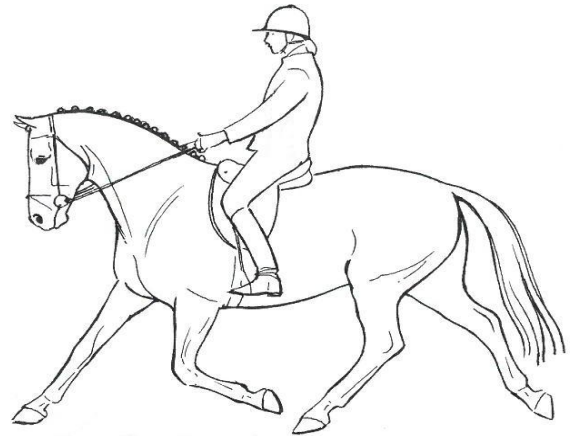


The Scales of Training



Rhythm Suppleness Contact Impulsion Straightness Collection

Germany has for many years followed a plan, called The Scales of Training, which has produced Olympic Champions and hundreds of other well trained horses, that are a pleasure to ride and reliable under the stress of competition. Each of the scales acts as foundation or prerequisite for the next, so when the first scale is in place the horse is ready to begin working on the next. These scales help to make the training more logical and can help horse and rider to gradually improve as a partnership.

Rhythm

The regularity of the beat within the gait. This should be correct for each pace: 4-time in Walk, 2-time with a moment of suspension in Trot and 3-time with a moment of suspension in Canter. The rhythm should be regular so that the horse/pony keeps the same tempo at all times. Until a horse or pony can trot or canter in a regular rhythm it is almost impossible for it to improve any other part of its way of going.

Suppleness

Both from side to side, left and right and longitudinally so the pony can begin to work in a rounded shape, and does not try to resist when the rider gives an aid. The horse/pony should go forward to the bit with a swinging back and elastic steps, showing an equal bend on both sides.

Contact

Does the weight of reins feel the same into both hands? Does it feel elastic? Is there more weight into one hand or the other, or is the horse/pony bearing down on your hands? There should be a steady, light and elastic contact between the rider's hands and the pony's mouth. The pony should have a steady, relaxed and closed mouth. The poll should always be the highest point with the nose line in front of the vertical.

Impulsion

Impulsion is balanced energy. The horse/pony should be willing to go actively forward whilst maintaining balance and rhythm. Impulsion should not be confused with speed.

Straightness

As the horse or pony becomes more supple, balanced and energetic it will find it easier to work straight. So within every movement the hind legs will follow in the tracks the front ones have created, both on a straight line and on a circle.

Collection

As the training of the horse/pony progresses he should be able to step under the centre of gravity from behind with more engaged hind legs, enabling the forehand to be lighter. In most Pony Club tests this will be illustrated by the horse/pony maintaining a good balance through the transitions and during the give and retake of the reins.