# Horse handling and training series

## Part 4: Riding exercises – Answers

1. At what stage should the rider start to introduce more advanced riding exercises to their training routine?

More advanced riding exercises should be introduced when the rider feels that the individual horse and rider combination is confident, comfortable, and completing the exercise with ease. The rider should also be experiencing improvements in the areas that the exercise is aimed at. For example, increased balance or responsiveness.

1. What benefit do the lunging exercises have on the horse and rider combinations riding exercises?

The lunging exercises aim to achieve the same capabilities as the riding exercises but at a less complicated level. They provide a foundation for the riding exercises and will enable the horse and rider to complete ridden exercises with greater ease.

1. What should the rider try to achieve before attempting flexion while going forward and around on the circle?

The rider should achieve one rein flexion and flexion from positions 1 to 5 at a standstill before going around on a circle.

1. Explain what the horse’s ‘sweet spot’ is in relation to flexion.

In relation to flexion, the horse’s sweet spot is the point of flexion where the horse is softest and the most comfortable to remain in this position. For young, inexperienced, or uneducated horses, this may be more flexion, for example, position 2, and in more experienced horses, this may be straighter, for example, position 3.

1. During the ‘forward and around on a circle’ exercise, what is a key point to remember in relation to size/shape of circle? Why?

Always try to stay on a symmetrical circle. This will indicate whether the rider’s hands and feet are effective and if the horse is responding to the rider. This is also an indicator of how competent the horse and rider are becoming at the exercise.

1. What does the exercise ‘trot large circles with intermittent small circles’ aim to achieve?

This exercise challenges and enhances the horse’s balance, suppleness, and responsiveness, as well as the rider’s coordination of their hands and feet.

1. What position should the horse’s head be in during the circles?

The horse’s head should be in the individual horse’s sweet spot.

1. When the rider has stopped and is changing direction during the intermittent circles exercise, does the rider turn the horse in a 180 towards the inside or the outside of the circle they were doing?

The rider should turn the horse to the outside.

1. What should the rider do after they have stopped and before they change direction? Why?

The rider should ask the horse to back up. This will help to transfer weight from the front end to the back end and therefore make the 180 turn easier.

1. What can the rider do to improve if the rider’s hands and feet are not being used effectively or a horse becomes unbalanced, less responsive, or falls out of shape?

The rider can remain on the small circle that they are on until the horse’s balance/responsiveness has improved, or the rider’s hands and feet are more effective.

1. What can the rider do to improve the horse if it is showing stiffness to one side?

The rider can increase the amount of flexion in that direction.