



## Advanced Under Saddle Assessment

### Day 1: Practice Walk/Trot/Canter/Back over Poles

Throw out some ground poles and maneuver over them at the walk/trot/canter and backing over the poles.

Keep it loose and fluid. Change up the transitions.

If you need some help getting started, check out some patterns at free pattern library

Pole Pattern	Examples

### Day 2: Practice Bareback

Bareback can be a great way to practice your balance and just hang out and relax with your horse.

Make sure to keep your seat centered and balanced. Left bum cheek on the horse's left side, right bum cheek on the horse's right side.

Legs need to be long and loose

Feet level or heels down

Go at whatever gait you feel comfortable with!

If you don't feel comfortable or your horse doesn't like bareback (some don't), you can practice no stirrup work, transitions, or anything else!



### Day 3: Practice Walk/Canter 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.

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 walk or 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

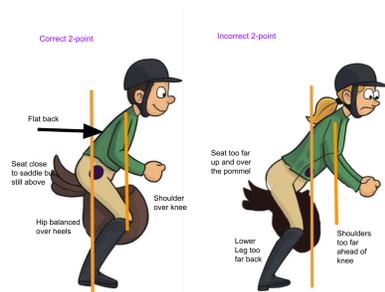
\*Make sure your hands don't get so far up the horse's neck that you unbalance your seat and tip forward.

### Day 4: Practice sitting/posting/2 point transitions

Practice changing between a sitting trot, posting trot and 2 point while working your horse.

Change up where you change your position. Sit the trot for 6 strides, post for 16, 2 point for 9 strides, post for 5 strides, 2 point for 20 strides, etc.

This can be done out on the trail or in the arena.







### Day 7: Practice Slow/Medium/Fast Trot

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. Trot patterns, Figure 8's, circles, etc. Ask your horses to slow down for 5, 10 or 15 strides, then let them trot regular, slow down again for 5, 10 or 15 strides, and trot regular, speed up for 5-10-15 strides and trot regular. Gradually increase the number of strides being asked for until you and your horse can trot a full lap or a full pattern at either the slow or fast trot.

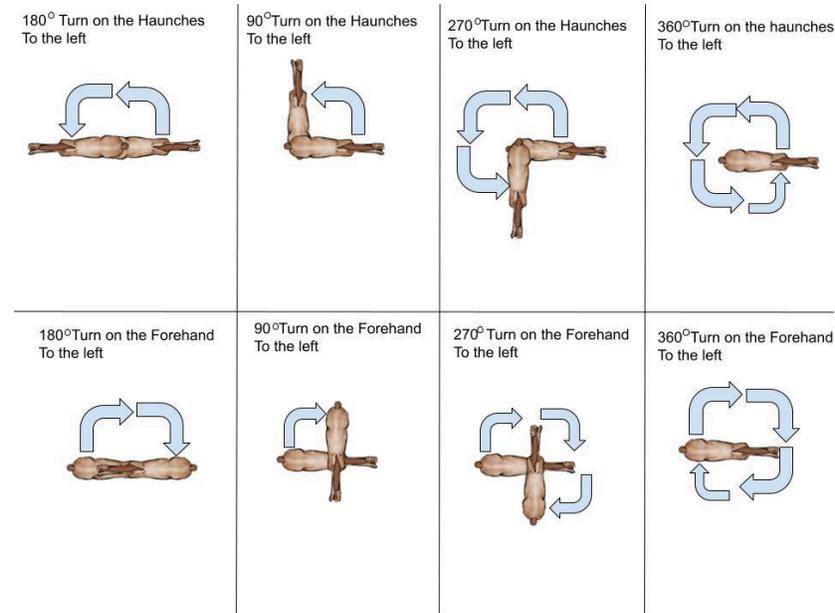
If you are out on the trail, you can ask your horse to do the same along the trail.

### Day 8: Practicing Sidepassing/Pivots/Turns on the Forehand

Sidepassing, Pivots and Turns on the Forehand are great ways to work on our horse's maneuverability.

Don't overwork the maneuvers. All three are comparable to your horse doing burpees and crunches at the same time. If your horse is new to these maneuvers or isn't in very good shape, take it easy on them. As they get more comfortable or in better shape, you can do more at a time.

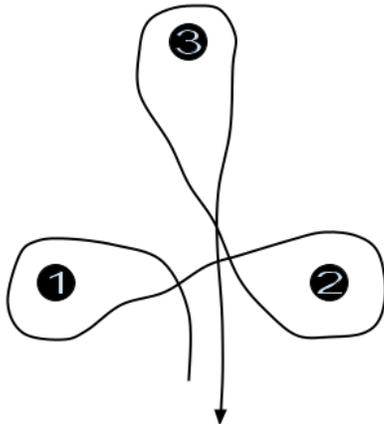
Make sure to take some walk and trot breaks between working on the maneuvers in order for your horse to stretch out their legs.



**Day 9: Practice Barrels/Pole Bending at Walk/Trot/Canter**

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.

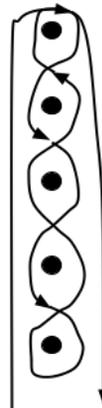
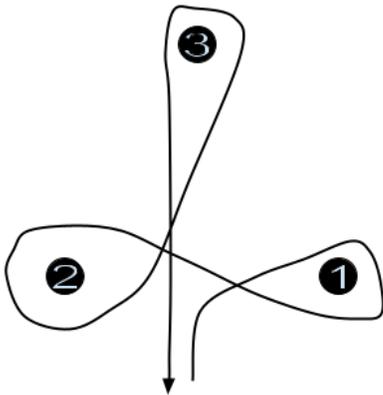


105' between barrels 1 & 3 and 2 & 3  
90' between barrels 1 & 2

Use cones if you  
don't have poles or  
barrels



Each pole has 21  
feet between for  
actual pole bending  
pattern





## **Day 10: Practice Emergency Dismount at Whoa/Walk/Trot**

Emergency Dismounts are a great and necessary thing to practice before you might really need them.

Practice at the whoa and walk. Progress to the trot and/or canter if you feel comfortable.

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

1. Kick feet free of both stirrups
2. 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
3. Swing legs forward and then backwards to create momentum
4. Push with hands/arms and with the momentum of the legs swinging and swing off of the horse
5. 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](#)

### 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.