# Horse handling and training series

## Part 2: Flexion behind the saddle – Answers

1. List 6 benefits of a horse that has been properly educated in flexion.

Horses that have been educated to use proper flexion will be:

* softer
* more responsive to ride
* able to carry themselves more effectively
* able to carry the rider more efficiently and safely
* better balanced
* encouraged to follow their nose when being handled and ridden.

1. What does flexion help to gain control of on the horse?

Flexion helps gain control of the head, neck, and ribcage.

1. Describe the weight transfer that occurs in the horse when the flexion exercise is completed.

The weight is transferred from the front end to the back end when the flexion exercise is completed.

1. When carrying out flexion behind the saddle, what point should the horse’s nose be taken to when asking for flexion while the horse is standing still?

The horse’s nose should not go past the point of the shoulder.

1. If a horse has not been educated in flexion behind the saddle, or the handler is unsure of its education, is it better to ask for more or less flexion?

It is better to ask for less if the handler is unsure about the horse’s level of education and experience with the flexion behind the saddle exercise.

1. What can the handler do to comfort the horse and prevent it from anticipating the rotation?

Hold the horse’s head under the chin or place a hand on the chest or neck where the handler is asking for flexion.

1. Why would the handler under rotate?

If a horse is uneducated, this will make the exercise easier for the horse as it will not have to do a full rotation. This is a good way to educate the horse in the exercise and introduce the exercise without confusing or startling the horse.

1. At what stage would a handler over rotate during the exercise?

When the horse is educated in the exercise and is completing the exercise with ease, the handler can enhance balance, coordination, and transfer of weight from the front end to the back end even more by over rotating and encouraging the horse to do a full 360 circle.