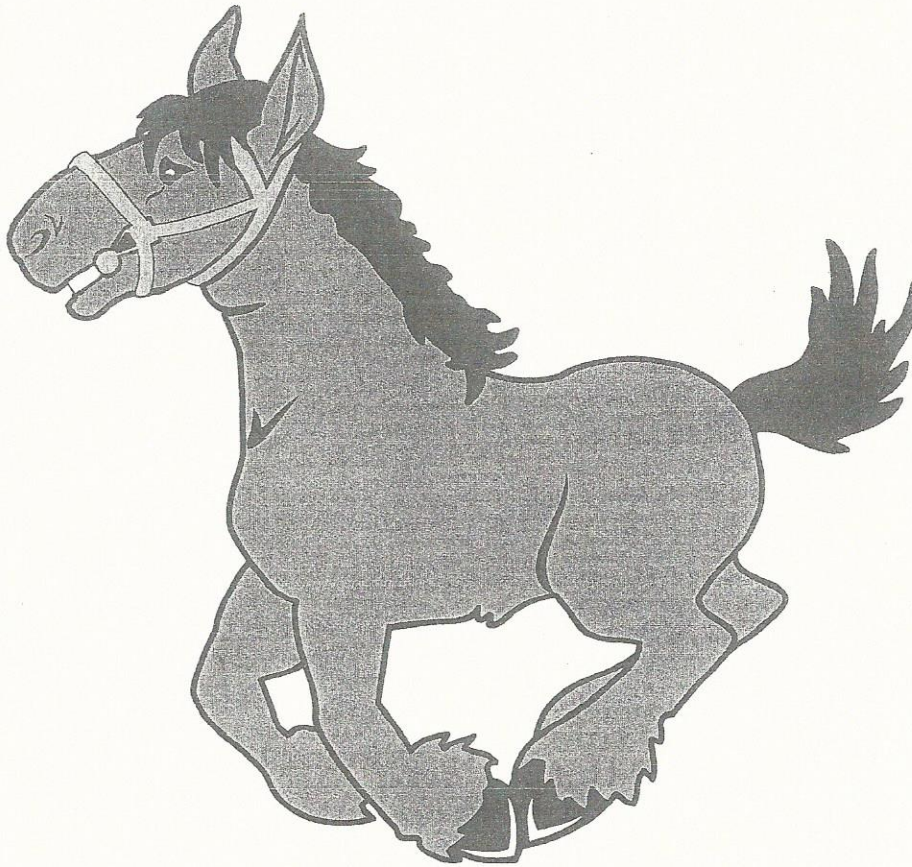


Horse Expo

Addendum to Study Guide Madera County 4-H Level III Riding Skills Practice



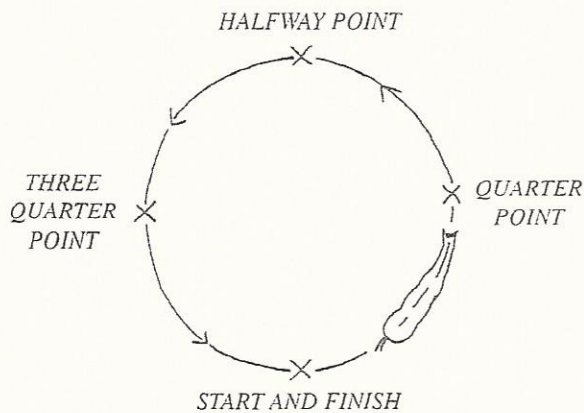
**Emerald Star Project
2013**

**By
Jessie Miles
Raymond 4-H**

All diagrams and instructions courtesy of CHA Manuals level 3 and 4
Live Demonstration was performed at 2013 Madera County Horse Expo

SCHOOLING FIGURES

CIRCLES



Circles should be round, not oval or pear-shaped.

