

Lesson Topic: Pirouette in Walk and Canter

The wording in the USEF and FEI rulebooks are slightly different. See both versions below:

USEF: DR112 The Pirouette , The Half-pirouette , The Quarter -pirouette , The Working Pirouette ,The Working Half-pirouette , The Turn on the Haunches .

1. The pirouette (half-pirouette) is a circle (half-circle) executed on two tracks with a radius equal to the length of the horse, the forehand moving round the haunches.
2. Pirouettes (half-pirouettes) are usually carried out at collected walk or canter but can also be executed at piaffe.
3. At the pirouette (half-pirouette) 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.
4. At whatever gait the pirouette (half-pirouette) is executed the horse, slightly bent in the direction in which he is turning should remain on the bit with light contact, turn smoothly and maintain the cadence of that gait. The poll stays the highest point during the entire movement.
5. During the pirouettes (half-pirouettes) the horse should not move backwards or deviate sideways. In the pirouette or half-pirouette in canter, the judges should be able to recognize a real canter stride although the footfalls of the diagonal - inside hind leg, outside front leg - do not occur simultaneously.
6. 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.
7. 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). When the turn is too large and the hind steps come off the prescribed line of travel, the correction is to take a straight line back to the track. Correction by use of half-pass or leg-yielding may result in a deduction of points. (See DR112.5)
8. The Quarter-pirouette. As a preparatory exercise, the quarter-pirouette is usually executed on the track at a given letter, the horse being highly collected for 1 or 2 strides before and then through the execution of a 90 degree turn around the haunches in 2-3 strides, maintaining a correct canter footfall.
9. The Working Pirouette and Working Half-Pirouette. The pirouette (half-pirouette) is a turn of 360 degrees (180 degrees) executed on two tracks, with the forehand moving around the haunches. The size of the working pirouette should be approximately three meters. The requirements for a working half-pirouette are identical to those of a regular half-pirouette, except that the allowable diameter is increased to approximately three meters. A working half-pirouette is to be judged like a regular half-pirouette except that full credit must be given for a well-performed, but larger (three meter) half-pirouette. Full credit should also be given for a well-performed regular-sized half-pirouette. A significant deduction should be made if a rider attempts but performs poorly a regular half-pirouette.
10. The Turn on the Haunches. For younger horses that are still not able to show collected walk, the 'turn on the haunches' is an exercise to prepare the horse for collection. The 'turn on the haunches' is executed out of medium walk prepared by half-halts to shorten the steps a little and to improve the ability to bend the joints of the hindquarters. The 'turn on the haunches' can be executed on a larger diameter (approximately one meter) than the pirouette in walk, but the demands of the training scale concerning rhythm, contact, activity and straightness are the same. A turn on the haunches is to be judged like a regular half pirouette except that full credit must be given for a well performed, but larger (one meter) turn on the haunches. Full credit should also be given for a well performed regular sized half pirouette. A significant deduction should be made if a rider attempts but performs poorly a regular half pirouette.

FEI Rules for Dressage Events, 24th edition, effective 1 January 2011, updates effective 1 January 2012

