

Essential Foundations

From Issue No. 9, Training

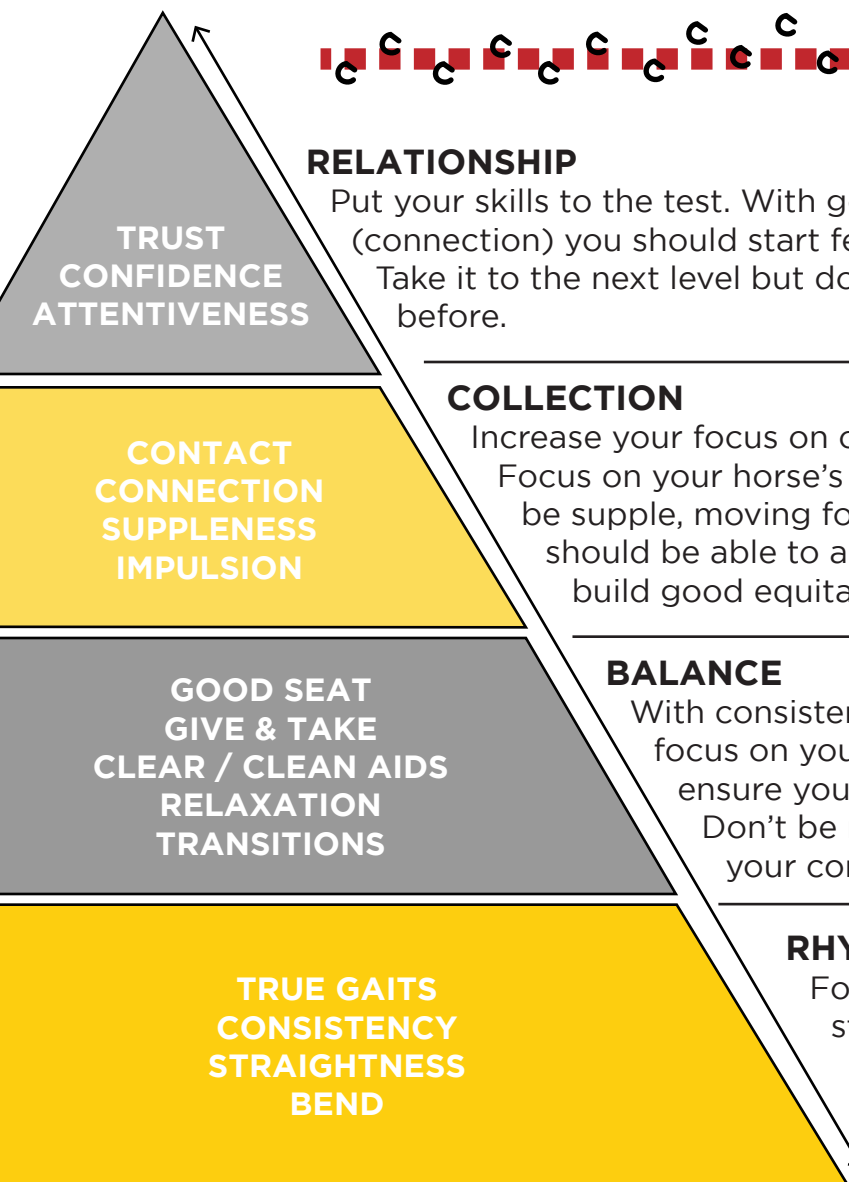
Having a good foundation in the basic gaits and transitions not only helps to build a strong and balanced rider, but results in a more balanced and supple horse. Plus it helps increase confidence, and the strength of the horse-rider relationship.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Everything begins and ends at the walk
 - if you can't master a skill or movement at the walk you aren't ready to try it at a higher gait
- Good Transitions are your friend
 - Up & downward transitions build suppleness, improve balance, and increase responsiveness to aids
- Focus on staying "in the box" and use both reins to maintain bend (inside rein) and straightness (outside rein)



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RELATIONSHIP

Put your skills to the test. With good balance, rhythm, and collection (connection) you should start feeling more confident in the saddle. Take it to the next level but don't forget the ones that came before.

COLLECTION

Increase your focus on contact - it should be elastic (not rigid). Focus on your horse's balance and quality of gait - he should be supple, moving forward (off the seat into the bit), and you should be able to anticipate his needs. You're working to build good equitation and improve your communication.

BALANCE

With consistent rhythm start building your skills, focus on your balance and seat as a rider, and ensure your aids are clear and well executed. Don't be rigid, but start building flexibility in your contact.

RHYTHM

Focus on building up the essentials - straightness at the walk and consistent figures (square and circle) with correct bend. The simple things often prove harder than they first appear.

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