

MOVEMENTS

Lateral Movements

Definition

The lateral movements include: leg-yielding, shoulder-in, travers (head to the wall), renvers (tail to the wall) and half-pass. In lateral movements, the horse moves with the forehand and the quarters on two different tracks.

“The fore and hind legs no longer move on one track but on more than one track forward and sideways. The hind legs cross closely in front of each other.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 138]

Purpose

- “to improve the obedience of the horse to the cooperative aids of the rider;
- to supple all parts of the horse thereby increasing the freedom of his shoulders and the suppleness of his quarters as well as the elasticity of the bond connecting the mouth, the poll, the neck, the back and the haunches;
- to improve the cadence and bring the balance and pace into harmony;
- to develop and increase the engagement of the quarters and thereby also the collection.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

Qualities Desired

“At the lateral movements the pace should remain free and regular, maintained by a constant impulsion, yet it must be supple, cadenced and balanced.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

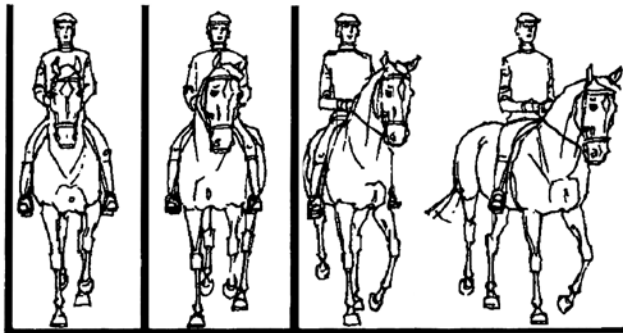
Aids

“At all lateral movements, the side to which the horse should be bent is the inside. The opposite side is the outside.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

“The rider must be very careful to sit exactly behind the horse’s neck, his shoulders parallel to those of the horse, his hips parallel to the hips of the horse. Only then is it possible to move with the horse, not restrict his movement or bring him out of balance. In lateral work the rider loads the inside seat bone a little more.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 138]

Source: *Riding Logic*

Horse is in a straight line.	Flexed to the left.	Bent to the left.	Giving way to the leg to the left. On two distinct tracks.
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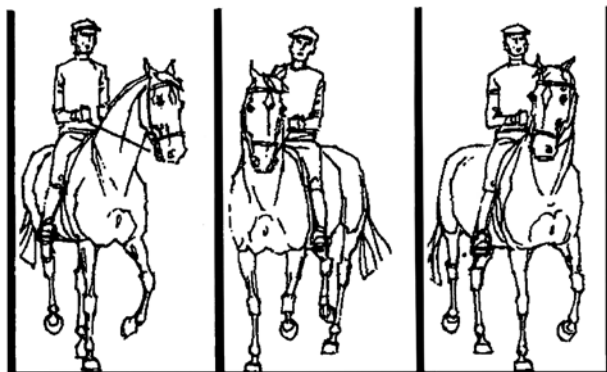
Riding in a flexed position on two tracks. Each rider depicted is moving straight towards the observer. Each appears to be sitting perfectly straight, although slightly inclined to the inside, but with no hint of collapse at the hips. The horses are moving in a flexed position but in a straight line and not sideways. Impulsion and energy have to be maintained otherwise the exercise is pointless.

Source: *Riding Logic*

Shoulder-in to the left. No pulling round at the neck.

Travers to the left (quarters-in).
Renvers to the right (quarters out).

Travers to the right. Renvers to the left.



Common Mistakes

“The impulsion is often lost because of the rider’s preoccupation in bending the horse and pushing him sideways.”
[*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

“Many riders collapse the inside hip which then actually loads the outside seat bone thus making it easy for the horse to lose his Takt (rhythm).” [*The Dressage Horse*, pp 138-139]

Training Advice

Lateral movements should only be practiced for a relatively short time, now and then interrupted by some energetic movement straight forward, in order to maintain, increase, or restore the impulsion.

“Should one practice lateral work without having attained a certain degree of collection, there is a danger of throwing the horse onto the shoulder, and the purity of the paces [gaits] will be lost. The riding of lateral work is based on the ability of the horse to have his inside hind leg carry more weight during circle and volte work. In preparation, ride in walk first, so they trust the aids. It is easier for the horse to learn to move their hind legs forward and sideways.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 138]

As all flexion at the poll and [bending] the neck have a repercussion on the whole spine, “the bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it impairs the balance and fluency of the movement concerned.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*] This applies especially to the half-pass where the bend should be less evident than in the shoulder-in, travers and renvers.

Turn on the Forehand

Definition

The turn on the forehand is a movement in which the horse’s hindquarters turn around the forelegs which march in place. The horse is bent in the opposite direction of movement and is therefore stepping away from the rider’s inside leg. The movement can be ridden as either a 180 or 360 degree turn.

Gymnastic Purpose

“The half turn on the forehand is an exercise aimed at developing looseness (Losgelassenheit) and also serves to teach the horse to respond to the sideways-pushing aids. Since the exercise is performed slowly, and can be taken a step at a time, it is a good opportunity for the novice rider to learn and practice each aid and learn to coordinate the aids.” [*Principles of Riding*, p 107]

“The purpose of the turn is to supple the horse and to teach him obedience to the aids.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 69]

“As a preparation for true dressage, the turn on the forehand has limited value, since a greater proportion of weight has to be on the forehand, whereas the first aim of dressage training is to get the hindquarters to support the greater proportion of the total mass. Nevertheless, the turn on the forehand is a necessary lesson at the beginning of training as it is an easy way of acquainting the horse with the predominant effect of the rider’s inside leg.” [*Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success*, p 47]

Qualities Desired

The qualities desired in the turn on the forehand are that the horse steps willingly away from the rider’s leg with regular, even steps, without stepping backwards or barging through the bridle.

