

Improve Riding Skills Through Interactive Video Review!

Watching riding videos—much like how athletes review game footage—can be an incredibly effective tool for riders and instructors to enhance learning, improve techniques, and achieve goals. Video review can help provide:

Improved Self-Awareness

- Riders often cannot see what their body is doing while riding. A video provides a clear, objective view.
- Identifying specific habits (e.g., leaning, unsteady hands) becomes easier.
- Riders can pinpoint areas of strength to build upon and weaknesses to address.

Reinforced Learning

- Watching a successful performance reinforces what "right" looks like.
- Riders can compare how correct techniques feel versus how they look, strengthening muscle memory.

Enhanced Communication Between Rider and Instructor

- Instructors can use videos to visually show the rider what they mean, reinforcing verbal instruction.

Mental Rehearsal

- Watching yourself ride can be a form of visualization, helping riders mentally rehearse the steps for improvement.

Motivation and Goal Setting

- Videos provide a tangible way to track progress over time.
- Watching improvement from one ride to the next can boost confidence and foster a growth mindset.

Tips for Effectiveness

- Collaborative Review: Watch the video with an instructor or another experienced rider. Their insights might catch something the rider overlooks.
- Focus on Positives: Always highlight what went well before delving into critique.
- Set Goals: Use the video to establish specific goals for the next ride.



Two Part Unmounted Lesson Ideas

This lesson plan constitutes of 2 parts:

- 1) A video review (optional handouts included).**
- 2) An interactive portion - choose one of the interactive activities.**

PART 1: Video Review

For this activity, you'll leverage technology and utilize a video of riding. How to prep: Preview this video and write down time stamps of what you want to highlight. Focus on 2 successes and 1 thing to improve on.

Option 1: Utilize video that had been prerecorded of your rider

- Personalized and relatable
- Must be able to keep the review in a positive tone to prevent hurt feelings.

Option 2: Find a video of a rider from on your library or an online source like YouTube.

- You can find a video that highlights success of particular skill you are working on.

See included worksheets available to use for video review at the end of this packet:

- One is available for beginner, younger or adaptive riding students
- A few question answer worksheets for riders who are ready to write down expanded thoughts.

Part 2: Choose 1 of the following Hands-On Activity to pair with your video



Option 1:

Gaits and Movement

Objective: Build rhythm awareness, gait pattern understanding, core and upper body strength, proprioception and coordination.

Activity:

1. Review horse gait patterns (e.g., walk, trot, canter) through a short video clip/diagram or live horse in motion. To enhance this practice you can use slow motion video and/or marking the horse's leg or feet with color (eg. polo wraps or bell boots) to help for visual tracking.
2. Utilize an audible to help identify the foot fall count for the various gaits via clapping, tapping or hand instruments.
3. Practice reproducing these patterns using hands and feet similar to a bear crawl position.
 - You can use paper numbers on the floor to help with learning the foot fall pattern.
4. Adding variation
 - Once the rider can execute the different gaits you can see if they can change from gait to gait or replicate a riding pattern/test.

Variation: You could have a rider use a stick horse and mimic head and neck movement at the different gaits. This allows for the opportunity to teach the following hand.

Why is this important for our riders: This exercise helps riders better understand the horse's movements which translates to knowing the horse underneath them. This will help rider generate "feel" and thus giving them the ability to precisely time their aids for cleaner more effective transitions.

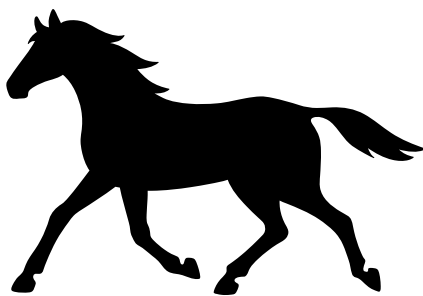
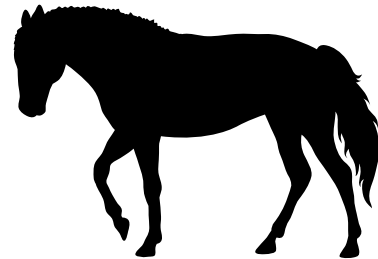
Note: Bear crawling is a physically challenging exercise for most. Be sure you are offering breaks. Also consider the surface they are moving on. If they are on barn isle or similar consider non slip gloves to protect their hands.



