

Wide hand

Ride your *entire* ride with hands 1.5' apart. Do not let the horse's neck touch your rein. This is a great exercise for the positioning of your hand as well as encouraging the use of **leg aids** *before* hand. Creating softness and flexion without using your hands is the best way to gage if your horse is truly listening, or if you're giving other cues!

Driving reins

This is an excellent exercise for riders with broken wrists, hard hands or riders that tend to lean on the rein. You can hold the reins through your fists with your thumbs pointing at the horse's mouth (quick google). This continues the line straight from the elbow to the bridle and helps maintain even **contact**.

Two posts

Remember those funny exercises you used to have to do as a beginner rider? Yeah. Let's see if we can still do those. Make yourself hold your position for two beats up in the trot and two down. Your leg should *not* swing in front or behind you. This is also an exercise you can easily do at the canter. Check yourself! How hard is it now? There are a ton of **variations** to this and you can make a whole ride out of it.

Cut off your lower leg

I always try to encourage students on horses that might be fresh (or if you're uncomfortable doing no stirrups alone) to cut yourself off at the knee. This develops technical **muscle control** and engages your inner thigh and core muscles for balance. A lot of the time we can rely heavily on the stirrup opposed

to engaging our *balance* muscles and this is a safe mental and physical exercise to correct that.

Lengthen stirrups

Only time for a quick flat ride? Put your stirrups *down* a few holes and really engage with that seat and lower leg. This is a super easy thing to do when you're limited for time. It's going to make you work harder and also encourage more **engagement** from your horse.

Poles in a line

There are so many things you can do with one small line of three or four poles. I see a lot of riders just go over and over, getting bored. Measure them out *long*, then measure them out *short*. Make it **difficult**. Get your horse to extend, to collect over them. Change the angles of the poles.

Stay off the rail

This is something we should all be doing in our rides alone! Make sure you stop riding the rail constantly. Your horse has to learn how to properly balance on your **aids**, not the wall. Get off the rail and make your own funky shaped arena.

Ride square corners, add in different turns and directions. If you have a horse that is "better one way than the other" or "weaker one way versus the other" OR has a hard time picking up a specific lead *TAKE IT OFF THE RAIL!*