-sided horse doesn't want to accept bit contact on his hollow side and leans on the bit on his stiff side you must work to reverse this situation. Here is an example of a typically one-sided horse and the procedure for making him even.

Your horse goes well to the right. But when your drive him to the left, your troubles begin. When driving straight on the road or in the ring, he positions his head and neck to the right a little. When you turn or circle him to the left, he falls in with his left shoulder and points his head and neck to the right. He hangs on the left rein and doesn't take up any contact on the right rein.

When going to the left, you must coordinate the two following rein actions. Take a firm steady feel of the right rein. Don't pull hard or your horse may turn right. In order to establish a "supporting" rein on this side, you must break up the resistance in the left side of your horse's jaw with a series of quick half-halts. You can't give him a chance to lean on this left rein. Repeatedly give and take on his stiff left side until he softens and straightens out. Meanwhile keep him moving actively and rhythmically forward whether you are trotting or walking. When you ask him to turn to the left, you must maintain a supporting right rein while you direct him with your left rein. Since you don't have the leg as an aid to help keep your horse out on the desired track, use your whip instead. Touch him on his left side near his girth when you begin your left turn or left circle.

You will know that you have succeeded in breaking your horse's resistance when you stop half halting on the inside left rein and he maintains his bend to the left, accepting the supporting contact on the right outside rein.

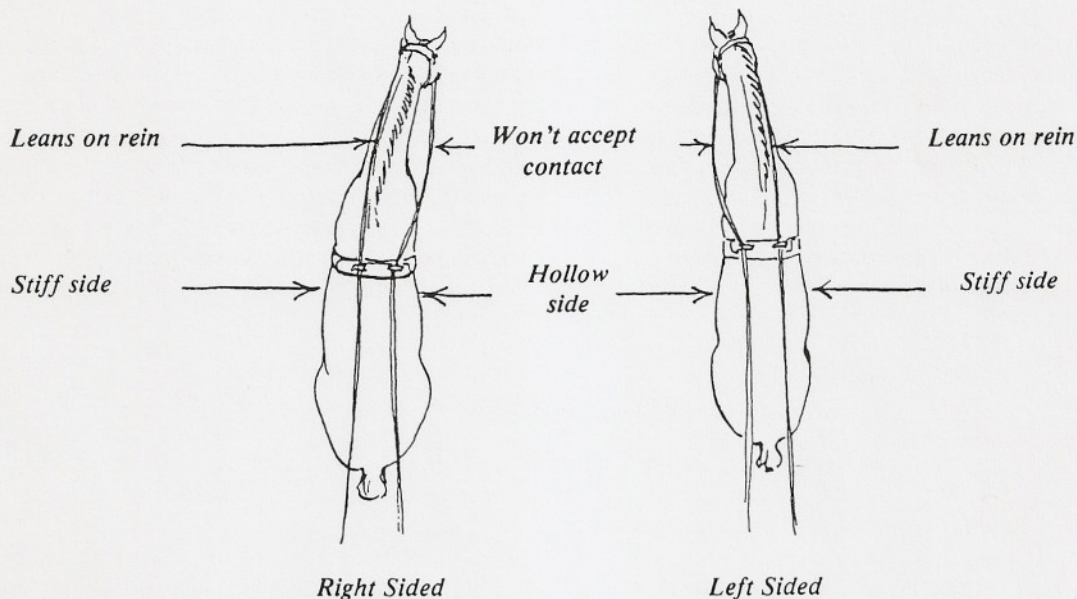
If you have a horse that is stiff to the right and hollow to the left, the same straightening procedure applies, except that you reverse your rein and whip aids. Use a supporting left rein and half-halt on the stiff right side. When you are making a turn to the right, reinforce these reins aids by touching your horse with the whip on his right side near the girth. (see fig. 20)

If your horse is moving energetically forward, in a relaxed, rhythmical way, and is accepting the bit in both directions, you have made a great accomplishment! You have reached the point in your horse's training where you can ask him to become rounder in his frame and come on the bit.

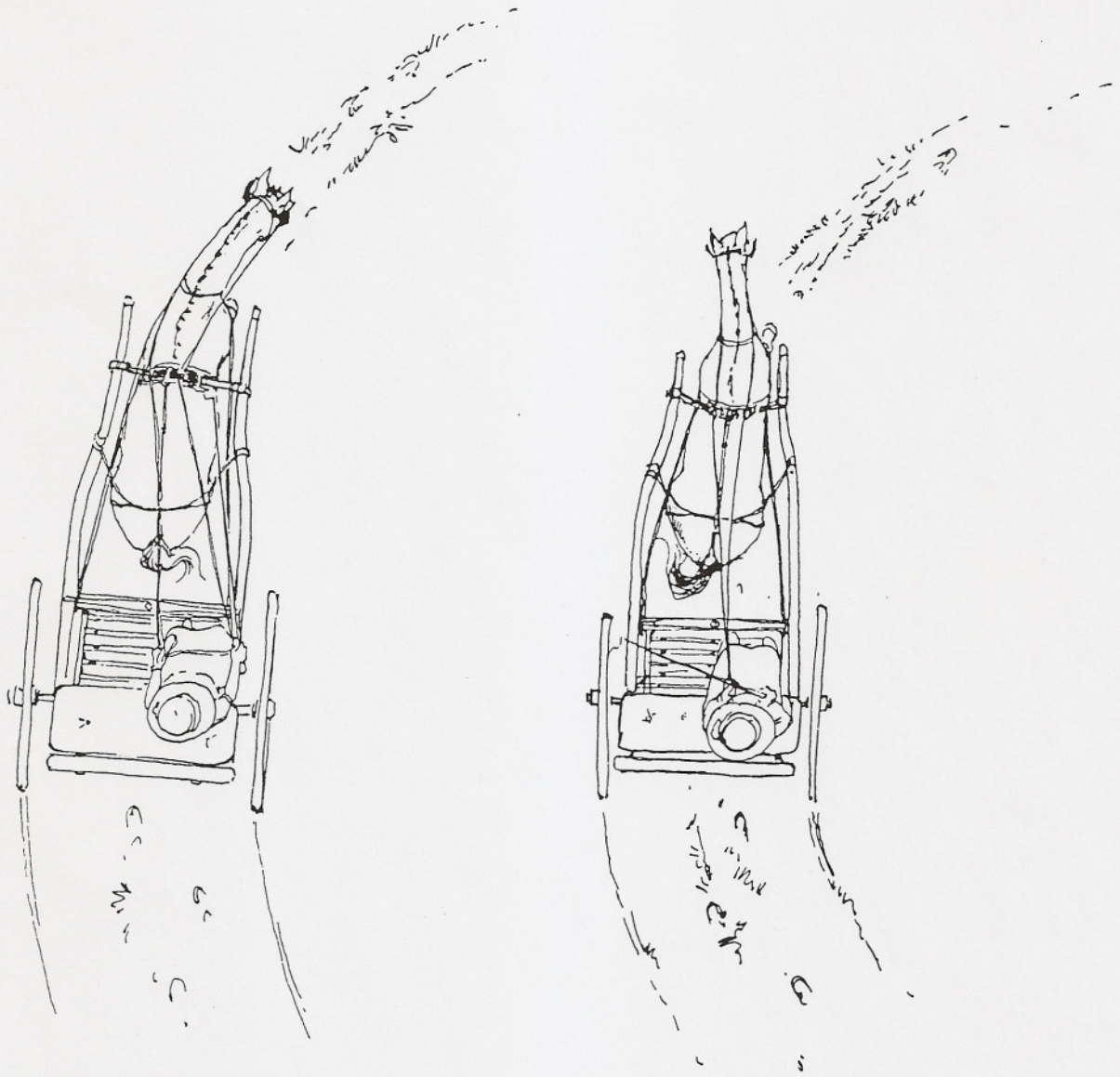
When you think of a horse being on the bit, you may visualize the head carriage of an advanced horse--a raised and powerfully arched neck with head tucked in and vertical. Don't expect this of your horse when he first learns to accept contact with the bit. At the lower levels of dressage competition, your horse will not be required to have the higher head carriage that is developed with the collected gaits. Since horses by nature place more weight on their forehands, it takes a long time (years!) for them to develop the strength and coordination to shift a significant portion of their weight back onto their hindquarters and elevate their forehands, resulting in this higher head carriage.

When training your horse to go on the bit, you are not trying to force his head and neck into a set position as

ONE SIDED HORSES



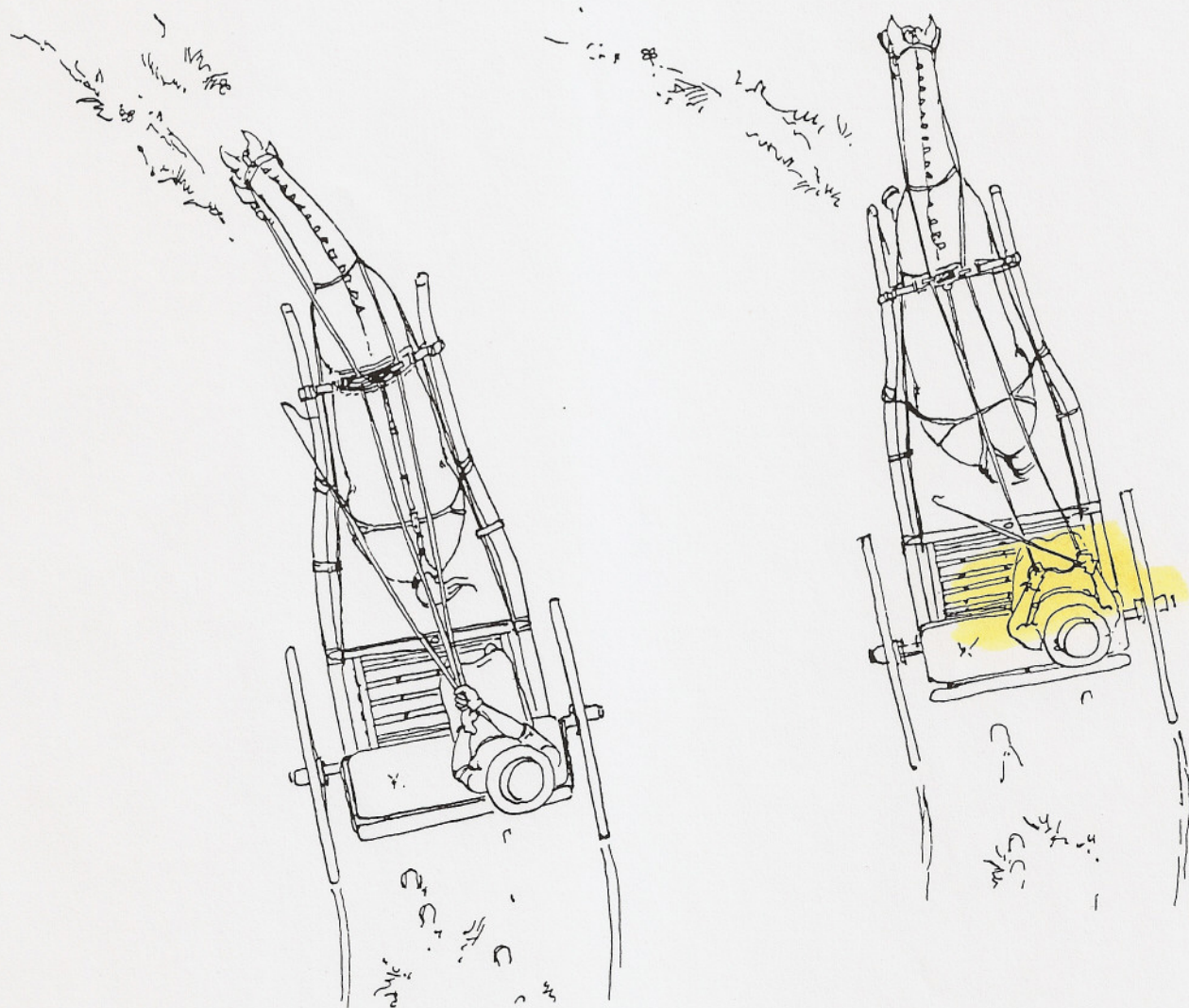
(Fig. 16)



*horse bending correctly
while circling right
(use of whip on inside girth)*

*horse falling in
while circling right*

(Fig. 17)



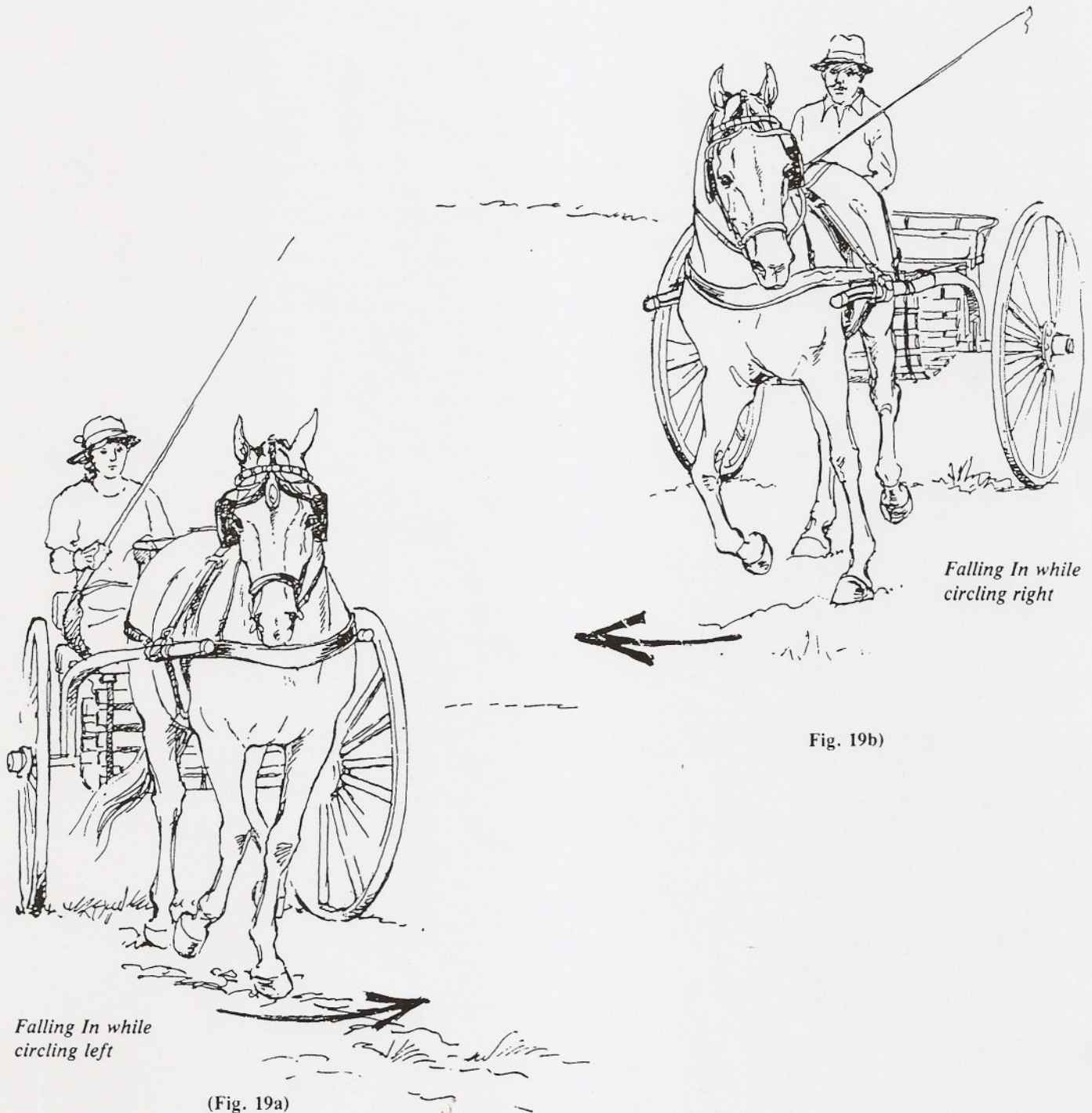
*Horse bending correctly
while circling left
(use of whip on inside girth)*

