

Intermediate Equestrian Study Guide

Dressage - The guiding of a horse through a series of complex maneuvers by slight movements of the rider's hands, legs, and weight. Done on the flat.

Sequential training system:

1. Rhythm and Regularity – You want your horse to have an evenness in both the gaits and the transitions into and out of them.
2. Relaxation – Signs of looseness in the swing of his back and poll and reaching for the bit when contact is lengthened.
3. Contact – Achieved with the horse's pushing power, not the rider's hands. The horse will stretch into soft hands and have equal feel in both reins.
4. Impulsion – Created by storing the energy of engagement – the forward reaching of the hind legs under the body.
5. Straightness – A horse's hind legs follow the path of the front legs, allowing the rider's hand aids to have a connection to the hind end.
6. Collection – the apex of the training scale. When in collection, the stride length is shortened and the stride's energy and activity are increased. The horse's weight is more in the hindquarters than the front, with the hind legs further under the body and a lightening of the forehand.

Impulsion is achieved by:

- Correct driving aids of the rider
- Relaxation of the horse
- Flow of energy through the horse, with muscles connected, supple and elastic

Dressage levels in America (From lower to higher) – Introductory, Training, First, Second, Third, Fourth. In a dressage test, there are a number of sequential blocks that may contain one or more movements. Each segment is scored by a number – 1 being very bad, 6 being satisfactory, 10 being excellent. Marks are also given for general attributes such as horse's gaits, submission, impulsion, and the rider's effectiveness in aids.

Riding:

- Bending – A horse should have a slight bend around the rider's inside leg. Slight pressure is applied with the inside leg, which the bend created is held in place by the outside rein. A soft and supple inside rein is maintained, encouraging the horse to turn his head to where the rider can just see his inside eye.
- Flying lead change – a flying lead change is when a horse changes to his opposite lead while on the flat. This is cued by the rider by bending the horse's neck slightly in the opposite direction and asking for the opposite lead with the corresponding leg cue. For example, when on the left lead canter, turn the horse slightly to the right and signal with the left leg for the right lead change.
- Impulsion – Impulsion is achieved by correct driving aids of the rider, relaxation of the horse and flow of energy through the horse, with muscle connected, supple and elastic.

- Half-halt – A half-halt is used to either slow down a strung-out horse, encourage more impulsion, or make sure a horse is listening to you. To perform one, squeeze the reins while sitting deeper in the seat. Depending on the purpose of the half-halt, pressure from the legs can range from steady to gently squeezing in order to maintain impulsion.
- On-The-Bit – Also known as “on contact”. A horse on the bit is engaged in the hips and raises the back as impulsion is created. The forward energy is then contained by the hands of the rider. The acceptance of the bit by the horse creates a flexing at the poll and stretching over the topline. The nose can be vertical to the ground or slightly above vertical. The horse is elastic and relaxed and responsive to the rider’s aids. To put a horse on the bit, impulsion through the legs and seat should first be created, then a gentle pressure is applied through the hands-either both at the same time or alternating reins. It’s vital the horse is moving steadily forward before the hands are engaged to prevent unnecessary tugging and pulling of the horses’ head.

English Riding Equestrian Events:

- Cross Country – the horse and rider travel over varied terrain and jump natural obstacles.
- Hunter Class – a jumping competition judged subjectively, where the rider and horse must meet an ideal standard in manners, style, and way of going.
- Jumper Class – Judges the ability of the rider. The equipment, clothing, and fence styles resemble hunter classes, but the technical difficulty resemble jumping class.
- Eventing – Also called Combined Training. It is typically a two day show that includes dressage, show jumping, and cross-country.

Types of jumps:

- Cross Rail – the poles form an “X”
- Vertical – the pole is placed perpendicular to the ground
- Oxer – two verticals close together, making a jump wider
- Triple bar – a spread fence of graduating height
- Wall – a solid jump
- Hogsback – a type of oxer with three rails, where the tallest pole is in the center
- Liverpool – a ditch or large tray of water under a vertical or oxer

Tack:

There are three main types of bits, classified on how they apply pressure to the horse’s mouth:

- Snaffle – uses a bit ring at the mouthpiece to apply direct pressure to the bars, tongue and corner of the mouth. The actual mouthpiece can be jointed in the center, or have two joints with a lozenge in the center. It can also be a straight bar, double twisted wires or slow twisted bars. The ring itself can either be a loose ring, or stationary and in an egg-shaped, “D” shaped, or full-cheek shaped. Most horses do well in some form of a snaffle.
- Curb – A bit that uses a type of lever called a shank that puts pressure not only on the mouth, but also on the poll and chin groove. The reins are attached below the mouth. A Pelham is a version of this bit with two sets of reins that attach to both the mouthpiece and the end of the shank.