Aids

“The half-turn on the forehand is performed as follows:

- The horse is halted (or walking); so as to avoid making the horse step back or raise its head, when riding in an enclosed area, the turn on the forehand should be performed on the inside track, and not up against a wall.
- The horse is flexed to the side of the sideways-pushing leg.
- The inside-hind foot steps in front of and across the outside hind foot.
- At the end of the exercise, i.e. when the horse has turned through 180 degrees, it is positioned straight again in the halt at this point it will be back on the outside track.

The following aids are used for the turn on the forehand:

- In order to obtain the flexion, the rider transfers more of his weight onto the inside seat bone and shortens the new inside rein.
- The outside ‘guarding’ rein prevents excessive bend in the head and neck.
- With his inside leg drawn back slightly, the rider pushes the hindquarters, step by step, forwards and sideways around the forehand; he uses his leg in time with the horse’s movement.
- The outside ‘guarding’ leg prevents the horse from stepping too far sideways and prevents the movement from becoming hurried.
- At the end of the movement the horse is halted again.” [*Principles of Riding*, p 107-108]

“After the halt, bend him slightly by closing your inside fist until you see the arch above the eye. [Remember to lengthen the outside rein.] Put more weight on your inside seat bone. Squeeze with your inside leg behind the girth and move him, step by step. If he wants to go backward, urge him forward with both legs. If he wants to go forward, tighten your reins. Your outside leg on the girth controls the speed (he must move step by step without rushing) and moves the outside fore foot forward. If he swings the haunches too fast use your outside leg behind the girth. The outside rein controls the bend. When you have completed the turn, straighten him and walk on.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 72]

Training Advice

“Throughout the turn, the rider must use his legs and weight to keep the horse ‘in front of the leg.’ This is the only way to ensure that the horse will remain on the bit and will not escape forwards or step back.” [*Principles of Riding*, p 108]

If the horse has a strong tendency to be ‘behind the leg,’ it may be helpful to perform the turn on the forehand from the walk.

“It is often helpful to use the whip behind your inside leg. The aim, however, is to make the horse obedient to a slight squeeze – a whisper.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 72]

Common Mistakes

The most serious mistake made in the turn on the forehand is to allow the horse to step backwards. Another common mistake is overbending the horse, which allows the horse to fall out the outside shoulder and prevents the proper crossing of the hind legs. This can turn into a “turn around the middle,” which has little loosening effect on the horse.

Leg-yield

Definition

“The horse is almost straight, except for a slight positioning at the poll away from the direction in which he moves, so that the rider is just able to see the eyebrow and nostril on the inside. The inside legs pass and cross in front of the outside legs.” [USEF Rule Book DR111] In the leg-yield, the horse is moving sideways and forward on two tracks, away from the rider’s inside leg. The leg-yield is performed in the walk and trot.

Gymnastic Purpose

“Leg-yielding is an exercise aimed at developing looseness (Losgelassenheit) and in particular, making the horse more responsive to the sideways-pushing aids. It is an excellent exercise for teaching the rider to coordinate the aids.” [Principles of Riding, p 108]

“It makes the horse obedient to the unilateral aids (legs and hands on the same side) thus suppling him and preparing him for the shoulder-in, the half-pass, travers and renvers. Leg-yielding is a means to make the horse obedient, not an end in itself.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 61]

“Leg-yielding must improve submission to the inside leg and hand and put the horse increasingly on the outside aids. It is a loosening exercise. The horse cannot stiffen his inside hind when it is made to cross in front of the outside one and engage under the body mass. As a result, leg-yielding promotes the flexibility and elasticity of the hindquarters.” [Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success, p 45]

Qualities Desired

The horse should go both forward and sideways with even, rhythmical and fluid steps with a marked loosening of the hindquarters. When executed properly, the leg-yield enhances the connection between the rider’s inside leg and outside rein. Maintaining a steady rhythm is important.

Aids

“The aids for leg-yielding are as follows:

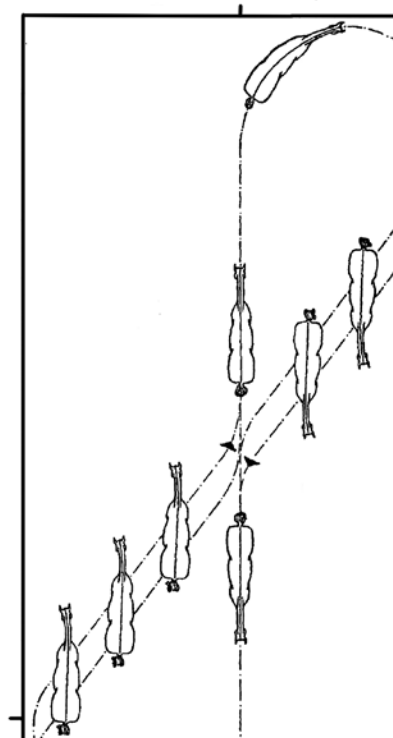
- The rider places more weight on the inside seat bone.
- The rider’s inside leg is positioned behind the girth and pushes forwards and sideways, keeping as far as possible in time with the movement.
- The rider’s outside leg is placed in a ‘guarding’ position behind the girth, preventing the horse from moving its hindquarters too far sideways. It is also responsible for maintaining the forward movement.
- The rider ‘feels’ the inside rein in order to obtain the flexion.
- The rider ‘gives’ sufficiently with the outside rein to allow the flexion while still maintaining a steady contact with the horse’s mouth. He also uses the outside rein to prevent the horse bending its head and neck excessively and falling out onto the outside shoulder.”

