**Session Plan for: Riding Flat**

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| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 1  |
| Subject | Developing Position | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses, markers |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Discuss what an independent seat means and why it is important. Discuss ways of developing your seat both on and off the horse. |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm up – use the warm up to help rider establish good position. Discuss stretches they can do before they mount up
2. Take both feet out of the stirrups and let legs hang down – check: is the rider seating evenly on both seat bones, straight through the upper body, ear/shoulder/hip/heel line, arm position
3. Use exercises in halt and walk to help rider loosen off and deepen seat
4. Encourage the rider to feel what is happening underneath them – can they feel the order the legs are moving?
5. Use exercises relevant to the rider to help improve position
6. Cool down ask rider to take feet out of stirrups and stretch legs down, make the same checks as you did at the start of the session
7. Discuss ways to stretch after a riding session and how it can improve their position

Suggested exercises:1. Exercises without stirrups
2. Standing up in stirrups – this can be done out hacking , where the horse may be more forward naturally, allowing the rider to concentrate on their position
3. Use visual reminders such as markers placed around arena or ribbon in horse mane to remind rider to check positon
4. Rider behind to observe and comment on position of rider in front
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individualsSuggest ways to improve position off the horse, refer to riding fit booklet |
|  | ProgressionContinue to work on own position and balance on and off the horse |

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**Session Plan for: Riding Flat**

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| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 2  |
| Subject | Developing position | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: The focus of this session is to help the rider become more aware of their position  |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. In halt help rider to sit in a balanced position
2. Ask rider to close their eyes and describe how it feels to them starting from head and working down. Are they holding or tensing through any muscles?
3. Use the breathing exercises from the Riding Fit booklets to help rider relax and let go of any tension
4. Progress to walk and do the same. You can lead the horse if you want the rider to close their eyes
5. If the rider begins to tense up, return to halt and encourage them to relax again
6. Ask the rider to consider how they sit on a chair or when driving- does this have an impact on how they sit on their horse?
7. Can progress to sitting trot but if the horse is not comfy or easy to sit to this won’t benefit the rider. They may find it easier in canter instead
8. Ask for rider feedback throughout – what are they feeling, how easy do they find it, are there consistent areas of tension that creep in?
9. Suggest exercises they can do off the horse to help improve their position
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionContinue to work towards improving position  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 3  |
| Subject | Developing position on lunge | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horse for lungeing and lunge equipment |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Discuss what an independent seat means and why it is important. Discuss how lunge lessons can improve the rider position |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Discuss strengths and weaknesses with their position and if there is anything they would like to work on
2. Warm horse up for lungeing and encourage rider to warm up while waiting
3. Work through relevant exercises on the lunge to help rider position and balance
4. Cool down
5. Discuss session and what the rider found beneficial
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individual |
|  | ProgressionContinue to develop position |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 4  |
| Subject | Canter without stirrups | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses, neck straps |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Benefits of working without stirrups – improve rider security, feel, lengthen leg |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm up horse and rider in walk, trot and canter
2. Focus on trot/canter/trot transitions to ensure horse is responsive in preparation for work without stirrups
3. Ride through exercises in walk and trot without stirrups
4. Discuss cantering with no stirrups and preparation for upwards and downwards transitions
5. Introduce canter without stirrups, use neck strap or hold front of saddle as required to help with balance and security

Exercise ideas:1. Canter around the short side of the arena, return to trot before long side
2. 20m circle with canter transition after centre line
3. Short bursts of canter on straight line
4. ½ circles across the school
5. Gradually lengthen the time spent in canter without stirrups
6. Cool down
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionPractice riding without stirrups to improve confidence and balance |

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**Session Plan for: Riding Flat**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 5  |
| Subject | Developing rider aids | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses, markers |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Ask riders to describe the aids they use when asking for an upwards or downwards transition |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm horse and riders up in walk, trot and canter
2. Discuss what makes a good transition, include square halt
3. Ride transitions between all paces, focus on the quality and horse reaction
4. Discuss how rider position can affect the quality and the clarity of the aid
5. Discuss the horse’s response to the aids and make corrections to rider position

Exercise suggestions:* Progressive transitions around arena
* Place poles or markers around arena, transitions to be ridden in between them
* School figures with transitions
* Transitions within the pace
* Direct upwards transitions if appropriate
* Transition to be made after a specific number of strides
1. Cool down
2. Discuss with riders which transitions they found easiest and why
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionContinue to improve clarity of aids and quality of transitions |

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**Session Plan for: Riding Flat**

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| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 6  |
| Subject | Training Scale | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Ask riders as they warm up to think about how their horse is going ready to give feedback after the warm up. Can be very basic feedback |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm horse and riders up
2. Ask rider for their feedback on how they feel their horse is going
3. Introduce the Training Scale – what it is and how we can use it to assess how the horse is going
4. Discuss rhythm and the riders understanding of this
5. Work through exercises that encourage riders to focus on rhythm
6. Help each rider to establish a suitable rhythm for their horse in each pace