- To make a good circle, pick out a starting and finishing point, a quarter point, a halfway point and a three-quarter point. Look about a quarter of the way ahead as you ride through the circle. Try to hit each of the points and be sure that you finish by returning to your start/finish point.
- Ask your horse to bend evenly around the circle and keep your speed even using coordination of leg, weight and rein aids.

Don't ask for too small a circle as it may be difficult for your horse unless he is very balanced. The faster the gait, the bigger the circle needs to be.

TURN ON THE FOREHAND

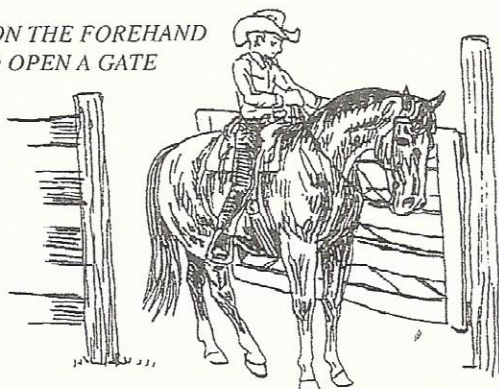
The turn on the forehand is the first basic lateral movement. In the turn on the forehand, the horse keeps his front feet in the same place and steps around in a circle with his hind legs, pivoting around the forehand.

This exercise may be used to move the horse over, to turn around, or to open and close gates while mounted.

Once your horse understands that he is to step sideways from pressure three or four inches behind the girth while you stand beside him, you may give the leg aid in the same spot from the saddle.

- Start with a quiet halt with your horse's attention on you. Don't pull on the reins, but be ready to use them to stop him if your horse tries to walk off instead of stepping over. Keep your outside rein against the horse's neck near the withers to keep his outside shoulder stable.
- Sit up tall and stretch your leg back into position. Give several light bumps with your calf to ask your horse to step over with his hind legs. As he takes a step, relax your leg aid and pat him. Then you may repeat the aid for the next step over.
- Even though the inside front hoof picks up and sets down on almost the same spot, the inside hind foot must pass in front of the outside hind foot as the horse executes the turn on the forehand.

TURN ON THE FOREHAND
TO OPEN A GATE



THE TURN ON THE FOREHAND

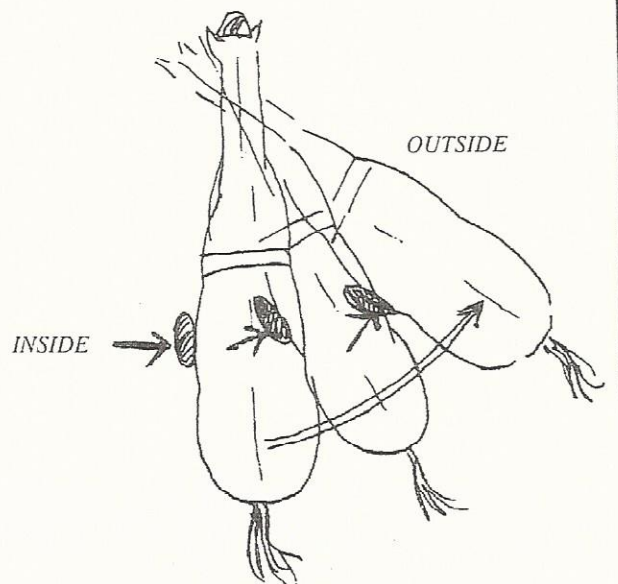
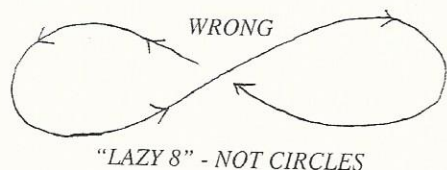