[Principles of Riding, p 95]

Training Advice

“Leg-yielding can be performed on the diagonal, in which case the horse should be as close as possible parallel to the long sides of the arena, although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the quarters. It can also be performed along the wall, which case the horse should be at an angle of about 35 degrees to the direction in which he is moving.” [USEF Rule Book DR111]

Source: Practical Dressage Manual



Leg yielding across half a diagonal and straight forward on center line.

“Leg-yield can be ridden away from the long side, away from the long side and back to the long side, along the long side, across the diagonal and on circles.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 62]

Source: Practical Dressage Manual

Common Mistakes

It is a serious fault to overbend the horse, allow the horse to fall over the outside shoulder, and allow the haunches to trail. When this happens, the horse does not properly cross the inside legs over the outside legs, thus losing the loosening effect of the exercise. This can be remedied by half-halting with the outside leg and rein, and riding the horse forward and straight for a few steps, or even leg-yielding in the opposite direction.

The horse should be almost parallel to the long side. The shoulders should lead slightly. The haunches do not travel ahead of the forehand.

It is important to sit over the middle of the horse. Do not collapse your inside hip and slide out of the saddle.

Shoulder-In

Definition

“This exercise is performed in collected trot. The horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the rider maintaining cadence at a constant angle of approximately 30 degrees. The horse’s inside foreleg passes and crosses in front of the outside foreleg; the inside hind leg steps forward under the horse’s body weight following the same track of the outside foreleg, with the lowering of the inside hip. The horse is bent away from the direction in which it is moving.” [USEF Rule Book DR111]

“The inside hind leg is brought well forward in the direction of the outside foreleg. The inside hock is engaged more and carries most of the weight because of the diagonal position of the horse, the lateral bend, and the increased collection.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 39]

“Standing in front of the horse, one should see only three legs. The inside foreleg, the outside foreleg which hides the inside hind, and the outside hind.” [The Dressage Horse, p 140]

“Shoulder-in is a lateral movement in which a horse is on three tracks:

track 1 = outside hind,

track 2 = inside hind and outside fore,

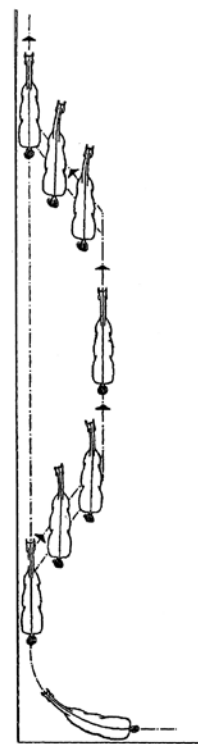
track 3 = inside fore. The rider slightly displaces the forehand to the inside of the track. The horse is bent away from the direction in which it is moving. The bend through the body is created by the horse slightly lowering its inside hip and bringing its inside hind more under its body and into the track of the outside foreleg, allowing it to go on three tracks.” [Canadian Equestrian Federation Coaching Manual Level III, p 23]

Gymnastic Purpose

The objective of the shoulder-in is to achieve a higher degree of collection as well as ‘Durchlässigkeit’ (throughness), lightness, and better balance. This, in turn, improves the horse’s straightness.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 39]

“Because of the positioning of the horse to the inside, the carrying ability of the quarters is asked more [challenged], loaded more and flexed more – thus the horse gains in collection. Because of the positioning of the horse to the inside, the pushing aids can be increased without fear of not being able to hold it through [losing the bend] – this allows an improvement in Schwung.

The ability of the horse to bend through his length is advanced, improving the straightening ability of the horse. Through



Leg yielding away from the long side and back to the long side.

the gymnastic development of the horse's quarters, the straightening bending work and the increased activity of the shoulders, the freedom of the shoulder will be improved. The forward-sideways movement refines the horse's obedience to the leg and with it the entire 'throughness' of the horse. Finally, the shoulder-in is a marvelous method to make the horse softer and more supple in the jawl." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 140]

Source: *Advanced Techniques of Riding*

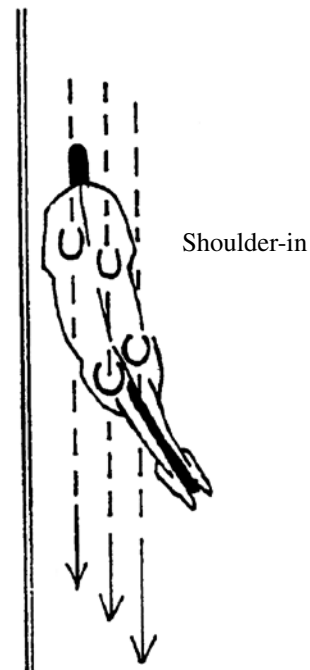
"Shoulder-in is used to supple and engage a horse and make him obedient to the aids. It is not only a suppling movement but also a collecting movement, because every step the horse must move his inside hind leg underneath his body and place it in front of the outside hind leg, which he is unable to do without lowering his inside hip." [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 97]

Qualities Desired

The qualities desired are correct bend, better collection and engagement of the inside hind leg, maintenance of the rhythm, regularity and balance as well as lightness, suppleness and ease of movement.

