

## The Overall Aim of the Training Scale

Being “*through*”, or “*letting the aids through*”, means that the horse is prepared to accept the rider’s aids obediently and without tension. It should respond to the driving aids without hesitation, its hind legs swinging through, and actively creating pushing power. At the same time the rein aids should be “allowed through” from the mouth, via the poll, neck and back, to the hindquarters, without being blocked by tension at any point.

The horse is “*through*” when it remains supple during all exercises, responds to the rider’s aids, accepts half halts and transitions without any hesitation or resistance and listens to the lightest aids of the rider.

- Throughness allows the rhythm to be maintained consistently in all three paces and in all transitions.
- Only if the horse moves with suppleness can the energy from the hindquarters pass through the horse’s body. Also, without suppleness, the restraining aids cannot act, via the mouth, poll, neck and back on the hindquarters.
- Any problems in the contact, that is unsteadiness or stiffness in the connection between the rider’s hand and the horse’s mouth, will interfere with the horse’s ability to let the aids come through.
- A horse that works with impulsion, supple through its back, and swinging through with its hind legs, will be in a better position to allow both the driving and restraining aids through.
- Not until the horse becomes completely straight can it accept half halts equally on both reins and go more positively into the contact in response to the rider’s driving aids, without its hind legs escaping to the side. This straightness, in its turn, is absolutely essential for collection and consequently for the correct carriage of head and neck.
- If the horse responds correctly to the exercises in collection by stepping forward with both hind legs equally in the direction of the centre of gravity, and by taking more weight on its hindquarters, this is an indication that it has achieved a high degree of throughness (Durchlassigkeit).

All items of the training scale are components of the collective marks of standard dressage tests. Therefore, the judges must always check the elements of the training scale before giving the collective marks.

(from FEI Dressage Handbook, Guidelines for Judging)

## **5. Straightness.**

### **Equal Bend on Both Reins.**

The development of impulsion and straightness is essential to prepare the horse for collection and to make it more supple and through.

Straightening the horse is a never-ending task, since every horse has some degree of natural crookedness.

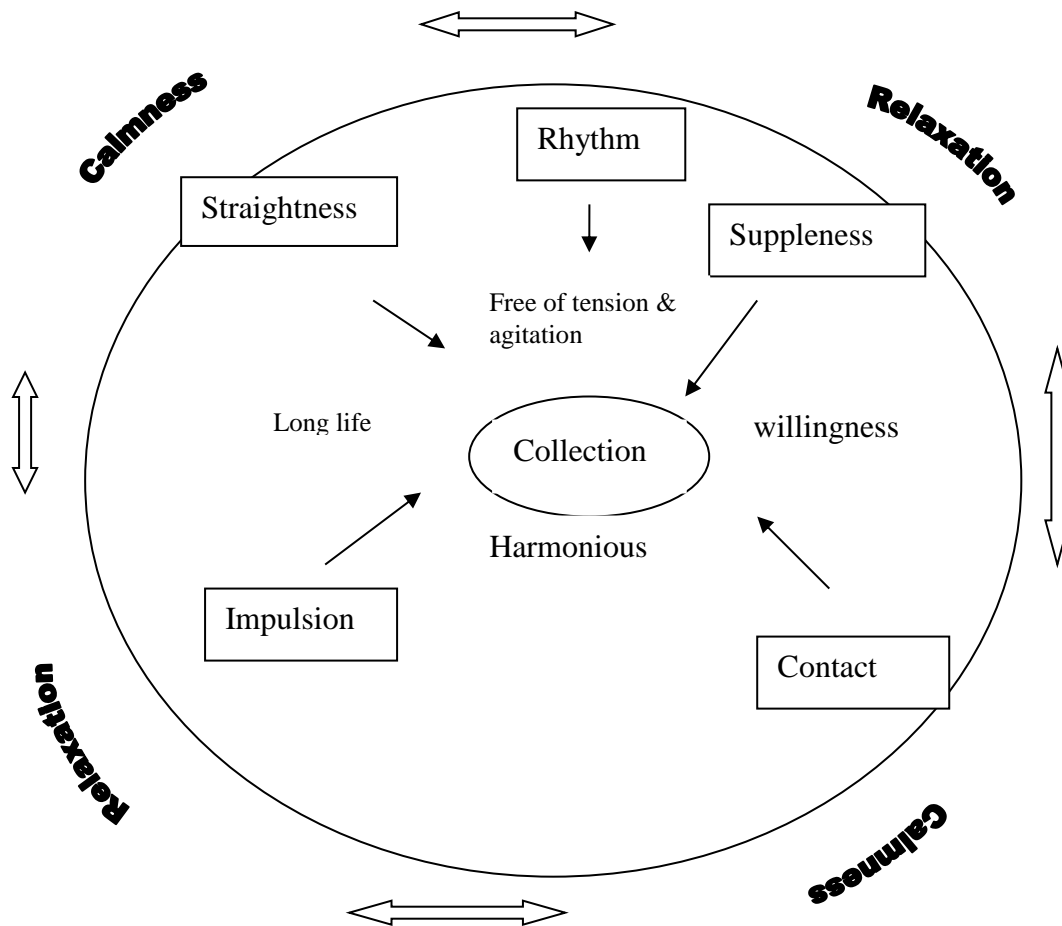
The horse is straight when its forehead is in line with its hindquarters, that is, when its longitudinal axis is in line with the straight or curved track it is following.

