

## **Exercises In the Saddle for Clients**

### **Exercise One: THREE WAY HIP STRETCH**

This exercise is taught at the halt only

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

The rider sits tall, core on, without any movement to the upper body, using their hands on the pommel for leverage, lift outward (at 90%) one leg off the saddle for the count of 3, then relax it back, repeat 3 times.

Then ask Rider to lift leg out and back for 3 sec, repeat 3 times. Relax leg.

Then lift, out, back and open (rotate at hip), hold for 3 secs and relax, repeat 3 times then change the legs.

You can demonstrate this throughout the exercise with your own legs.

This stretch is for where the thigh joins the hip allowing the rider to sit deeper by stretching all the muscles and ligaments around the upper thigh and hip.

Watch that the upper body does not swing back & forward or to side to side – remind the rider about the triangle they are sitting on and to use their abs and hands on pommel for support.

The success of this exercise is not how far off the saddle the rider can lift the leg but how still the upper body is kept as the rider attempts to lift the leg.

Stirrup lengths should drop by 1 -2 holes after this exercise.

### **Exercise Two: LEG SWINGS**

This exercise is taught at the halt and may be performed at the walk once the rider is confident/competent

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

6 – 10 repeats for the exercise on both sides

Using the pommel to support their upper body get the rider to swing both legs at a time from the hip.

Possible problems:

Swinging from the knee or roll forward onto their pubic bone)

Rolling onto pubic bone

### **Exercise Three: AEROPLANE ARM SWINGS – Horizontal Rotation**

This exercise is performed at the halt only

Leave the riders feet in the stirrups

4 – 6 repeats for the exercise on both sides

Explain how the body is cut into two sections through the waist. The lower half of the body must stay still and relaxed while the upper half of the body rotates at the waist with their arms stretched out level with their shoulders – the riders arms rotate first one way then the other, slow and controlled with not bounce or swing.

Possible problems:

Watch the rider stays on their tail bone and no roll forward onto their public bone.

Ensure lower leg stays quiet and at the girth.

Ensure legs do not grip through thighs & knees but stay soft and long

As the rider rotates, ensure they look over to the opposite rump to achieve a long stretch through their back. Rotate from side to side about.

#### **Exercise Four: THIGH STRETCHES** (For the more supple or balanced beginner)

This exercise is performed at the halt only

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

6 – 10 repeats for the exercise on both sides

One side at a time the rider is to reach down and grab their ankle on the same side as their hand - then sitting up straight creating a stretch in their thigh. Ask the rider to push their knee to the ground to increase the stretch as if they are going to kneel on the ground.

Possible problems:

Ensure they are relaxed through the hip and buttock.

Sitting on their seat bone and not perching or rocking forward onto their pubic bone.

#### **Exercise Four: LEGS AWAY** (Check if rider has back problems before doing this exercise)

This exercise is taught at the halt and may be performed at the walk and the trot once the rider is confident/competent

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

2 - 4 repeats for the exercise trying to achieve longer moments of time ie to the count of 10, 15 or if in walk or trot ½ circle, 1 circle etc

The rider uses their hands on the pommel for support, core on and without any movement to the upper body lift both leg off and out from the saddle at the hip joint and hold for a period of time that the coach determines appropriate for that rider's fitness and suppleness. The legs do not need to be lifted off the saddle only the weight of the leg carried. This gives the rider the focus of the seat bone, pubic bone triangle.

Possible problems:

Make sure they are lifting the leg straight off & not forward.

Ensure the rider is sitting centred – equal weight left and right on the seat bones

Not rolling forward onto their crutch.

### **Exercise Five: A. STRETCH**

This exercise is taught at the halt and may be performed at the walk once the rider is confident/competent

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

Arms straight above their heads, pointing to the sky, arms level with their ears - legs pointing to the ground making sure the rider is not rolling forward but sitting on their tail bone ask the rider to stretch themselves to make their bodies as long as possible, tall from their hips up, tall from their hips down - count to six and let them relax.

Possible problems:

Ensure they are relaxed through the hip and buttock.

Sitting on their seat bone and not perching or rocking forward onto their pubic bone.

Don't let the rider become dizzy! Ask for feedback.

### **B. EYE'S UP**

Repeat the above but this time get them to look up at their hands - make sure they don't roll forward onto their pubic bone, hold for 10 – 15 seconds, this should be achieved in walk.

Possible problems:

Take care that the sun does not blind the rider.

### **Exercise Six: TOPLINE MOVEMENT** – Foundation Knowledge for contact

This exercise is taught at the walk once the rider is confident/competent

In Walk with rider's eyes closed for a few strides, count the two beats of the front legs then ask the rider to count them. Explain as the horse takes a step forward with his left foot, the horse's left shoulder moves forward, and the rider's hips moves forward and vice versa with the right. This is "FOLLOWING THE MOVEMENT OF THE HORSE". If the rider tenses, they restrict the movement of the horse therefore they must be relaxed to allow the horse to move freely forward

Then count the back two beats of the walk. This is much harder for the rider to feel as they are sitting over the forehand. It feels more like a "lift, lift" movement compared to the defined beat of the front footfalls. Ask the rider to count. Then count all four beats together.

### **Exercise Six: ROUND THE WORLD** Add these exercises in for children's lessons only

This exercise is taught at the halt and may be performed at the walk once the rider is confident/competent

Bring your pupil to a balanced halt off the outside track in the round yard or arena

Remove the rider's feet from the stirrups

With the rider using their hands on the cantle & pommel to support them - at the halt first - get them to lift their leg over the pommel and sit side saddle facing into the centre, then lift their left leg over the cantle - sitting backwards, lift their right leg over the cantle - facing outwards then their left leg over the pommel to face front again.

Do this exercise turning left then back over again to the right at the halt then left and again right at the walk. At the walk, hold the horse at its head so you are handy if the rider needs assistance. For the more nervous rider, halt to turn then walk between each seat change.

Possible problems:

The rider may slip off the saddle when first starting this exercise so stand close to the saddle and keep a hand on the leg of the rider to give them support.

This exercise is a moral booster but can easily turn and the rider can lose confidence – take the rider slowly at first