

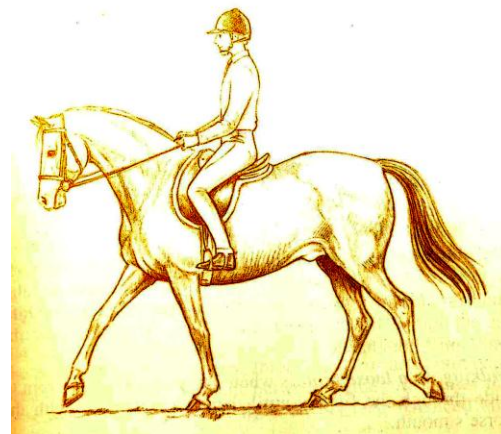


WIMBLEDON VILLAGE STABLES  
— LONDON —

## The positions of the rider in motion

### AT WALK

The walk is a four-time pace. The position of the body does not alter except that it moves slightly at the hips and waist in rhythm with the natural movement of the horse. The rider's elbow and shoulder joints must move fluently, thus allowing the hands to go with the natural movements of the horse's head and neck.



### AT THE RISING TROT

The trot is a two-time pace: the horse's legs moving in alternate diagonal pairs, with a moment of suspension in between. In rising trot the rider rises from the saddle on one beat and sits in the saddle on the alternate beat. This is also called posting. In rising trot your upper body should be inclined slightly forward from the hips so you can be in balance with the horse's movements.



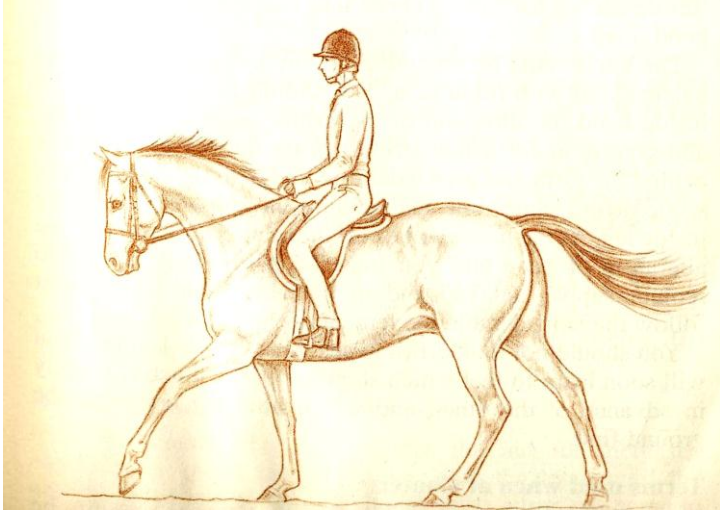
Rising trot, sitting on the right diagonal

While actually rising, your shoulders should lead the movement, but you must not tip forward. Your body should feel as if it is being raised by the movement of the horse, the seat returning quietly to the saddle without any loss of balance. Do not allow your weight to fall back onto the saddle; this will put you behind the movement of the horse. Be careful not to collapse at the waist, causing a rounding of your back. Hip and knee joints should remain supple and mobile while opening and closing, to accommodate the rising and lowering movements. The weight on the stirrup irons and the contact of the lower leg should not vary. Elbow and shoulder joints should be supple and mobile, allowing the hands to maintain the same contact as you rise and return to the saddle. *It is important for this same steady contact to be maintained at all times.*

**Diagonals.** A rider is said to be 'riding on the left diagonal' when his seat returns to the saddle as the left forefoot and right hind foot touch the ground. He is said to be riding on the right diagonal when the right forefoot and left hind foot touch the ground. It is generally considered to be riding on the left diagonal when proceeding to the right (on the right rein) and to ride in the right diagonal when proceeding to the left (on the left rein). To change the diagonal, the rider sits down in the saddle for an extra beat, before rising again. The rider should change the diagonal when changing direction, and also at intervals when out hacking, so that the horse makes equal use of both sides of the body.

## AT THE CANTER

The canter is a three-time pace. It is normal and correct for the rider to ask the horse to lead with the inside foreleg when cantering turns and circles. At this pace suppleness of the hips is most important. Your upper body should move in rhythm with the three beats of the horse's stride. The seat should remain close to the saddle for all 3 beats, the back and hips allowing this through their suppleness. The suppleness and mobility of the rider's shoulder and elbow joints are very important, as there is considerable movement of the horse's head and neck. If the rider stiffens his back he will bump in the saddle, which is most uncomfortable for both horse and rider.



Position in canter



The forward seat

## In Transitions (change of pace)

During transitions it is important for your body to remain in balance with the horse's movement. In transitions up and down you must remain quiet and supple, neither anticipating nor being left behind the increasing or decreasing pace. You should resist the temptation to influence the horse by throwing your body about and by looking down or leaning in, as this will unbalance him. This particularly applies to transitions from trot to canter and is often the cause of the horse striking off on the wrong leg.

## In Circles and Changes of Direction

You should allow your weight to remain equally on both seat bones and to stay correctly in the centre of the saddle, sliding neither to the inside nor the outside. Your hips should remain parallel to the horse's shoulders. You should look in the direction in which you are going.

## The Aids

Aids are the language used by the rider to communicate with the horse. The aim should be to give quick, clear aids at all times and to receive an immediate response from the horse. There are two types of aids: NATURAL – Your legs, hands, seat and voice and ARTIFICIAL – Whips and spurs.

## Co-ordination of the Aids

The rider should aim towards giving aids that are invisible to the onlooker, though totally clear to the horse. The desired pace is created and maintained by using co-ordinated leg and hand aids. It is important to learn how to sit naturally and softly and for body movements to work in harmony with the horse. The rider must always remain in balance and be aware of the influence of his seat and weight. The voice can be used in conjunction with other aids, for example "walk on", "trot", "steady". The voice can also praise or soothe the horse. It can be associated with a pat or stroke on the neck, a most useful method of communication to reward good work and as a way of saying 'thank you'.