ARTICLE 413 THE PIROUETTE, THE HALF-PIROUETTE AND TURN ON THE HAUNCHES

1. The Pirouette (half-pirouette) is a turn of three hundred and sixty (360) degrees (hundred and eighty -180- degrees) executed on two (2) tracks, with a radius equal to the length of the horse and the forehand moving around the haunches.
2. Pirouettes (half-pirouettes) are usually carried out at collected walk or canter, but can also be executed at piaffe.
3. At the pirouette (half-pirouette) the forefeet and the outside hind foot move around the inside hind foot. The inside hind leg describes a circle as small as possible.
4. At whatever pace the pirouette (half-pirouette) is executed, the horse, slightly bent in the direction in which it is turning, remains “on the bit” with light contact, turning smoothly around, and maintaining sequence and timing of footfalls of that pace. The poll remains the highest point during the entire movement.
5. During the pirouettes (half-pirouettes), the horse should maintain its activity (walk also included) and never move backwards or sideways.
6. In executing the pirouette or the half-pirouette in canter, the athlete should maintain lightness of the horse while accentuating the collection. The horse’s hindquarters are well engaged and lowered and show a good flexion of the joints. An integral part of the movement is the quality of the canter strides before and after the pirouette. The strides should show an increased activity and collection before the pirouette and the balance should be maintained at the end of the pirouette.
Aims of the pirouette and half-pirouette in canter: To demonstrate the willingness of the horse to turn around the inside hind leg on a small radius, slightly bent in the direction of the turn while maintaining the activity and the clarity of the canter, the straightness and the balance before and after the figure and clear canter strides during the turn. In the pirouette or half-pirouette in canter, the Judges should be able to recognize a real canter stride although the feet of the diagonal – inside hind leg, outside front leg – are not touching the ground simultaneously.
7. The quality of the pirouettes (half-pirouettes) is judged according to the suppleness, lightness and regularity, and the precision and smoothness of the entrance and exit. Pirouettes (half pirouettes) in canter should be executed in six (6) to eight (8) strides – full pirouettes – and three to four (4) strides – half-pirouette.
8. Half-pirouettes in walk (one-hundred and eighty -180- degrees) are executed out of collected walk with the collection being maintained throughout the exercise. When the horse exits the half-pirouette it returns to the initial track without crossing the hind legs.
9. Turn on the haunches from walk. For younger horses that are still not able to show collected walk the “turn on the haunches” is an exercise to prepare the horse for collection. The “turn on the haunches” is executed out of medium walk prepared by half halts to shorten the steps a little and to improve the ability to bend the joints of the hindquarters. The horse does not halt before or after the turn. The “turn on the haunches” can be executed on a larger radius (approx. ½m) than the pirouette in walk, but the demands of the training scale concerning rhythm, contact, activity and straightness are the same.
10. Turn on the haunches from halt to halt (one-hundred and eighty -180- degrees). To maintain the forward tendency of the movement one (1) or two (2) forward steps at the beginning of the turn are permitted. The same criteria apply as for the turn on the haunches from walk.

When studying these definitions it becomes clear that the walk pirouette and the canter pirouette are essentially the same movement, just in different gaits. The three main criteria of a pirouette are: 1 maintaining the regular rhythm of the gait; 2. increasing the engagement of the hindquarters, particularly the outside leg; 3. enhancing the collection. The requirements for the turn on the haunches and for the quarter pirouette in canter are preparatory steps toward these goals.

It is also important for the rider to realize that it is essential to hone his/her skills in perfecting turns on the haunches and walk pirouette before attempting pirouettes in canter. In the walk the rider has more time to work on the cooperation of the aids. Also, shortening the walk steps require comparatively little loading of the hindquarters than collecting the canter for pirouettes. For these reasons the rider should seek many opportunities to practice his/her technique in the walk, thus decreasing confusion and frustration for both horse and rider, when getting ready for canter pirouettes.

Purpose and Gymnastic Benefit

1. In pirouettes the forehand describes a larger circle than the hindquarters, which move on a much smaller circle. This, especially with the proper degree of collection, enhances the freedom and mobility of the shoulders as well as the lightness of the forehand. These qualities become more obvious in the canter, particularly since the pirou-

- ette constitutes the highest degree of collection in that gait.
2. For pirouettes in the walk to exhibit the same ingredients as canter pirouettes, the horse must first be taught a correct collected walk. In order to achieve this the rider has to acquire the skills to influence each hind leg separately and distinctly. The horse should give the feel that he is “going on his toes”.
 3. A well-balanced and well-educated horse should be able to execute pirouettes in both directions with exactly the same quality.

Prerequisites

When the horse is able to leg-yield effortlessly in various formats, he can be taught shoulder-in, haunches-in (travers), and renvers in the walk. These movements familiarize him with the aids, and increase suppleness. In time this work can be carried over to the trot.

Lateral movements can be schooled in the medium walk (or in the somewhat shortened walk) but should be interspersed with free walk or work in other gaits. In the walk, care must be taken not to overuse the rein aids and to synchronize the leg aids with the horse’s movement. If this important rule is observed, the walk will stay pure and the rider will in due course acquire the skills to collect the walk. Great care must be taken not to ask for a collected walk at this stage in the horse’s education. He should be taught to shorten his steps just enough to be on the aids for a fairly large turn on the haunches. Gradually, as it becomes possible over time to shorten the walk, the turns can be made incrementally smaller. Hurrying this process along and demanding small turns when the horse has not yet learned to shorten the steps will only cause problems. When the horse is capable of a really good collected walk, the pirouettes can be made very small with precisely accentuated steps. (See also: working pirouettes).

