

# Building Strong Foundations

## Training Exercises

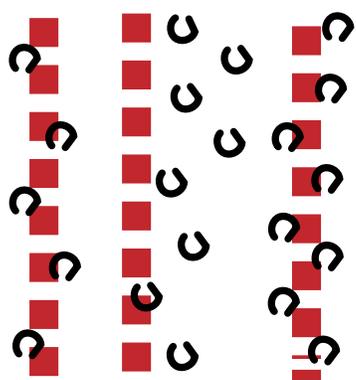
From Issue 9, Training

### Why care about the basics?

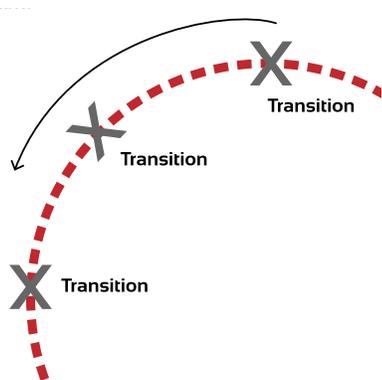
Having a good foundation in the “basics” of riding helps to build a stronger rider & a more balanced, supple horse. It also increases confidence and the strength of the horse-rider relationship. Proper transitions, good quality of gait, straightness, aids, and a good seat all contribute to a better rider and better equitation.

Strong foundations help you & your horse work more effectively as a team.

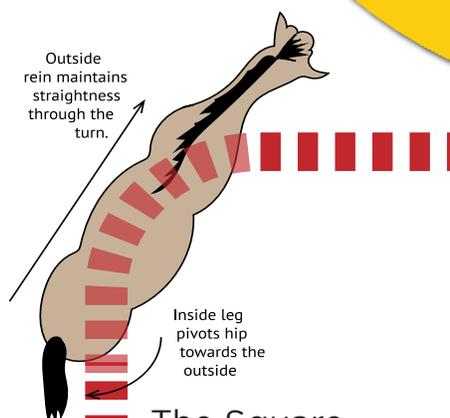
### Simple Exercises to Test (& Build) your Foundations



Are you Straight?



Testing Transitions



The Square

#### To set up:

- Pick a line in your arena that is not on the rail (e.g. quarter or centre line)

#### To ride:

- Start at the walk, and try to ride a straight line (also try it at the trot and canter)

#### Keep in mind:

- Your horse's head, neck, & shoulder should form a straight line
- Pick a focus point ahead of you to help keep you straight
- You shouldn't be able to see the hindquarters or hind legs if you are in alignment

#### Use this exercise to:

- Work on building straightness

#### To set up:

- Pick a spot where you have room to ride a 20m circle

#### To ride:

- Pick a gait (walk, trot or canter) ride a 20m circle
- When you have a smooth & forward moving gait, ask for a transition (up or down)
- Ride the new gait for 3-5 strides, then transition again
- Repeat until you've completed a full circle

#### Keep in mind:

- Transitions should be “up the hill” (no rushing or falling down)
- Gait quality before & after the transition should be consistent

#### Use this exercise to:

- Work on transitions
- Keep your horse supple and attentive to your aids

#### To set up:

- Pick a spot where you would have room to ride a 20m circle
- Don't ride against the rail (wall or fence)

#### To ride:

- Start by riding straight
- As you prepare to turn your first corner, close your outside leg and push the shoulders over, while steering with your inside rein and using your outside leg to pivot the hip towards the outside
- Try it at the walk first, until your horse is comfortable with the aids

#### Keep in mind:

- Put more weight on your inside seat bone when preparing to turn
- Turn with both hands (use inside & outside rein)

#### Use this exercise to:

- Building your skill in using diagonally paired aids
- Work on keeping your horse accessible, supple, and “in the box”.



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