Horse Footfalls



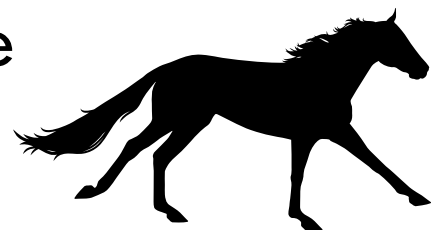
Walk
4 Beats



Trot / Jog
2 Beats



Canter / Lope
Left Lead
3 Beats



Option 2:

Horse Preferences and Grooming Exercises

Objective: Explore how understanding a horse's preferences enhances trust and cooperation.

Activity:

1. Review your video of growing or tacking from the lense of horse communication and body language.
2. Discuss how to read horse language and identify their preferences. Discuss how to handle situations where the horse dislikes a "task" in a respectful fair way. (e.g., areas they like to be brushed, areas of sensitivity, their preferences in brush type, pressure and cadence).
3. **Exercise:**
 - Preform grooming or tacking practice "Check in" with the horse: Observe ears, eyes, and body language when trying different brushes and touch locations.
 - Let students note horse reactions and identify their preferences on a worksheet or chart.
4. **Reflection Question:** How can these preferences help you build positive relationship when working with a horse on the ground or under saddle?

Why is this important for our rider: Understanding body language and being respectful of the horse's signals is not only important from a safety standpoint but it also builds positive relationships with the horses. Horses who have a positive relationship with their riders have more trust in them and are more receptive to the riders requests.



Observing Horse Preferences

Horse Name: _____

When I first approached he/she was: (circle one)