To perform canter pirouettes effortlessly the horse requires a great deal of strength. The trainer must allow adequate time for this to develop. The following 13 “stepping stones” are a guide for appropriate work. The horse should be able to: (1) Make very polished transitions from canter to walk to canter and (2) 10 to 8 meter voltes in excellent balance as well as (3) be able to counter canter in a wide variety of school figures. When practicing this work (4) transitions within the gait must not be neglected and (5) the collected canter should have lively impulsion.

In due course the horse should (6) be schooled in lateral movements in canter which will eventually provide him with enough power in his hindquarters (7) to enable him to do the highly collected canter required for pirouettes. This mode of cantering is called ‘school canter’ or ‘pirouette canter’.

When riding lateral work in canter it is usual to begin with a shoulder fore position (also known as plie), then shoulder-in, haunches-in (travers) and renvers. It must be observed (8) that the angle in lateral work in canter should be somewhat less than in trot. When the angle is overdone in canter, not only does it throw the horse onto his shoulders, making collection impossible, but it is also potentially harmful to the gait. Lateral work is particularly useful (9) when carried out through corners and on circles, not just on straight lines. An educated rider can (10) chose a variety of combinations of lateral movements that will not only strengthen the horse but also (11) increase his suppleness and agility, both qualities useful for pirouettes. When schooling the horse in this gymnastic work the rider (12) should frequently test the horse’s self-carriage by releasing the reins (ueberstreichen), but he should also (13) be able to lower the horse’s neck if tension occurs and the horse’s back gets tight.

Correct gymnastic work in canter should result in the gait becoming more ‘springy’ and should give the rider the feeling that the horse is cantering ‘uphill’. Since all the joints in the haunches are flexing more, the croup lowers and as a result the horse seems to grow taller through the shoulders. This way of going is the most accentuated in the school canter. When the elevation of the forehead occurs relative to the lowering of the haunches it is called ‘relative elevation’ it is erroneous to think in terms of ‘lifting the withers/shoulders of the horse’. This type of elevation can be simulated with strong influences of the reins and it is called ‘absolute elevation’, but can easily result in the horse stiffening in the back and not lowering the croup.

The School Canter

When examining the purity of the gait it has to be recognized that the highly collected ‘school canter’ is not a three-beat gait. The diagonal footfall- inside hind and outside fore- is no longer true. Because of the intensified collection the

inside hind leg touches the ground a fraction before the outside fore. (If the reverse occurs, the outside fore touching the ground before the inside hind, the horse would be considered to be going on the forehand). The old masters recognized this phenomenon, in fact worked toward that goal, and termed it 'school canter'. It is questionable if a canter pirouette executed in the desired degree of collection can be done in a three-beat rhythm. Slow motion video analysis has in fact also revealed that a four-beat canter rhythm is prevalent in pirouettes. The crux of the matter is, however, that the school canter should be characterized by lively impulsion and should not deteriorate to being slow and labored. To the naked eye it should appear to be in a three-beat rhythm. Thus the intent of the FEI/USEF rules regarding canter pirouettes are in no way invalidated, it just doesn't quite happen that way.

Aids – Gross Form

1. *The Walk Pirouette*

Prepare the horse with half halts to get his attention and to improve collection. Shorten the inside rein to keep the flexion and bend throughout the turn. If necessary, the inside hand can move a little sideways to initiate the turn. The outside rein limits the bend but also has to allow enough so as not to prevent the horse from moving forward/sideways. The rider sits a little more onto the inside seat bone. The inside leg is at the girth keeping the inside hind leg motivated to step forward, the outside leg is behind the girth; together they keep the bend in the horse's body and the rhythm of the walk. In addition, the rider's inside leg has to prevent the inside hind from taking big sideways steps, which would result in too large a turn. If the outside leg acts too strongly behind the girth this could induce the horse either to cross with the outside hind or to step too much sideways with the inside hind. In both cases this would also cause the turn to become too large. The rider's outside leg has to prevent the outside hind from falling out, yet should also drive rather more forward than sideways.

2. *The Canter Pirouette*

The aids are basically the same as for the walk pirouette. However the rider has to pay more attention to the quality of the canter in terms of collection and impulsion so that before, during, and after the pirouette the horse keeps the same energy. The outside rein and outside leg are a little more important in determining the size of the turn. The rider must not exaggerate the weight on the inside seat bone. The torso should remain perpendicular behind the withers and the rider's shoulders parallel to the horse's shoulders and his hips parallel to the horse's hips.

