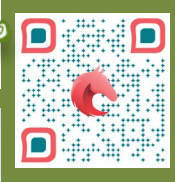




The Riding Seat

Scan the code for extra training while workshop is in progress



The rider's seat is the beginning of great riding or poor riding.

One of the biggest compliments to a rider is that they have a "good seat," and developing this seat is part of the lifetime journey of being a rider.

The rider's seat is more than just how a rider sits in the saddle. The term encompasses how they move with the horse—are they able to follow the movement without stiffness or bouncing. A good seat also refers to a rider's ability to stay with the unexpected movements, such as a big spook or an exuberant buck.

"Seat" is more than just one's backside in the saddle. Old riding texts refer to the fork of the rider's seat, which includes the upper thighs. The most important part of a good seat, and

arguably the two most important joints for riding are the hip joints.



The hip joints are the large ball and socket joints where the femurs connect to the pelvis. Fluid, organized movement in these joints, allows for following the horse in all gaits without stiffness,



but also allows us to slow the horse with just the right amount of tension. The pelvis is the largest, heaviest bone in our body, and small movements of the pelvis will shift our weight and can immediately influence the horse's balance and direction.

Of course, no part of the body works in isolation.

There are many muscular attachments to the pelvis providing stability, mobilization, and aiding in breathing. Any changes here can and will affect the rest of the body.

When sitting in the saddle, the pelvis should be in what is referred to as "neutral." This is where the hip points and pubic bone are in line, on the same plane in the body. An easy way to recognize this riding is to look at the outside seam of the rider's pants. It should be vertical.

If the pelvis is tipped forward, the rider will need to hollow or arch their back and throw their chest and shoulders back to keep their weight balanced. The hip angle (from upper body to

thigh) will be more closed, and the rider will struggle to move well, likely feeling as though their hip joints get "locked," and may often be told they are leaning too far forward.



If the pelvis is tipped too far back, the rider's back will be rounded and they may often have a feeling of being "behind the movement" of the horse, and told to sit up straighter.

From the aligned position, in "neutral" or center, we again have the most options for movement, able to follow the horse through the gaits or in any direction.

"Open your hip" is common riding advice, but frequently misunderstood. In riding, a reference to a rider's hip angle is a reference to the angle created from the rider's upper body to their thigh.

An open hip means there is more space between thigh and upper body (think of a rider leaning back).

A closed hip means there is less space between thigh and upper body (think of a rider leaning forward).





The position of the rider's thigh affects the hip joints. Try this exercise the next time you are riding, first standing still and then at the walk.

Roll your entire leg off and away from the saddle, taking your heel in and your knee out and notice what happens to the back of your hip joint. The space in the back of the joint becomes smaller and less movement is possible. Now roll your leg back on the saddle, so your toes are more or less pointing straight ahead and your thigh is resting on the saddle and notice how the space in the back of your hip joint becomes larger and the movement in the joint unrestricted.

Are there times you take your leg off the saddle in order to give cues, to try to "use your heel" or achieve a "solid lower leg"? From what you felt in the above exercise, how do you think this movement affects your horse? Did you notice any change from them when practicing this at the walk?

The rider's core is also inexplicably linked to the seat. Any change of the pelvis will change the entire spine and core, and likewise, any change to the rider's abdominals, breathing, and upper body will affect the pelvis, and therefore the rider's seat.





Connect With Your Horse

Build Your Confidence

Why do you ride?

Do you ride to remember what you felt as a child, or do you ride to fulfill a lifelong dream, perhaps out of reach until recently?

Do you ride to challenge yourself, to say "I can do this", no matter the sweat, dusty arenas, and soreness in your body?

There are moments for all of us as riders where everything feels right, when we feel balanced, secure, at ease. We are moving with the horse, and we feel light and free. These moments of great riding keep us coming back, keep us facing the challenge, and accepting the risks that riding

gives us. Great riding is about more than just how you sit in the saddle. Great riding is about working with your horse, understanding how they think, how they learn, and what creates true connection.

Introducing the Brand New - Everything Re-Imagined and Re-Created - Balanced Riding Course

Learn about Enrollment and Join the Journey by clicking on the QR Code or visiting www.horseclass.com/brc

