

volte is ridden in a 5-meter (16 foot) diameter. It is usually ridden in the second corner of a long side. After riding 180° around the volte, the rider straightens the horse and rides on a diagonal line back to the track.

### Training Advice

The advice for riding the half circle is the same as for riding proper circles, corners and other changes of direction. However, when returning to the track on the diagonal line, make sure that the horse is straight on both reins, the rider is sitting equally over both seat bones, the rider's legs are both at the girth and the horse's hind legs are following the tracks of the fore legs.

### Common Mistakes

Riders may inadvertently proceed more than 180 degrees around the arc of the circle before returning to the track on the diagonal line.

## Serpentines Along the Wall

### Definition

Also called a "broken line," the serpentine along the wall can be made up of one or two shallow loops.

When riding a single loop serpentine along the wall, the loop will be 5 meters (16 feet) away from the track, (the quarter line), and centered at the half-way mark (the B-E markers). (see diagram)

When riding a double loop serpentine along the wall, the loops are 2.5 meters (8 feet) away from the track, or half of the quarter line. The apex of the loop should be half-way to the B-E marker so that the first loop ends and the second loop begins at the B-E marker. (See diagram)

### Gymnastic Purpose

The gymnastic purpose of riding loops is the loosening and suppling effect of the changes of flexion and bend.

### Qualities Desired

The quality of the gaits should be maintained while the horse shows a proper change of bend, accepting the connection from the rider's inside leg to the outside rein equally on both sides.

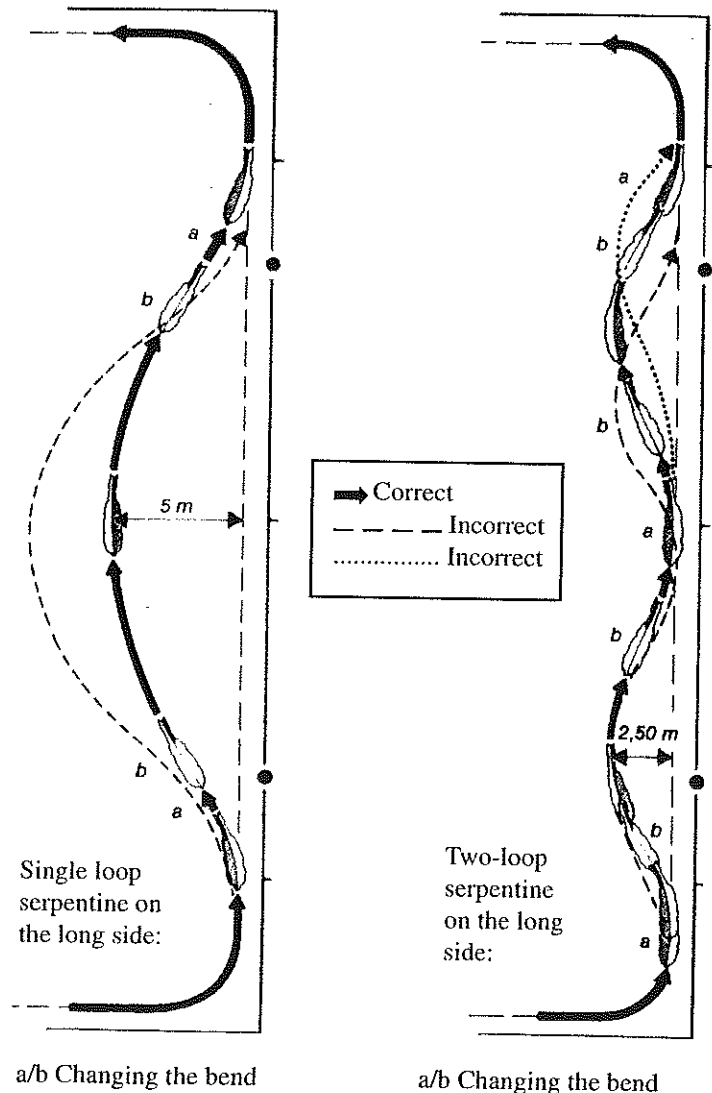
### Aids

The aids for riding loops are the same aids as the bending aids described above in the sections on circles and corners.

### Training Advice

After riding through a corner the rider straightens the horse for a moment, and then guides the horse on to the shallow loop beginning at

Source: Principles of Riding



the corner marker. The change of bend should occur halfway between the start of the loop and the deepest point of the loop. The first half of a loop should be a mirror image of the second half, whether riding single-loop or a double-loop serpentine.

### Common Mistakes

One of the most common mistakes made while riding loops is that the rider after reaching the deepest point of the loop, leg-yields the horse back to the rail rather than riding the true line of the loop. This diminishes the suppling effect of the changes of bend in the loop.

Another common mistake is riding a straight line to and/or away from the apex of the loop, rather than the correct line with proper changes of bend.