Aids – Fine Form

When approaching pirouettes in the walk as well as in the canter, it is helpful to ride in a shoulder-in manner. This ensures that the horse is light on the inside rein and the outside shoulder is well controlled. IF the horse has a tendency to lose flexion and bend (more apt to happen in the canter) the inside hand should be raised, but not crossed over the withers, and the inside leg placed firmly at the girth 'like a lamppost' to prevent the horses from falling in.

When the horse has started the pirouette, it is helpful to think of haunches-in without, however, overdoing the outside leg aid. Too strong of an outside leg pushes the haunches sideways and this can cause the pirouette to become too big. (The same occurs in the walk). Some riders, when the haunches are falling out, place the outside leg very far back in an effort to control this evasion which is also accompanied by a loss of bend. In most cases this does not help at all but rather causes the horse to push the haunches even more against the outside leg. At the same time the rider must strive to maintain the bend and to half halt sufficiently to prevent the horse from speeding up.

Some riders exaggerate the weight aid on the inside seat bone and also turn the torso quite a bit to the inside in the mistaken belief that it will help the horse to turn. In fact this can be the cause of several evasions, one of them being the haunches falling out, another speeding up, and yet another that the overloading of the haunches causes the joints to flex so strongly that the horse will start 'crow hopping' (both hind legs together). Another cause for crow hopping is the sudden overloading of the haunches when the tempo is too free and the rider tries with strong aids to pull the horse into a small pirouette.

Some horses will respond to an overly strong seat aid by stiffening the back, preventing it from working elastically. The

back will drop, the horse may come above the bit, and the joints in the haunches cannot flex enough, causing the horse to become croup high.

In any negative response from the horse, the rider needs to reevaluate the preparation, the degree of collection, and the application of the aids. Once the horse understands what is required of him, it can be helpful to lighten the seat a little and to dose the aids carefully.

The Working Pirouette

The horse has eventually acquired some strength, the degree of collection, and the dexterity to make a good quality pirouette small enough to score highly in competition. Now the rider is called upon to realize that schooling the horse constantly in competition-sized pirouettes in daily work can be a serious mistake. Because very small pirouettes make incredibly high demands on the horse, frequent practice could promote not only over stressed joints but also the development of a number of evasions which would require additional schooling to correct (not to mention inflict more bodily stress). The best solution is to ride 'working pirouettes' which retain all of the qualities we seek in a true pirouette, but are about two to four times larger. Only occasionally should the rider demand show-sized pirouettes, and even then it is advisable not to do too many in the warm-up before a competition. (The same principle applies to walk pirouettes).

Useful Exercises

1. Decreasing the Square and the Square Volte (Fig. I)

This illustration shows some possibilities that eventually lead to riding a square volte. On all the longer straight lines that horse can be ridden in various lateral movements followed by a rather small turn. This is excellent preparation for the quarter pirouette as well as strengthening the horse for collection. The benefit of the square volte is that the horse has to go straight after each quarter turn which makes him more responsive to the inside aids.