Straightening a horse means also that the horse has to be able to be bent and flexed on both reins equally.

The main reasons for straightening a horse are:

- To help horse stay healthy and sound through evenly distributed weight on both sides.
- To prepare the horse for collection. Only a straight horse can push and collect effectively using its hind legs equally and having an even contact in both reins. Only if the horse is straight can it be supple and “through” equally in both directions.
- If the horse is straight, the hind legs will push towards the centre of gravity.

## The Training Scale



The Building blocks of training for Horse and Rider (a place to revert to when problems occur).

To be able to engage/collect a horse the points in the training scale need to be in place and their purpose understood.

Riders need a high level of knowledge and riding skills – along with “feel” – to reach the higher levels in Dressage, Eventing and Show jumping.

## TRAINING SCALE

### First Stage

Prelim-Novice

*Development of  
confidence and  
understanding.  
Rhythm,  
suppleness,  
contact*

### Second Stage

Elementary-  
medium

*Development of  
"pushing power"  
Suppleness,  
contact, accept of  
on the bit,  
impulsion,  
straightness*

### Third Stage

Advanced-  
Grand Prix

*Development  
of "carrying  
power"  
Impulsion,  
Straightness,  
Collection.*

## LATERAL MOVEMENTS

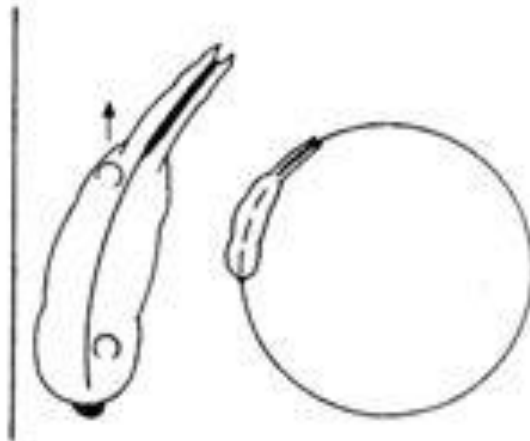
The main aims of lateral movements - except leg-yielding - are to develop and increase the engagement of the hindquarters and thereby also the collection.

In all lateral movements - shoulder-in, travers, renvers, and half-pass - the horse is slightly bent and moves on different tracks.

The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it does not impair the rhythm, the balance and fluency of the movement.

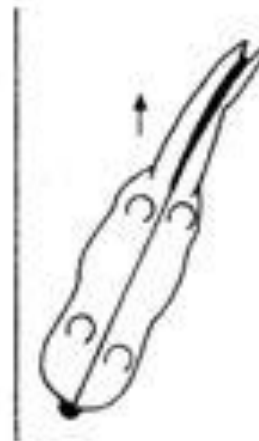
In the lateral movements, the pace should remain free and regular, maintaining a constant impulsion, yet it must be supple, cadenced and balanced. The impulsion is often lost because of the rider's preoccupation with bending the horse and pushing it sideways.