Aids

"The horse is led into the shoulder-in with a half-halt. The inside rein 'guides' the forehand to the inside. The outside hand allows the shoulder to move forward and limits the bend passively. As in turning, the inside rein shows the way, the outside rein gives support, thus maintaining balance. The rider slightly weights the inside seat bone and checks that the shoulder does not come behind the movement. The inside lower leg lies closely to the girth to maintain the bend in the ribs, causing the inside hind leg to step forward, and maintain the sideways movement.



The outside lower leg is passive unless required when the outside hind leg falls out. To finish the shoulder-in, the outside rein and inside lower leg guide the forehand back to the track." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 140]

Training Advice

"In practice, the shoulder-in is continued coming out of the first corner of the long side, as the horse is already bending and it is easier to draw the inside hind leg underneath. One rides out of the corner as if one wishes to carry on with the turn leading with the inside rein and lower leg into the sideways movement. In the beginning, one uses less flexion and angle, that is to say, one rides shoulder-fore and then by increasing the flexion, leads into a few steps of shoulder-in.

Should the Takt (rhythm) and/or Schwung (swing/impulsion) be lost, or should the required bend be lost, one leads the horse back to the track, flexes him equally on both reins and rides him forward before beginning again with the shoulder-in." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 141]

"If one feels that the bend is insufficient at the beginning of the shoulder-in, a correct course is to execute one or more voltes. Whenever one feels that the hind limbs are starting to disengage and to slacken, the best procedure is to ride forwards energetically toward the center of the arena until impulsion is restored and only then resume the lateral movement on the new track." [*Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success*, p 73]

Common Mistakes

- "The horse's neck is bent too much, often seen when the angle of the movement is too narrow." [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 105] "This is mostly the result of too strong an inside rein action, causing too much bend in the neck. The fault is corrected by using less inside rein and stronger controlling influence of the outside rein (outside half-halt) with the hand carried lower and close to the withers." [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 40]
- "The angle is too wide, which impairs the freedom, regularity and harmony of the pace, and restricts the impulsion." [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 105] "This is usually caused by using the inside leg too strongly and too far back. The rider must also be careful that the horse does not tilt its head. This can be caused by using the inside rein too

- strongly or by the horse's lack of acceptance of the outside rein." [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 40]
- "The impulsion is lost because of the rider's preoccupation with bending the horse and pushing him sideways.
 - The movement is not executed in the same manner on both reins, which also will influence the scoring of the General Impressions under Submission on a test."
 - "Another problem is when the horse tilts his head in the shoulder-in. On the right rein especially, one can see that the right ear is lower. This can be because the rider hangs onto the outside rein, working with too strong an outside hand, or that the horse does not step evenly into both reins." [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 105]

Travers and Renvers

Definition

"Travers. This exercise can be performed in collected trot or collected canter. The horse is slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider but with a greater degree of bend than in shoulder-in. A constant angle of approximately 35 degrees should be shown, from the front and from behind one sees four tracks. The forehand remains on the track and the quarters are moved inwards. The horse's outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The horse is bent in the direction in which it is moving. To start the travers, the quarters must leave the track or, after a corner or circle, are not brought back onto the track. At the end of the travers, the quarters are brought back on the track without any counter-flexion of the poll/neck as one would finish a circle.

Renvers. This is the inverse movement in relation to travers, with the tail instead of the head to the wall. Otherwise the same principles and conditions are applicable as at the travers." [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

"In travers and renvers the horse is bent and flexed in the direction of his movement. In travers, the quarters are to the inside of the arena. In renvers, it is the forehand that is to the inside." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 146]

Gymnastic Purpose

"Travers and renvers complete the gymnasticising started with the shoulder-in. They have the same gymnastic aims, but the flexion and the bend must be greater than that of the shoulder-in. Through the flexion and bend in the direction of movement, the outside hind leg is drawn under the center of gravity of the horse and rider. The inside hind leg is more loaded as the weight of the horse is now shifted over the inside hind leg. For the horse, travers and renvers – in comparison to shoulder-in, are the most strenuous lessons." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 146]

The benefit of working in travers is not the crossing over the outside hind leg, but the increased engagement of the inside hind leg, which has to bend more and carry more weight. In addition, it encourages a better overall obedience to leg and rein aids." [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 42]

The renvers "is an excellent means of establishing the horse's lateral bend, as the quarters are supported by the wall of the school and the rider has a good chance to control the horse's outside shoulder." [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 48]

Qualities Desired

The qualities desired are the same as for shoulder-in, except that there is a greater degree of collection in travers and renvers with more engagement and bending of the three joints of the inside hind leg.