Exercise suggestions:* Count out the rhythm of the pace
* Riders observe each other’s horses. Can put coloured bandages or boots on horses to make it easier to see leg movement
* Place a marker at either end of the long side, count the number of strides the horse takes between each marker
* Place quarter markers around a circle – count the number of strides between each maker
* Variations within the pace – can the rider recognise what happens if they slow down or speed up the tempo
1. Cool down. Discuss each horse
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionRecognising changes in rhythm and making corrections |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 7  |
| Subject | Training Scale | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Recap on the Training Scale from previous session and rhythm  |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm horses and riders up focussing on rhythm of each pace
2. Ask riders to feedback on how they feel their horse is going
3. Discuss straightness of horse and how rider position can affect it
4. Look at each riders straightness in their position and how this will affect their ability to apply aids and keep horse straight
5. Remind riders of the aids to keep horse straight
6. Help riders to assess their horse’s straightness using suitable exercises

Exercise suggestion:1. Work on inner track – can the rider feel if the horse is falling back to the track? Progress to ¾ line and centre line. Use poles to help rider channel horse. Progress to use school figures, focussing on if the rider can feel if the horse is drifting off the line or around the turn
2. Work on square/rectangle shapes and turns across the school – start to encourage the rider to control the horse’s outside shoulder and be more aware of outside aids
3. Cool down
4. Riders to give feedback on their horses way of going to include straightness and rhythm
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionWork to recognise rhythm and straightness. Practice giving feedback on how they think their horse is going |

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| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 8  |
| Subject | Bend and flexion | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Recap on the Training Scale from previous session and rhythm and straightness |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm horses and riders up focussing on rhythm and straightness
2. Ask riders to give feedback on how their horse is going
3. Discuss the difference between and the aids for bend and flexion
4. Use suitable exercises to help riders develop their feel for bend and flexion
5. Discuss the horse’s stiff and soft sides, influence of symmetry of the rider’s position and rider’s stronger and weaker side can influence horse

Exercise suggestion:1. Cones in corners to encourage riders to go deeper into them and bend the horse around.
2. Circles of various size – difference between riding a corner and a circle
3. Shallow loops – changing the bend, allows riders to begin to feel which side horse finds easier to bend to
4. School figures using markers or poles to help with shape symmetry
5. ½ 10m circles in walk. Riders to make and feel a clear change of bend. Help rider to identify the horse’s stiff/soft sides. Add circles in at the start and end of the loop
6. Cool down and riders give feedback on their horses way of going
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionWork to continue to refine aids |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 9  |
| Subject | Training Scale and developing aids | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Recap on the previous sessions  |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm up horses and riders focussing on straightness, rhythm, bend
2. Riders give feedback on how they feel their horse is going and their own positional strengths and weaknesses
3. Discuss and work through exercises to help improve the horse and the rider
4. Work through suitable exercises asking for regular from riders to check understanding and feel
5. Throughout the session ask riders for feedback about; straightness, rhythm, balance, bend and flexion, quality of the transitions and their position. Encourage the riders to think about how they influence the horse
6. Cool down – ask riders questions about how they felt their horse went and discuss a plan on how to progress
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals. Set goals for future sessions |
|  | ProgressionDevelop position and confidence on a variety of horses. Rider to consider the influence on every horse they ride |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 10  |
| Subject | Working in open order | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Riders have already covered working in open order in walk, trot and canter under the instruction of a coach in Gold. For Platinum they are required to work individually in open order in walk and trot (with at least three other riders) taking responsibility for their own work and safety. Each rider can be working on a different exercise so the riders learn to plan ahead and avoid each other in preparation for working in a warm up arena. Although the coach will be instructing it will be a less guided session than at Gold. |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Remind riders of the safety considerations and rules of the school
2. Warm riders up in open order under guidance in all three paces
3. Discuss each horse and ask for rider feedback
4. Give each rider an appropriate exercise to work on and support as required
5. Can bring riders back as a ride to cool down
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionRiders to continue to practice riding as individual with other riders in the arena |

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| Name |  | Level | Platinum |
| Topic | Riding Flat | Lesson | 11 |
| Subject | Video feedback | Location | Arena |
| Resources & Requirements | Suitable horses, IPad or similar to take video clips of ridersClassroom to watch clips back and view clips of other riders |

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| Time | Activity |
| *10 mins* | INTRODUCTION: Videoing sessions or parts of a session is a great way for them to see themselves and compare what they see with what they feel on the horse. Do the two match up? |
| *60**mins* | **ACTIVITIES:** 1. Warm horses and riders up
2. Work through exercises suitable for the group and video each rider
3. As group or individually watch the video back and discuss
4. Consider including clips of other riders e.g. Olympic riders and discussing
 |
| *10 mins* | SUMMARY Feedback to individuals |
|  | ProgressionTake videos of the riders regularly and review them |

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