

## RSDP Resource on the Basic Principles of Coaching

### Section 1 – The Rider

**Rider Position – the coach must be observant of correct, balanced rider position and the reasons why this is important**

- Secure seat and lower leg
- Stirrup length which is appropriate for the level of rider and the objective of the session
- Tall upper body showing some degree of core strength and level shoulders
- Quiet, soft hands which allow the horse to move in a similar way

**Rider Aids - What are the basic aids with which the rider communicates with the horse**

- Voice
- Hand
- Legs
- Seat

Secondary aids (which are not required at Level 1 Coaching) include:-

- Whip
- Spurs

### Section 2 - The Horse

**How does the horse move? -What is a pace or gait and what different types are there?**

A gait is the way of determining the horse's action when moving. The main gaits are:-

- Walk
- Trot
- Canter
- Gallop - Gallop can take two forms a Rotary Gallop or Transverse gallop.

Transverse gallop (normal gallop) is a four-beat, single suspension gait where at one moment all four legs are off the ground. The stride length of the gallop is about twice that of the canter, as increased momentum extends suspension distance along with the reach of each limb. The gallop is used for speed.

Rotary Gallop is also four beat, double suspension gait often used when sprinting or jumping at speed

## The Horse's Footfalls



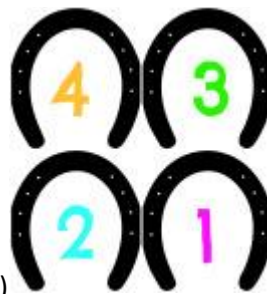
Walk four time.



Trot two time.



Three time beat (left lead)



Gallop 4 time beat.

## Transitions - What is a transition?

A transition is a change of pace or gait from one to another. Transitions can be “upward” ie from walk to trot or “downward” from canter to trot.

A direct transition is one where the horse progressively moves from one gait to another such as from trot to canter.

An indirect transition occurs when a gait is omitted, such as moving from walk to canter or canter to walk, without trot strides

A transition within the pace happens when to horse is asked to increase or decrease the pace he is working in for example working trot ( normal working pace) to increased bigger trot or decreased shorter slower trot.

## What is changing the rein?

Changing the rein means altering the direction the horse and rider are going in – from left to right or vice versa.

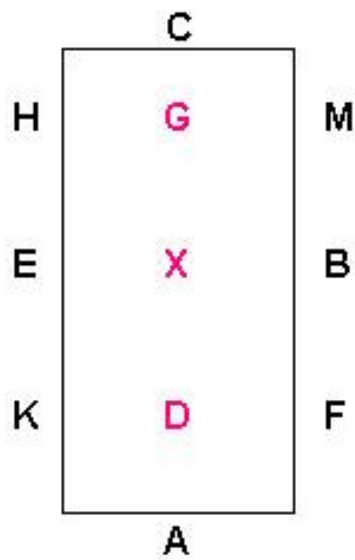
There are many ways to change the rein, as a general rule of thumb a lazy horse can be encouraged to maintain forwardness by changing the rein in a straight line such as on the long or short diagonal of the arena or down the centre line. An excitable or fizzy horse can be settled by changing the rein

using turns or circles, two half circles from the short end of the arena or a half circle onto the centre line followed by a diagonal incline back to the track and onto the new direction.

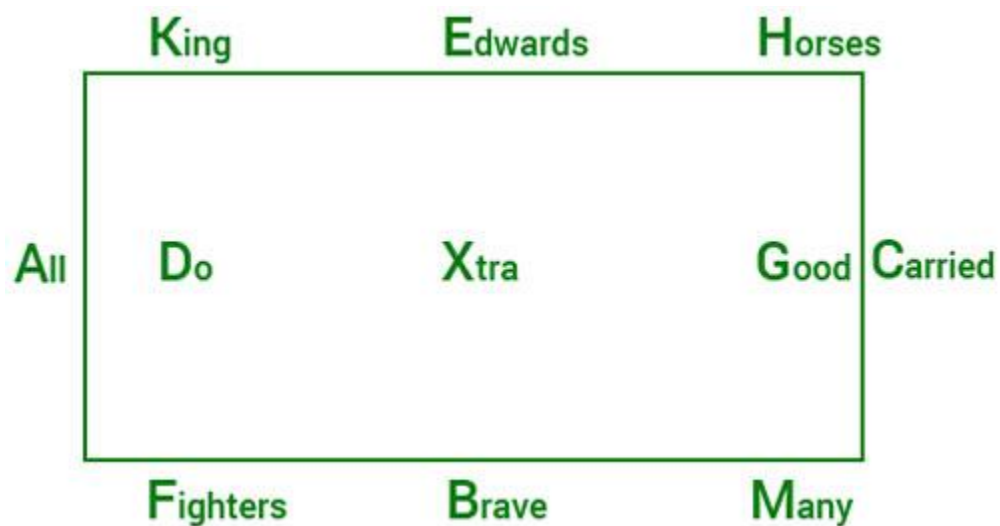
## Section 3 – The Coaching Environment

### The Arena

The arena can be split into letters to help guide the riders in a correct direction. The ones in black are normally clearly marked and pink additional letters that aren't usually outlines but may be useful.