*horse falling in
while circling left*

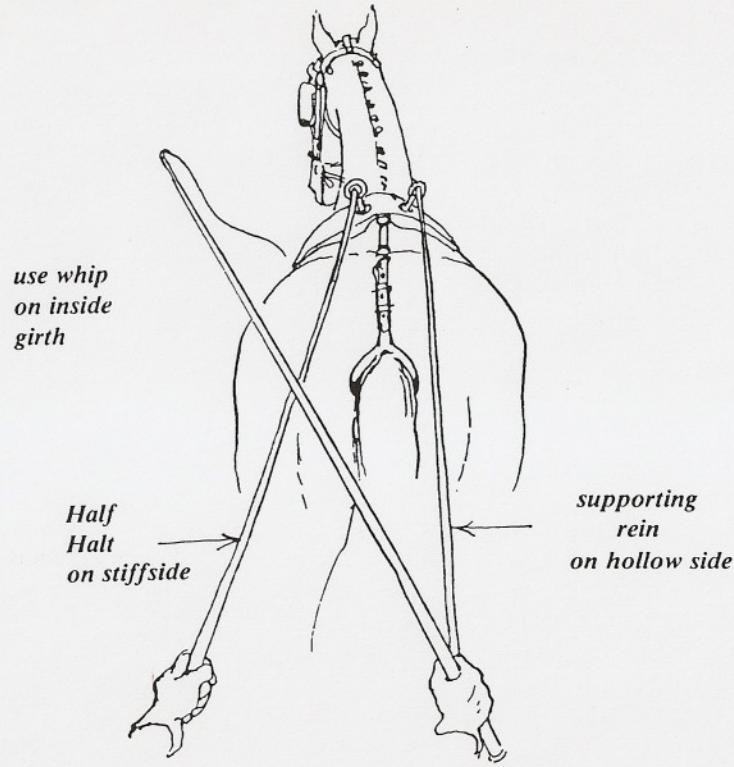
(Fig. 18)

one does with a biting rig. Getting your horse on the bit is the result of a long training process in which there are no shortcuts. Your horse will be on the bit only when he moves forward in a relaxed manner, engages his hindquarters, is rhythmical, straight, and accepts an even contact with the bit on both sides of his mouth. (see fig. 21) Horses trained with biting rigs may appear to have the head carriage of a horse on the bit. However, they are not really on the bit because they haven't learned to engage their hind-quarters and track up properly. They haven't been encouraged to relax their backs. (see fig. 22)

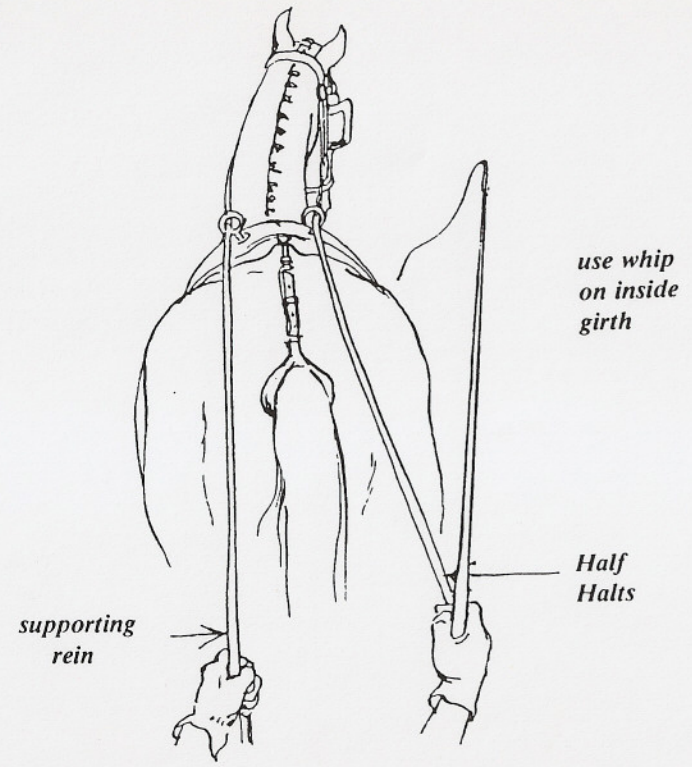
When your horse is on the bit, he is carrying more of his weight with his hindquarters; therefore, he will not seek support by leaning on the reins. He will flex his neck at the poll, the poll being the highest point of his neck, and give with his jaw, offering no resistance to your rein aids. At the lower levels of driven dressage, where collection is not required, your horse's neck should be somewhat raised with his head held just in front of the vertical. Later on, when executing collected movements, your horse will be expected to shift more of his weight to his hind legs. This will serve to further lighten his



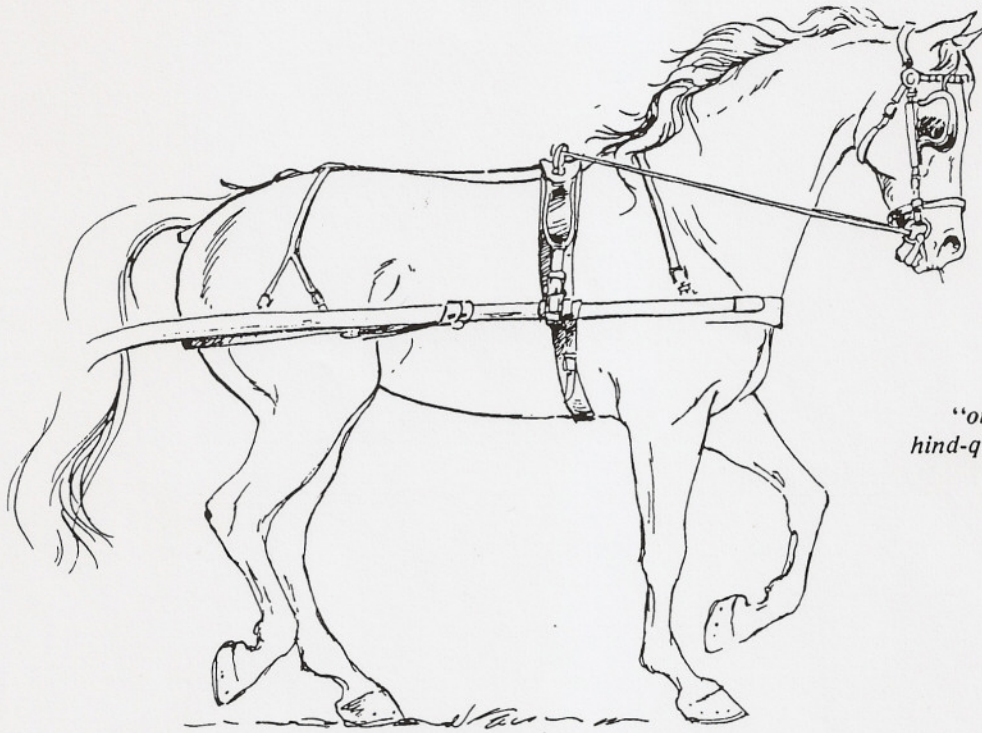
*Turning left with
Right Sided horse*



*Turning right with
Left Sided horse*

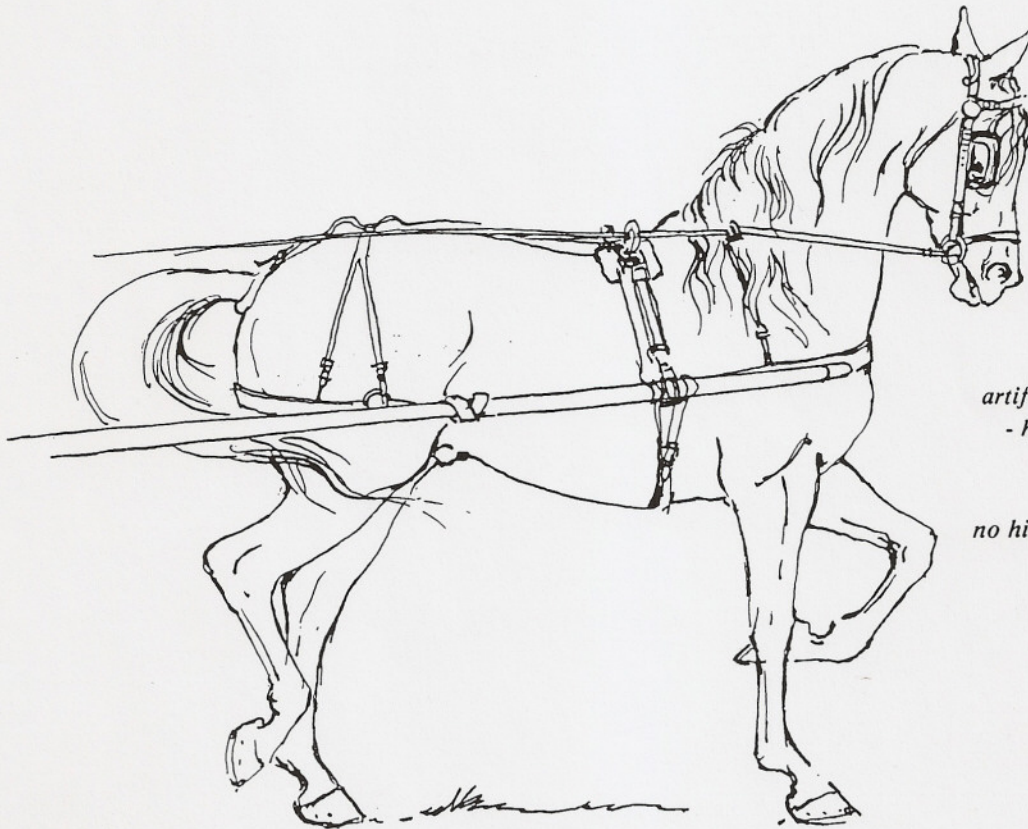


(Fig 20)



*"on the bit"
hind-quarters well engaged*

(Fig. 21)



*artificial head carriage
- horse not on bit -*

no hindend engagement

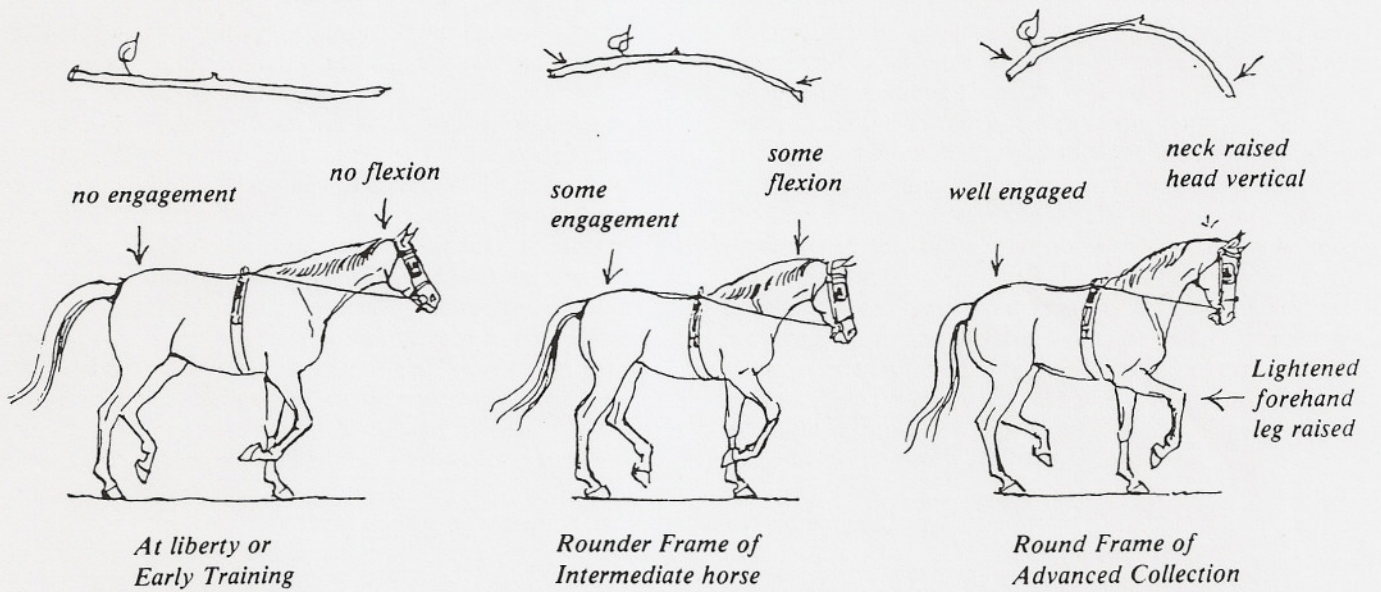
(Fig. 22)

forehand, enabling him to raise his neck higher and flex more at the poll, bringing his head more toward the vertical. (see fig. 23 and 24)

You will encourage your horse to become rounder in his frame by subtly containing the forward motion produced by well engaged hindquarters. Work only at the trot at first. Take a supporting contact on the outside rein. Use this rein to regulate your horse's speed and prevent him from turning in. Squeeze and release the inside rein as you would squeeze the water out of a sponge. This is not as abrupt as the quick pull and release of the half-halt. You vary the time that you take squeezing the inside rein and the time you spend releasing that rein. If you keep your horse moving actively forward while you repeatedly employ this rein action, you will

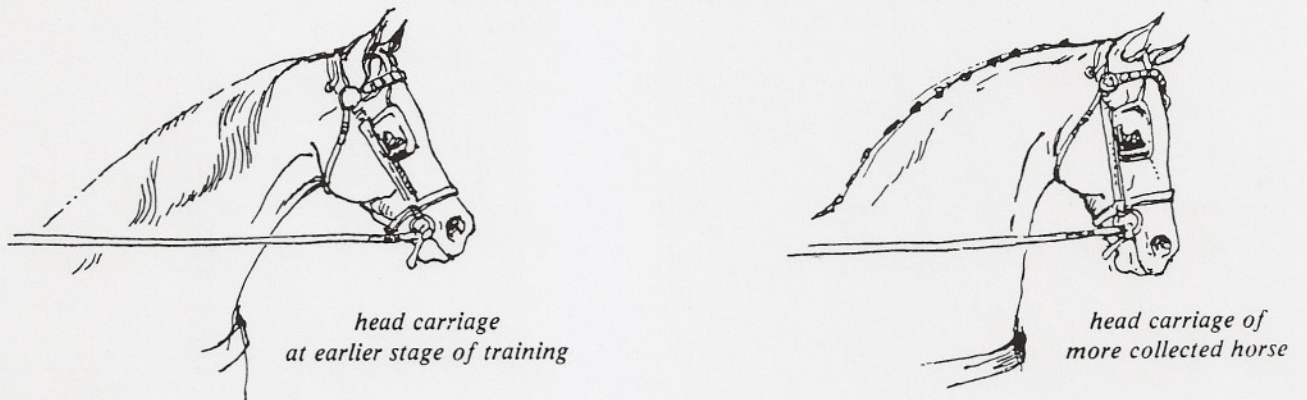
encourage your horse to round his back and flex his neck at the poll. You must be very sensitive with your hands when you ask your horse to come on the bit. When you feel your horse soften and flex at the poll, you must be equally as soft with the reins. Your horse needs to be rewarded with giving hands (this doesn't mean losing contact). Don't forget to keep your horse going rhythmically forward at this point or he will not be able to stay on the bit. Work your horse in both directions of the arena when you are doing this exercise. If you are practicing on a road or trail, switch to a new outside rein every so often to keep your horse soft on both sides of his jaw. A good indication that your horse is properly on the bit is a moist or lathered mouth. A dry mouth is a sign that your horse is resistant in his jaw.

FRAME OF HORSE AS TRAINING PROGRESSES



(Fig. 23)

Head Carriage of horses 'On the Bit'



(Fig. 24)

CHAPTER 9

HORSES THAT AVOID BIT CONTACT

Horses that go above the bit or behind the bit to avoid contact are particularly difficult to work with. Both types are usually tense and unable to use their hind-quarters efficiently as a result. They are usually in great discomfort.

