

Progress Checklist: MODULE #6 - BENDING

"Are you flexible?"

Banish Stiffness



RIDING SKILLS

Walk, Trot, Canter, Rein Back, Circles, Serpentes, Straight Lines, Leg Yields

Self Evaluation

Fix the Brace (L1)

- Slow down, feel for your horse.
- Brace is the opposite of flexibility and the enemy of harmony. It reflects trust or leadership issues. When horses brace, they are preparing for something difficult or unpleasant. Make sure it is not you!
- Force vs Psychology; FEEL.
- Sit 'centered'... not crooked
- Bending & BehaviorFIX

Develop Flexibility of the Neck:

Mini Bends (L2)

- Simulate on foot, discover your own brace or asymmetry.
- The Clock: Mini Bends to 1 & 2, 11 & 10, and returning to 12. BE ACCURATE!
- At the halt
 - At walk and trot
 - Canter (1 & 11 only)
 - No head tilt – balance with the reins.

Latitudinal Flexion (L3)

- Bend the body, not the neck – NO inside rein!
- Keep the ears level (high ear = tighter rein – strive for even contact)
- Your Headlights! Are they all going in the direction you want... from head to toes? Are they level and symmetrical?
- Do large circles (small ones are more difficult)
- DO NOT turn your head more than your shoulders (unless on a jump course)
- DO NOT push with your outside heel/spur!
- Use your headlights to stay "straight" on the circle line
- Exercises: Wide arcs, half circles, big Figure 8s, Large serpentes in flow.

Longitudinal Flexion (L4)

- Good Banana / Bad Banana
- "Round" vs Flat, Downhill or Hollow
- Big circles better for stretching. Nose no lower than knees.

One Rein Suppling (L5)

- Guide your horse with one rein on a Figure 8 – true & counter turns

Feel the Mouth - Building Trust in Your Hand (L6)

- What would your horse want your hands to do? "Hold hands"
- Find and follow the mouth. Keep it the same: Don't let the feeling change.

Position the Bit / follow the bit / pinky turns (L7)

- Position the bit on the line
- Rest your pinkies on the saddle, give the outside pinky!

The Inside Ski (L8)

- Point it to the destination and on the line
- Your horse's body should be parallel to your foot ("ski")

Leg Yield - Circle and Diagonal Lines (L9)

- 50% sideways & 50% forwards
- Keep the body & neck straight – parallel to the rail or line of the circle

Bendy Leg Yields (free the shoulder) (L10)

- Bend the neck slightly away from direction of travel
- Shoulder is leading

I promise my horse I won't get mad. I promise I won't punish. I promise I will try to see things from his or her point of view. I promise that I will strive to be trustworthy and continue to grow in my awareness. I promise I will strive to be a good leader.