30°



Shoulder-in

35°



Leg-yielding

## **2. SUPPLENESS**

### **ELASTICITY AND FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY**

Suppleness, together with rhythm, is an essential aim of the preliminary training phase. Even if the rhythm is maintained, the movement cannot be considered correct unless the horse is working through its back and the muscles are free from tension.

Suppleness is a central theme throughout the schooling. It should never be neglected and should be constantly checked and reinforced.

Only if the horse is physically and mentally free from tension or constraint can it work with suppleness and use itself fully.

The horse's joints should bend and straighten equally on both sides of its body and with each step or stride. The horse should convey the impression that it is putting its whole mind and body into its work.

Lack of suppleness can take many different forms, e.g. tightness in the back, severely agitated tail, rhythm faults, hind legs lacking activity, a tense and dry mouth and crookedness.

Indications of suppleness are:

- A content happy expression - freedom from anxiety.
- The elasticity of the steps - the ability to stretch and contract the musculature smoothly and fluently.
- A quiet mouth gently chewing the bit with an elastic contact.
- A swinging back with the tail carried in a relaxed manner.
- Soft and rhythmical breathing, showing that the horse is mentally and physically relaxed.

The best confirmation and proof of the suppleness is that when the reins are given, the horse stretches the neck downward and forward to the bit without losing rhythm or balance.

## **3. CONTACT**

### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE BIT AND AIDS / SELF-CARRIAGE**

Contact is the soft, steady connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth. The horse should go rhythmically forward from the rider's driving aids and "seek" contact with the rider's hand, thus "going into" the contact. "The horse seeks the contact and the rider provides the contact".

## Exercise 1

Used to assess riders ability;

To control the horse on their line at their speed, their position on the horse.

Exercise gives riders a reference point to judge their horses response to the aids.

Riders that are working on position – ie. Learning to keep their balance whilst co-ordinating the aids, do not need to be working on “engaging” the horse whilst performing this exercise.

-They do need to know the aids.

-Riders that are experienced use this exercise to find the problems/evasions/resistances that all horses have whilst coming to terms with self-carriage and consistent attention to their riders.

-Competitive riders require a horse to be “ready” all the time whilst riding a test – prelim-GP. This becomes an ever evolving exercise that checks the horses attention and response without agitation.

-What does the horse really understand? Where does he need to develop better work ethic?

This exercise develop the riders “feel”, recognition for what is “right” so they can leave horse alone – or is there a bit more they can do. It teaches them to “LISTEN”.