Aids

Aids described below are for travers. Renvers, requires an opposite movement. To develop the travers, the rider gives the horse more flexion in the beginning and starts the movement with a half-halt. The outside lower leg lies behind the girth, pushing the quarters of the horse to the inside of the arena, and also bending the horse around the inside lower leg while controlling the forward/sideways movement.

"The rider's head and neck are turned in the direction of the track, his chest and shoulders must be turned somewhat inward, parallel to the horse's shoulders, and his outside hip must be held back to correspond with the position of his outside leg. The rider must sit to the inside." [*Dressage, A Guidebook to the Road to Success*, p 70]

Training Advice

“Travers is best developed out of the first corner of a long side, as the horse is already bent around the inside leg in the corner and the rider now needs only to guide the quarters to the inside of the track with the outside lower leg. As in the beginning the flexion and bend in the direction of movement is very difficult for the horse, one must only gradually increase the bend around the inside leg.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 147]

“To finish the travers correctly and to return to riding on one track, the horse’s forehand is brought into the school and aligned with the quarters. Then, maintaining the flexion in the poll, the otherwise straightened horse is brought with the inside leg aids sideways back to the track on the long side. This should be done in good time, so that when reaching the corner marker the horse is back on the track and totally straight.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, pp 45-46]

“Should the horse show irregular paces or faulty carriage the rider must abandon the travers and energetically ride straight ahead, re-establishing the horse’s basic obedience.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 44]

“For renvers, one again begins out of the first corner of a long side leading a horse initially into shoulder-in, and then carefully changing the flexion and bend into the direction of movement, without losing the Takt and Schwung. As renvers is more difficult than travers, it is for this reason that one first of all guides the forehand to the inside of the track, and then gives the bend and flexion into the direction of movement.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 147]

Common Mistakes

“The main mistake in travers and renvers is too strong a flexion of the horse in the neck, without the relative bend in the ribs.

The horse may also be at too steep an angle to the track.

He may move more sideways than forward/sideways, holding himself back and, therefore, not correctly moving forward from the spot. In this case the inside lower leg must work harder, with the outside rein holding a little more firmly, thus limiting the bend of the horse to a greater extent.

Mistakes such as tilting the head, coming behind the bit, or errors in Takt can also occur as in shoulder-in and should be corrected in the same way as described for shoulder-in.

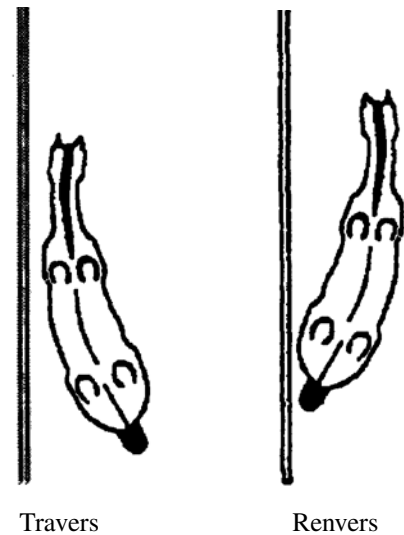
It can also occur, that while performing travers and renvers, the horse may canter on. This is a mistake that is best not corrected on a straight line. The rider should proceed in the movement, that is, proceed in travers and renvers further, until the horse comes back into the trot.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 147]

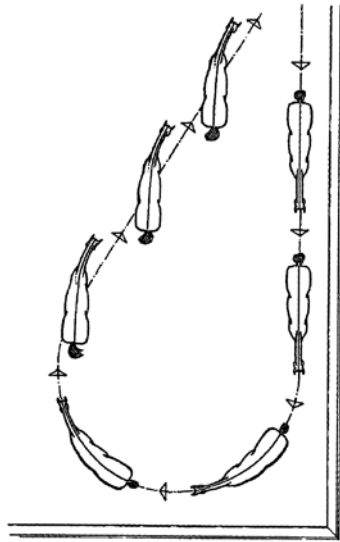
Half-Pass

Definition

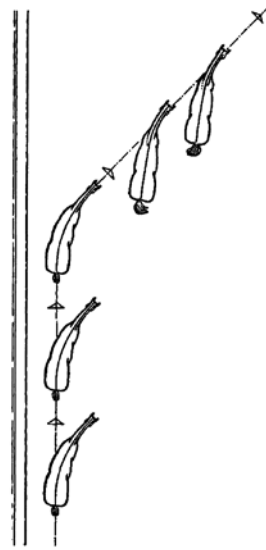
“Half-pass. This movement is a variation of travers, executed on the diagonal instead of along the wall. The horse should be slightly bent round the inside leg of the rider in order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, thus adding ease and grace to the movement although the forehand should be slightly in advance of the quarters. The outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The horse is looking in the direction in which he is moving. He should maintain the same cadence and balance throughout the whole movement. In order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, which adds to the ease and grace of the movement, it is of great importance, not only that the horse is correctly bent and thereby prevented from protruding his inside shoulder, but also to maintain the impulsion, especially the engagement of the inside hind leg.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

Source: USEF Rule Book





Half-circle and Half-pass



Shoulder-in and Half-pass

“In half-pass the horse moves forwards and sideways along imaginary tracks. As in travers, the horse is bent around the rider’s inside leg and is flexed into the direction in which he is going. The half-pass is ridden almost parallel to the track, the shoulders always a little in advance of the quarters. This is especially important since the shoulders are slightly narrower than the quarters and therefore the inside shoulder has to be brought that little fraction more into the direction of the movement.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 48] Half-pass can be performed at collected trot, collected canter, or passage.