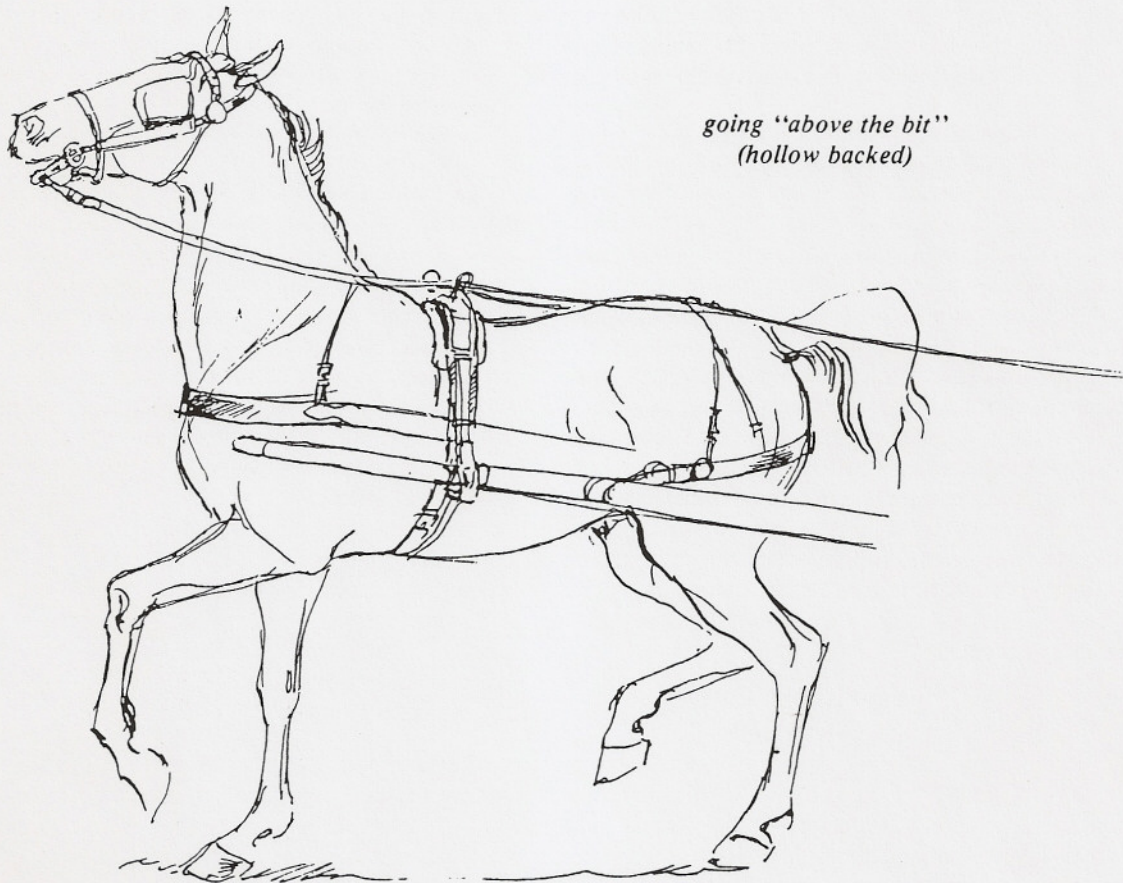
A horse that goes above the bit throws or carries his head up with his nose pointing straight out in front of him to keep the pressure of the bit off the bars of his mouth. (He shifts the pressure to the corner of his lips instead.) This type of horse "hollows" his back rather than rounding it. (see fig. 25)

A horse that goes behind the bit avoids bit contact by overarching his neck so that his nose points toward his chest and he drops the bit in his mouth. (see fig. 26)

The first thing you should do if you have either of these problems is to have your horse's mouth and teeth professionally checked by your vet or equine dentist. Pain caused by a bit pressing on bruised flesh or banging against an erupting tooth can certainly cause your horse to avoid bit contact. Make sure that the bit you are using fits your horse and is properly positioned in his mouth.

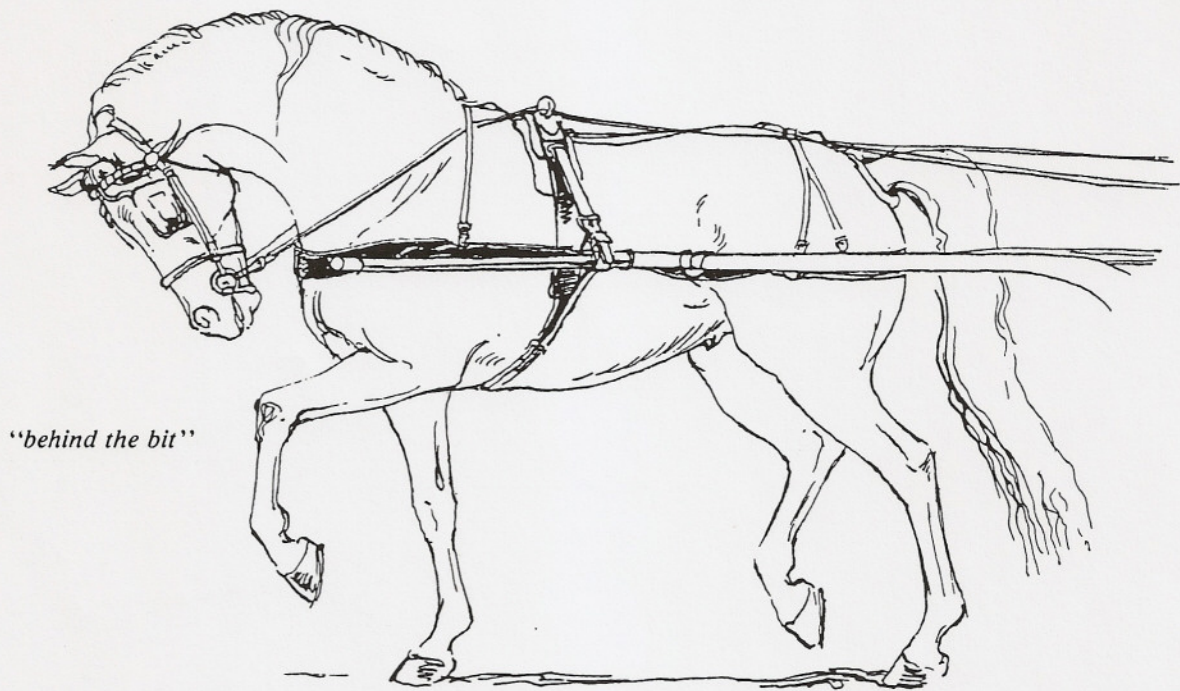
If your horse's mouth is normal, you should take the following approach if he goes above the bit. First of all, try a milder bit. If you are already using a snaffle, wrap it in leather or try a soft rubber snaffle. Then take all the time that you need to relax your horse. You cannot take another step in your horse's training until he is relaxed. Work at the walk until he is quiet and his head comes down. Talk to your horse, using a soothing voice, and be very soft with your hands. When your horse is walking calmly, ask for short periods of trot always returning to the relaxed walk. When you ask for circles, work only on large circles (40 meters) at first. Don't rush this type of horse in his training. If you are patient, you will make progress.

If your horse is behind the bit and his mouth is normal, you should approach his training in the following way. As with the "above the bit" horse, first try a milder bit. Then you must concentrate on making him move forward, taking longer, unrushed, rhythmic strides. When he finally does begin to lengthen his frame, he will begin to seek a little rein contact. When the "behind the bit" horse makes this first step in the right direction, you must be very soft and giving with the reins to encourage him. If he runs into an unyielding hard rein, he will back off the bit contact immediately. Correcting a horse that is behind the bit demands a great deal of sensitivity and knowledge on your part.



going "above the bit"
(hollow backed)

(Fig. 25)



(Fig. 26)

If you find that you are making no progress with either of these types of horses (a horse that goes above the bit or a horse that goes behind the bit), consider the possibility that your horse may have physical discomfort in an area of his body other than his mouth. A horse may avoid bit contact because it hurts him to stretch out his neck and lengthen his frame. He may have a stiff or injured muscle. If you feel that there might be a physical problem, get some professional help.

Horses that lean on the bit are also avoiding proper bit contact. They are not avoiding the bit. They are avoiding using their bodies properly and therefore won't take a light contact. They are using the bit as a kind of "fifth leg." Horses that lean on the bit are putting most of their weight on their forequarters. They are all too eager to let you support their heads with reins.

If you drive a horse that leans on the bit encourage him to engage his hind-quarters and carry himself. Make frequent use of half-halts. At first you may have to use very strong abrupt aids. Make sure your horse is moving energetically forward. When he leans on the bit keep a steady contact on one rein and pull and release the other rein abruptly and firmly. A half-halt of this severity should result in your horse lifting his head up, if only for a moment. Half-halt as frequently as necessary until your horse begins to carry himself. With some horses this will be with every stride! When your horse begins to understand what you are asking of him, you will most likely be

able to use lighter aids when applying half-halts.

It is a very beneficial exercise to make frequent transitions of gait with a horse that leans on the reins. (I discuss transitions in the next chapter.) Try making quick, smooth, transitions from trot to halt to trot as frequently as you can. This may be every ten, fifteen, or twenty strides. If your horse is green, allow him to walk for a stride or two as he goes from trot to halt or halt to trot. By driving your horse forward throughout these repeated transitions you will encourage more engagement of the hind-quarters and therefore a lighter contact on the reins.

It is very important to be consistent in refusing to let a horse lean on the reins. You may be so used to this unpleasant habit that you aren't even aware of it. Be conscious at all times of the degree of pressure your horse is exerting on the reins. Through the use of half-halts and frequent transitions your horse will realize that it is more comfortable to take a light contact and carry himself than to lean on the reins.

The right degree of rein contact will vary from horse to horse. If you are uncertain of whether or not your horse is leaning on the reins, ask for a quick downward transition. If your horse is carrying himself and you have the right amount of contact with his mouth he will respond immediately. If he doesn't respond and you must increase the strength of your aids, your horse is most likely leaning on the reins.

CHAPTER 10

TRANSITIONS

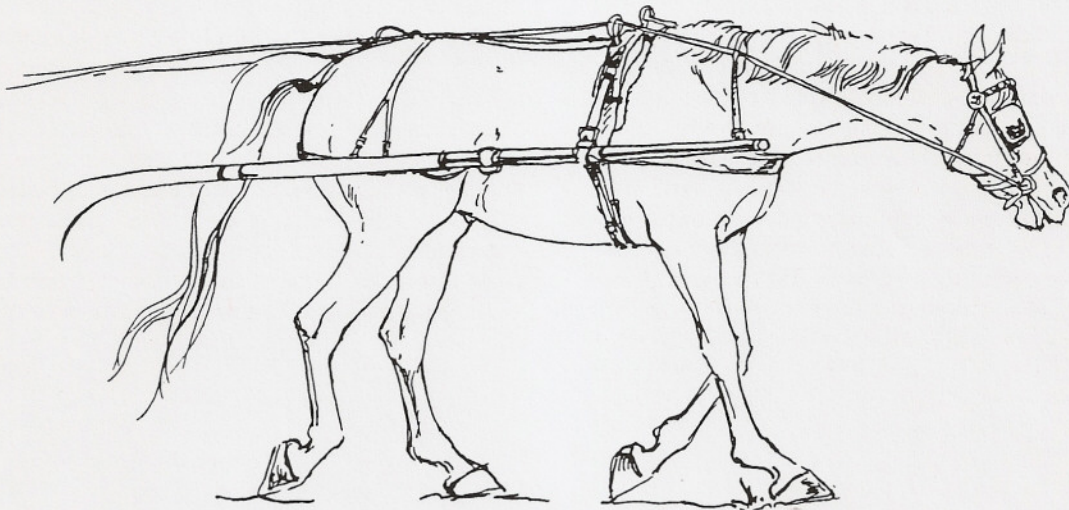
A transition is a change of gait or pace; for example, from walk to working trot, working trot to walk, halt to back, working trot to a lengthening of the trot, etc. A transition to a faster gait is called an upward transition, and to a slower gait, a downward transition. A good transition is made when your horse changes pace smoothly and immediately without any sign of resistance. Your horse should maintain a steady rhythm in his gait up to the moment of transition. In the lower levels of dressage, the halt to working trot and working trot to halt can be executed progressively through the walk, i.e., your horse can take two or three well defined walking steps before trotting or halting.

In order to achieve a good transition, your horse should be well-balanced, forward-moving, and have an even contact with the bit. You must drive your horse forward throughout any transition, whether it be from walk to trot or trot to walk! Since most people think that the only aids for slowing down are a pull on the reins and a verbal command to "whoa" or "walk," etc., it may seem a paradox that one must use aids to encourage your

horse to move forward through a downward transition. In order to maintain engagement of your horse's hind-quarters as you change to a slower pace you must keep your horse moving energetically forward. If you do not, your horse will drag his hind feet when you ask him to slow down, and the resulting transition will be sloppy and most likely not straight. (see fig. 27)

Forward movement is a prerequisite to engagement of the hind-quarters. However, do not confuse rushing with this desired quality of forward movement. When your horse is rushing he is obviously going forward quickly, but his hind-quarters are not being engaged. When a horse rushes he is not relaxed and he does not carry weight and propel himself with his hocks. A rushing horse is heavy on his fore-quarters and transitions that you attempt with such a horse will be jerky and rough.

When you are about to make a transition, give a quick half-halt on your horse's stiff side. This should not be a rough, visible aid (unless your horse is running away with you!). The purpose of this half-halt is to get your horse's attention, and prepare him for a new command. When you give this half-halt, drive your horse forward with your voice or whip at the same time. This action will cause your horse to step under himself a bit more with his hind legs and become more balanced. After the half-halt, give your horse the verbal and rein aids to walk, halt, or trot. Once your horse has made a nice upward or downward transition, insist that he keep up the forward movement in the new gait.



Sloppy downward transition - no impulsion

(Fig. 27)

CHAPTER 11

THE GAITS

THE WALK

The walk is the most important gait in which to work your horse. You cannot progress in your training until you have established the basics, (relaxation, forwardness, etc.), at this gait. A horse that has a naturally good walk, (i.e., four, regular, marching beats and a good overstride of the front hoofprints with the hind hooves) will, with proper training, most likely be able to excel in trot and canter work.

At the training level you should ask your horse for the free walk and the working walk. At the free walk you want your horse to stride forward in a relaxed manner and stretch his head and neck out and down. (See fig. 28a) A swinging tail is a good sign that your horse's back is relaxed and working properly. Ask your horse to keep marching rhythmically forward with your driving aids and at the same time give him progressively longer reins. This should encourage him to stretch his head and neck down and out. Most horses will naturally take longer strides in this relaxed, comfortable frame. It may take a while for a tense horse to be able to perform the free walk but most horses will enjoy this exercise when they understand it. It is good to use the free walk as a reward after a hard exercise.

The working walk is also a forward, marching, four beat gait. The difference between the free walk and the working walk is that you keep a light, steady contact with the bit and you don't encourage your horse to stretch his head out and down. (See fig. 28b) Continue using your driving aids to keep your horse moving forward and straight. Your horse should still overstride at the working walk, but it will not be as great as the free walk.

At the higher levels of competition you will be asked to perform the lengthened walk. It is very similar to the free walk except that you give your horse long reins, not loose reins. You encourage your horse to stretch his head and neck out and down but you keep a light contact with the bit all the while. (See fig. 28c) This is harder to accomplish than the free walk because your horse must seek the bit contact as you lengthen the reins. A horse at training level may not be able to do this.

THE TROT

(Working, Collected, Lengthened, and Extended)

The progressive levels of driven dressage competition require progressively more difficult changes within the trot. These different types of trot demonstrate an increased degree of hind-end engagement, balance, suppleness, and submission that should be achieved at the various levels.

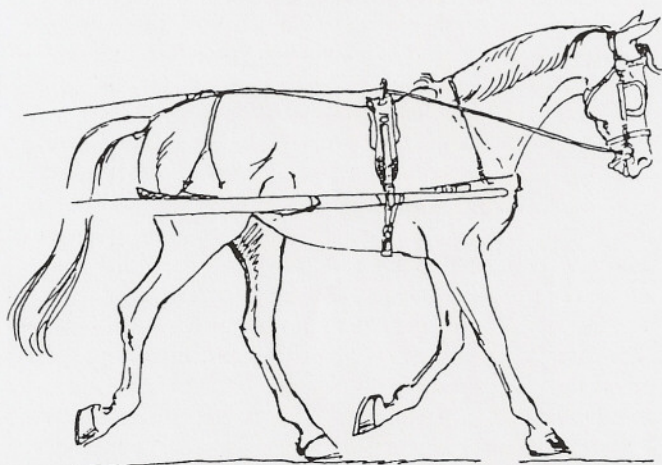
At the training level of dressage competition your horse should be capable of a good working trot. At the preliminary level lengthenings of stride at the trot are introduced. Collected trot is required at intermediate and

advanced levels and extended trot is required at the advanced level.

However advanced you and your horse are, it will improve your horse's muscular development, sensitivity to the aids and sense of balance to practice a small degree of collection and extension in your dressage workouts. You should only attempt this when you feel that your horse is relaxed and obedient. It will take a long time (perhaps years) before your horse can execute the high degree of collection and extension required of an advanced dressage horse. But by occasionally asking for these changes within the trot, you will improve your horse's response to your aids and begin to develop his muscles and coordination so that eventually he may be able to perform them correctly.