Curious

Indifferent

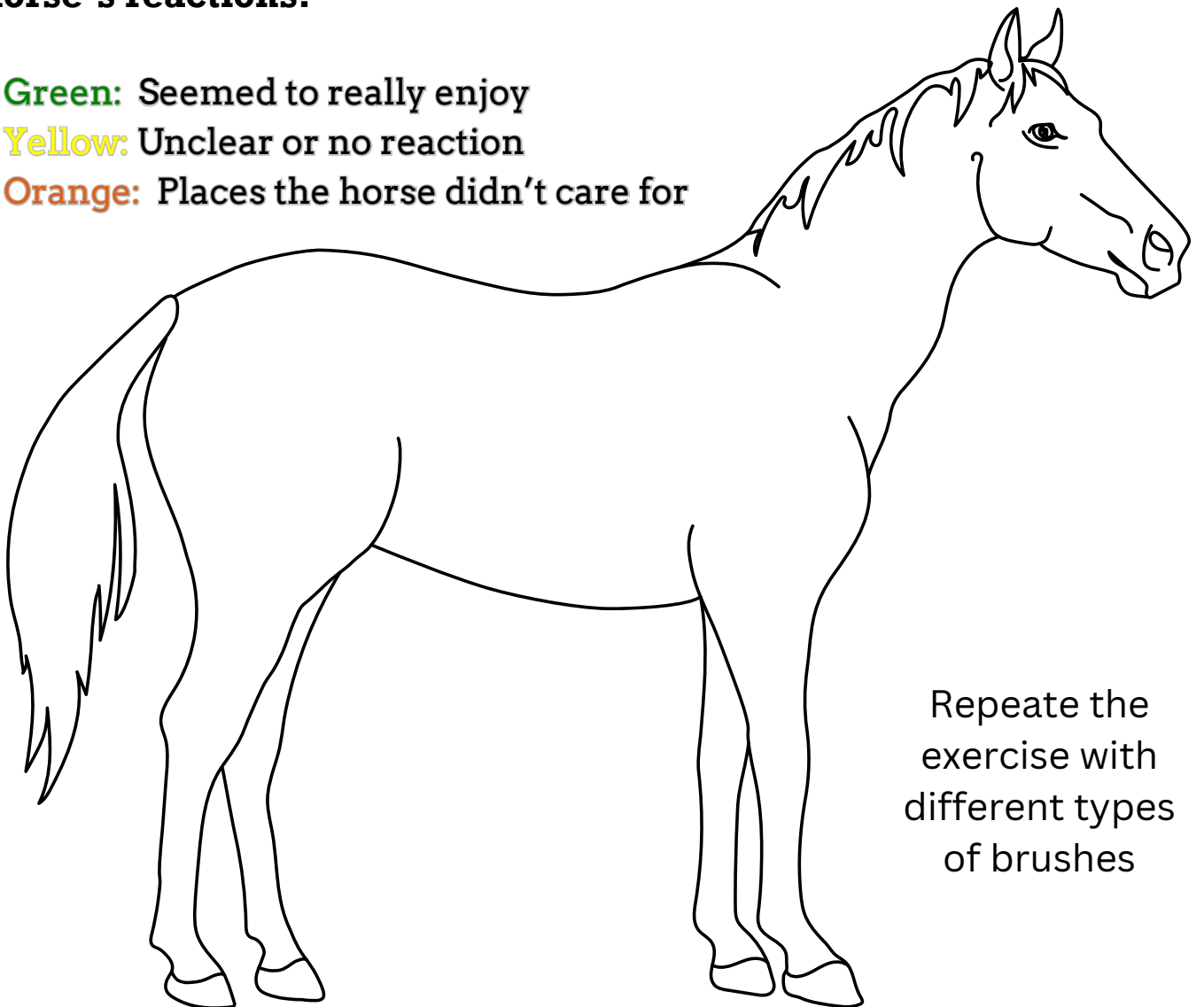
Withdrawn

Use a soft body brush all over the horse's body keeping the rhythm and pressure consistent. Color the following based on the horse's reactions:

Green: Seemed to really enjoy

Yellow: Unclear or no reaction

Orange: Places the horse didn't care for



Repeat the exercise with different types of brushes

Some horses enjoy touch more than others. The more we acknowledge our horse's preferences and request, the more receptive they become to our questions.



Option 3:

Balance/Posture/Aids

Objective: Use tools like an exercise ball or barrel to simulate postural challenges and develop awareness of their impact for effective aids.

Activity:

1. Set up a station with an exercise ball or mounted barrel.
2. Practice “riding” the ball/barrel:
 - Utilize this portion to help support your riders position and feel changes that they may need to make.
 - Simulate the challenges presented with improper balance (leaning forward/backward, uneven stirrup length). Ask them to share the impact on their comfort and balance.
3. Create movement and variability: Work through maintaining correct posture while you simulate movement of the ball/barrel and or input from reins.

Option 4:

Riding Accuracy

Objectives: To understand how to plan and adjust for accuracy through turns, gait adjustment, stride counting etc.

Set up: Create a mock arena appropriate for your program using things like pool noodles, ground poles, tape, chalk lines, letters etc.

