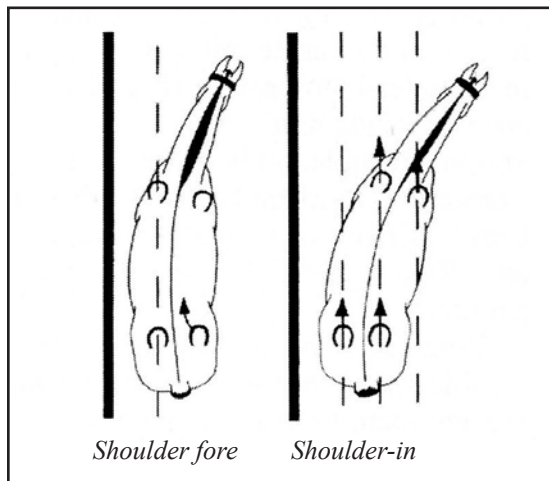


## **Lesson Topic: Shoulder-Fore and Shoulder-In**

### **Purpose**

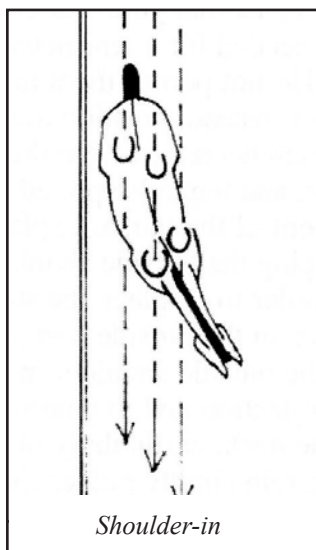
In schooling of horse and rider, the shoulder-fore precedes the shoulder-in. The demands of shoulder-fore are less than those of shoulder-in, but contain essentially the same elements. Shoulder-in is a collecting as well as a collected exercise. Collection means improved self-carriage (balance) of the horse. It is mainly achieved through bending of the horse's body as the inside hind leg steps further under the horse's center of gravity and is thereby obliged to bend and carry more weight. Thus each inside hind leg is gradually strengthened and pushing power is developed into carrying power. The forehand gets lighter, the shoulder freer, and the horse's mobility is improved as he carries himself in collection.

The horse's forehand is brought toward the inside track while the hindquarters remain on the wall. Like all lateral movements, shoulder-in improves the suppleness of the hindquarters, lateral bending, obedience to the aids, collection and balance, and ultimately, straightness, as it achieves equal ability in both hind legs.



*NOTE: In shoulder fore the horse's outside leg follows the track of the outside front leg.*

### **Prerequisite**



Horse and rider should have achieved First Level. Rider is fairly well balanced and can apply half-halts; ride correct leg-yields with control of the outside shoulder of the horse and maintain correct position and bend up to and including ten-meter circles at the trot. Before attempting lateral work, it is important that the horse has achieved a certain degree of collection.

### **Execution**

Introducing shoulder-fore and shoulder-in is best done in the walk in order to understand coordination of the aids, and achieve correct bend and the proper degree of angle in relation to the straight lines ridden. Since shoulder-in is difficult for horse and rider in the beginning, it should only be ridden for short intervals with forwardness and carriage refreshed by a small circle and then shoulder-in repeated.

In a correctly executed shoulder-in, the horse's inside hind leg moves toward its outside fore leg, which creates three tracks. Shoulder-fore has less angle and bend.

Historically, de la Guérinière developed the shoulder-in to maintain the qualities achieved on the ten-meter circle of relaxation, engagement, suppleness, and submission. By continuing to apply the bending aids on a straight line, he discovered that those qualities could be preserved. Furthermore, collection could be enhanced by causing the hind legs to travel closer together.

### **Rider's Aids**

The rider is in collected trot tracking left. In a corner at the beginning of the long wall, ride a ten-meter circle left. The horse must be in balance and on the aids. Imagine that you are going to ride another circle, but just as the horse's forehand comes off the track in the beginning of the second circle apply a half-halt on the outside rein, and with your inside seat and leg, send the horse forward and slightly sideways along the second track. The rider's inside leg maintains bend and forward impulsion while the outside leg behind the girth keeps the bend throughout the body. The inside rein keeps the horse positioned away from the direction of movement while the very important outside rein keeps balance and direction together with the seat and inside leg and prevents overbending of the neck and falling through the outside shoulder.

