

Beginner Under Saddle Assessment

Day 1: Walk/Trot Transitions

You may have heard the phrase - "All training takes place in transitions." Why is this? All transitions - up and down - require your horse to think, require your horse to move their feet differently than they just were. Transitions also require you to think, to process and ride the change in the horse's movement.

Make sure to change up where the transitions happen. Don't always ask in the same spot. Ride a circle and transition 2 or 3 times on the circle. Ride a Figure 8 and do 3 or 4 transitions in the Figure 8.

Use a three step process for down transitions; exhale - pause your seat (stop following the horse's motion) and lightly squeeze your fingers around the reins. If the squeeze on the reins isn't enough to slow your horse down, bring the reins back towards your hips until your horse slows down.

Also, use a three step process for up transitions; inhale - slightly push your hands towards the horse's ears- soft squeeze with your calf muscles against the horse's sides. You may also add a cluck (for trot) or a kiss (for canter), if needed.

If your horse doesn't move into the up transition with the above process - try one of three things-

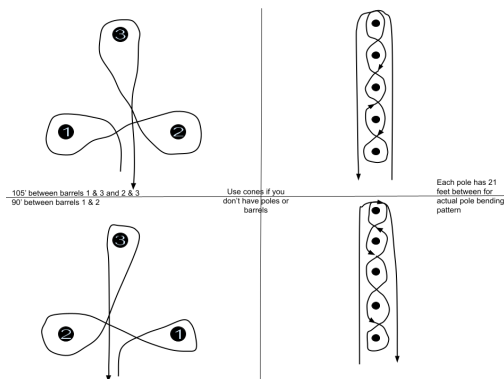
1. Push your hands a little bit further towards the horse's ears*
2. Add more pressure with your calf muscles to your horse's sides
3. Both 1 and 2

*Make sure your hands don't get so far up the horse's neck that you unbalance your seat and tip forward.

Day 2 - Barrel/Pole Bending walk/trot

Even if you are an old hat at Barrel Patterns or Pole Bending, what if you changed up the pattern?

Add up or down transitions during the pattern, do the pattern backwards (i.e. barrel pattern from the single barrel to the double barrels), do the pole bending pattern by doing 3 poles, then 5, then 2, etc. Only do the pattern at the walk and the trot.