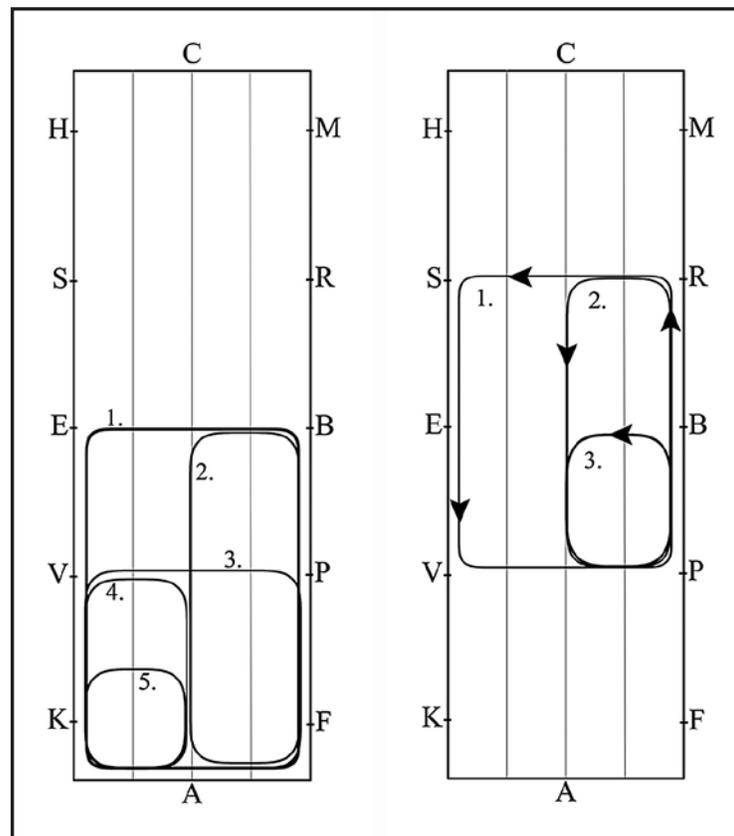


Figure I

Ia

Ib

2. The Passade (Fig II)

This is a 180 degree turn on two tracks in a haunches-in manner. It can be carried out both in walk and canter. To begin with the turn can be made like a 10 meter half volte and as the horse collects himself better, the turn can be ridden smaller. This exercise is particularly useful in canter work when it can be combined with preceding lateral movements which alternately gymnasticize the horse's outside and inside hind legs.

Correcting Walk Pirouettes Plan A

A student who has just shown 4th level the previous weekend books a lesson with you. When discussing her test with you, she says that her lowest scores were those for the pirouettes, walk and canter. Therefore, you both agree that schooling pirouettes should be the main object of the lesson.

Warm Up

After a suitable warm-up time the horse is ready to work. You ask the student to canter several 10 meter voltes and to show you some shoulder-in and haunches-in on the long sides as well as on the circle. During this work you occasionally ask for several strides of pirouette canter.

It soon becomes evident that the quality of the collection even in the lateral work is not sufficient. The horse gets behind the aids and slows down when the student wants to obtain pirouette canter.

You explain to the student the correlation between the canter and the walk pirouettes, and that her horse needs to be much better collected in the canter before there is a possibility to improve the pirouettes. So today's work should focus on the walk pirouettes.

Setting the Task

After a break from the canter work you ask the student to go onto the rail on the right rein in a medium walk and to make a transition to a collected walk at K. While she is still walking down the long side at B, you explain the task you want her to carry out. (This gives her enough time to prepare mentally and envisage the pattern). You ask her to turn right at V and then make a walk pirouette on the quarter line in front of P, then a pirouette left on the quarter line in front of V and to turn left at P down the rail, lengthening the reins. You explain that you want her to ride the collected walk and the pirouettes just like she would in the show and that at first you just want to observe and make corrections later.

This gives her a chance to do what she does habitually in terms of collecting the walk and giving the aids for the pirouettes. For you, it is an opportunity to observe mistakes first hand.

Assessment

This is what happens: the horse's walk gets slower and slower and he tries to curl up in his neck and come behind the vertical. The student corrects the neck by several upward pulls on the reins. The horse raises his head, but he is now above the bit. His back is rigid and he takes several irregular steps. As the horse crosses the center line, the rider prepares for the pirouette to the right. She slows down the walk even more and makes a very tight turn.

At the beginning of the turn, the horse was rather straight in the neck, but after a few steps he is counter flexed and the

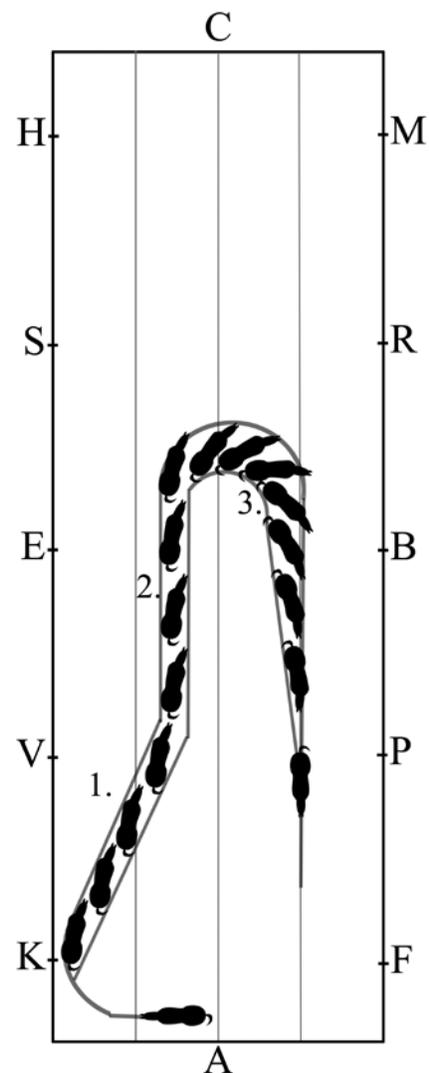


Figure II

1. Half Pass
2. Shoulder-fore(-in)
3. Passade

student slides onto the outside seat bone in an effort to make the turn small. Naturally, the horse gets stuck with the inside hind leg. The student realizes this, and as the horse comes out of the turn, she spurs him rather vigorously while tightening the grip on the reins.