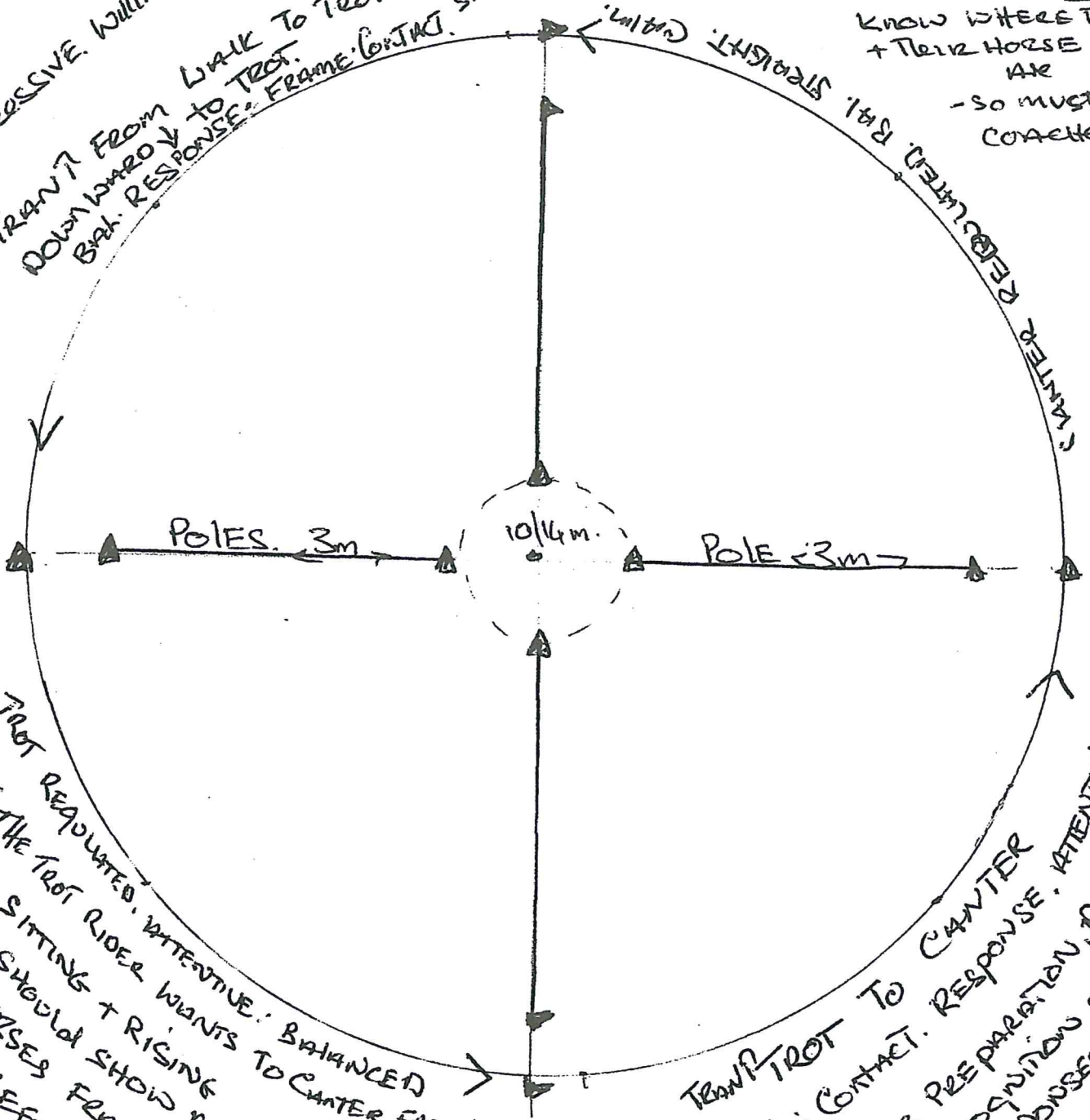
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# EXERCISE FOR PREP/NOV. :

- RIDERS/HORSES
- COMFORT ZONE
- STRETCH ZONE
- PANIC ZONE

- EACH RIDER MUST KNOW WHERE THEY + THEIR HORSE ARE  
- SO MUST COACHES.

PROGRESSIVE. WILLING CONTACT. RESPONSE  
TRANSIT FROM WALK TO TROT.  
DOWNWARD TO TROT.  
BAL. RESPONSE. FRAME CONTACT. STRAIGHTNESS



TROT REGULATED. ATTENTIVE. BALANCED  
(THE TROT RIDER WANTS TO CANTER FROM)  
• SITTING + RISING SHOULD SHOW NO DIFFERENCE IN HORSES FRAME + RHYTHM, BEFORE ↑ TO CANTER.

TRANSIT TROT TO CANTER  
BAL. CONTACT. RESPONSE. ATTENTIVE  
(RIDERS PREPARATION, POSITION AIDS - RECOGNITION OF HORSES RESPONSES)

TO BE ABLE TO DO RESPONSIVE  
THIS EXERCISE, THE HORSE MUST BE ADJUSTABLE TO  
TO: FORWARD DRIVING  
RETRAINING  
SIDEWAYS AIDS

