# Horse handling and training series

## Part 4: Riding exercises – Fact sheet and questions

* Once a horse and rider have become educated a certain level, they can introduce new exercises to enhance the education of both horse and rider to reach a new level.
* All lunging exercises can be transferred to riding exercises.
* Ridden exercises should be started once the horse and rider are confident at the lunging exercises and flexion exercises at a standstill.
* Forward and around on the circle combines lunging exercises and flexion exercises.
* Forward and around on the circle, the horse is ridden in the sweet spot position, which is where the horse is the softest and most comfortable.
* The rider will need to use appropriate inside and outside leg to prevent the horse from falling in or falling out.
* Always shape and soften a horse at a stop before walking off.
* Repeat the exercise numerous times to enhance rider and horse education.
* Try to keep the circle symmetrical.
* When completing the intermittent small circles, try to keep the horse flowing and smooth, and maintain symmetrical circles.
* Use a backup when stopping and changing direction to transfer weight from the front end to the back end. If the horse is stiff, use more flexion (for example, a position 2) to encourage the horse to soften.

### Questions

1. At what stage should the rider start to introduce more advanced riding exercises to their training routine?
2. What benefit do the lunging exercises have on the horse and rider combinations riding exercises?
3. What should the rider try to achieve before attempting flexion while going forward and around on the circle?
4. Explain what the horses ‘sweet spot’ is in relation to flexion.
5. During the ‘forward and around on a circle’ exercise, what is a key point to remember in relation to size/shape of circle? Why?
6. What does the exercise ‘trot large circles with intermittent small circles’ aim to achieve?
7. What position should the horse’s head be in during the circles?
8. 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?
9. What should the rider do after they have stopped and before they change direction? Why?
10. 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?
11. What can the rider do to improve the horse if it is showing stiffness to one side?