So they go pacing off toward the left pirouette. Again she wants to make this one very small and begins to turn him with strong rein aids, with counter flexion. As before, after a few steps, her weight shifts to the outside seat bone. However, because the horse remembers her spurs he turns the forehand rather quickly. This time, he gets stuck with both hind legs for a moment before he can recover his balance. He throws up his head and does almost a running walk towards P.

By this time the student, realizing that things have gone terribly wrong, is highly embarrassed and says “I know that was awful, but he gets so resistant. I don’t know what to do”.

Correction

Horse and rider need to take another break during which you explain that the situation can easily be remedied if she focuses on the two main issues. The first, and more important one, is to improve the collected walk. You explain to her that a slow walk is not a collected walk and things will get a lot easier for the horse, if he is taught a true collected walk which will enable him to do a better job. The second issue is the technical aspect of her riding, and that she is causing some of the problems in her struggle to make the pirouettes so small. She replies that only small pirouettes score high in competition. You tell her that this thinking is precisely what has contributed to the problem, rather than focusing on the essence of the movement, which is, that the pirouette is a turn in motion. You tell her that you know an excellent exercise that will address both issues and you explain to her the patterns of Fig. I.

Work Phase

Let the student take up the reins again and ask her to carry out one or two of the simpler versions in Fig. I. in a medium walk. You want her to do lateral movements on the long side, alternating between shoulder-in and haunches-in, and later adding renvers. Throughout, you insist that she makes the horse walk with much more activity than she initially thinks is acceptable. You insist that she makes every turn quite tight, increasingly paying attention to the horse’s activity. During the exercise, you are giving her frequent feedback on her seat and position as well as the application of her aids, e.g. where her legs should be, what functions they have, how much to flex and bend the horse, how to load her seat bones and to follow through with her hips.

As the size of the pattern is gradually decreased, you tell her to collect the walk more, paying great attention to maintaining the activity, and to half-halt frequently with short, light rein aids. She should constantly guard against the horse’s desire to slow down by quickening the rhythm with her legs. It might help her to think that she wants the horse to piaffer (without, however, doing so).

This work is carried out in both directions. Gradually the turns are ridden more like quarter pirouettes. The concept of the exercise and its benefits are becoming clearer to the student and she is able to obtain much improved collected walk. During another short break, you review the aids for the pirouettes, emphasizing how a correct application will help her horse perform them well.

Near the end of the lesson you set her the same task as in the beginning. This time, the collected walk is greatly improved and the student is using her hands more lightly with shorter reins, enabling the horse to stay in better self carriage. You remind her not to focus on making the pirouettes very small, but make them purposely larger, while keeping the horse stepping actively. This works very well in both directions. When you ask her to do them again smaller, the horse stays in front of her aids and performs them very competently.

Cool Down

Now, let the student walk her horse on a long rein. Advise her not to practice pirouettes in the small format until just before a show and to continue schooling the quality of the collected walk with the exercises she has learned today. You also ask her to work on the collected canter at home, making sure the horse jumps with lively impulsion instead of becoming slow. Then you ask her to take the horse for a walk on the property to cool him down.

Correcting Canter Pirouettes Plan B

A few weeks later, the student brings the horse again for a lesson. She says that she has been working conscientiously on improving the canter and that she would like to concentrate on schooling canter pirouettes.

Warm Up

During the warm up it is indeed apparent that the canter is much better. The student is able to make good transitions between working, the medium, and the collected canters. Toward the end of the warm up you ask her to show some walk pirouettes. This allows you to observe her technique and will also prove if she has retained everything she learned in her lesson on walk pirouettes. To everyone's satisfaction all the walk pirouettes turn out very well. Then the horse is allowed a short break in walk on a long rein.