Gymnastic Purpose

“The purpose of the half-pass is the same of the travers: suppling the horse evenly on both sides and improving the collection by increased engagement of the inside hind leg.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 48]

Qualities Desired

The horse “should maintain the same cadence and balance throughout the whole movement. In order to give more freedom and mobility to the shoulders, which adds to the ease and grace of the movement, it is of great importance, not only that the horse is correctly bent and thereby prevented from protruding his inside shoulder, but also to maintain the impulsion, especially the engagement of the inside hind leg.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

Aids for Half-Pass

The aids for the half-pass are the same as for travers along the wall. Before starting the half-pass, it is advisable to ride the first few strides in shoulder-fore position to make sure that the horse’s inside shoulder is leading. The transition into half-pass will be especially fluent if the rider takes care that the horse makes the first step sideways with his inside fore-leg.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, 1991, p 49]

Training Advice

The half-pass can be ridden across the full school or half the school, either from the track toward the centerline, or vice versa. It can also be ridden as a counter change of hand or zig-zag.

“On leaving the track out of the corner onto the long side, use the flexion and bend that the horse had in the corner, and then lead the quarters into the school with the outside lower leg. In the half-pass, the forehand should lead the quarters, the opposite of travers. Many riders make the same mistake at the start of the half-pass of using the outside leg too much

and as a result cause the quarters to lead.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 154]

“At the counter change of hand, the rider should make his horse straight an instant before changing direction. When for instance in counter-change of hand at half-pass to either side of the center line the number of meters or strides to either side is prescribed in the test, it must be strictly observed and the movement be executed symmetrically.” [*USEF Rule Book DR111*]

“In the beginning, one should not ride the canter half-pass too steeply, but possibly come out of the first corner of the long side and aim for the end of the center line. The horse can gain confidence in where to put his legs and trust in the sideways movement.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 173]

Common Mistakes

“With half-pass, the same problems can arise as in travers and renvers. If this is not the fault of the rider and cannot quickly be corrected, it is of greater use to move back into travers or shoulder-in, or maybe even circles, rather than continue in half-pass. That is to say, one should move back a step in the training of the horse and correct the problem there. Should the quarters lead in the half-pass, the horse loses Schwung, as the hind legs are no longer stepping in the direction of movement, but sideways away from that direction. The rider then has great difficulty in achieving the desired point in the arena that he is aiming for. As a correction, the inside lower leg must be applied more to hold the quarters. Then through increased activity of the lower back, lighter inside hand and pushing with the outside leg, the horse should be brought again to fluent over-stepping the half-pass.

Should the horse be too bent and flexed in his head and neck but not bent enough in his ribs, thus causing the quarters to trail, the rider must use more and more outside leg to bend the horse round the inside lower leg. The outside rein must limit the bend of the horse firmly. The rider will find that it is best to improve the bend in the ribs by returning to circles and shoulder-in.

It is very common, especially in half-pass left, that the horse can twist his neck and tilt his head. As a correction for this, one must be very accurate in riding the correct flexion of the half-pass, and lift the right hand a little higher.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 155]

“If during training, the rider detects signs of any of these faults, he must stop the half-pass immediately and ride energetically forward, regardless of whether he has finished the movement or not. To correct any of these faults, we advise riding on voltes, riding a figure eight, decreasing and enlarging a circle, shoulder-in, renvers and travers, as well as transitions to medium and extended trot and canter.

The most common rider errors in the half-pass are incorrect weight distribution, collapsing the inside hip, which usually involves the inside hand crossing the withers to the outside. In counter-change of hand during half-pass, riders are often too eager to get into the new direction, do not sit quietly enough (especially when flying changes are involved) and cause the horse to throw himself into the new direction with the quarters leading.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 50]

Turn on the Haunches

Definition

“This movement is a schooling exercise which can be executed from a halt or walk, and is preparatory for the pirouette which is executed out of a collected gait. The horse’s forehand moves in even, quiet and regular steps around the horse’s inner hind leg while maintaining the rhythm of the walk. In the half turn on the haunches the horse is not required to step with its inside hind leg in the same spot each time it leaves the ground but may move slightly forward. This movement may be executed through 90 degrees, 180 degrees, or 360 degrees.” [*USEF Rule Book DR112*]

Gymnastic Purpose

“It is used to simulate the activity of the hind limbs when they carry the greater proportion of the combined weight of horse and rider. It is a movement designed to improve collection and flexion of the haunches. It is also meant to heighten the sensitivity of the horse to the forward and lateral driving actions of the legs, and to the restraining actions of the hands, and as such, is an important lesson in submission.” [*Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success*, p 53]

“For the rider, the benefits are that they develop his ability to feel the horse’s movements and coordinate his lateral influences.” [*Riding Logic*, p 128]

Aids

“Prepare for the turn by a half-halt. Sit inward. The inside rein bends the horse slightly and leads the horse, step by step, around the inside hind leg. Your inside leg on the girth maintains the bend and prevents the inside hind leg from falling in. The outside leg moves the horse and prevents the quarters from falling out. The outside rein defines the degree of the bend and, if necessary, supports the outside leg. Look in the direction you will move and feel that you are turning yourself and taking your horse with you. You should lead with the inside rein, rather than pull.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 95]