Before you ask for collection and extension, your horse must be on the bit and his basic working trot should be well established. (see fig. 29a) This working trot should

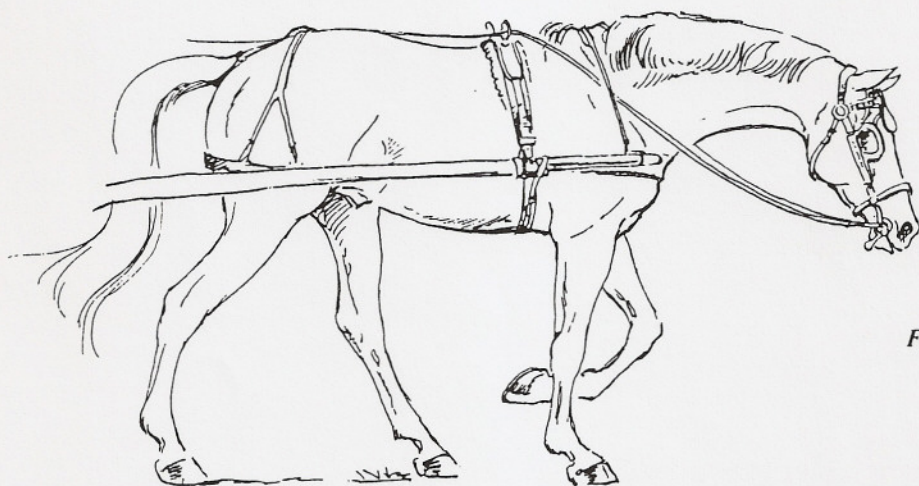
Working trot



(Fig. 29a)

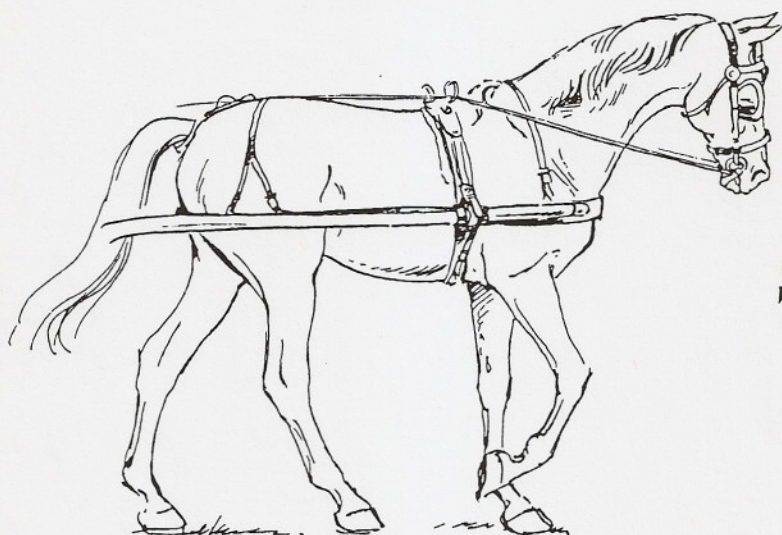
be a "security blanket" to you. It should be a comfortable gait to which you and your horse can return to reestablish rhythm, relaxation, and forward movement. Your horse should be well balanced at the working trot. He should be able to carry himself without rushing, dragging his feet or falling on the forehand. At the working trot your horse's hind hooves should track up into the prints of his front hooves.

When you ask for collection, you will be compressing your horse into a rounder frame by pushing him from the rear and containing him in front with the reins. You should always push your horse into a collected frame, not pull him into it. He should lighten his forehand by stepping further under his body and carrying more of his weight with his hind legs and hocks. This will enable him to raise his neck and adopt the higher head carriage developed by collection. Your horse's steps will be shorter in this trot than in the working trot but the rhythm should remain the same.



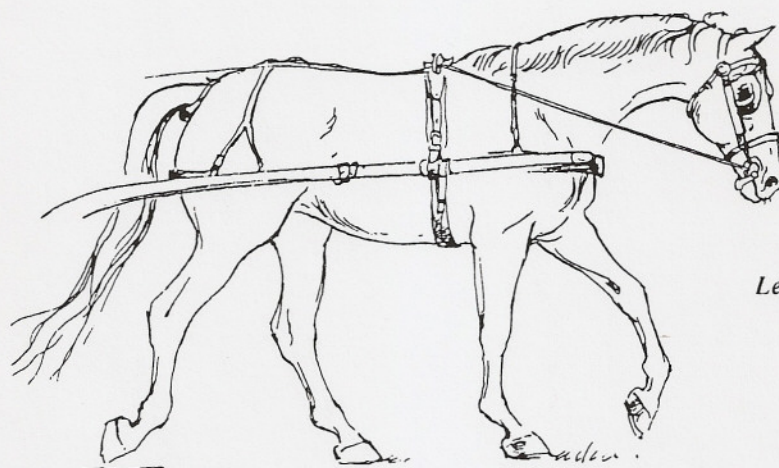
Free Walk

Fig. 28a



Working Walk

Fig. 28b

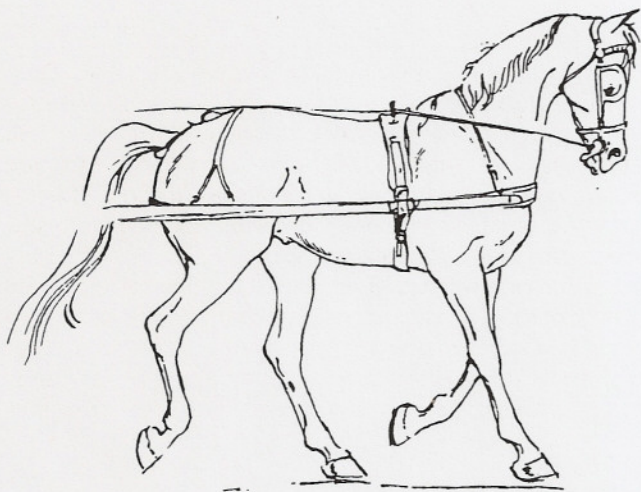


Lengthened Walk

Fig. 28c

A true, collected trot is only attained after years of consistent dressage training. (See fig. 29b) Collection is hard work for your horse. It takes a long time for your horse to develop the physical strength to perform it correctly. When you first ask for collection, your horse will probably lean on the bit and lose his impulsion. As always, keep him moving energetically forward! Keep him from leaning on the bit by half halting with one or both reins. Don't spend a lot of time in collected trot when you first introduce it. A few steps now and then are plenty. Always return to a forward working trot or walk after collection.

Collected trot

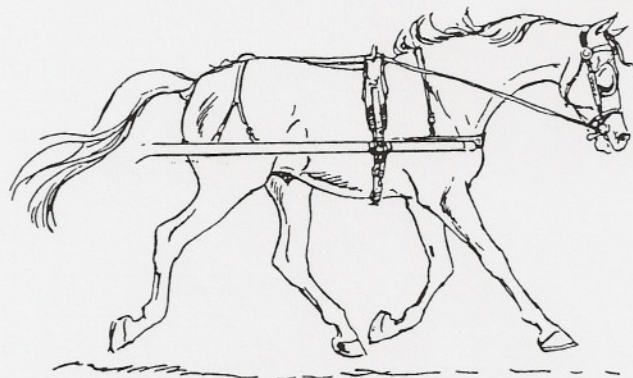


(Fig. 29b)

The lengthened trot is an intermediary trot between the working and extended trot. Your horse must be able to perform a good lengthened trot before you can attempt an extended trot. To perform the lengthened trot, you must ask your horse to take longer strides than he does in the working trot while allowing him to lower and extend his neck (but not come off the bit). See fig. 29c) He must not rush or change the rhythm of the trot as he lengthens. While remaining balanced (not leaning on the bit) and rhythmical, your horse should display strong impulsion as he springs off well engaged hind legs. The suspension period in this trot (the time your horse spends off the ground) should become more obvious than that of the working trot. Your horse should overtrack his front hoofprints with his hind hooves by at least several inches.

At the extended trot, your horse should demonstrate a great degree of impulsion, springing powerfully off well engaged hind legs, taking the longest strides that he can. The suspension period in this trot should be brilliant. To an observer, your horse should look as if he is floating through the air during this period. His overstride should

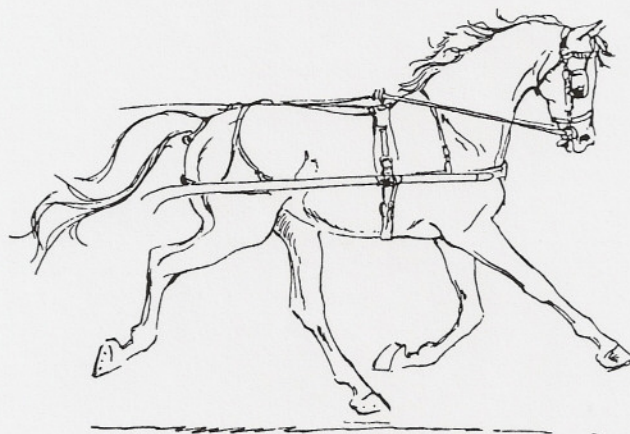
Lengthening in trot



(Fig. 29c)

be greater than that of the lengthened trot. At the extended trot your horse should remain on the bit. Your horse's head should not be lowered and extended as it is at the lengthened trot. His head carriage should be the same as it is in the collected trot. (See fig. 29d)

Extended trot

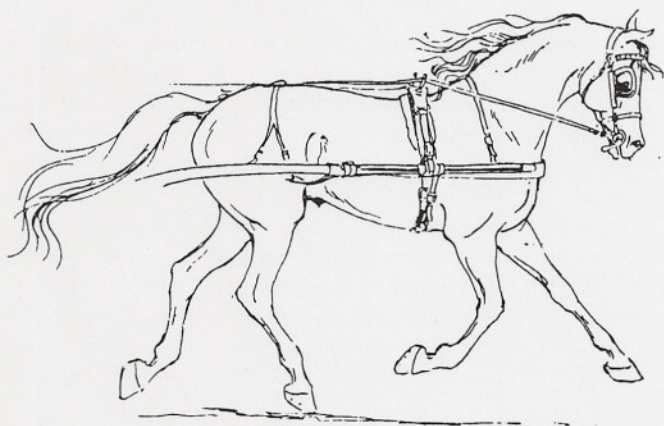


(Fig. 29d)

The extended trot is an advanced movement. It requires a great degree of balance, engagement of the hindquarters and strength. It takes years to develop, as does the collected trot. Your horse will not be capable of

a true extended trot until his muscles and balance are fully developed. If your horse demonstrates a "false extension" or takes straddling steps with his hind legs when he lengthens his strides, he is not ready to perform the extended trot. (See fig. 30a and 30b) A false extension will result if your horse tries to avoid hind end engagement by throwing out his forelegs in a showy manner but not lengthen stride with his hind legs. (See fig. 30a) Horses that have been training in biting rigs are likely to display a false extensions because they have been forced into an artificial frame that lacks hind end engagement.

False extension - lacks engagement of hindquarters



(Fig. 30a)

When you first ask your horse to lengthen his stride at the trot urge him on across the diagonal of the arena, down the long side of the arena, or on a level field or dirt road where the footing isn't too hard. Ask only for a few strides and maintain a light, even contact with your horse's mouth. Allow your horse to stretch his neck out and down, but don't throw the reins away. If he rushes, becomes uneven in stride, or throws out his front feet without a corresponding lengthening of stride from behind, bring him back to the working trot and try again, demanding less lengthening.

Since the lengthened trot tends to wake up horses, it is a good exercise for increasing impulsion in a sluggish horse. Transitions from working trot to lengthened trot, then back to working trot will improve the impulsion in the working trot of the lazier horse. On the other hand, lengthened trot can be detrimental if practiced too soon or too much with a nervous, excitable horse. Don't even attempt a lengthening of stride with this type of horse until he is as relaxed as possible.

Conversely, work in the collected trot can have a positive effect on a nervous horse that tends to rush. Transitions from working trot, to collected trot, and

Incorrect extension straddling with hind legs



(Fig. 30b)

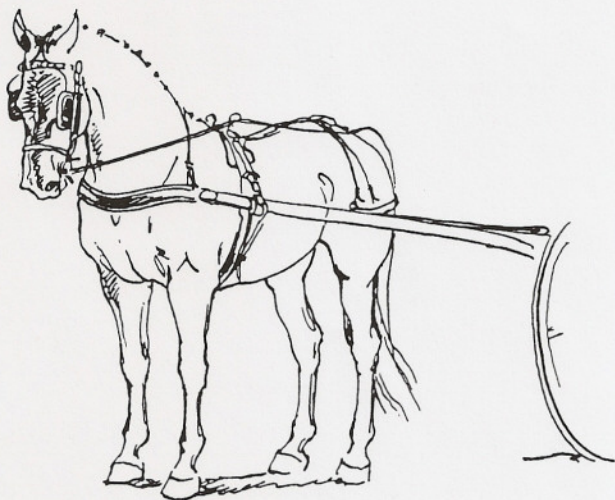
back to working trot will help to balance and relax his working trot. Collected trot should not be stressed with the lazier type of horse until he is reliably energetic and forward in his working trot.

THE HALT

At the halt, your horse should be motionless, yet attentive, ready to respond promptly to your aids. He should stand straight and square, his weight distributed evenly on all four legs. In the lower levels of competition, your horse should maintain an even contact with the bit. In the more advanced levels, your horse should remain on the bit and bring his hind legs under himself to a greater degree. (See fig. 31)

Throughout your horse's training you should always drive your horse forward into the halt. If your downward transition lacks impulsion, it will be very easy for your horse to drift sideways and find it impossible to achieve a square halt.

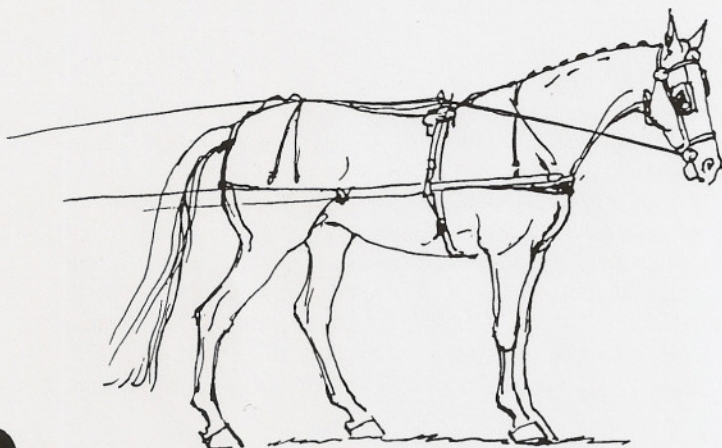
In early phases of dressage training, you will rarely achieve a square halt because your horse will not have developed the degree of hind-quarter engagement, and therefore, the balance that this movement requires.

Square halt — advanced horse

(Fig. 31)

Reward your horse if he comes to a straight, obedient halt with forelegs side by side, and at least one hind leg well engaged. (See fig. 32) Then ask him to engage his other hind leg by urging him forward while you use the reins to prevent him from actually moving forward. Indicate which leg he is to move by tapping that hind leg lightly with the whip. If you consistently ask for a square halt throughout your horse's training, it will eventually come as his balance improves.

Remember that it is more difficult to come to a square halt when going up or down hills. If you are going down

Halt typical of training level horse

(Fig. 32)

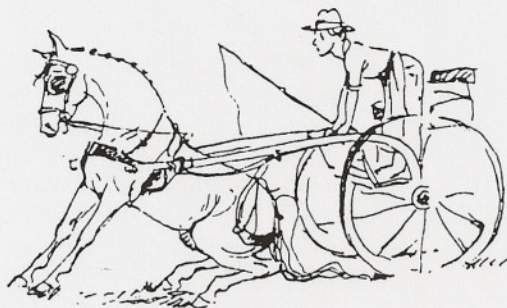
hill, the weight of the cart coming up against your horse's hind-quarters can push him out of balance and cause him to put a hind foot forward. If you are going up a hill, it is easier for your horse to "hold the cart" by bracing with his hind legs side by side. However, it will be more difficult for him to engage his hind legs.

Your horse is most capable of a square halt on a level surface. However, if you harness your horse with too much slack in the breeching and traces, the weight of the cart will run up against your horse a moment after he halts and push him off balance.

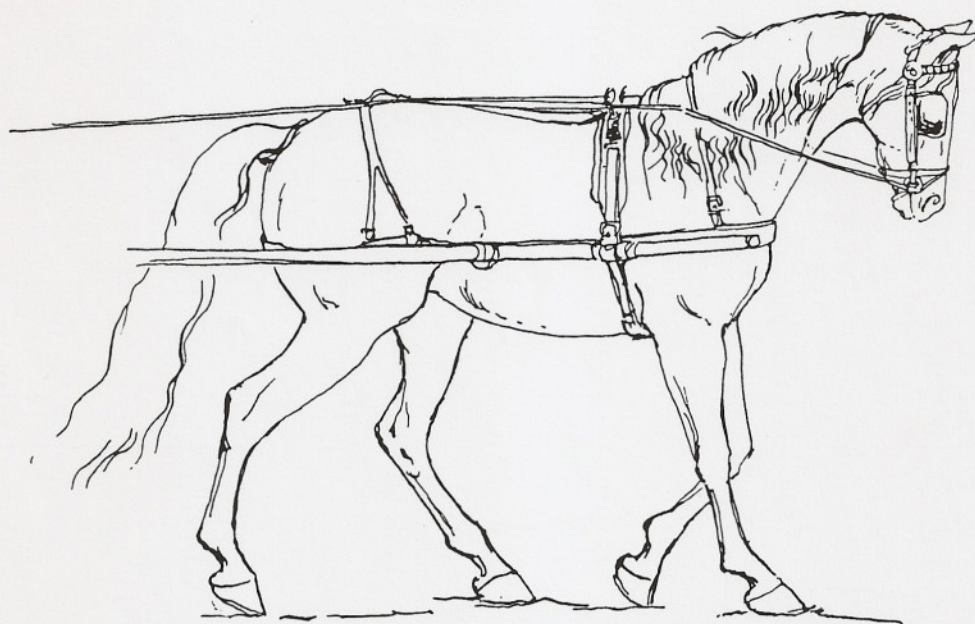
BACKING (THE REIN BACK)

The aids for backing your horse in harness are the verbal command to "back" and a light pull on the reins. However, in order for your horse to engage his hind end and take clearly defined backward steps he must be on the bit and ready and willing to move forward from an obedient halt. (See fig. 33) If your horse is inattentive at the halt and off the bit, he will most likely back crookedly and go above the bit. (See fig. 34)

Backing, (the rein back), is considered to be a collected movement. However, it is an important movement for your horse to know even if he can't perform it in an advanced, collected frame. Whenever you give the aids for backing and your horse responds without resistance, reward him with a kind word, even if he isn't on the bit. Your horse will naturally improve in this movement as his dressage training progresses. At training level your horse should back obediently.