Work Phase

Prerequisites

Before schooling the pirouettes proper you want to find out if the horse can collect sufficiently to demonstrate the pirouette canter. You let the student canter on a 20 Meter circle and ask her to collect the horse for 3 to 6 strides. You position yourself on the outside of the circle. Gradually the normal collected canter is collected even more until several strides of pirouette canter are achieved. Ask the student to freshen up the strides between moments of ultra-collection until both horse and rider are able to vary the canter promptly between working and collected gaits as well as the pirouette canter. This stimulates the horse's response to the aids as well as ensuring that impulsion is maintained at all times. The horse is schooled in this manner in both directions and then given a break.

Observations (discovering a fault).

During the break you tell the student that you noticed, when she collected the horse for the pirouette canter, she had difficulty keeping him on the circle line and that the horse showed a tendency to spiral in. You tell her that this indicates she was using her hands too strongly, particularly the inside rein, and that her outside leg tended to slip further back than was necessary.

Correction

In order to correct this you explain that you want her to do the exercise with which she is already familiar from her previous lesson on walk pirouettes (Fig I). When the work in the canter is resumed you ask her to go down the rail in shoulder-fore and down the center line in haunches-in. While she is riding shoulder-fore you ask the student to collect the horse several times in pirouette canter and to make sure the horse stays absolutely on the track. When she can do this on the rail you ask her to do it on the center line. This increases the degree of difficulty and shows if the horse is truly on the aids. In order to minimize the use of the reins and to prove that the horse is in self-carriage you ask the student to release the reins occasionally in the pirouette canter. Again this work is done in both directions and the horse gets a break.

The horse's stiff and hollow side

Tell the student that you noticed during the previous exercises that her horse always showed a tendency to bulge through the left shoulder when in shoulder-fore right and that she seemed to get a large angle rather easily when riding haunches-in right. However, when she was going to the left, the shoulder-fore was more correct, but that it was harder for her to get an appropriate bend and angle for the haunches-in. You conclude that the horse is hollow on the right and stiff on the left and that this may have an impact on the pirouettes.

Setting the task

Ask the student to canter on the right lead. She is to make a 20 meter circle at A, schooling the horse in several transitions within the gait, including pirouette canter. Position yourself some distance beyond X close to the diagonal KXM. Next, the student is to ride on the diagonal (KXM) and to make a half pirouette right at X with a flying change upon returning to the track at K.

Then she is to ride another circle at A, this time on the left lead, and to practice transitions as before. Subsequently she is to go onto the diagonal FXH and to ride a half pirouette left at X, followed by a flying change upon returning to the track at F. (While she is on the left lead circle at A, change your position toward the diagonal FXH, but some distance beyond X).

Observations

The work on the circle generates impulsion, and as the student rides onto the diagonal KXM, she prepares the horse very well for the pirouette right. However, just before she turns the forehand, the horse swings his haunches to the inside. This causes the pirouette to become very large so that it also takes additional strides to get back on the diagonal line. In her effort to return to the diagonal the student bends the horse's neck quite a bit to the right, losing the left shoulder. This causes a loss of impulsion which the student is struggling to regain before reaching the rail. Yet she manages to do that successfully and the flying change is correct.

Once again the transitions on the circle (this time to the left) generate good impulsion so that the pair seems well equipped to go onto the diagonal FXH. When the student collects the horse for pirouette canter he grabs the inside, thus successfully avoiding the bend. Because of the dilemma in the pirouette right, the student intends to make this one (to the left) smaller, and she turns the horse with determination. The horse responds rather promptly, flinging the forehand around and falling out with the outside hind. The turn resembles more a turn around the middle rather than around the hindquarters. However, the flying change at F is correct. Ask the student now to give the horse a break and to walk on a long rein.

Correcting the pirouette to the right

Share your observations with the student. Explain that in the pirouette right the horse was not listening to the inside aids, specifically the inside leg. There could be three reasons for the horse to go haunches-in before the pirouette even began: 1. the student was not insisting on enough shoulder-fore in the approach to the pirouette, 2. she was using her outside leg too strongly, 3. because the right is the horse's hollow side, he also over-reacted to the outside leg aid.

The square volte, Fig. I.

Remind the student of the patterns of Fig. I. which she rode already in her lesson on walk pirouettes and in an easier version earlier in this lesson. Ask her to take the reins up again and to canter the horse on the right lead. Let her begin the exercise by riding a fairly long sided rectangle. She should ride shoulder-fore on the long sides and make every turn like a quarter pirouette. With every repetition the long sides are shortened so that she will eventually ride a square volte with quarter pirouettes for corners.