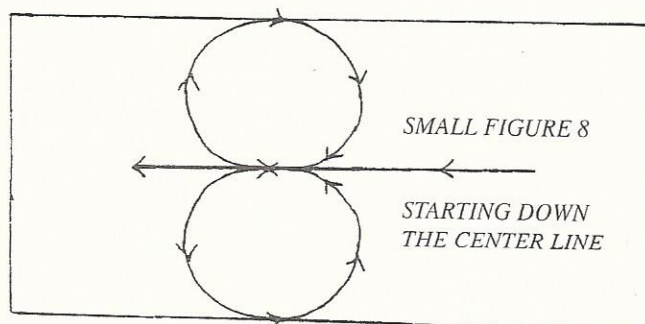
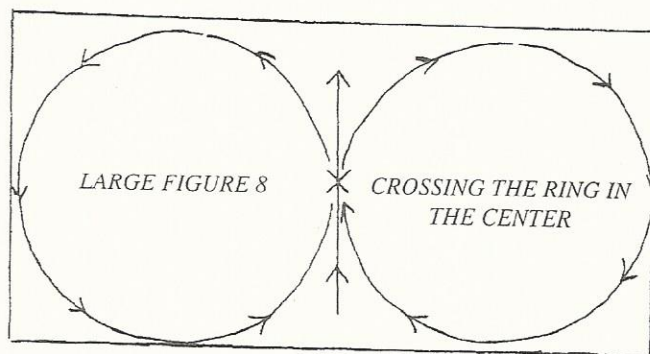
FIGURE 8

A figure 8 is made with two large circles connected on a straight line. It is not a lazy 8 which has diagonal lines and looks like two teardrops touching.



- Start by riding straight to the center of the arena and find a marker for your start and finish point. Make a circle in one half of the arena returning to the center point.
- Now go straight for a couple of strides, and then make a matching circle in the other direction, returning to the center point to finish.

If the arena is big enough, you can make a large figure 8 by crossing the arena in the center. A small figure 8 may be made by starting down the center line.



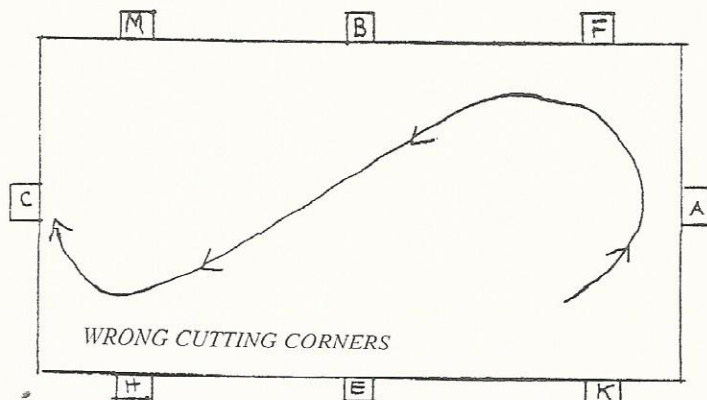
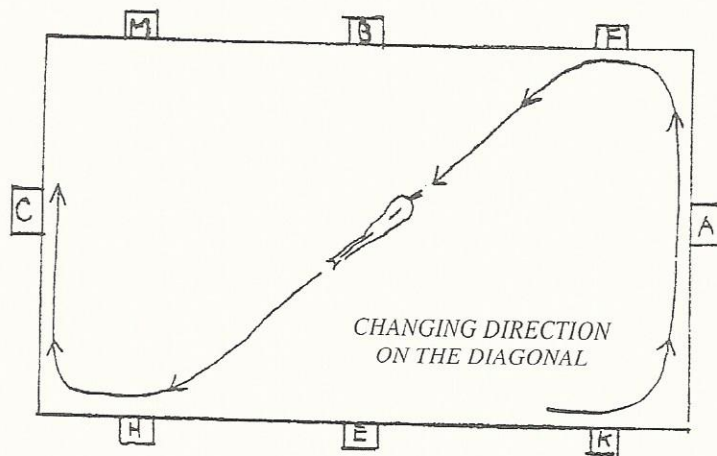
CHANGE OF DIRECTION ON THE DIAGONAL

Sometimes this is also called "*change of rein*" or "*changing hands*." To change direction on the diagonal, it is helpful if your arena has letters or markers as in the riding tests.

