

Some Notes from Dr Deb's Ridden Horsemanship Clinic

Warming up

Be 'present' and be prepared. (Be set up ahead of time)

Start by walking and bending on long reins.

You want the head to feel loose on the end of the neck (twirling)

At the walk your pelvis makes a 'butterfly shape'

Create energy with the calves of your legs. You can 'fluff' your legs, vibrate or rattle them until you get a change then go quiet. (These are more of an 'out & in' movement not 'backward & forwards')

Snake Trails

Flowing from one direction to the other is very therapeutic.

The purpose of riding the snake trail is to 'shake the horse loose'. Twirling the head and the loins will cause him sooner or later to let his rib-cage go.

When you twirl the horse's head you want the jaw to tuck under his throat. You don't want the head to 'tilt'.

Try to feel all the little adjustments he is making.

When you bend the horse you should feel the weight of the horse go to the outside.

Support the bend with your legs

The bend comes from their inside hind leg stepping up and under the belly.

The proper bend will result in the horse 'filling' the outside rein. Allow the horse to 'come into' the outside rein.

The outside rein has to be soft enough that he feels OK to arrive there.

You will start to understand what it means for the horse to 'go from the inside leg to the outside rein', I did not really understand this until Dr Deb explained it.

A leg yield is a form of 'twirling the loins'

Intersperse snake trails and short serpentines with allowing the horse to stretch down as you feed out the reins.

Needless to say this is very therapeutic

The Walk

Is your waist loose? If not the horse will think you have the brakes on. Let go of your waist.

Freezing your waist will shorten the steps. Feel the side to side part of it.

Move your hips separately. Then the horse's motion is able to move your body.

Your body belongs to the horse from the waist down.

How smooth and how big s changes can you make from a fast to a slow walk and vice versa. Communicate with your body.

The Bit

Energy from the horse is like a river. Your legs are like levees.

The horse can think the bit is like a dam.

Never let the horse think he has to bottle against the barrier.

The horse should 'carry' the bit.

Talk to the horse with the bit.

Circles

The roundness of a circle comes from the inside of the horse.

Get him on his outside legs.

To some degree a circle is like a leg yield because of the inside hind leg. The smaller the circle the more the inside hind leg has to step under.

Never ride a circle off the inside rein. Only use enough inside rein to prevent him going out.

The energy comes from the inside hind leg, the outside hand receives it.

When he bends his neck and his inside hind pushes his body, you will feel it.

If the horse isn't bending, he is falling!

Make a small circle that would be meaningful to the horse, a little bit of a challenge but not enough to unbalance him. 'Tease' them into letting something go, Go back to the snake trail and then circle the opposite way.

Another exercise is to make a circle, pick a spot and spiral in to hit the spot and do a 180 degree turn on the forehand.

Corners

Set it up so well **before** he gets to the corner that he does the corner by himself.

Corners are excellent for encouraging those first moments of collection.

Make a left 90 degree turn by feeling the left hind leg so it is up under the body and shoulder towards the **right**. Release for the actual turn.

In other words you have set it up for your horse to make the turn on his own, rather than dragging him around by his head at the last minute!!

Stops

Feel the footfalls and interfere. Stop the feet not the head.

Stop the individual front feet one at a time.

Feel the hind feet stepping into your hands.

Ride on a very light feel of his tongue.

If the horse doesn't stop you may have to block more and more on the outside rein

This will be a 'pushy kind of a feel' (the horse is pushing on you.) but you have not put any backward traction on the reins (Pulled)

Halt to Walk

Fix it up so they step off with a hind foot first, like they're walking uphill

Say to the horse 'don't fall forward' when you leave by getting the picture of what you want in your head and playing with the feel.

Allow him to lift his back first by 'letting go of your pelvis'.

Touch with the calf of your leg, then irritate. When they move forward go quiet.