## Serpentine Through the Whole Arena

### Definition

"The serpentine through the whole school consists of several half circles of equal size with a straight section between. The length of the straight section depends on the number and so the diameter, of the loops. In this sort of serpentine, the horse is straightened at the end of each loop, and then bent again at the beginning of the next half circle. The horse finishes on the same rein if there is an odd number of loops, and on the opposite rein if there is an even number of loops." [*Principles of Riding*, p 106]

"The serpentine consists of half circles connected by a straight line. When crossing the center line the horse should be parallel to the short side. Depending on the size of the half circles, the straight connection varies in length." [*USEF Rule Book DR110*] (see diagram)

### Gymnastic Purpose

"Serpentines through the whole school, depending on the number of loops and their width, help to develop looseness (Losgelassenheit) or to prepare the horse for collection." [*Principles of Riding*, p 106]

The constant changing of flexion and bend in a serpentine "is a valuable suppling exercise for both horse and rider." [*Principles of Riding*, p. 106]

### Qualities Desired

The qualities desired in the serpentine are the same as in the simple loop, i.e. proper changes of bend, purity of the gaits and correctness of the figures.

### Aids

The aids for the serpentine are the bending aids described in previous sections, coupled with straightening aids.

#### Bending:

To ride a serpentine correctly the weight aids are most important for turning the horse. On entering each new loop the horse has to be both flexed and bent in the new direction by shortening the new inside rein and changing weight and leg aids.

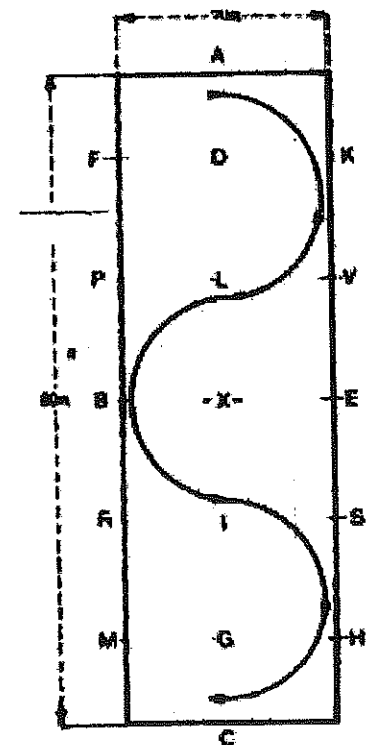
#### Straightening:

To straighten the horse, the rider should allow the horse out of the bend so that it is equal on both legs, both reins and both seat bones, with no curvature in the horse's body. Changes of bend should be prepared for with half-halts.

### Training Advice

"The first loop is started by moving gradually away from the middle of the short

Source: USEF Rule Book



Serpentine of three loops

side of the arena, and the last loop is finished by moving gradually towards the middle of the short side. Starting and finishing by riding into the corners is incorrect." [Practical Dressage Manual, p 59]

"In another type of serpentine, which is not used in tests, each loop is joined directly onto the next, without a straight section... the horse crosses the center line at an angle so that the loops are pear-shaped... the flexion and bend are changed smoothly as the horse crosses the center line. This serpentine helps to promote skillful riding, as well as making the horse more supple and 'through' (Durchlässigkeit). In fact it is a valuable suppling exercise for both horse and rider." [Principles of Riding, p 106]

### **Common Mistakes**

Some common mistakes are making loops of unequal widths and sizes, tempo changes, losing the purity of the gaits, and incorrect bending. In addition, allowing the horse's shoulders or hind quarters to fall in or out can create a loss of balance, straightness, and difficulties in producing a correct figure with smooth changes of bend.

## **Figure Eight**

### **Definition**

"This figure consists of two exact voltes or circles of equal size as prescribed in the test, joined at the center of the eight. The rider should make his horse straight an instant before changing direction at the center of the figure." [USEF Rule Book DR110]

### **Gymnastic Purpose**

The gymnastic purpose of the figure eight is the same as has been previously described in the section on serpentines.

### **Qualities Desired**

The horse must show correct changes of bend without affecting the balance, rhythm, or any other qualities described in the training scale.

### **Aids**

The aids for the Figure Eight are the same as the bending aids previously described in the sections on corners, circles and serpentines.

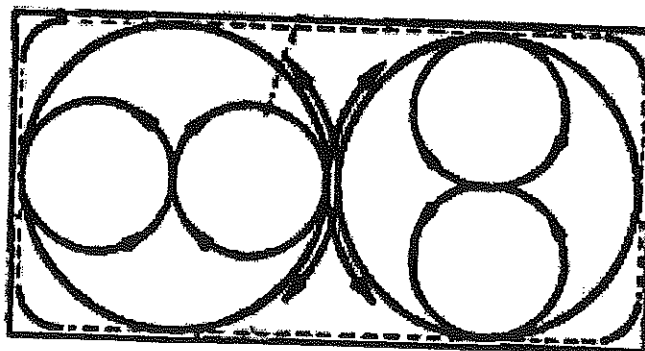
### **Training Advice**

The two circles of the figure eight must be of equal size. Figures of eight with smaller circles or voltes help to promote collection by increasing the engagement and carrying power of the inside hind leg. The rider needs to be sure that the horse follows a single track throughout the figure, i.e. the horse's hind legs follow the same path as the forelegs.

### **Common Mistakes**

The most common mistakes are incorrect or nonexistent changes of bend. As described in the definition of figure eight, the horse must be ridden straight for an instant at the exact joining of the two circles or voltes so that the new circle or volte is begun with the correct bend and the horse following the true line of the figure.

Source: Practical Dressage Manual



The Figure of Eight