- Ride through the short end of the arena (for example, tracking to the left). Just after you turn the corner, continue your turn and aim your horse diagonally toward the opposite corner of the arena. You should ride straight on the diagonal line until you reach the opposite rail of the arena, just before the corner.
- At the corner, you will simply turn right and follow the rail around in the new direction, changing position of your inside and outside legs, seat bones and reins for the bend in the corner.

This way of reversing directions lets you keep going at a faster gait or lets a class "*follow the leader*" while changing directions. It is useful in training and to see if you can keep your horse on a straight line without the rail, and guide him precisely from target to target across the arena.

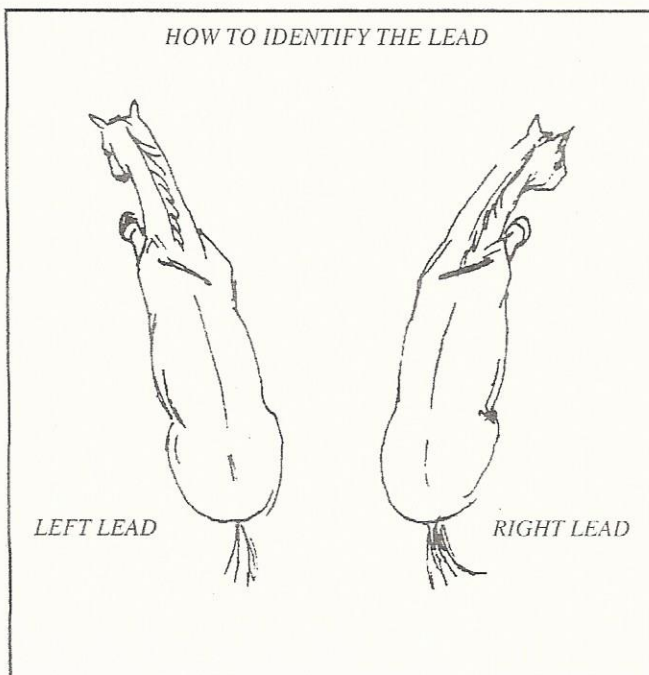
Don't let your horse cut the corners or he will spoil your change of direction on the diagonal. At the trot, change diagonals at X (the center) or at the far corner when the horse changes his bend.



CANTER OR LOPE

Sitting the canter or lope is different than the trot. The canter has a forward dip and roll to it. It doesn't bounce straight up like the trot or jog.

- To improve your seat in the canter, you need to sit tall and straight but relaxed. You also need to learn to follow the rolling motion with your seat. The following is done from your waist down, so that your seat stays down in the saddle. Don't try to pump back and forth with your shoulders.
- Give a little push down and forward as you feel the dip in the canter. Then relax as the horse's back rolls back up. It may help to think of the way you use your seat to pump a swing, or to pretend that you have saddle soap on the seat of your pants and that you are polishing the seat of the saddle.
- Don't stiffen your legs and push against the stirrups or it will make you fly out of the saddle and bounce at every stride.
- Pinching tightly with your knees or legs will also make you bounce and is uncomfortable for your legs. Your legs should not grab your horse's side but rest on the horse and saddle.
- As you ride the canter or lope, your hips make a circle, forward and down, up and back. Your heels should also flex down every stride, in timing with your hips.



HOW TO IDENTIFY LEAD

There are two ways to identify the lead your horse is on: by sight and by feel. Sight is easier for most people at first but looking will interfere with your ability to feel the lead. As you gain more experience, you can feel if the lead is correct or wrong.