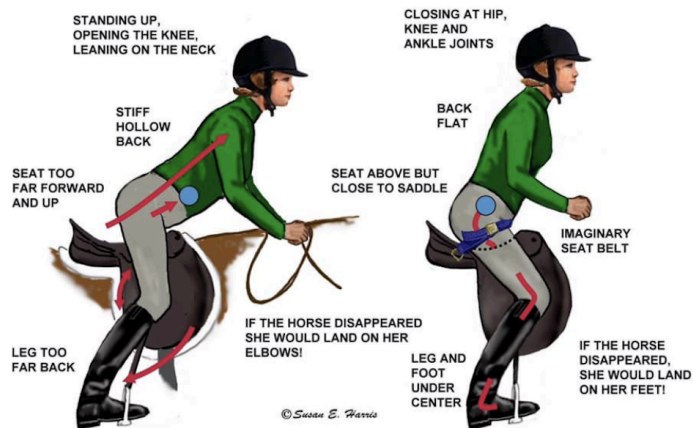


Day 3 - 2 point or half seat at the whoa/walk

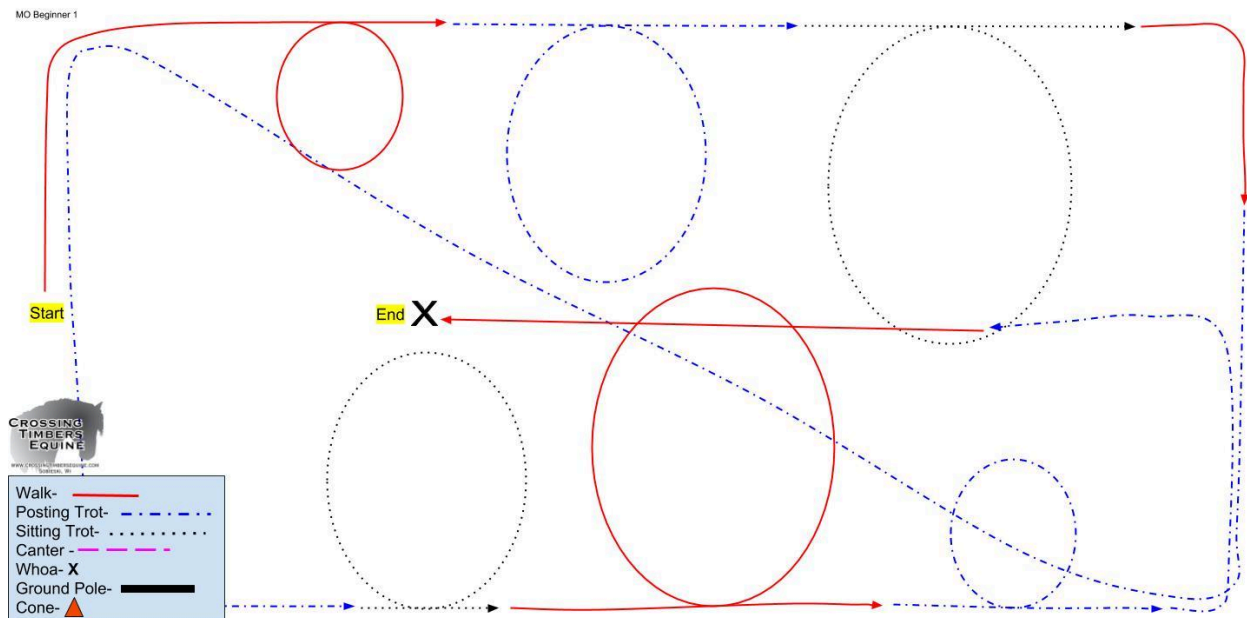
2 point (English)/half seat (Western) is a great way to learn how to maneuver in the saddle. If you already know how to do 2 point/half seat, transitioning can help build muscle memory and stamina.

If you are in a western saddle, half seat maintains a little bit more contact with the saddle through the seat. A rider wants to keep a little more distance from the saddle horn.

WRONG AND RIGHT HALF SEAT / 2 POINT POSITION



Day 4 - Members Only Beginner Pattern 1





Day 5 - Slow/Medium/Fast Walk

Asking for different speeds during the walk can help improve your horse's listening skills and their maneuverability. You also never know when it might come in handy, either working around obstacles or in certain situations.

If you are in an arena, don't just stick to the rail. Walk patterns, Figure 8's, circles, etc. Ask your horses to slow down for 5, 10 or 15 strides, then let them walk regular, slow down again for 5, 10 or 15 strides, and walk regular, speed up for 5-10-15 strides and walk regular. Gradually increase the number of strides being asked for until you and your horse can walk a full lap or a full pattern at either the slow or fast walk.

If you are out on the trail, you can ask your horse to do the same along the trail.

Day 6 - Emergency Dismounts at the Whoa/Walk

Emergency Dismounts are a great and necessary thing to practice before you might really need them. Practice only at the whoa and progress to the walk if you feel comfortable.

If you are riding in a Western Saddle, make sure any clothing does not get caught on the saddle horn.

If you think your horse may wander off once you dismount, ask a friend to hold or lead your horse.

Please practice safely and ideally in an enclosed area

- Kick feet free of both stirrups
- Place hands on the pommel of the saddle or one hand on the horse's neck and one hand on the pommel of the saddle
- Swing legs forward and then backwards to create momentum
- Push with hands/arms and with the momentum of the legs swinging and swing off of the horse
- Make sure to land with knees bent to reduce shock to the hips and back

How to do an Emergency Dismount off of your Horse

Day 7 - Sitting/Posting Trot Transitions

While trotting, practice changing from sitting to posting trot. The transitions are where your body goes through the most changes. Once you are in a sitting trot or in a posting trot, the rest is usually easy, but if the transitions are rough then it is harder to get into a smooth flow.

Change up how many strides you sit, then post, then sit, etc. Sit for a full circle, then post for half a circle, then sit for the rest of the circle. On the rail - sit for half the rail, post the rest, then sit for a quarter, post a quarter, sit a quarter, post a quarter.



Stay soft and loose during the transitions.

Day 8 - Seat Stop Transitions

Will your horse stop with your seat?

Practice seat stops - give your horse cues in this order - sit deep/stop following the horse's movement - say "Whoa" out loud to your horse - use your reins if your horse doesn't stop from your seat or word.

Remember the phrase "Sit/Whoa/Hands" to help remember this system EVERY time you ask your horse to stop. After a little while, they should be stopping off of your seat!

Disclaimer:

Horses, being a flight animal, can be dangerous to work around and with. Activities with and training a horse can be unpredictable at times. Do not attempt any of these activities, training or procedures without proper supervision, safety equipment and proper facilities. Neither Crossingtimbersequine.com, Crossing Timbers Equine, LLC, nor Kristin Hodge and its/their employees, agents, and sponsors are responsible for any injury(its) or loss resulting from these exercises and demonstrations for horse and horse training activities contained herein.

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