

Figuring out Figures

Incorporating Circles into Training

From Special No. 5, Anniversary Issue

[Part 1]



THE ELOQUENT
EQUINE

Volume 1

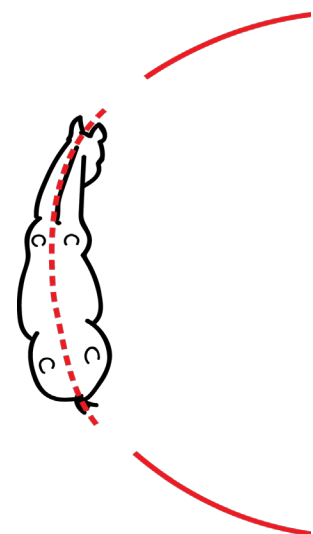
No. 11

Circle Basics

Circles come in a variety of sizes, and can be combined to build a variety of exercises to work on suppleness, balance, alignment, bend, collection, and impulsion. A good circle will also encourage your horse to use his inside hind leg to push through and activate the hindquarters.

The three most common circle sizes are: 20m, 15m, & 10m. Any circle under 10m is called a **volte**. A common volte size is 8m.

The smaller a circle is, the more difficult it is to execute as it requires more balance, collection, and impulsion from the horse.



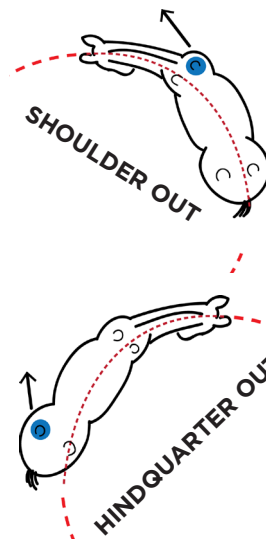
CONSIDER THIS:

A good circle has:

- Four quarter points
- The space between each 'point' must be even, and the curve of each quarter must be consistent

When riding a circle:

- Rein contact should be even
- Horse should have a slight inside bend
- Your horse's whole body should bend to the arc of the circle line
- Use outside rein to counteract any 'drift' off the circle line (usually shoulder or hindquarters)



Measuring the Circle

In a 20 x 40m arena:

8m: From the wall to the quarter line

10m: The letter E or B to X (center line)

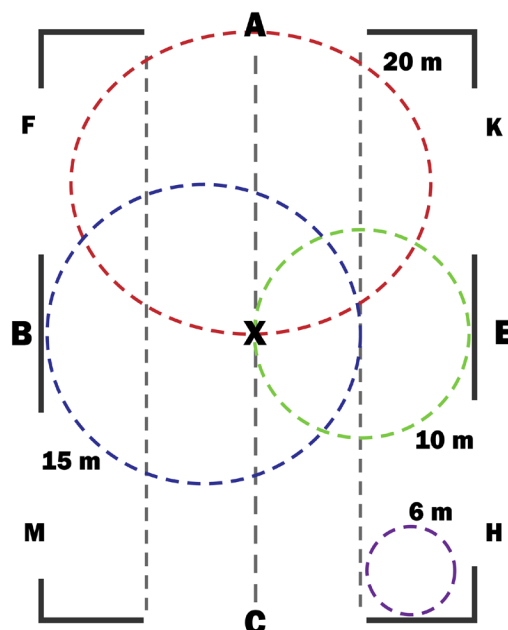
15m: The letter E or B to the quarter line (the $\frac{3}{4}$ line)

20m: The letter A or C to X (center line)

Start Simple

If your horse is not used to performing circles:

- Start with a larger circle (20m) at the walk, then move to smaller circles, then other gaits
- Try introducing circles and bend on the ground, in hand with lunging



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