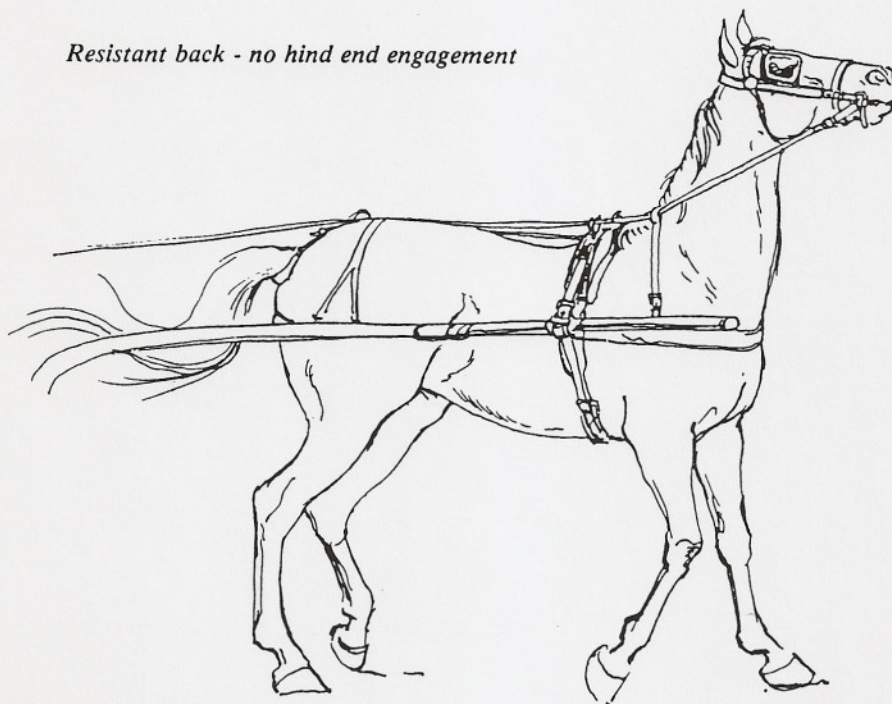


A proper back



(Fig. 33)

Resistant back - no hind end engagement



(Fig. 34)

CHAPTER 12

FIGURES TO PRACTICE

When you work your horse in dressage, practice the following figures that appear in dressage tests. Drive through these figures at the walk and trot, incorporating both upward and downward transitions. When you want to change pace or direction at a letter, do so when your horse's nose is even with that letter.

1. Straight Lines

Across the Diagonal (fig. 35)

On the Center Line (fig. 36)

Along the Long Side (fig. 37)

Along the Short Side (fig. 38)

Off the Track (fig. 39)

On the Quarter Line (fig. 40)

Concentrate on keeping up your impulsion on straight lines. If you lose your forward motion, you will waver from the track. Straight lines are very difficult to drive correctly, especially when you are incorporating downward and upward transitions. Practice trot-to-walk, walk-to-trot, walk-to-halt, halt-to-walk, working-to-collected trot, working trot-to-lengthened/extended trot, etc. on the straight line. You will see how easy it is to stray from the line if your horse isn't moving energetically forward.

2. Circles

The circle is the basic figure on which to practice bending. To drive a circle correctly you must keep your horse straight on the track. Your horse's spine should always be in line with the arc of the circle. You will have to bend him more to correspond with the track of a twenty meter circle and less when driving a forty meter circle. (see fig. 41)

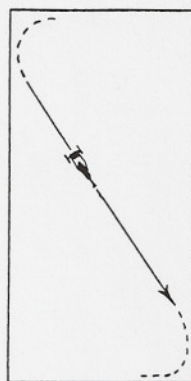
When you drive a circle, your horse must be steady on the outside rein and move with enough impulsion to stay on the desired track maintaining the correct bend. Try to touch the various points that mark the boundaries of your circle for just one stride and always end where you started. It is a good idea to pick a center for your circle and try to keep an equal distance as you drive around it.

The forty meter circle utilizes the entire width of the arena. This large circle is difficult to drive because there is plenty of area in which to go astray. When you drive the forty meter circle, your outside wheel track should almost touch the wall on the long sides of the arena.

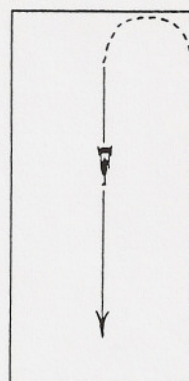
The forty meter circle is the easiest to drive when executed in a forty meter by eighty meter dressage arena at A or C because the letter X will mark one of your boundaries. The circle will touch the track on the long sides of the arena 10 meters past K, M, F, or H. (fig. 42)

When practicing the thirty meter circle at E or B, the other side of your circle should be midway between the center line and the other long side of the arena, i.e., on the quarter line. (fig. 43)

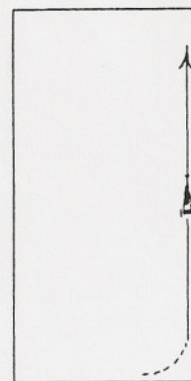
When driving the thirty meter circle off the short side of the arena from letter A or C, you should make your



(Fig. 35)



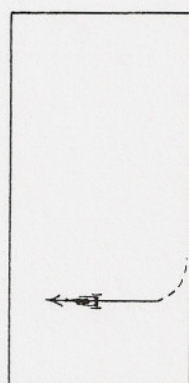
(Fig. 36)



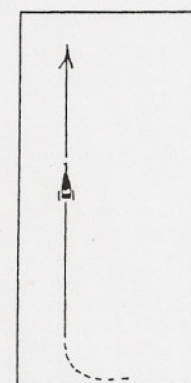
(Fig. 37)



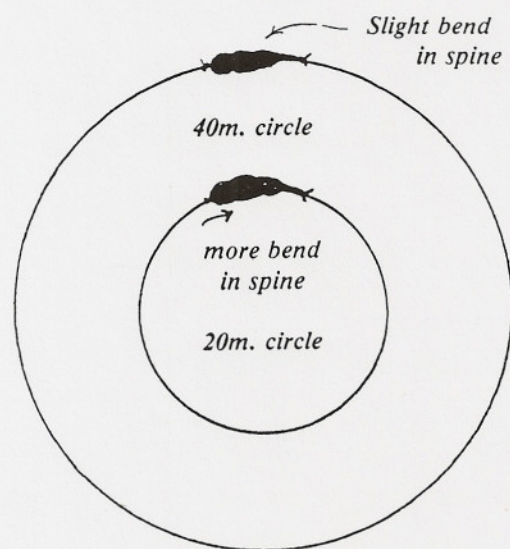
(Fig. 38)



(Fig. 39)

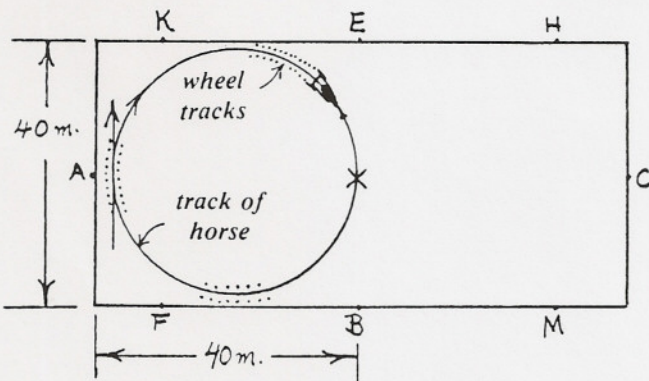


(Fig. 40)



(Fig. 41)

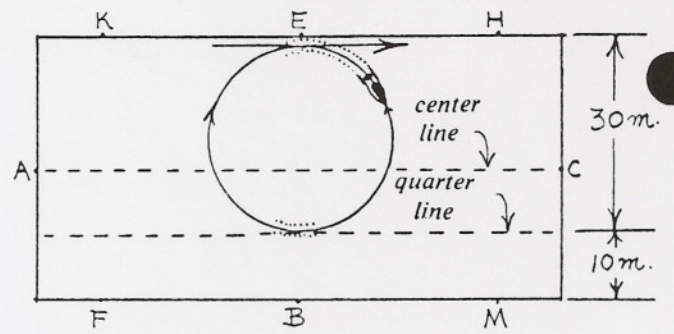
circle wide enough to just come within five meters of each long side of the arena. (fig. 44)



(Fig. 42)

The twenty meter circle is asked for in the more advanced tests. Since this circle is half the width of a driven dressage arena, the center line will mark one of your boundaries when you begin the circle from the long side of the arena. When the twenty meter circle is driven from the center line, the long side will mark not only the outer boundary, but the halfway point of the circle. (fig. 45)

In advanced tests, twenty meter circles are often driven from letter D. Since D is located ten meters from the short side of the arena on the center line, these circles will fit neatly into the corners of the arena. Begin these circles when your horse's nose passes letter D. Touch the track at K, M, F, or H and on the quarter line on the short side of the arena for just one stride. (fig. 46)



(Fig. 43)

If you begin a twenty meter circle from A or C on the short sides of the arena, the two quarter lines will mark your boundaries. (fig. 47)

Here are some common mistakes made when circling. The desirable circle is indicated with a dotted line.

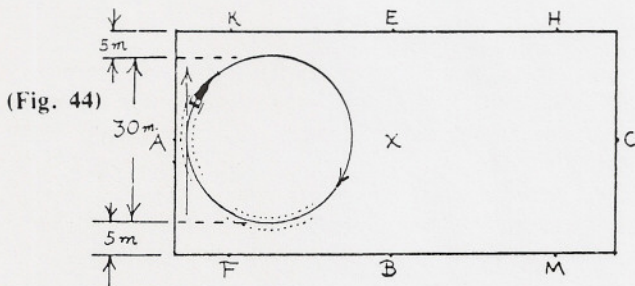
Taking too many strides along the boundaries makes an oblong shape (fig. 48)

Not reaching your boundaries (too small circle) (fig. 49)

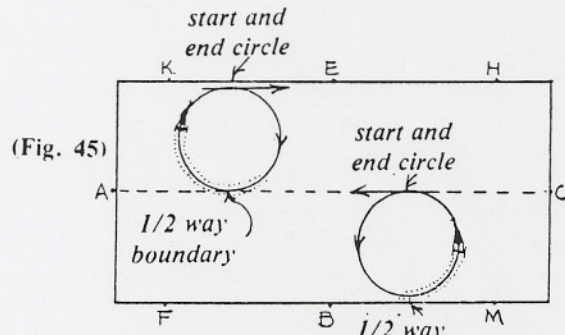
Hitting the boundaries but falling in from the track of the circle--horse not bending correctly (fig. 50)

Not beginning and ending the circle at the same point (fig. 51)

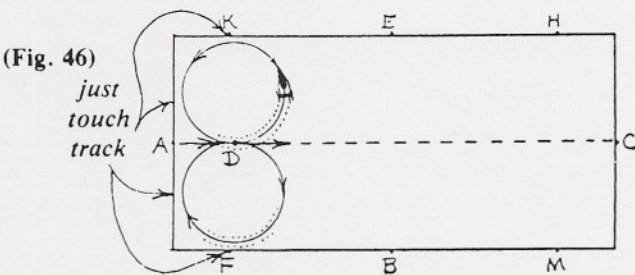
Going deeply into the corner instead of finishing the circle (fig. 52)



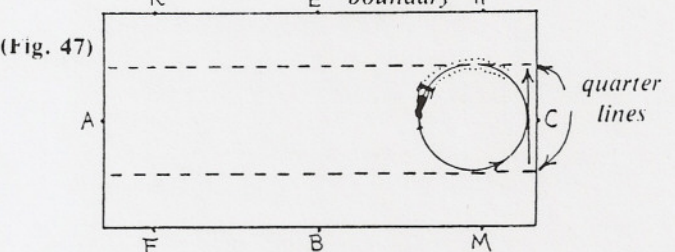
(Fig. 44)



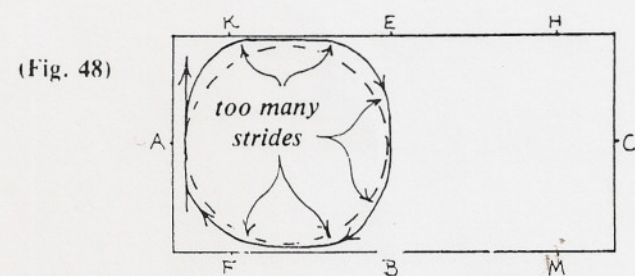
(Fig. 45)



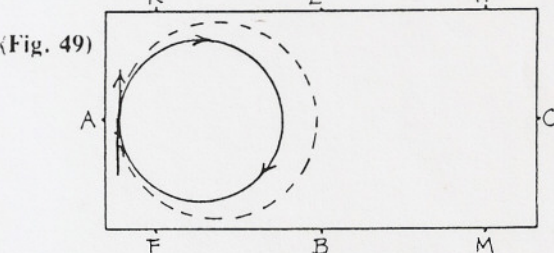
(Fig. 46)



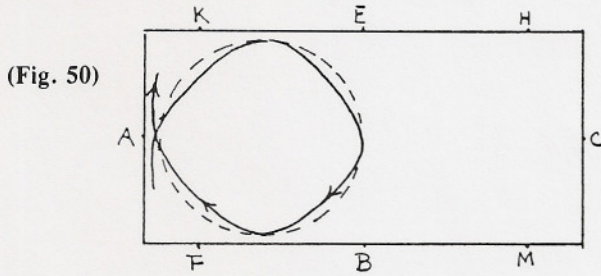
(Fig. 47)



(Fig. 48)



(Fig. 49)



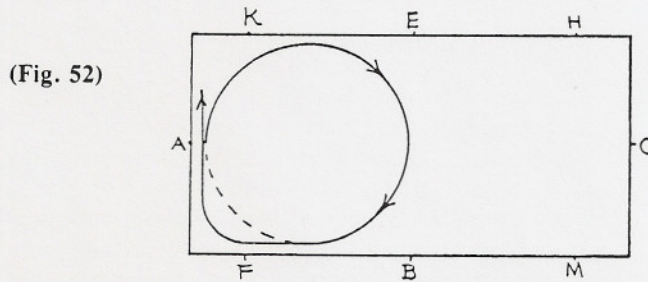
(Fig. 50)

3. Corners and turns

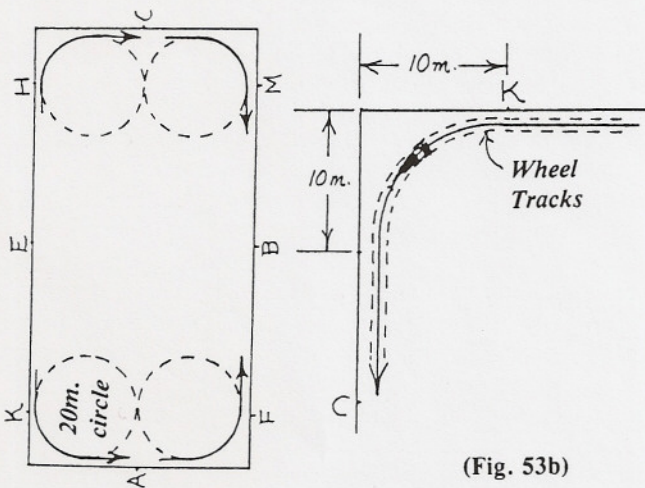
A corner or turn is really one quarter of a circle. The aids are the same as for circling.

Although you should always try to drive well into the corners of the arena, or into a turn, the speed at which you are going and your horse's degree of balance will dictate how deeply you will be able to go. The slower or more collected the pace, the farther into the corner or turn you can drive.