“The inside rein, which can exert a slightly sideways action, leads the horse into the turn. The outside rein, prevents excessive bend, but ‘gives’ sufficiently to allow the horse to move as required in the direction of the turn.” [*Principles of Riding*, p 113]

Common Mistakes

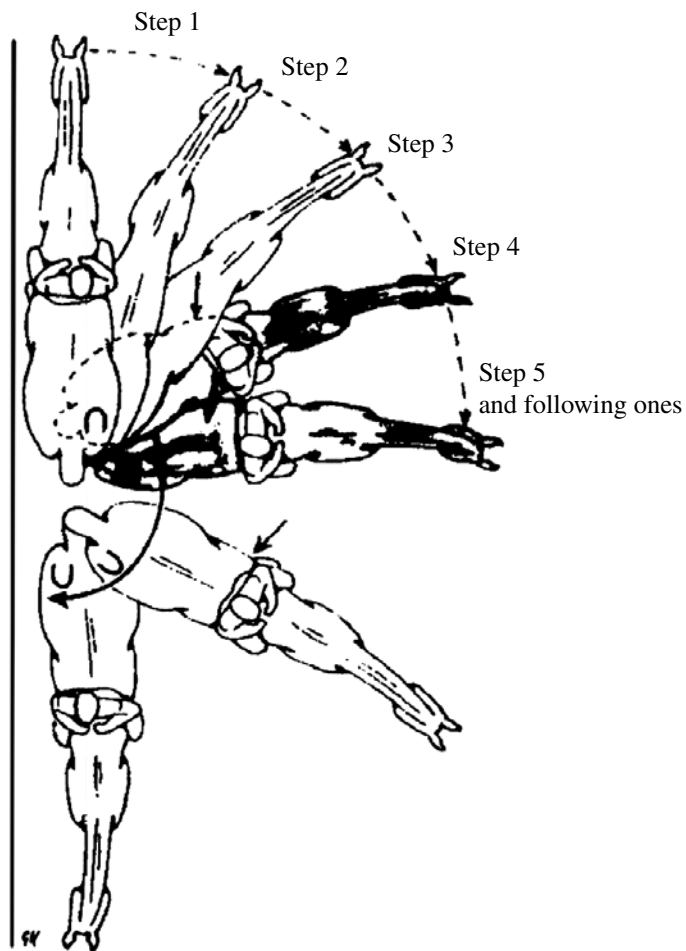
- “Horse not bent in the direction in which he is turning.
- Inside foot not raised and returned to the same spot, but stuck or partly stuck to the ground because of lack of impulsion or not sufficiently engaging aids from the rider.
- The walk rhythm is not maintained.
- The horse moves backwards or deviates sideways with his quarters.
- The haunches move on a circle.
- Pivoting of the feet and stepping backward are bad faults.
- Performing a small half-circle is a lesser fault than stepping backwards.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, p 95]

“In the turn on the haunches or walk pirouette, should the horse “stick” behind, then the movement is without a gymnastic purpose as most of the weight is not on the inside hind leg. A much worse mistake is a backward step, usually caused when the horse is not working through its back, or when the rider’s hands are riding backward and not allowing movement to come through. One often sees horses that are thrown around instead of moving step by step. The horse loses his ‘Takt’ and pivots on the hind leg.” [*The Dressage Horse*, p 134]

Training Advice

“The activity of the hindquarters can be maintained only by agility in the use of the rider’s legs, supported, if necessary by enlivening touches in rapid succession with the spurs. This nimbleness is possible only if the rider’s legs always remain in light and sensitive contact with the horse’s sides. Muscular force is entirely useless in feeling and preventing the immobility of one hind foot or a backward step. It also dulls the horse’s reactions and does not permit the fine variations of leg pressure that the dressage horse must be taught to understand.” [*Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success*, p 56]

Source: *Riding Logic*



The turn on the hindquarters.
The critical points are shaded.

Pirouette

Definition

“The pirouette, or half-pirouette, is a circle (or half circle) executed on two tracks with a radius equal to the length of the horse, the forehand moving round the haunches. It is usually carried out at a collected walk or canter but can also be executed at piaffe. The forefeet and the outside hind foot move round the inside hind foot which forms the pivot and should return to the same spot, or slightly in front of it, each time it leaves the ground.” [USEF Rule Book DR112]

Gymnastic Purpose

“The canter-pirouette has its origin in those far gone days when extreme maneuverability of the horse was required for man-to-man combat in war. In a somewhat different form, it remains part of the repertoire of horses used in bull-fighting or working with cattle. It is certainly one of the most difficult movements demanded of a horse. The canter-pirouette is a movement that no horse will ever execute spontaneously. A pirouette in six to eight bounds of canter is the ultimate touchstone of collection, of flexibility of the haunches, of carrying power of the hindquarters, of impulsion and of absolute submission of the aids. Because a coefficient of 2 is placed on them in tests, they have as decisive an influence on victory in modern friendly contests in a dressage arena as they once had on the battlefield.” [Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success, p 115]

“Only horses that are able to bend the quarters and have sufficient strength to raise the quarters again are in the position to carry out a correct pirouette. The actual practice of the pirouette itself leads to a greater gymnasticising of the quarters.” [The Dressage Horse, p 178]

Qualities Desired

“At whatever gait the pirouette (half-pirouette) is executed the horse slightly bent in the direction in which he is turning should, remaining on the bit with a light contact, turn smoothly round maintaining the exact cadence and sequence of footfalls of that pace. The poll stays the highest point during the entire movement.