On the left lead, the horse's legs hit the ground in the following order:

- Right hind, left hind and right fore together, left fore
- The left hind and left fore are the leading legs. They move second and appear to travel farther than the outside legs. The horse will lift both his inside legs higher and reach forward more.
- To learn to feel your leads, sit back and deep in the saddle and consider the position of your hips and legs. If the horse is on his right lead and his right legs are "lifting higher and reaching more forward," you can feel it in your hip and legs. If the horse is on the right lead, you will feel your right hip and leg are forward and your weight is in the left stirrup.
- To learn to identify the lead by sight, it may help to put colored leg wraps on his left legs and watch him canter from the ground.
- From the saddle, you can't see the leg wraps, but you can see the inside front leg coming out in front of the left shoulder. If you look at both shoulders, you can see that the right moves first, then the left moves secondly and further forward.

Once he is in the lope or canter and it feels like he will keep going, glance down at the inside shoulder and see if you can see his inside front fore coming out ahead as he canters. Try to feel the lead first so you do not become reliant on looking to know what lead you are on.



SIMPLE CHANGE OF LEADS

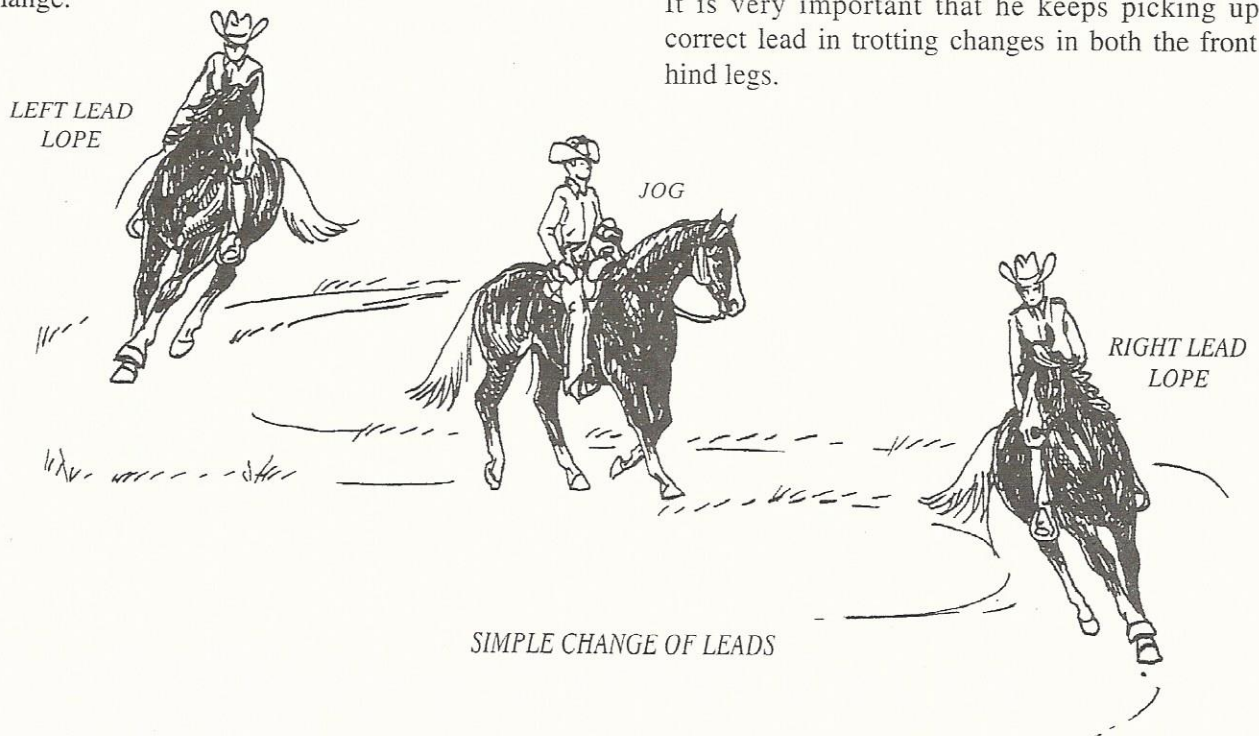
Always begin with the simple change of leads. This tests your horse's response to and understanding of your aids. If he can't handle the easier change, he will have trouble trying to perform the more difficult flying change.