At the working gaits, you should consider the corners or turns to be one quarter of a twenty meter circle. When driving through corners start to bend your horse ten meters before the corner and go straight ten meters after. Use the corner letters F, M, H, and K to mark the start or finish of your corners. These letters are situated ten meters away from the corners on the long sides of the arena. When your horse's nose passes the ten meter mark you start or end the corner. (fig. 53a and b)

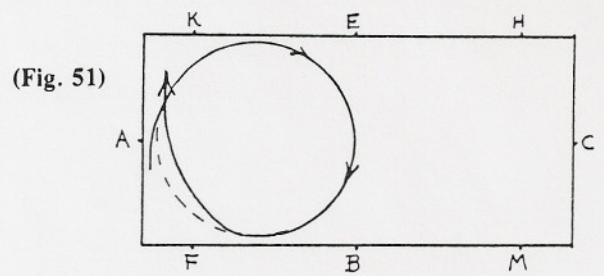


(Fig. 52)



(Fig. 53a)

(Fig. 53b)



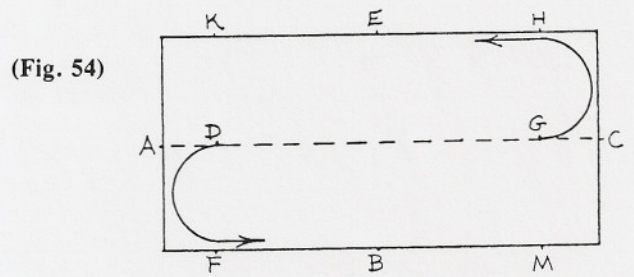
(Fig. 51)

When turning off the center line at letter C, G will mark where you should start your turn. When turning off the center line at A, Letter D will mark where you should start your turn. (fig. 54)

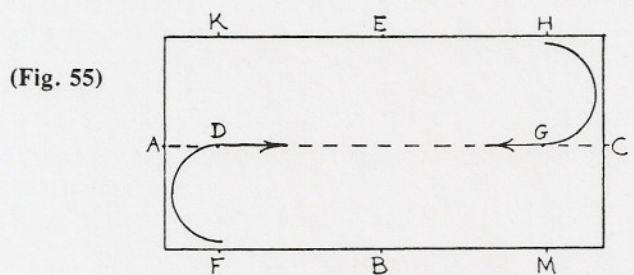
When turning onto the centerline at letter C or A maintain the bend that you have created, (having just come through the corner), and straighten your horse 10 meters from letters A or C at letter D or G. (fig. 55)

When negotiating corners at the collected trot, you should pass the corner letters before you begin your turn. Begin to bend your horse six meters before the corner and go straight six meters after. You will be describing one quarter of a twelve meter circle. (fig. 56)

At the collected trot you should start your turn off the center line four meters past letter D if you are going to turn at A, or four meters past letter G if you are going to turn at C. (fig. 57)



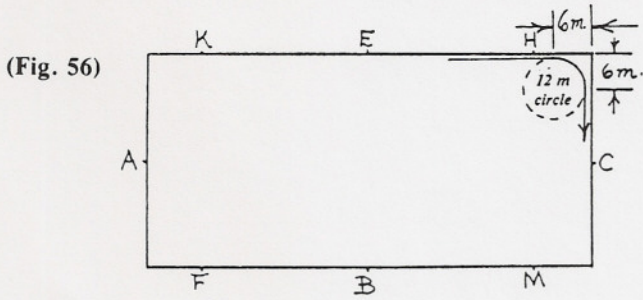
(Fig. 54)



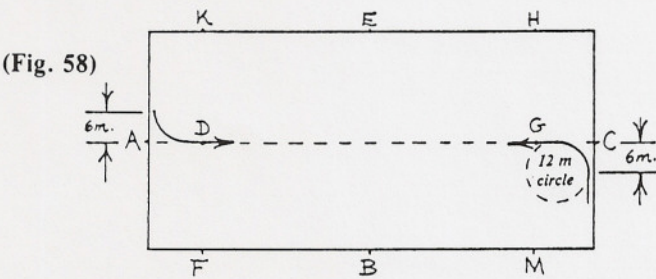
(Fig. 55)

If you want to turn onto the center line (also at the collected trot) you should begin to turn your horse six meters before letters A or C. If you have just driven through a corner at the collected trot you will have straightened your horse for a stride or two before bending again. (fig. 58)

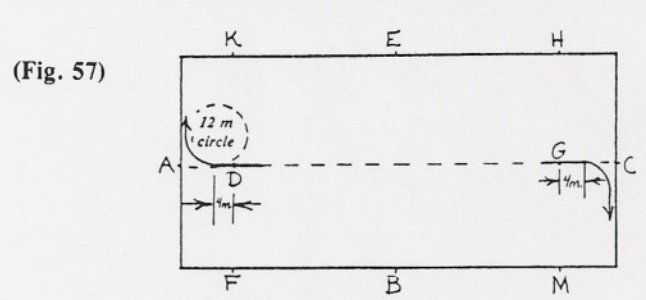
You will never be asked to lengthen or extend your horse through a corner.



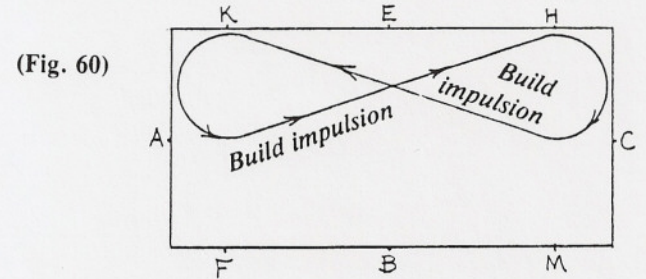
(Fig. 56)



(Fig. 58)



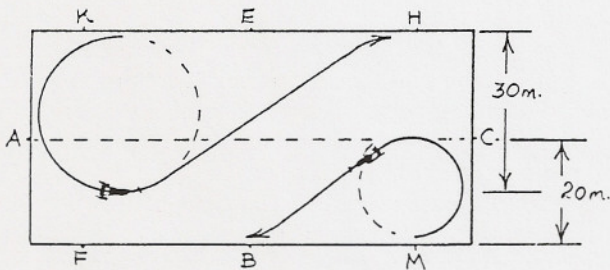
(Fig. 57)



(Fig. 60)

4. Half Circles

A half circle is a means of changing direction. It is a good figure to practice because it incorporates bending with going straight again. It is also a movement in dressage tests above the training level. After bending your horse in circles, it is always good to go straight now and then to relax your horse's muscles and reemphasize straight forward movement. To execute this figure, drive more than halfway down the long side of the arena. Then begin to drive a twenty or thirty meter circle. When your circle is half completed and your horse's nose points back to the long side, straighten him out and urge him forward in a straight line back to the track. In dressage tests, twenty meter half circles are driven from specific letters on the long sides of the arena. Prepare to bend your horse a few strides before you come to that letter. (fig. 59)



(Fig. 59)

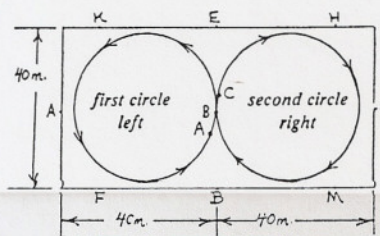
When practicing half circles it is good to lengthen your horse's trot as he comes out of the half circle and goes straight back to the track. Build up his impulsion with a half-halt on the half circle and let this energy flow forward as you lengthen back to the track.

A good way to practice smooth changes from one bend to the other is by combining two half circles on the long side of the arena. If you build up impulsion in the

5. The Figure Eight

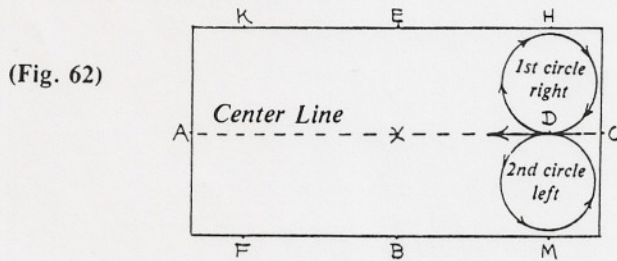
Although "figure eight" is not the technical name for this figure used in dressage tests, I will use it here because so many people are used to this term. Dressage tests describe this figure as a circle followed by another circle of the same size that goes in the opposite direction, as an example, circle right twenty meters followed by circle left twenty meters.

When you drive this movement, concentrate on driving each circle properly, maintaining the correct bend and shape of each circle. When you come to the center of the figure, you should straighten your horse for an instant before changing your bend and starting the next circle. It is very important to have your horse on the aids, particularly if your horse is onesided and the second circle must be driven in your horse's stiff direction. Make sure that your horse is going well forward (do not mistake rushing for forward movement). Prepare you horse for the change of bend by half-halting him on the inside rein just before you come to the center of the figure. Then, when you apply the aids to straighten him and change the bend, your horse will more readily accept the contact on the new outside rein. You may have to touch your horse with the whip on the outside girth when you give him the half-halt (just before you come to the center). This will help to reinforce your rein aids by telling your horse that he is not to fall in on the second circle. (fig. 61)



A. half-halt on inside rein, touch with whip on outside girth
B. straighten for an instant
C. change bend

In advanced tests, the figure eight is often composed of two twenty meter circles. (see fig. 62) A figure eight of this size is not required in the lower level tests. However, it is an excellent figure to practice as your horse progresses in his training. To execute it properly, your horse must be on the bit. Therefore, in earlier phases of your horse's training, practice this figure using larger circles of thirty or forty meters.

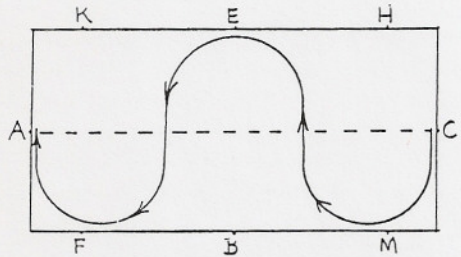


(Fig. 62)

6. Serpentes

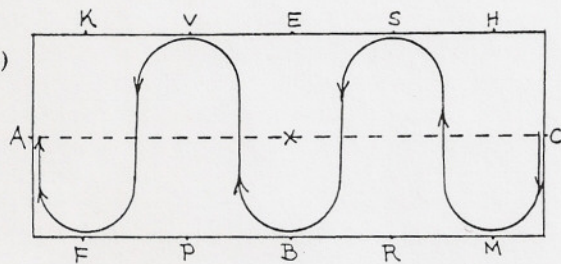
A serpentine is a series of loops that alternate direction and are connected on the center line. Every time you cross the center line you must begin to change your horse's bend as you change direction. Drive each loop as half of a circle. When you cross the center line, you will be perpendicular to the long sides of the arena.

Three and five loop serpentes are most often used in dressage tests. A three loop serpentine is usually performed in a 40 meter by 80 meter arena. Each loop will be 26.6 meters wide. A five loop serpentine is an advanced movement competitively performed in a 40 meter by 100 meter arena. Each of its loops will be twenty meters wide. When driving a three loop serpentine in a 40 by 80 meter arena, either E or B will mark the center of your second loop. (see fig. 63) When driving a five loop serpentine in a 40 by 100 meter arena, the center of every loop will be marked by a letter. (fig. 64)



(Fig. 63)

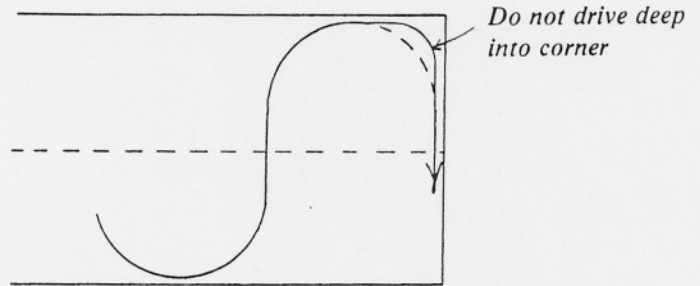
three loop serpentine in 40m.x80m. arena



(Fig. 64)

five loop serpentine in 40mx100m. arena

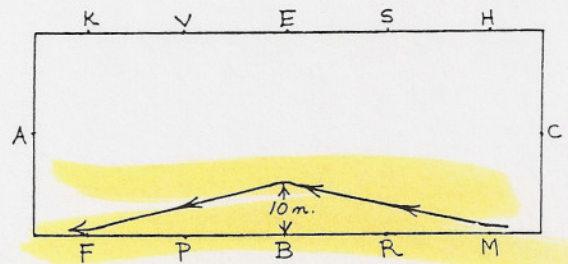
As with circles, corners, half circles, and figure eights, serpentes require that you keep up your horse moving forward with impulsion through the figure. Keep a supporting contact on the outside rein in each loop and prepare your horse for the changes of bend just before you come to the center line. Keep in mind which letters mark the centers off the loops and remember to touch these points for one stride. When you are finishing your last loop near the short side of the arena, do not drive deeply into the corner. Complete the movement. Stay on the track of the last loop. (fig. 65)



(Fig. 65)

7. Deviation

A deviation is a gradual movement in which you drive in a straight line away from the long side of the arena to a prescribed point, then drive in a straight line back to the long side of the arena. The prescribed point should be midway between where you leave the long side and where you return to it. In advanced test F.E.I. #2, the instructions read: "MF 10 meter deviation from side with reins in one hand." You should start your deviation from M. Move in a straight line until you are ten meters away from the wall. (At this point, your horse's nose should be even with B.) Bend your horse at B, straighten, and return to the track at F. (see fig. 66)



(Fig. 66)

Although a deviation is only asked for in intermediate and advanced tests, it is a very good figure to practice in early phases of training. The movement incorporates straight lines which are basic to dressage training, and bending for only a stride or two. The hard part of the deviation is keeping your horse from drifting back to the long side of the arena before reaching the point to which you wish to return. If your horse loses his impulsion when you bend him midway, the second straight line will be difficult to drive.

Although I have described how the various dressage figures are to be performed in a dressage arena, you can practice them in any level space. In fact, you can practice driving straight lines, corners and deviations on the road. Obviously, you won't always have dressage letters to mark your course, and often you will want to concentrate on the quality of movement rather than accuracy of figure.

Accuracy is important in dressage so, at some point, you should practice in an arena. This can be any level area where you can set up letters or plan, from rock to bush, the boundaries of a dressage arena. It is a good idea to "get a feel" for the size of a forty, thirty, and twenty meter circle.

Practice combining the various figures appropriate for your level of training to make your workouts more challenging. When the day of your competition is near, you will want to practice your actual test. Do practice all of the individual movements, but practice them in random order. If you practice the whole test over and over again, your horse will learn to anticipate the movements. Then he may "jump the gun" on you in actual competition. I would suggest that you practice the entire test only once or twice. For your own benefit you can diagram the dressage arena and the movements of the test as many times as you want on paper and/or practice it on foot on your living room floor.

CHAPTER 13

WHAT YOU SHOULD PRACTICE FOR THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Whether your horse is just beginning his dressage training or is an advanced dressage horse, you should begin your sessions by establishing the basics--relaxation, forward movement, straightness and rhythm. Without these qualities, any figure or gait you practice will not be correct. Often times, when you are introducing your horse to a new movement, he will temporarily lose one of the basics. Then you must go back and reestablish the lost quality before you move on.

Here is a list of what you should be capable of performing at the various levels of competition. It can serve as general guide for what you should be working on in your training sessions for a given level. There is no set time for how long it should take you to accomplish any of these exercises and goals.