A good way of remembering the letters is the saying about King Edward



## Section 4 - Useful Exercises and how they can help develop the rider

- **Increase the strides between markers and ask your rider to count the strides.**

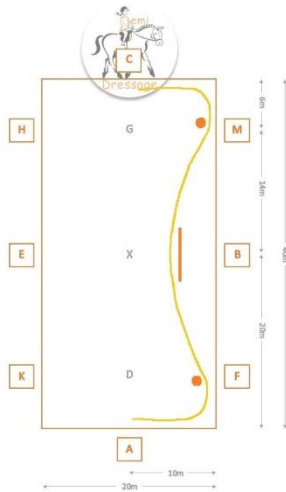
For example the coach asks the rider

“How many strides do you get between B & E next time I would like you to increase or decrease the number”.

This can be help for a coach when a rider is nervous and needs to relax and breath takes the focus away from the horse and surroundings.

It can help check the level of control slowing the horse down and pushing on again.

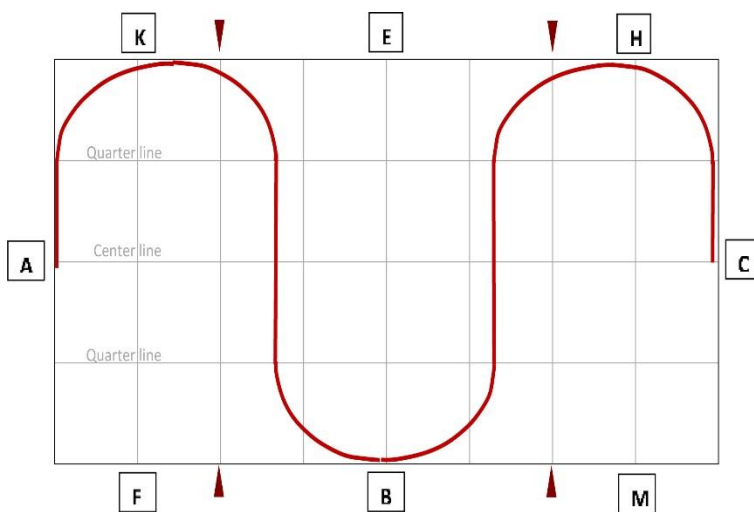
- **Shallow loops off the long side.**



This can help the rider and horse become more focused  
Give a nervous rider a task to do they have to think about.  
Help with balance of the rider as they have to change the bend of the horse and their aids, this can be done with long irons or in the racing position.

As a coach you can see the rider and horse from different angles and if they are working together with straightness and bend.

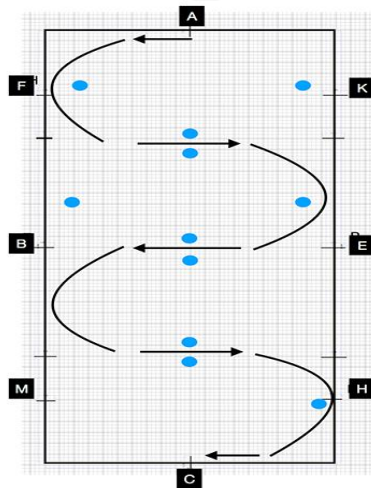
- **3 loop serpentine**



This is a great exercise for checking if the horse is listening to the rider.

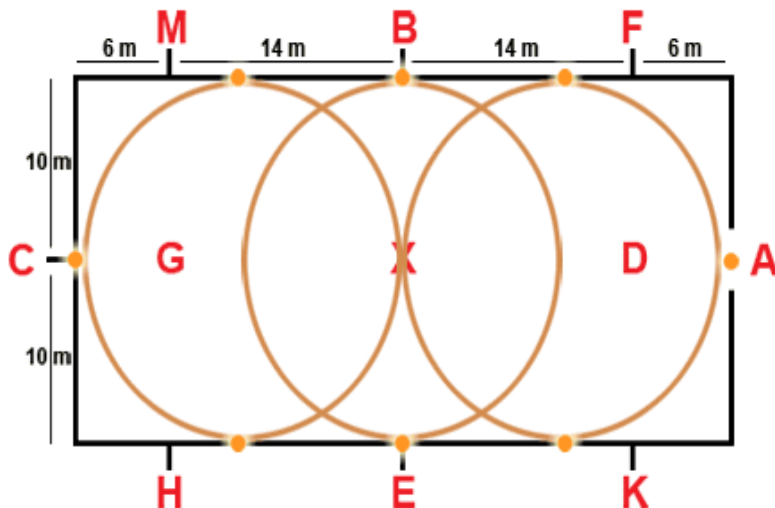
Checking rider balance through turns and straightness through the change. Do they lean to one side or are twisted in their body. It can also help with a busy horse keeping them focused and a nervous rider giving them lots to think about. More advanced riders could do this in the racing position short rather than long.