During the pirouettes (half-pirouettes) the horse should maintain his impulsion and never in the slightest way move backwards or deviate sideways. If the inside hind foot is not raised and returned to the ground in the same rhythm as the outside hind foot the gait is no longer regular.

In executing the pirouette or the half-pirouette in canter, the rider should maintain perfect lightness of the horse while accentuating the collection. The quarters are well-engaged and lowered and show a good flexion of the joints. An integral part of the movement is the canter strides before and after the pirouette. These should be characterized by an increased activity and collection before the pirouette and, the movement having been completed, by the balance being maintained as the horse proceeds.

The quality of the pirouettes (half-pirouettes) is judged according to the suppleness, lightness, cadence and regularity and to the precision and smoothness of the transitions; pirouettes (half-pirouettes) at canter are judged also according to the balance, the elevation and the number of strides (at pirouettes 6-8, at half-pirouettes 3-4 are desirable).” [USEF Rule Book DR112]

“In canter pirouette, the quarters should describe the smallest possible circle, but the horse should not lose the clear three-beat of the canter. The canter stride should be quiet and expressive, with a clear lowering of the quarters. The inside hind leg takes more of the load. The canter strides in the pirouette should not become quicker or slower than the normal canter strides before or after the pirouette.” [The Dressage Horse, p 178]

Aids

“The canter pirouette is best prepared with half-halts so that the turn is more on the spot, and with the correct flexion of the horse into the direction of movement.

The rider’s outside lower leg lies behind the girth and holds the sideways movement.

The riders’ inside leg prevents the falling out of the horse, which would cause the quarters to lead the shoulder. The

inside leg makes sure that the horse's inside hind leg steps firmly forward and underneath its hindquarters.

The inside rein flexes and the outside rein passively limits the amount of bend. Half-halts regulate the rhythm and maintain the quarters on the smallest possible circle.

The rider must sit especially well into the direction of the movement with weight on the inside seat bone to make it easier for the horse to step under his body." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 178]

"Establish a correct rhythm with good engagement so he can 'sit' at the pirouette with well bent joints. He must be supple. If he is tense, he will probably whirl around above the bit. Sit inward. Look in the direction you turn and take the horse with you. Both legs behind the girth maintain the canter, keeping the hind legs active. The inside leg maintains the bend in cooperation with the inside rein and prevents the haunches from falling in. It is a common fault that the inside hind foot move inward at the first stride of the pirouette. The rider's outside leg moves the horse around and prevents the haunches from falling out. The inside rein leads the horse into the turn—do not pull him backward. The outside rein controls the bend and supports the outside leg." [*Practical Dressage Manual*, pp 129-130]

Training Advice

"To begin the pirouette, the horse should have learned to collect himself well and to canter well. The horse should also be confident in canter half-passes.

Practice pirouettes by reducing the size of the circle that the horse is working on. Ride a little in travers canter. When the horse manages this well, reduce the size of the circle until the horse is in a pirouette. If it becomes difficult for the horse to carry himself, or should he lose the three-beat of the canter, increase the size again.

A problem in the pirouette is when the horse throws himself around. The horse is unable to hold its balance enough with the inside hind leg. One should ride the pirouette on a bigger circle. In addition, the outside rein and inside lower leg must actively prevent the horse from spinning round.

Some horses actually sit too much on their quarters in the pirouette, bringing the hind legs up to the forelegs and jump like a hare with both hind legs at the same time. These horses lift themselves too high in front and therefore come above the bit. As a correction, one should first of all flex the horse deep and ride him through his back again." [*The Dressage Horse*, p 182]

"A useful exercise to prepare green horses for canter pirouettes is to determine if the horse can canter on the spot and maintain the quickness of his hind legs and be able to be pushed forward out of that rather than just escaping. The horse has to be very pliable forward and back again with the confidence that he can sit there and canter maybe six steps almost on the spot still thinking in his mind that he's forward." [*Dressage Insights: Excerpts from Experts*, p 117]

"I do an exercise on a square, like riding a box, where I go straight maybe five, six or seven strides, and then do a quarter turn onto another straight line to keep the horses from anticipating and throwing themselves around." [*Dressage Insights: Excerpts from Experts*, p 118]

Common Mistakes

- "The impulsion, cadence and regular sequence of the legs are not maintained; the horse spins around, executing only a few strides at a tense and hurried canter.
- The horse is not bent to the direction in which he is turning.
- The inside hind foot is not raised and returned to the same spot or almost to the same spot, or it moves inward the first stride.
- The haunches move on a circle which, however is a lesser fault than being stuck to the ground, losing the rhythm of the canter.
- The horse moves backward (a serious fault).
- The canter is sometimes disunited, the horse changing the leg, often only for a fraction of a second and solely with his hind legs.

- The horse is not collected or straight enough when cantering up to the spot where the pirouette is supposed to be executed.
- The transition out of the pirouette is too explosive.” [*Practical Dressage Manual*, pp 130-131]

The main faults in riding a pirouette are escaping quarters, loss of lateral bend, loss of Schwung, and falling onto the inside shoulder.” [*Advanced Techniques of Riding*, p 61]