

PRACTICAL DIRECTIVES FOR LUNGEING THE RIDER ON THE HORSE

Safety Factors

Location of Lesson

- Enclosed area (quiet, safe)
 - * Indoor arena
 - * Outdoor, fenced-in area away from the rails
- Good footing should be level, secure, not deep, not slippery

Preparing the Horse

- Warm up the horse without the rider before the lesson.
- Correct equipment for lungeing must be used.
 - * Always attach a safety strap between the D-rings on the pommel. Do not use a neck strap which can cause the rider to tip forward.
 - * Always knot reins and buckle through the safety strap, enabling the student to influence the horse in case of emergency (see *Fig. 15*).

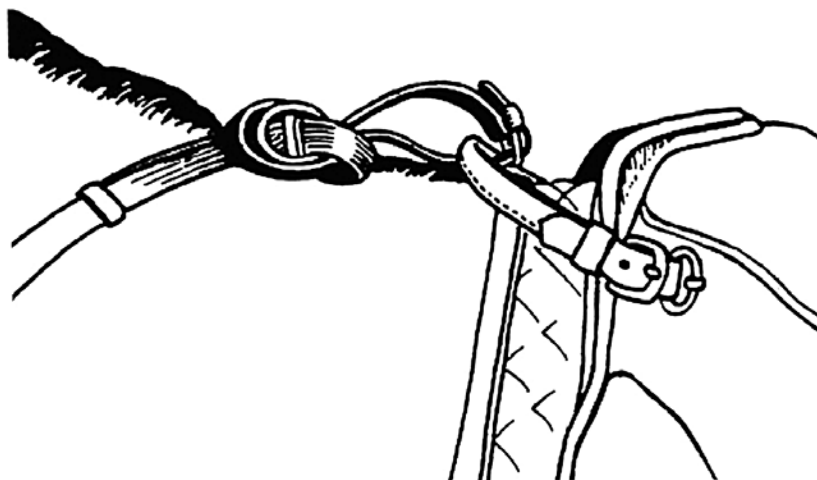


Figure 15

Reins properly knotted through safety strap.

- * Explain safety precautions to the student: if the horse becomes excited, shies, accelerates, etc., the rider should immediately grasp bridle rein at the knot and calmly assist the instructor in establishing control of the horse.
- * Unclip the side-reins before the student mounts and dismounts.
- * Rider should be encouraged to pat the horse and establish good rapport to ensure horse's confidence and relaxation.
- The Rider
 - * Suitable riding attire must be worn.
 - * Safety helmet with chin harness fastened before mounting.
 - * No spurs.
 - * With a beginner, keep the stirrups.
 - * With a more advanced rider, go without stirrups for short periods.