Activity:

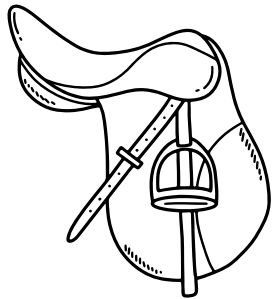
Utilize mock arena to play out different scenarios to help your rider build a toolbox of ring adjustments:

- Collection and extension of gait between 2 ‘ground poles’
- Planning turns for riding lines/jumps
- Planning riding with other horses in the arena
- Demonstration of the difference of effort required on straight lines vs tight turns



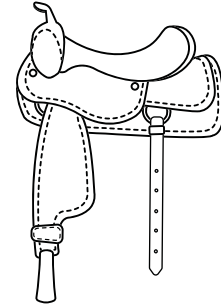
Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

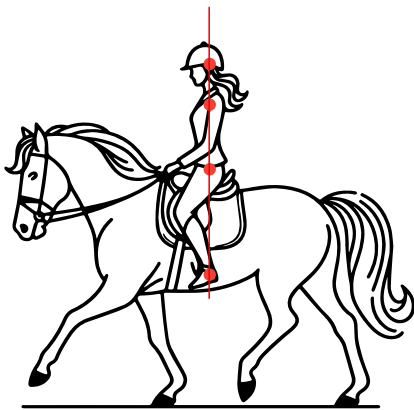


English

What type of saddle is the rider using?



Western

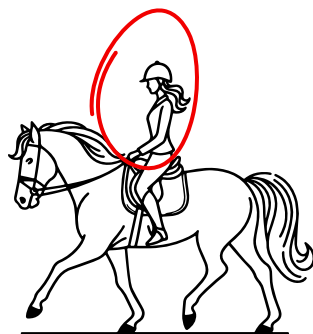


Did the horse:

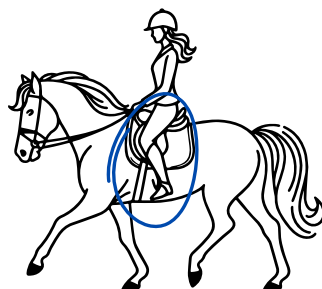
- Walk
- Trot
- Canter
Lope

Rate the rider's balance:

Upper
body
posture



Lower
body
posture



Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

Rider Position and Mechanics

- Is the rider balanced and aligned correctly (head, shoulders, hips, and heels)?
- Are the rider's hands quiet and positioned appropriately for the discipline?
- Are the heels down and legs in a secure and steady position?
- Is there independent use of the aids (legs, hands, seat, voice)?
- Does the rider's posture remain consistent, or do they collapse, lean, or shift weight unnecessarily?

What are some things that look really good?

What is one thing that could be improved upon and how?



Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

Effectiveness of Aids

- Are the rider's aids clear, timely, and effective in communicating with the horse?
- Does the rider use subtle cues, or are they over-using certain aids?
- Are there any obvious conflicts between aids (e.g., pulling on the reins while asking the horse to go forward)?

What are some things that look really good?

What is one thing that could be improved upon and how?



Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

Horse's Response

- Is the horse responding willingly and consistently to the rider's aids?
- Does the horse move freely and in balance, or is there tension, resistance, or confusion?
- Is the horse engaging from behind, or are they hollowing their back?
- Does the horse seem relaxed and confident, or are there signs of stress (e.g., ear pinning, tail swishing, resistance)?

What are some things that look really good?

What is one thing that could be improved upon and how?



Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

Accuracy

- Is the rider executing diagonals and leads correctly?
- Did the rider do a good job planning for turns, transitions and horse spacing?
- Does the rider notice the horse's communication and make adjustment?
- Are the riders aids subtle but effective?

What are some things that look really good?

What is one thing that could be improved upon and how?



Watch A Ride

RIDE REVIEW

Actionable steps for improvement

- Write down specific exercises to address areas of improvement (e.g., strengthening leg position with no-stirrup work, using poles for straightness).
- Use Slow Motion: Identify micro-movements that may not be noticeable at full speed.
- Compare with a Reference: If available, compare your riding video to professional riders or previous personal bests.
- Focus on One Area at a Time: Avoid overwhelming yourself by addressing every critique at once. Start with a key element, like your seat, then move on to others.

What are some things that look really good?

What is one thing that could be improved upon and how?