TRAINING LEVEL

Objectives

Relaxation, Forward Movement, Rhythm, Straightness, Light Contact, A Degree of Suppleness, A Degree of Balance

Gaits

Halt, Rein Back, Free Walk, Working Walk, Working Trot

Figures to Practice

Straight Lines, Corners (¼ of 20m. circle), 40m. circle, 10m. Deviation (not asked for in competition-good to practice)

Transitions

Halt to Working Walk or Free Walk, Working Walk to Halt to Working Trot (Through the Walk), Working Trot to Halt (through the Walk), Working Walk to Working Trot, Working Trot to Halt (through the Walk), Working Walk to Working Trot, Working Trot to Working Walk, Working Walk to Free Walk, Free Walk to Working Walk, Halt to Rein Back, Rein Back to Working Walk

PRELIMINARY LEVEL

Objectives

Relaxation, Forward Movement, Rhythm, Straightness, Contact, Impulsion, Some Engagement of the Hind-Quarters, A Degree of Suppleness, A Degree of Balance

Gaits

Halt, Free Walk, Working Walk, Lengthen Stride in Walk, Working Trot, Lengthen Stride in Trot, Rein Back

Figures to Practice

Straight Lines, Corners (¼ of 20m. circle), 40m. circle, 10m. Deviation, 30m. circle, Half-Circle (20m. diameter), 3 Loop Serpentine

Transitions

Halt to Working Walk or Free Walk, Working Walk to Halt, Halt to Working Trot, Working Trot to Halt, Working Walk to Working Trot, Working Trot to Working Walk, Working Walk to Free Walk, Free Walk to Working Walk, Halt to Rein Back, Rein Back to Working Walk, Working Walk to Lengthened Walk, Lengthened Walk to Working Walk, Working Trot to Lengthened Trot, Lengthened Trot to Working Trot

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Objectives

Relaxation, Forward Movement, Rhythm, Straightness, Contact, A Greater Degree of Impulsion, Roundness of Frame, A Greater Degree of Suppleness, A Greater Degree of Balance, Accuracy, A Greater Degree of Hind-Quarter Engagement

Gaits

Halt, Free Walk, Working Walk, Lengthen Stride in Walk, Working Trot, Lengthen Stride in Trot, Rein Back (3 to 4 steps), Collected Trot

Figures to Practice

Straight Lines, Corners (¼ of 20m. circle at Working Gaits, ¼ of 12m. Circle at Collected Trot), 40m. circle, 10m. Deviation, 30m. circle, 20m. circle, Half-Circle (20m. diameter), 3 and 5 Loop Serpentine

Transitions

Halt to Working Walk or Free Walk, Working Walk to Halt, Halt to Working Trot, Working Trot to Halt, Working Walk to Working Trot, Working Trot to Working Walk, Working Walk to Free Walk, Free Walk to Working Walk, Halt to Rein Back, Rein Back to Working Walk, Working Walk to Lengthened Walk,

Lengthened Walk to Working Walk, Working Trot to Lengthened Trot, Lengthened Trot to Working Trot, Working Trot to Collected Trot, Collected Trot to Working Trot, Rein Back to Working Trot

ADVANCED LEVEL/F.E.I. LEVEL

Objectives

Relaxation, Forward Movement, Rhythm, Straightness, Contact, A High Degree of Impulsion, On the Bit, A High Degree of Suppleness, A High Degree of Balance, Accuracy, A High Degree of Hind-Quarter Engagement, Distinction Within the Paces

Gaits

Halt, Free Walk, Working Walk, Lengthen Stride in Walk, Working Trot, Lengthen Stride in Trot, Rein Back (3m.), Collected Trot, Extended Trot

Figures to Practice

Straight Lines, Corners (¼ of 20m. circle at Working Gaits, ¼ of 12m. Circle at Collected Trot), 40m. circle, One Handed 10m. Deviation, 30m circle, One Handed 20m. Circle, 15m. circle, Half-Circle (20m. diameter), 3 and 5 Loop Serpentine

Transitions

Halt to Working Walk or Free Walk, Working Walk to Halt, Halt to Working Trot, Working Trot to Halt, Working Walk to Working Trot, Working Trot to Working Walk, Working Walk to Free Walk, Free Walk to Working Walk, Halt to Rein Back, Rein Back to Working Walk, Working Walk to Lengthened Walk, Lengthened Walk to Working Walk, Working Trot to Lengthened Trot, Lengthened Trot to Working Trot, Working Trot to Collected Trot, Collected Trot to Working Trot, Rein Back to Working Trot, Working Trot to Extended Trot, Extended Trot to Working Trot, Collected Trot to Extended Trot, Extended Trot to Collected Trot, Extended Trot to Halt

CHAPTER 14

SCHOOLING YOUR HORSE: "GROUND WORK" and "WORK UNDER SADDLE"

I would like to discuss briefly several auxiliary methods of training your horse for driven dressage; longeing, riding, and long-reining. These training methods can be a very useful tools for schooling and exercising your horse.

"LONGEING"

Of the three training methods, "longeing" is the least physically taxing for the trainer (unless you have to handle a fresh, unruly horse). It can be used by most people regardless of their age and physical shape. When you "longe" a horse you control your horse from one small spot or area. This will be the center of the circle on which you work your horse.

Longeing has become a controversial subject in recent years. Some horsemen feel that longeing is prerequisite to developing proper balance and musculature in your horse. Other horsemen feel that longeing overly stresses your horse's legs and would not recommend longeing to anyone.

My belief is that longeing can be a positive training technique, if it is practiced correctly. Before you longe your horse, you should have a good mental image of what you want your horse to do. If you are not experienced in longeing, I would advise you to read extensively on the matter and get help from a reputable dressage instructor.

You should use the correct longeing equipment for dressage training, (strong, well cared for longe cavesson, longe line, surcingle or saddle, bridle, side reins, and longe whip), and know how to fit it to your horse. (see fig. 67, 68, and 69) If you need to longe your horse to let him "blow off steam", which is often the case when horses don't get enough daily turn out, you will need to attach the longe line to your horse's bit for stronger control. The attachment of the line to the bit is necessary in this particular situation. However, for dressage purposes, you only attach the longe-line to the longe cavesson.

You should work your horse for short sessions of thirty minutes or less, including rest periods. When starting a young horse (at least two years old, preferably three) on the longe you should work on a large circle of twenty meters and spend no more than five minutes in each direction. If you drill your horse on the longe for long periods, you will not only sour him, but you will also run the risk of physically injuring him, particularly if he is young and his bones are still growing.

Your objectives on the longe are the same as for dressage work in harness, i.e., relaxation, rhythm, impulsion, hind-quarters engagement, and even contact with the bit. You also have the same aids to work with: your reins (the longe line and side reins), your voice, and the whip. However, your perspective is different when you are on the ground observing your horse on the move. You can more clearly view his resistances, his degree of hind end engagement, and his acceptance of the bit. You can immediately see the result of your aids and make necessary corrections.

Longeing your horse in his stiff direction can be very useful in limbering and strengthening weak muscles without the added burden of pulling or carrying weight.

With the discriminating use of side reins, you can train your horse to become rounder in his frame by driving him forward to meet the even contact you have established. When you first use side reins, it is a good idea to have some supervision from a dressage instructor. It is very easy to misuse these reins. If you shorten them too soon on a horse that is not physically or mentally ready to go on the bit, you can create a number of problems. Your horse may lean heavily on the bit, go behind or above the bit, or take on an advanced head carriage without any corresponding hind end engagement. (see fig. 69a)

pages on training left out

CHAPTER 16

WARMING UP FOR DRESSAGE
AT THE SHOW

Before you enter the dressage arena you should have your test memorized and know the A.D.S. rules regarding dressage.

If you are going to drive a training or preliminary dressage test in a Combined Driving Event you will have a limited amount of time in which to "warm-up". This will be the time period between your presentation and your dressage test. Since presentation precedes your dressage test by approximately half an hour to forty-five minutes, this will be the time you have for a warm-up immediately prior to your test. (You won't want to warm-up directly before presentation if you want to keep your harness, horse, and cart immaculately clean.) At the Intermediate and Advanced levels this is not a consideration because Presentation is judged while you are performing your dressage test.

If the added pressure of limited warm-up time makes you, and therefore, your horse, tense, plan your warm-up strategy before you go to the show. You will already know approximately how long it takes to warm-up your horse at home. With some agreeable horses, it may be fifteen minutes. With a more difficult animal, it may take forty-five minutes or longer. When you go to a Combined Driving Event with any horse, you should plan to spend a little extra time familiarizing your horse with the sights, sounds, and smells of the show grounds. If your horse gets too excited or nervous in unfamiliar places, set aside enough time to work him well before your presentation or dressage test. I would suggest longeing or riding for this early warm-up. Then you won't have to use your carefully polished harness and cart. If you have another harness and cart that you use for the marathon phase of the Combined Driving Event, you can work your horse in that equipment.

At some point, it is wise to walk through your dressage test on foot in the actual dressage arena. (Obviously this must be done before the competition begins.) In this way, you will more clearly realize the size of the arena and the footing, which may be uneven or slippery in spots.

Make your final warm-up a positive one. Do not introduce any new or difficult movements. As an example, don't try to get your horse on the bit if he isn't comfortably on the bit in his regular training sessions. If you are at odds with your horse in the warm-up, your horse's resistance will be evident in your test. Horses are comfortable with routine. You should warm-up your horse in the same manner that you normally do at home. However, if it is very hot, or your horse is particularly cooperative at the start of your warm-up, spend much of your time at the walk. Five or ten minutes before your test drive your horse through the movement of the test in random order, concentrating on relaxation, forward movement, and straightness. If your horse is

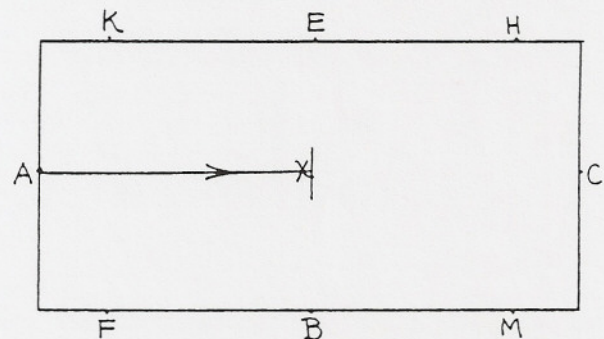
fresher than usual, you will have to work him harder than you normally do, but keep in mind that you always want to save your horse's brilliance for the dressage test. Don't overwork your horse in the warm-up.

If you are going to drive a dressage test in a pleasure driving show, you should follow the same procedure for your warm-up as you would in a Combined Driving Event. However, you should select your other classes to allow yourself plenty of time to warm-up for your dressage class. This should be done well in advance of the show when you get your prize list.

CHAPTER 17

A SAMPLE TEST AND HOW TO DRIVE IT

Test Movement	Directive Ideas
I. A Enter Working Trot X Halt. Salute	Straightness of Center line Transition, Quality of Halt

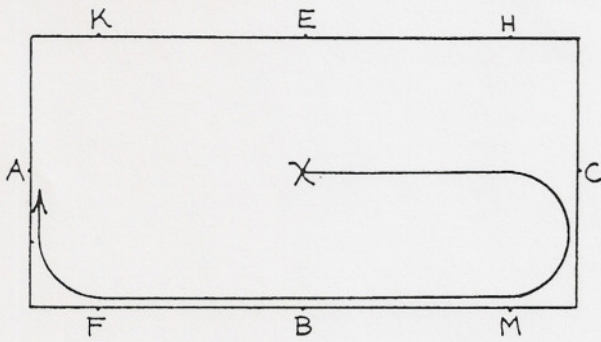


(Fig. 80)

When the bell is sounded, you will have one minute to enter the dressage arena at the working trot. Don't rush in. This is plenty of time to circle your horse, if you need to, and drive your horse as straight as possible through the gate at letter A toward X. Concentrate on driving your horse forward. This is the key to keeping him straight. But don't hurry him. Remember to keep him relaxed and rhythmical. The center line and the letter X are often mowed shorter than the rest of the arena. This will help guide you in a straight line. Halt when your horse's nose is at X and is even with B and E. At this level, you should halt somewhat gradually taking a few walking steps as you slow down. Drive your horse forward throughout the entire transition to the halt.

After halting, look at the judge at C and salute him/her properly. Take the reins in one hand. If you are a lady, raise your whip vertically in front of your face. If you are a gentleman, you must transfer the whip to your left hand, remove your hat and let your arm drop loosely to your side, or you may salute the same way a lady does.

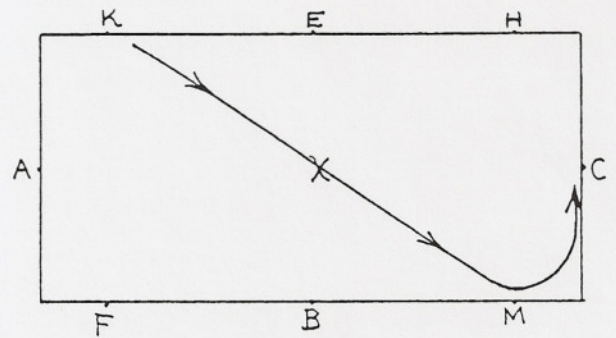
Test Movement	Directive Ideas
2. <i>X Proceed Working Trot C Track Right</i>	Quality of Transition and Turn at C



(Fig. 81)

After the judge acknowledges your salute, pick up your reins and promptly drive your horse straightforward through the walk to the working trot. Concentrate on driving your horse forward. When your horse's nose is ten meters from C at G (even with M and F), begin to bend him right. To prevent your horse from falling into the turn, take a supporting contact on the outside rein (left rein). Try to keep up the same rhythm of trot through the corner as well as on the straight lines. Go straight on the long side as soon as your horse's nose is even with M. Keep concentrating on your rhythm. A few strides before F take up contact on the outside rein in preparation for the upcoming corner. Begin your corner at F and go straight on the short side ten meters after the corner.

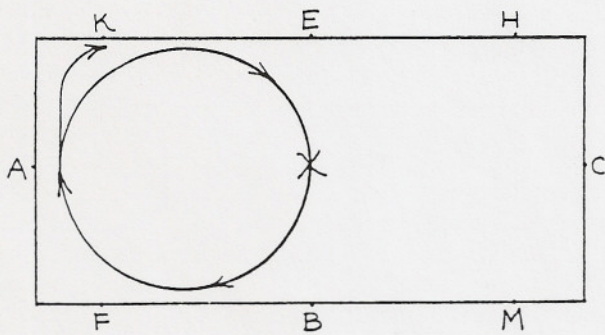
Test Movement	Directive Ideas
4. <i>KXM Change Rein Across Diagonal</i>	Quality of Trot Straightness



(Fig. 83)

This movement is a straight line followed by a corner. Maintaining the bend created in the last corner, turn about 45 degrees at K, straighten your horse and keep up the rhythm of the working trot as you drive your horse forward towards M. Just before M take a firmer contact on the outside rein (right) to keep him from falling in. At M, bend your horse left and drive forward through the corner. Straighten your horse ten meters from the corner on the short side and proceed to C. Keep a steady contact on the outside rein in preparation for the next movement.

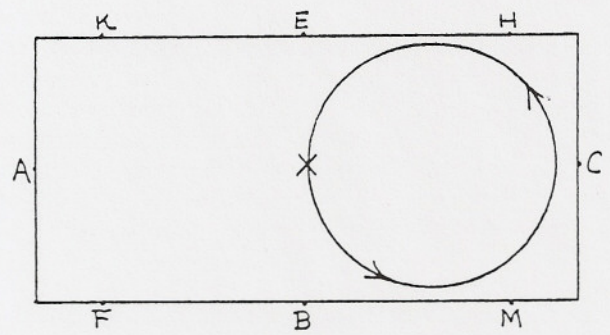
Test Movement	Directive Ideas
3. <i>A Circle Right 40 m.</i>	Quality of Working Trot Roundness of Circle



(Fig. 82)

Maintain the contact on the outside rein. At letter A, begin your circle. Drive your horse forward and maintain the rhythm of the working trot. Take one stride on the track along the long sides of the arena and cross X at the halfway point of the circle. End your circle at A and drive deeply into the next corner. Begin your turn ten meters from the corner and go straight again at K. Don't slow down in the corner.

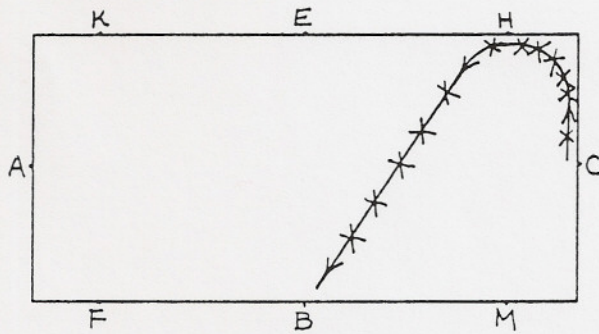
Test Movement	Directive Ideas
5. <i>C Circle left 40m</i>	Quality of Working Trot



(Fig. 84)

Maintain the supporting outside rein from the previous movement throughout this circle. The boundaries are the same as for the circle in movement 3: touch the track for one stride along the long sides of the arena and cross X which marks the midpoint of the 40m. circle. Drive your horse forward on the track of the figure maintaining the rhythm of the working trot.

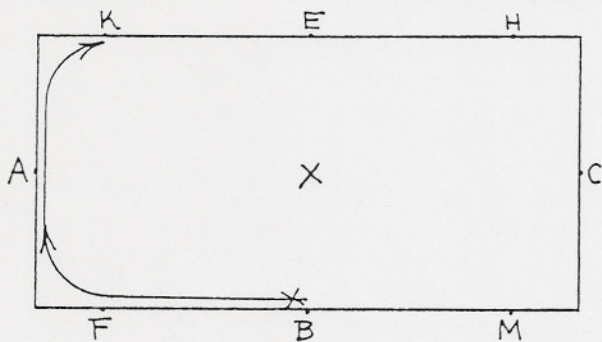
<p>Test Movement</p> <p>6. C-H Working Walk H. Free Walk across Short Diagonal Returning to Track at B B Working Walk</p>	<p>Directive Ideas</p> <p>Quality of Transition and Free Walk Straightness</p>
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(Fig. 85)

While you are still on the circle, a few strides before C, you should give your horse a half-halt and drive him forward into the working walk. Maintain this forward energy at the walk. Drive well into the corner, but not much deeper than you did at the working trot. One-quarter of a twenty meter circle is fine. Continue your turn at H. Then give him more rein to encourage him to stretch his head and neck out and down for the free walk. Urge him forward straight toward B. Encourage him to overstep his front hoofprints with his hind hooves. Don't hurry him through or he may lose the rhythm of the walk or break into a trot. At B, reestablish the working walk by taking back a light contact.