To perform a simple change of leads:

- Begin by loping along the rail on the left lead, tracking to the left.
- Ride around the end of the ring and begin a change of direction on the diagonal.
- Before you reach the center of the ring, bring him back to a jog for five or six strides. Be sure the jog is balanced and the horse is working off his hocks. Then give the aids for a right lead lope just before reaching the rail, at a moment when the horse is pushing off with his left hind. Your horse should pick up the right lead and lope around the end of the ring.

To change from right to left lead, repeat the process from the other direction.

With practice, you will be able to lope straight and shorten the number of trotting steps in the center until the horse only needs to trot for two or three steps before you pick up the new lead. At this point, you may bring your horse down to a walk for a couple of steps to make the change.



Keep the simple change straight, controlled and quiet. Don't get into the bad habits of leaning forward or sideways, throwing your body around, or twisting your horse sideways as you change leads. Successful lope to walk transitions take more balance and hind end power for your horse to accomplish than walk to lope transitions.

When you can make good simple changes on the diagonal, you can progress to a large figure 8 pattern. This gives you less time and room to make the change of leads.

- The horse should make two circles touching with a few straight strides between the circles, not a lazy 8 which looks like two teardrops touching (see diagram in Level 3).
- He should be on the inside lead on each of the circles. He will have to change leads at the center point as he changes circles. This should be done on a straight line.
- Don't turn your horse into the lead change, lean over or throw your body around.

When you are making good, short, trotting changes, you may reach a point where your horse can lope, break to a trot for only half a stride or so, and then pick up the new lead. This is building toward a flying change.

It is very important that he keeps picking up the correct lead in trotting changes in both the front and hind legs.

FLYING CHANGE OF LEADS

When the horse is ready to do flying changes, he will usually switch of his own accord by accident when you are asking for a quick simple change. If he changes front and hind leads together, wonderful! If he only changes in front, go back to simple changes.

The aids for a change of leads are the same in both a simple change and a flying change. The difference is that a flying change requires split second timing and more agility of both the horse and rider. There is a greater margin for error in a flying change.

Use these aids for a flying change.

- Pick up a lope on the correct (inside) lead with your outside leg behind the girth, using a slight neck rein in the direction of the lead you want, using your inside leg at the girth to keep the horse out. Ride this lead long enough to be sure that it is correct and that you are in balance with your horse.
- Straighten your horse out. Make sure that both your hips are even and that neither leg is farther back. Lope straight ahead. This should be done at the middle of the diagonal line or the center of the figure 8.
- Give the aid for the new lead by shifting the new outside leg back behind the girth, looking in the new direction, lifting your hands up and giving a slight neck rein in the direction of the new lead. (For example, if you are changing from left to right, you will switch to a left leg behind the girth and neck rein to the right to ask for the right lead). Sitting up straight in the middle of the saddle and keeping your weight slightly on the outside hip will enable your horse to shift more smoothly to the new lead.

In a flying change, it is necessary to time the aids so that they are given when the horse's hind legs are off the ground and when he can switch hind leads as well as front leads.

To do a clean flying change, the horse must change the hind legs first and finish that stride by then also changing in the front. He has to make a sort of sideways step with his hind legs in order to switch. Practicing two tracking at the walk and trot can help prepare him to make the switch with his hind legs. Giving a little sideways push with the hips and opening your new inside leg can also help move the hind legs over and help the horse make the change behind.

Flying changes are necessary when a horse must make sudden changes of direction at fast speeds. This happens in barrel racing, pole bending, in cattle work and other speed work. Riders should not ask their horses to make sudden turns at speed until both horse and rider are advanced enough to perform flying changes when necessary.

FLYING CHANGE OF LEADS

