

5 Steps to an adjustable horse

1 Moves Forward From Both Legs

The horse moves freely forward when the horse's core is lifted with both legs. When the core of the horse lifts, the back lifts and then the rider can communicate with the movement of his/her hips. If the core is dropped then the back is down and away from the rider's hip making communication with the horse a bit more difficult.



Simple Action Step: When my calves close on my horse, their belly lifts giving the back legs room to move more forward with active steps. When the horse lifts the back and belly I feel my saddle widen. This gives me a comfortable place to sit. When I am comfortable sitting, then my seat can allow the horse to move freely forward.

2 Yields to leg and seat bone pressure

The horse moves away from pressure. When I can move a horse away from the pressure of my leg, seat bone, and reins, I can then influence each part of my horse's body. I can then turn my horse like a boat by moving the rudder right and guiding the nose left.

Simple Action Step: When I apply pressure to the rib cage, it picks up and moves away. When I apply pressure with a rein against the neck, the shoulder moves away from that pressure. When I move my leg back and apply pressure then the haunches move away from the pressure.



3 Seeks contact with my hands

The horse seeks my hand. This means that the horse is working properly over the back and allowing contact with the mouth. When the horse tucks the nose to the chest or raises the neck and bulges in the lower neck it means that the horse is actively avoiding my communication aids.



Simple Action Step: My horse actively telescopes the neck out and seeks the bit. This gives me the feeling of "holding hands" with my horse. With this active connection with my horse, I can place the frame of my horse's body and neck into any shape that I need.

4 Is balanced evenly to both sides

The horse bends easily to both sides, in every part of the neck, rib cage, and pelvis. When I find imbalances in the body, I want to address those by using dressage gymnastic exercises that address those parts of the body that are stuck, stiff, and inflexible. Through a balanced body, the horse can then begin to develop a more brilliant movement.

Simple Action Step: I can flex my horse's body from poll to tail easily in both directions. If I find that I cannot, then I apply exercises such as leg yield, shoulder-in, haunches in, flexion, counter flexion, etc. until I get the feeling that I am working towards.



5 Responds to seat to adjust rhythm, speed, and size of stride.

The horse moves is tuned into the rider's hips. Once the horse is proficient at the steps above, then

the rider can adjust the horse's rhythm, and size of stride. The rider can ask the horse for the maximum length in stride as well as bring the stride on the spot. These happens because the back comes up to the hips and the hips dictate that the rider needs from the horse through the loosening and tightening of the hip flexors and core.



Simple Action Step: I can adjust my horse through the use of my hips. My hips are the key to adjusting my horse's stride and rhythm.

Want more? Schedule Deirdre Malburg for clinics at your facility or lessons at her facility. Please visit DDressage.com to schedule lessons and clinics. Lessons available from beginning to Grand Prix dressage. Clinics available for dressage instruction with a focus on developing horses and riders into more body awareness. Clinics also available on building the fitness of both horse and rider. Deirdre is also available for lectures on equestrian and equine fitness, mental preparations, and training program planning (through her proven method of periodization training).

Thanks for joining our email team. Our goals at Deirdre Dressage are to develop material that riders across the country can use to find more enjoyment with their horse. We are here to guide you through the process of developing clear communication with your equine partner through the classical principles of dressage. Here at Deirdre Dressage we believe that dressage is the ballet of the equestrian disciplines. It is the foundation to build on to ensure that our horses are correct in their work and have developed evenly. Look out for more info from Deirdre Dressage in the coming weeks and we develop you and your horse into complete athletes.