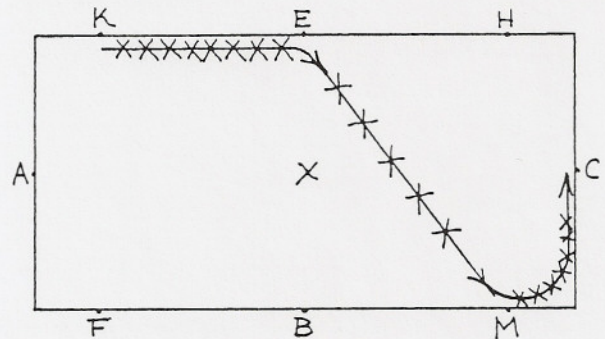
<p>Test Movement</p> <p>7. Between B & F Working Trot</p>	<p>Directive Ideas</p> <p>Transition Quality of Working Trot</p>
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(Fig. 86)

Give the aids for the working trot a stride or two after B. Try to establish an energetic, rhythmical trot immediately. Take a supporting contact on the outside rein (left) a stride before F. At F, begin your corner maintaining the same rhythm in the trot. Go straight on the short side ten meters from the corner. Maintain a supporting outside rein on the short side of the arena. At 10 meters past A begin to bend your horse through the next corner. Half-halt your horse a stride or two before K in preparation for the walk required in the next movement.

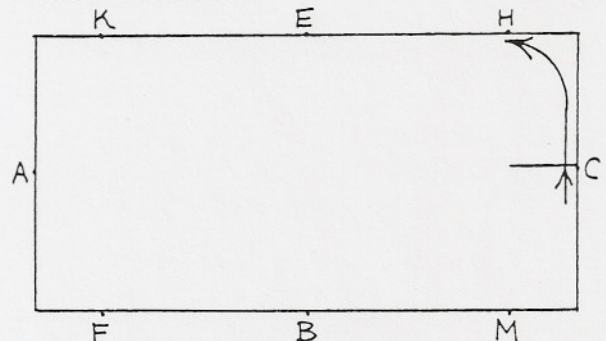
<p>Test Movement</p> <p>8. K-E Working Walk E Free Walk Across Short Diagonal, Returning to the Track at M M Working Walk</p>	<p>Directive Ideas</p> <p>Quality of Transition and Free Walk Straightness</p>
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(Fig. 87)

At K straighten your horse and drive him forward to the working walk. Establish a forward marching walk. Prepare your horse for a right turn a stride or two before E. At E, turn toward M and give your horse enough rein to stretch his head and neck out and down in the free walk. In order to track as straight as possible to M, insist that your horse move energetically forward. A stride or two before your horse's nose is at M, take back your rein contact and prepare to bend around the next corner. Begin to turn at M and maintain the four beat rhythm of the walk throughout the turn.

<p>Test Movement</p> <p>9. C Halt Proceed working Trot</p>	<p>Directive Ideas</p> <p>Quality of Halt and Transition</p>
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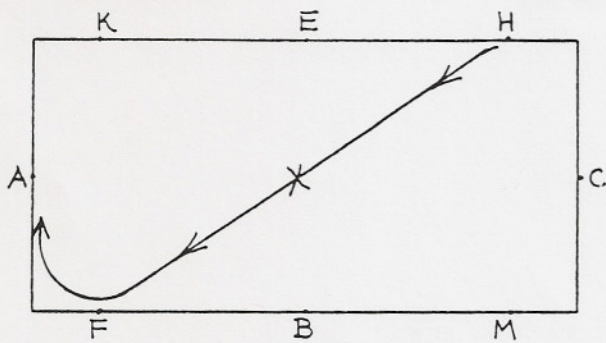
(Fig. 88)

If your horse is going energetically forward at the walk, the transition to the halt should not be sloppy. Half-halt and give the aids for halting a stride or two before C. Halt for a few seconds maintaining your rein contact. Then drive your horse forward to the trot. It is allowable for your horse to take a few walking strides before he trots. Insist that your horse move energetically forward at this point. If your horse loses impulsion, he will lose the rhythm of the trot and it will be difficult for you to maintain the correct bend through the corner. As usual, keep a firm constant contact with the outside rein to prevent your horse from falling in.

CHAPTER 18

Test Movement
 10. HXF Change Rein
 Across Diagonal

Directive Ideas
 Quality of Working Trot
 Straightness

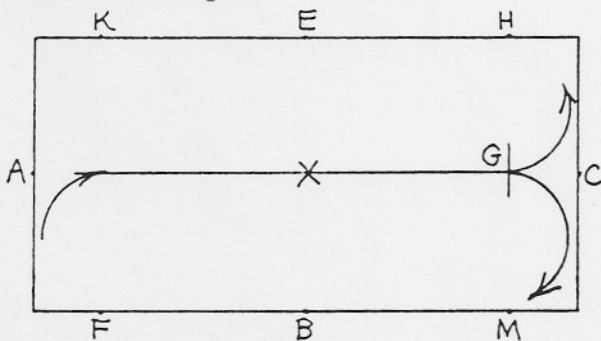


(Fig. 89)

At H, maintain the bend to the left and aim straight for F. Go forward and maintain your rhythm. If your horse loses impulsion you will waver from the track. A few strides before F take a supporting contact on the left rein. At F, bend your horse right and keep that bend throughout the corner. Keep the rhythm of the trot constant.

11. A Down Center Line
 G. Halt. Salute. Leave
 Arena at Working Trot

Directive Ideas
 Straightness of Center Line
 Quality of Halt and Trot



(Fig. 90)

Keep up the bending from the previous movement as if you were driving a 20m. circle. However, go straight on the center line. Drive your horse straightforward toward the judge at C. Letter G is positioned ten meters before C on the center line and is parallel with H and M. Prepare your horse for the halt at G with a half-halt. Drive him forward throughout the trot-walk-halt transition to keep him straight. Look at the judge and salute. Once the judge acknowledges your salute, turn left or right at C and leave the arena maintaining the same rhythmical trot that you have performed throughout the test. Exit the arena through the gate at A.

No matter how hard you concentrate on doing well, minor or even major problems always manage to crop up in dressage tests. For example, your horse shies unexpectedly from a dressage letter or you suddenly realize that you drove a movement incorrectly. Don't let mishaps affect your attitude in a detrimental way. You receive individual scores for each movement you perform. Even though you may receive low marks for a few movements, you can still improve your overall score if you perform the rest of the test positively and to the best of your ability.

**WHAT DRIVING A TEST CAN
 REALLY BE LIKE**

Movement	Directive Ideas
1. A Enter Working Trot X Halt. Salute	Straightness on Center Line Transition Quality of the Halt

After warming up for twenty-five minutes, your horse is fairly relaxed but you aren't. You are still having a little trouble bending your horse left and there are large pots of flowers waiting at every letter to spook your horse. The bell is rung. You have 60 seconds to enter the arena. Urging your horse into a strong working trot, you enter the arena through the open gate at A. You drive absolutely straight down the center line but overshoot the X mowed in the grass. Your halt is straight, but not square. While you salute, your horse remains still and attentive.

Score: 5

Remarks: Straight entry, but horse rushed, overshoot X Halt not square

2. X Proceed working Trot C Track Right	Quality of Transitions and Turn at C
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Since you overshoot X, you decide to slow down a bit. Urging your horse on with your voice and whip, you walk for two strides, then trot. You are still straight on the nicely mowed center line. Since your horse bends well to the right, you drive deeply into the corner. Perhaps you drove too deeply into the corner. Your horse slows down to keep his balance. You drive him on with your voice and the trot improves. You can hear a better rhythm. At B, your horse notices the lovely flowers (you've forgotten about them). He swerves away from the track to take a better look. You urge him on immediately with a flick of the whip and take a supporting contact on the outside rein. The corner after F flows better than the previous one.

Score: 5

Remarks: Good transition, Better working trot, Lost rhythm in corner, M-F not straight, Nice second corner

3. A Circle Right 40 meters	Quality of Trot Roundness of Circle
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Since your horse was paying attention to you and on the aids in the corner you make a good start on the 40 meter circle. Your horse is bent slightly to the right and is forward and rhythmical. However, near K your horse spooks again. There must be ogres in those flower pots. He loses his bend, throws his head in the air, and falls in on the circle. As a result, your circle shrinks. You never make it to X. Trying to salvage the rest of the circle, you drive your horse more forcefully forward with your voice and whip. You really mean business now. For a few steps, your horse jumps forward. As you finish the circle you think, "I sure messed that one up. Maybe I can make up for it." You drive a nice corner after A. Your horse is bent correctly and his trot is nice and forward.

Score: 4

Remarks: Good Rhythm, Disobedient at X, Too small circle, Good corner

4. KXM Change Rein Quality of Trot
Across Diagonal Straightness

You perform a straight, forward, rhythmical trot across the diagonal. As you approach letter M, you are determined to keep your horse's attention on you instead of the flower pot. You command your horse to "trot on" in an insistent tone of voice and take a firm hold on the right (outside) rein as you approach M. Since you must drive the next corner in your horse's stiff direction, you half halt on the inside girth to keep him from falling in. The resulting corner isn't half so bad.

Score: 7

Remarks: Nice straight line, Nice corner, A bit too strong trot

5. C Circle Left 40 Meters Quality of Trot
 Roundness of Circle

This time you are determined to make the circle the right shape and size. Keeping your horse on the outside rein, you drive him forward. He looks briefly at the flowers at H, enough to change his bend for two strides, and continues on smoothly. You realize how very large this circle is as you look toward X, your next boundary mark. You make sure not to bend your horse too much or the circle will track short of X. When you touch the track on the long side just before K, your horse doesn't even blink an eye at the flowers. About 10 meters before C, you half halt your horse on the right outside rein to prepare him for the upcoming transition.

Score 8

Remarks: Very nice circle

6. C-H Working Walk
H Free Walk, Across
Short diagonal, Returning
To Track at B
B. Working Walk

Your transition is accurate and smooth (and right in front of the judge as well). Feeling pretty much in control of your test you remember to give your horse enough rein to really stretch his head and neck out at the Free Walk. Your horse responds nicely. He oversteps by about ten inches all the way to letter F! "I should make up points on this walk" you think. Then you realize your mistake. You were supposed to drive to B, not F! You look at the judge, who tells you to continue on with the test.

Score: 6

Remark: Lovely walk, not to B

7. Between B & F Working Trot Quality of Trot

Now you are flustered and you can't remember what to do next. Then you remember, trot from B to K. You urge your horse on, but a bit too vigorously. Your transition to the trot is abrupt and your horse throws his head up. You try to get him on the outside rein for the corner at F

but aren't successful. He falls in. By the time you pass A, you've gotten him back on the outside rein. As a result, the next corner is much nicer.

Score: 3

Remarks: Mistake, Rough transition, Rough aids, Second corner OK

8. K-E Working Walk Quality of Transition
E. Free Walk, Across and Free walk
Short Diagonal, Straightness
Returning
M. Working Walk

Remembering to drive your horse forward into the walk, your transition is smooth and straight. This time you are concentrating on making the walk section more accurate, especially since your horse is walking particularly well today. You drive your horse forward and straight to E maintaining a light contact. When you turn at E, you let the reins out so that your horse can stretch into the free walk. Once again, your horse performs a straight, long striding, rhythmical walk, but this time you end up in the correct place, at M. The working walk is required at M, so you take back a light contact and establish a slightly stronger contact on the outside rein. Concentrating on the four beat rhythm of the walk you drive well into the corner toward C.

Score: 8

Remarks: Beautiful walk!

9. C. Halt. Quality of Halt and
Proceed Working Trot Transitions

You halt smoothly and accurately, your horse's nose is lined up with the letter C. After standing quietly for a few seconds, you ask your horse to move forward through the walk to the trot as subtly as possible. After all, you're right in front of the judge. Unfortunately, your aids are too subtle. Your horse walks for four strides before trotting. Realizing that you need a little more energy, you touch your horse with the whip as he goes around the next corner. The corner doesn't flow very well. Your horse isn't straight on the track and the rhythm of the trot is lost.

Score: 5

Remark: Nice square halt, Sluggish transition, Lost impulsion in trot

10. HXF Change Rein Quality of Trot
Across Diagonal Straightness

Your horse is moving forward well again, so the turn at H is smooth. You aim your horse directly at F and concentrate on his rhythm as well as his forward momentum. As you near letter F, you take up a supporting outside rein in preparation for the upcoming corner. It is a good thing that you did, your horse remembers the scary flower pot and tries to spook again. However, he doesn't get too far this time. As soon as you sense your horse getting ready to shy, you increase your contact on the outside rein and half halt him on the inside rein to keep him bent correctly. You tell him to

“trot on” and enforce these words by touching him on the right side with the whip! The resulting corner is probably the nicest one of the test: relaxed, forward, straight and rhythmical.

Score: 8

Remarks: Good rhythm in trot, straight, nice corner!

Test Movement	Directive Ideas
11 <i>A Down Center Line</i>	Straightness on Center Line
<i>G. Halt. Salute. Leave</i>	Quality of Halt and Trot
<i>Arena at Working Trot</i>	

You continue on the track of the curve until your horse's nose is on the center line. Then you urge him on straight toward C. Suddenly he stumbles. The reins are pulled loose through your fingers. As quickly as possible, you retain your rein contact and continue on the center line hoping you haven't ruined the movement. You look for letters M and H on the longides of the arena to establish where G is. About ten meters before G, you take a supporting contact on the right rein and give your horse a half halt on the left rein. You allow him two walking steps before you bring him to a halt. Although you are straight, your horse's right hind leg is not engaged. You click your tongue and he brings his right hind up even with the left! You salute the judge. You are rewarded with a smile and a nod, acknowledging your salute. You ask for a nice energetic transition to the trot and you get one with only one walking stride. You bend your horse properly through the corner to the left and perform a forward rhythmical trot is a straight diagonal line to the exit gate at A.

Score: 6

Remarks: Straight line, Nice rhythm, Stumbled, Square halt, Good exit

Collective Marks

GAITS	7 - lovely walk
IMPULSION	6
SUBMISSION	5 - inattentive at times
Driver's Position	5

Further Remarks: Nice moving horse — don't rush him at trot; keep him on the aids more consistently to keep his attention.

The Dressage judge's marked sheets for each individual test can be obtained by contestants after the competition is over. You obtain good professional criticism by performing dressage tests. The criticism is for your own benefit. If you carefully consider the judge's comments you can use this input to improve future tests.

Your average score for this Training Level Test is 5.86. This means that your overall performance was more than sufficient but not quite satisfactory. From the examples above, you can conclude from the individual scores and remarks, as well as your own self-criticism, that you are capable of a much nicer test. Your horse's gaits are more than adequate (7) and he is responsive when you anticipate problems and keep him consistently on the aids. The problems that occurred in this test were due to your own lack of concentration.

CHAPTER 19

HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A GIVEN HORSE

If you take dressage seriously and practice it regularly, your horse's way of going and his muscling will improve. In addition, you will have developed a stronger mental rapport with your horse. His sensitivity to your aids and his willingness to respond will have improved with dressage training. Most horses are resistant to your aids when it is physically difficult for them to respond. Since dressage training gradually limbers and strengthens the muscles that enable your horse to perform, he will have become more willing as a result of his training.

Although all horses will benefit from dressage training, some will excel while others will always be limited. If you are fortunate enough to drive a horse that moves well naturally, (i.e., has good suspension in his trot, oversteps his front hoofprints with his hind hooves at the walk and trot), your potential for excelling in dressage is good. If your horse is an average or bad mover, (i.e., not much suspension in the trot, doesn't track into or over his front hoofprints with his hind hooves), he will definitely improve, but will never have the potential for performing dressage that a naturally good mover has.

Inherent good movement does not always determine which horses will win in dressage competition. Often a horse with average gaits will be placed higher than a better moving horse if his performance was smooth and accurate.

Temperament and intelligence are very important factors to consider when determining a horse's potential for dressage driving. You may have a horse that is a ballerina at liberty. But if he is extremely spooky, stubborn or brainless, he will have very little aptitude for dressage and probably will never be a good harness horse. An average mover that is more intelligent and willing is a much better candidate.

Any driving horse can be used for dressage driving as long as he is sound and reasonably sane. The qualities that you look for in a dressage driving prospect can be found in any breed of horse regardless of the "action" characteristic of that breed. The high stepping Hackney and the Arab with its "daisy cutting" way of moving are both equally capable of excelling in driven dressage.

Some horses are particularly difficult to work with, not because they lack the natural ability to move well, but because the qualities considered to be desirable for dressage have been ignored, hindered, or destroyed by previous training. Training methods that rely upon the use of biting rigs, tail sets, rattlers, chains, shackles, etc. to obtain artificially high action and extreme animation discourage relaxation, forward movement, and straightness, the fundamental objectives of dressage. If you intend to do dressage with a horse that was formerly trained for the show ring using such equipment, you will most likely have to spend a long time (perhaps years) teaching him to go forward in a relaxed manner.