- 4 loop Serpentine



A 4 loop serpentine can be used to progress from a 3 loop serpentine if your arena is large enough. The turns become much tighter and it will take a lot of control, balance and planning from the rider. Could be a very useful exercise in trot to test a more advanced rider. Take care when using with a novice rider who struggles with balance always start with a 3 loop and work upwards. Only canter this if both horse and rider are connected, well balanced and have control in the pace. Ensure the rider trots to change direction.

- 20m circles

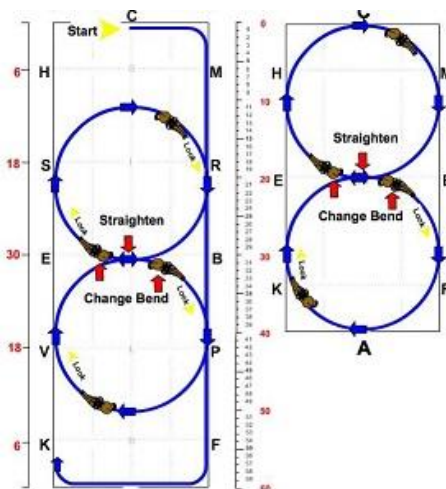


20m circles are one of the easiest movements in the arena and can be done at either end of the arena or in the middle.

They are useful to check balance and rider accuracy. Keep both rider and horse engaged if the horse is busy or rider nervous.

This can firstly be used in the trot with long then short irons (racing position) and then progress to the canter.

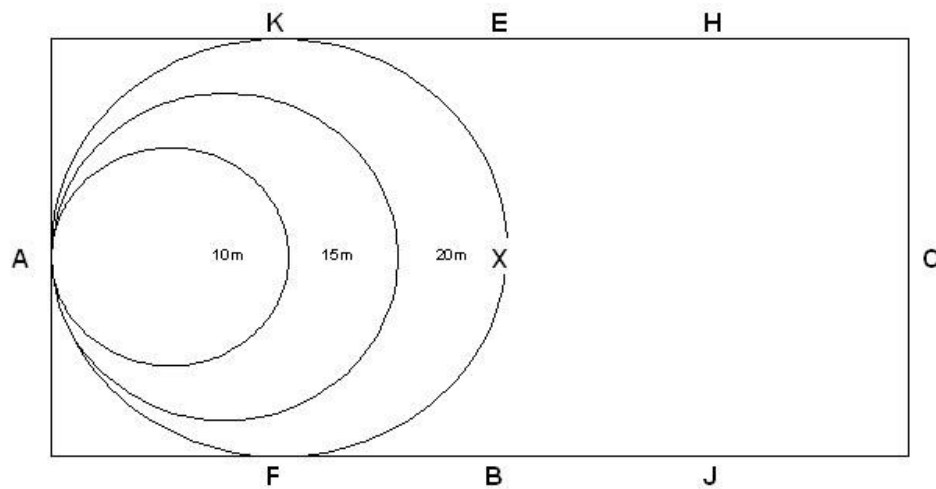
- Figures of 8



Figures of 8 form a shape of the number 8. They require the rider to be accurate and have control.

If the horse is a little excitable, or you have a rider who is nervous or maybe in a group are struggling to get them to have feel or engage with you, this exercise is great. It can be ridden at walk until they understand the exercise and then in the trot and canter. When being ridden in the canter the rider must remember to come back to trot in the centre as they change the rein, to enable the horse to rebalance and go onto the correct canter lead. Very useful for the coach to see horse and rider from all angles to start with long irons and progress to standing canter ready for the gallop.

- **15metre and 10metre circles**



Once the rider has progressed and is balanced and has a good effective position on the 20m circle, serpentines and shallow loops. You can look to increase and decrease the size of the circles. This would be best done in the walk and trot as could potentially be a risk to both horse and rider in the canter causing loss of balance or injury. It can help with encouraging bend in the horse and ensuring the rider has the correct aids that are effective. The rider could also change the direction out of the circle and could ask for these circles at either end of the arena or in the middle.

A 15m or 10m circle could be asked to be ridden on its own or the coach could ask for them to start on a 20m circle and slowly ask the horse to come onto a smaller circle and then ask for them to ride out again.

## Progressing the more advanced rider with poles

Poles can be useful in encouraging a rider to be more accurate. Helping the rider develop balance and feel as the horse changes its action over a pole. If the horse is busy and is struggling to become settled this can help keep them focused. All this helps to prepare the rider for riding outside of the arena when they are novice riders but can also be used to challenge and develop technique in the more advanced rider.