- Gag – A bit that has added slots or rings on the sides of the mouthpiece that provide leverage by sliding the bit in the horse’s mouth. Typically more severe than a snaffle or curb.
- Martingales:
 - o Standing Martingale – a single strap attached to the girth, passes between the horse’s front legs and is fixed to the back of the noseband. It also has a neck strap or can be attached to a breast strap. It is more restrictive than a running martingale.
 - o Running Martingale – consists of a strap which attached to the girth and passes between the horse’s front legs before dividing into two pieces. At the end of these straps is a small metal ring through which the reins pass. It is held in the correct position by a neck strap or breast strap. It acts by putting leverage through the reins to the bit.

Horse Care:

Signs to look for are tacky gums, lethargic, lack-luster eyes, coughing repeatedly, not eating, excessive rolling and biting of the stomach.

The most common horse ailment is colic, which is the term abdominal pain. There are multiple types of colic from multiple causes. It is the leading cause of premature death and should be taken seriously. Signs include repeated lying down and rising, rolling, groaning, and biting the stomach. Treatment can include walking and lots of water to pass the obstruction. If that doesn’t work, call the vet who might pump the system with oil to clear it out. When in doubt, call the vet.

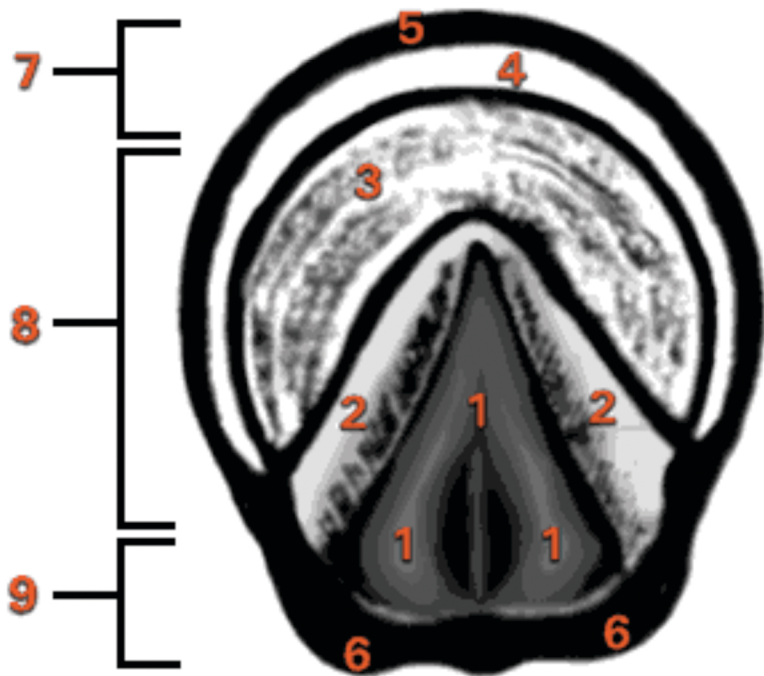
Treatment of cuts and wounds – Horses inevitable get cut or scraped on various different objects and from each other. Most will heal on their own. It’s important to wash out a fresh cut/scrape with running water in order to clean it. The depth of the wound will determine if it needs stitches, but those must happen within 2 hours of the cut. If it is minor, iodine or a saline solution works well to clean it. Be cautious with ointments as they tend to trap dirt and cause infection. If there is heat or puss coming from it, it is likely infected and will need antibiotics.

Horse is “Off” – this is a term used in general to describe a horse not moving as correctly as they usually do. This can be caused by any number of reasons – usually related to the legs or a hoof. Horses get sprains and strains and popped ligaments just like humans. If a horse is limping or not moving freely, observe where the horse is favoring and determine if there is any heat in the legs or hoof. Usually rest is the best course of action. Call a vet when in doubt about anything.

Hoof abscesses – a debilitating but treatable hoof ailment. The most common cause of acute lameness. It’s basically a pimple caught inside the hoof. Most will work its way out of either the frog or the coronary band. Soaking the hoof in Epson salts tend to help draw the infection out. Also, constant walking, as painful for the horse as it is, will help work it out. Once it breaks through, care should be taken to make sure the break-out area stays clean as it heals.

Thrush – a common bacterial infection in the frog region of the hoof. It happens most often in wet and muddy areas. Symptoms are a strong odor from the off and black sticky substance coming off when hooves are pick out. It is easy to treat. Treatments include soaking in iodine, packing with a specifically designed thrush cleaner. Always be sure to pick out a horse’s hooves on a daily basis, in order to keep the area dry and clean.

Bottom Of The Hoof:



- 1. Frog**
- 2. Bars**
- 3. Sole**
- 4. White Line**
- 5. Hoof Wall**
- 6. Bulbs**
- 7. Toe**
- 8. Quarter**
- 9. Heel**