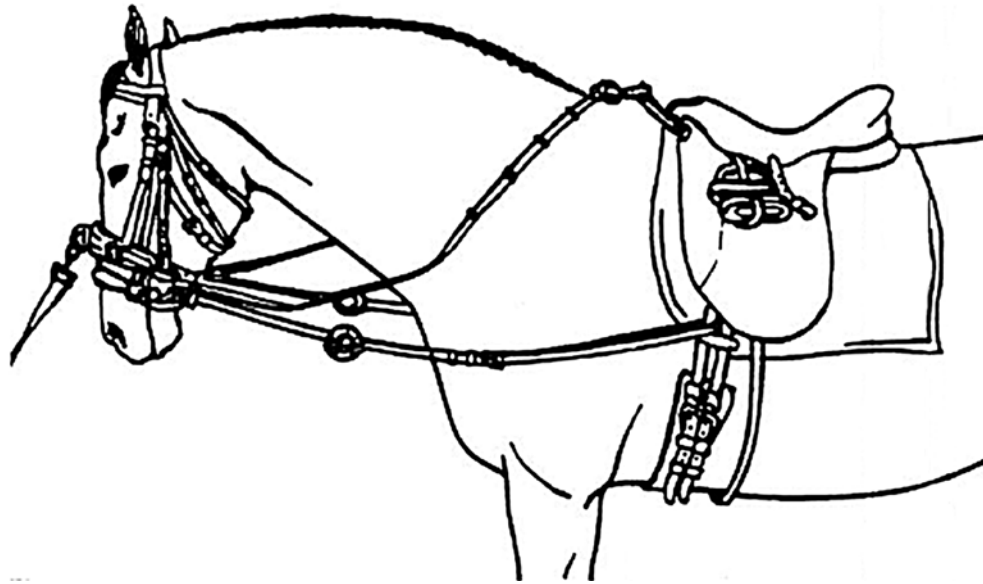


Figure 16

Horse correctly tacked up for lunging the rider.

Time Frame

Lessons for Beginners

- * There is no substitute for mileage in the saddle.
- * A minimum of 15 lessons, but 50 is better.
- * Thereafter, once or twice weekly in combination with other instruction.

Lessons for Advanced Riders

- * Lessons are recommended once a week.

Duration of Lesson

- * 15-30 minutes depending on the fitness of the rider.
- * Change direction frequently, about every 5-7 minutes so the student doesn't learn to favor one side.
- * Take breaks.

Suitability of Horse

All horses used for seat lessons must be safe, steady and well accustomed to being lunged in side reins.

Beginning Riders

- Experienced, safe horse, comfortable with rider's arm/leg movements.
- Quiet, moderate gaits.
- Appropriate size.
- If possible, student should use same horse for each lesson.

Advanced Riders

- Experienced, safe horse, comfortable with rider's arm/leg movements.
- Use a variety of horses with varying gaits.

Lesson Format

Equipment

- Make sure all equipment is properly fitted and adjusted.
- Consider all other safety factors for lungeing as described under *Practical Directives for Lunging The Horse*, section A & B.

Mounting Up

- Bring horse into center of lunge circle. Let stand.
- Knot reins through safety strap if you haven't already done so when warming up the horse.
- Check girth, pad and length of stirrups.
- Detach side reins at bit and snap together over withers or hook onto D-rings.
- Assist rider to mount.
- Walk horse forward.
- Reattach side reins.

Initial Assessment

- Proceed in circle at walk and trot (canter only if appropriate), observe the student for a short while, and make an assessment of seat and position. Select some suppling exercises to warm up the student.
- Assess rider's seat while halted.
- Share assessment with the student.
- Explain the classical seat, as needed.
- Choose a few important faults that need correction.
- Don't attempt to change everything at once; it is unrealistic.
- Explain to the student the faults on which to concentrate.
- When not taken to extreme, visualization and imagery can be helpful to the student.

Exercises

- Lunge exercises develop confidence in the rider. Take care not to overface the student.
- Select appropriate exercises to correct those faults.
- Explain the exercises in the halt or walk, giving reasons for each.
- As security and balance improve, attempt them in the trot, and later in the canter, if appropriate.
- While each exercise is being done with the arms, for instance, the rider is to try to maintain best possible leg position (and vice versa).

Wrapping Up

- Review lesson with student. Ask for feedback which will help ascertain level of understanding.
- When lunge lesson is over, side reins should be detached at the bit, snapped together over withers, or hooked onto D-rings.
- Instructor standing at head of horse, rider dismounts.
- Girth loosened.
- Horse praised and led away.
- To prevent soreness, rider should be encouraged to do stretching exercises both before and after the lesson.

Lungeing Exercises

General Comments

- Begin each lesson with the sequence of rider awareness: balance, seat, legs, and hands.
- To establish a certain degree of balance and alignment, begin with breathing exercises to open the chest and relax the diaphragm.
- Remind the rider to breathe from diaphragm throughout the work.
- Students should strive for the best possible leg position when doing exercises with the upper body, and vice versa. Unilateral arm exercises should be done with the inside arm only, while the outside hand holds onto the safety strap. This insures that the rider's shoulders stay aligned with the horse's shoulders.