

THE PYRAMID OF TRAINING – THROUGHNESS

Definition

Throughness is an equestrian term which means the supple, elastic, unblocked, connected state of the horse's musculature and a willing mental state that permits an unrestricted flow of energy from back to front and front to back (circle of the aids), which allows the aids/influences to go through all parts of the horse. A horse is said to be 'through' when, by virtue of a lively impulsion and the suppleness of his joints, free from the paralyzing effects of resistance, he obeys willingly and without hesitation and responds to the various aids calmly and with precision, displaying a natural and harmonious balance both physically and mentally. [USEF Rule Book DR101] **These qualities are the hallmark of a correctly schooled horse.**

"By making the horse obedient to the rider's aids, one achieves *Durchlässigkeit*. The horse is most cooperative, can relax, bend and contract all muscles and joints to the utmost degree, and can therefore produce extreme propulsive power." [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 23]

"The horse is said to be 'through' or to 'let the aids through' (*Durchlässig*) when it remains loose (*losgelassen*) and responds obediently and equally on both reins, to the driving, restraining and sideways – acting aids. This quality is the hallmark of the correctly schooled horse." [Principles of Riding, p 160]

"*Durchlässigkeit* (Throughness) is the result of correct, gymnastic schooling ('gymnasticising'). If the horse possesses *Durchlässigkeit*, this is conclusive evidence that the training has been correct.

'Letting the aids through' is closely related to, and interconnected with, the other aims of training.

- It allows the rhythm to be maintained in all three gaits, and also in the transitions.
- Only if the horse moves with 'looseness' (*Losgelassenheit*) can energy from the hindquarters pass forward through the horse's body. Also, without 'looseness' it is impossible for the restraining aids to act, via the mouth, poll, neck and back, on the hindquarters.
- Any problems in the contact, that is, unsteadiness or stiffness in the connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth, will interfere with the horse's ability to 'let the aids through'.
- A horse which works with impulsion, which is supple through its back, and so 'swings through' with its hind legs, will be in a better position to let both the driving and the restraining aids through.
- Not until the horse becomes straighter can it perform half halts equally on both reins, and at the same time go more positively into the contact in response to the rider's driving aids, without its hind legs escaping to the side.
- This, in its turn, is absolutely essential for collection and consequently for the correct raising of the head and neck.
- If the horse responds correctly to the exercises in collection by stepping forward more, and with both hind legs equally, and by taking more weight on its hindquarters as required, this is an indication that it has achieved a high degree of *Durchlässigkeit*." [Principles of Riding, p 169-170]

Qualities Desired

"By virtue of a lively impulsion and the suppleness of his joints, free from the paralyzing effects of resistance, the horse obeys willingly and without hesitation and responds to the various aids calmly and with precision, displaying a natural and harmonious balance physically and mentally." [USEF Rule Book DR101]