Initially the student has problems making the horse quite straight after the turns, but with more practice and feedback from you, communication between horse and rider vastly improves. Finally the square volte is ridden rather well and the pair deserves a break.

The passade, Fig. II.

During the break you explain the merits of Fig. II. Those are, simplified, that a) in the half pass the horse has to listen to the outside leg (in this case, care must be taken not to have the haunches leading, since the right is the horse's hollow side), b) in the shoulder-in he has to listen to the inside leg, c) in the passade the aids are combined, with special emphasis on the techniques she has just practiced in Fig. I.

Let the student canter the horse again on the right lead and get them to perform the entire combination of Fig. II. Give feedback as necessary. When the pattern is completed the horse should be ridden in a straight line in shoulder-fore. Then the exercise can be repeated. Let the student rehearse 3 or 4 times, each time making the passade smaller until it is a half pirouette. Finally ask the student to go onto the diagonal KXM and to ride a half pirouette right at X. Remind her to keep the horse in shoulder-fore, especially in the pirouette canter, to apply her outside leg moderately, and to use the skills she just learned in the two exercises.

She succeeds in riding a very good pirouette of 4 strides and is easily able to return onto the diagonal line and to finish with a flying change just before reaching the track at K. Now give the horse another break.

Correcting the pirouette to the left.

During the break, share with your student your observations regarding the pirouette left. Let her know that it was primarily the loss of bend as well as the horse's reluctance to engage the outside (right) hind which were responsible for the problems she encountered. In addition, her desire to make the pirouette small exacerbated the situation. Tell her also that the loss of bend was to a large degree due to the fact that the left is the horse's stiff side. Explain that in moments of

extreme collection the stiffness can reappear and create unexpected problems, even though it has become almost negligible in the preceding work.

It is clear that the pirouette left can improve only if the horse is sufficiently gymnastized to maintain the bend and to engage the outside hind leg. The *passade* would be a suitable exercise to address this problem. But you select another exercise that may be even more beneficial.

Counter canter in renvers with outside volte.

Ask the student to canter the horse on a 20 meter circle at A on the left lead and describe the exercise as you go along. Position yourself outside the circle near B or E.

To begin with, the student should ride a couple of circles making several transitions within the gait to improve impulsion and response to the aids. Then ask her to spiral into the circle until she is on a 10 meter volte. The spiral must be ridden in haunches-in and the horse can be collected a little more as the spiral is made tighter. The spiral should take about 4 to 6 revolutions.

When on the volte ask the student to spiral the horse out in shoulder-fore while freshening the stride. This exercise should be repeated 2 to 3 times.

The next step is to change out of the circle, still riding haunches-in. This will automatically be a renvers in counter canter when going in the other direction. Let the student ride the counter canter in renvers also about 2 to 3 times.

At some point, ask the student to ride a 10 meter volte to the outside when (or every time) she crosses the center line. (This is a volte to the left, on the inside lead). The volte is ridden in haunches-in and when completed the horse is turning again onto the 20 meter circle right thus continuing in counter canter in renvers. The voltes can be made progressively smaller until the same effect has been achieved as in the *passade*.

It takes some skill to keep precise angles and to maintain impulsion and balance. This pattern requires very correct riding. The student needs ample feedback regarding accuracy and the application of her aids. The combination of these exercises fosters the engagement of the outside hind leg since it has to make the longer path, as well as suppling the horse and therefore preparing him better for the left bend.

Eventually the *passade*, resulting from the volte, develops effortlessly into a half pirouette left without any loss of bend and the horse can be ridden in a straight line toward the corner with a flying change.

Cool down

After the flying change, ask the student to let the horse chew the reins out of her hands and then come to the walk through several trot steps. Allow the horse to walk on a long rein while you review the lesson with your student. Afterwards the horse can be hacked around the property before returning to his trailer.

Addendum

Instructors should be aware, that even if this imaginary scenario works exceptionally well, the lesson will most likely exceed the normal time frame of 45 to 60 minutes. It is therefore up to the instructor to make choices and to decide which of these possibilities to omit.

For example, everything under the heading of 'prerequisites' and the subsequent 'corrections' need not necessarily be included in the lesson. Similarly, a choice can be made between riding Fig. I and II. It is not essential to do both. The spiral can be ridden once, or can be omitted altogether, etc.

It is up to the instructor to decide which of these exercises might work the best for a particular horse/rider combination.