The rider keeps her outside hand fairly low and definitely on the outside of the withers. Do not twist in the torso. Keep your shoulders parallel to the horse's shoulders and your hips parallel to his hips. Start with a ten-meter circle. Insist that your students' aids create the bend needed for a ten-meter circle and shoulder-in. Do not permit them to pull on the inside rein but instead, position the horse into the bend, which is created from the rider's seat, position, and leg aids applied from the rear to the front of the horse. Explain that the aids are bringing the outside shoulder of the horse in, in order to displace the shoulders. The half-halts on the outside rein are crucial to bringing the outside shoulder in to maintain tempo and collection and to control the degree of bend in the neck, particularly at the base of it. The inside rein simply guides the horse into the direction of the bend and softly maintains the position. This would be a good moment to test the self-carriage through a release of the inside rein (*überstreichen*), verifying that the horse is maintaining the bend through the inside leg and outside rein.

Whenever the bend and balance get lost, ride energetically forward in order to refresh the gait. Reward your horse every time he honestly tries. While learning, it is better to ride this quite demanding exercise for short distances in balance with quality, rather than demanding from your horse and yourself to keep it for a long stretch such as is called for in some of the competition tests.

## Common Faults

1. Overbent neck by pulling on inside rein. Not enough support on outside rein. Rider's seat balance to the outside.

*Correction:* Adjust rider's lateral balance by asking them to ride correctly on a 20-meter circle, decreasing and increasing the circle with correct seat and leg position and using a correct balancing outside rein that stabilizes the horse's neck at the base. Return to practice of shoulder-fore. Clarify the rider's understanding of the purpose of shoulder-in. Ask for the release of the inside rein (*überstreichen*) in shoulder-in to prove lack of dependence on the inside rein.

2. Too much angle, no bend (leg-yielding).

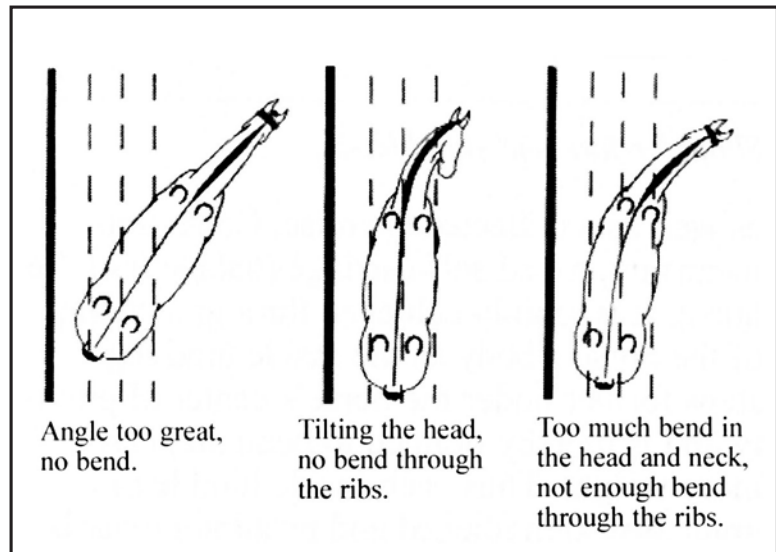
*Correction:* Confirm bending aids in rider. Correct fifteen-meter and ten-meter circles. Ride figure eights, spirals, and serpentines. Emphasize the importance of the outside leg to control the haunches and prevent them from swinging out.

3. Rider's inside leg too far behind girth, outside leg dormant. Rider collapses over inside hip, seat slides to outside and is ineffective. Rider often hangs on inside rein due to loss of balance.

*Correction:* First, correct rider's seat and position. Stress the importance of the rider's balanced seat and correct position in making it possible for this movement to improve the horse's balance into collection.

4. Loss of impulsion, engagement and thus collection. The purpose of the exercise is lost.

*Correction:* Ride forward straight to medium trot to refresh impulsion and engagement. Ride transitions from collected to medium to collected trot. Add some canter to refresh the gait. Ride trot-canter-trot transitions. Make certain that the rider can sit and follow the horse's back in medium and collected trot and does not limit the horse's forward energy by gripping and holding. Once the above is confirmed, ride shoulder-in to medium-trot transitions across the half school. Confirm half-halts in shoulder-in to balance into medium trot.



*Faults in shoulder-in.*