NM

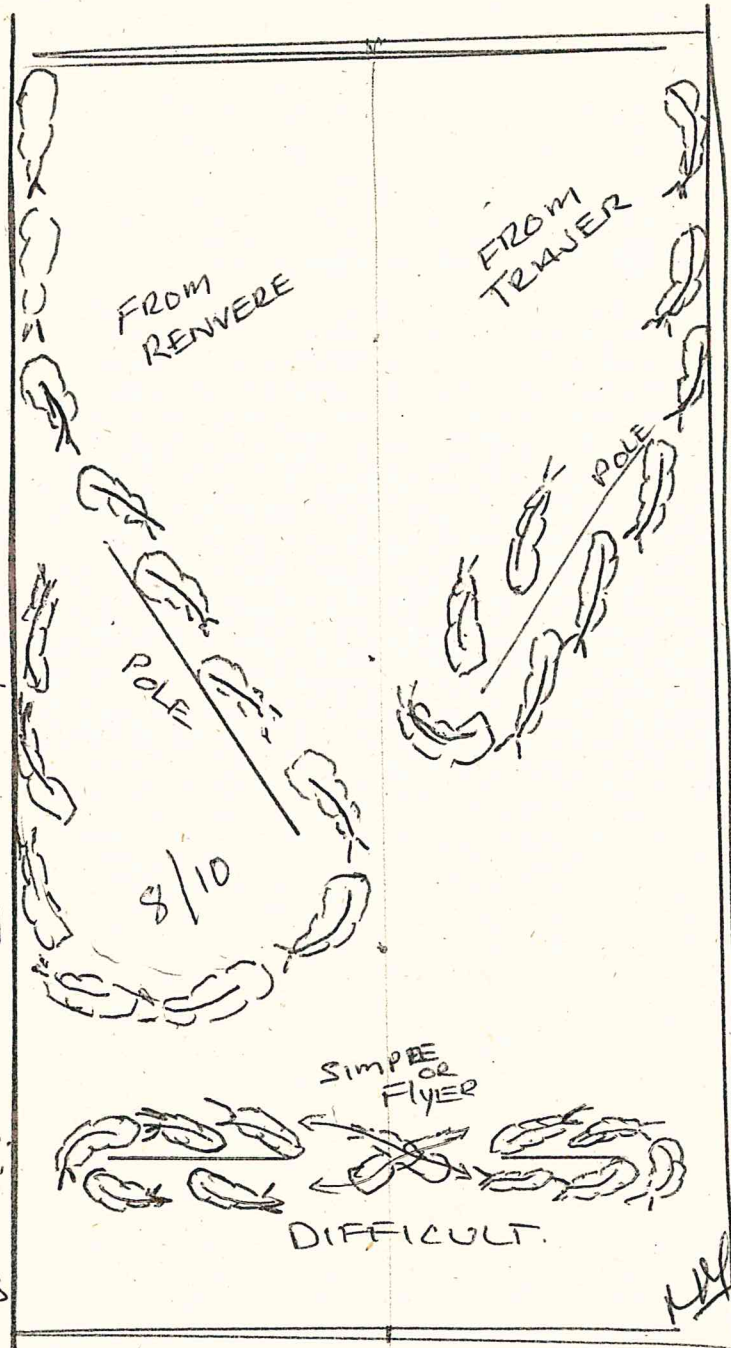


WHEN THESE LINES ARE ON A CURVE + STRAIGHT LINES ON THE WALL WE MAY PROCEED TO OPEN ARENA LINES.

PROCEED WITH CARE: REMEMBER COMFORT ZONE. STRETCH ZONE + PANIC ZONE (BOTH RIDER + HORSE).

- RIDERS POSITION + FEEL
- REPOSE TO AIDS

- PRACTISE LINE IN WALK - THINK IT OUT -
- USE POLES FOR ACCURACY + REFERENCE
- LEARN TO COUNT
- LEARN TO FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THESE EXERCISE
- KNOW WHEN YOU ARE LOSING CONTROL OF LINE
- BALANCE
- SUBMISSIA
- CONTACT PROB
- "THROUGHNESS"



ALL EX MAY BE SCALED DOWN INTO "DOUBLE" CHUNKS.

Suppleness goes when tension + agitation take

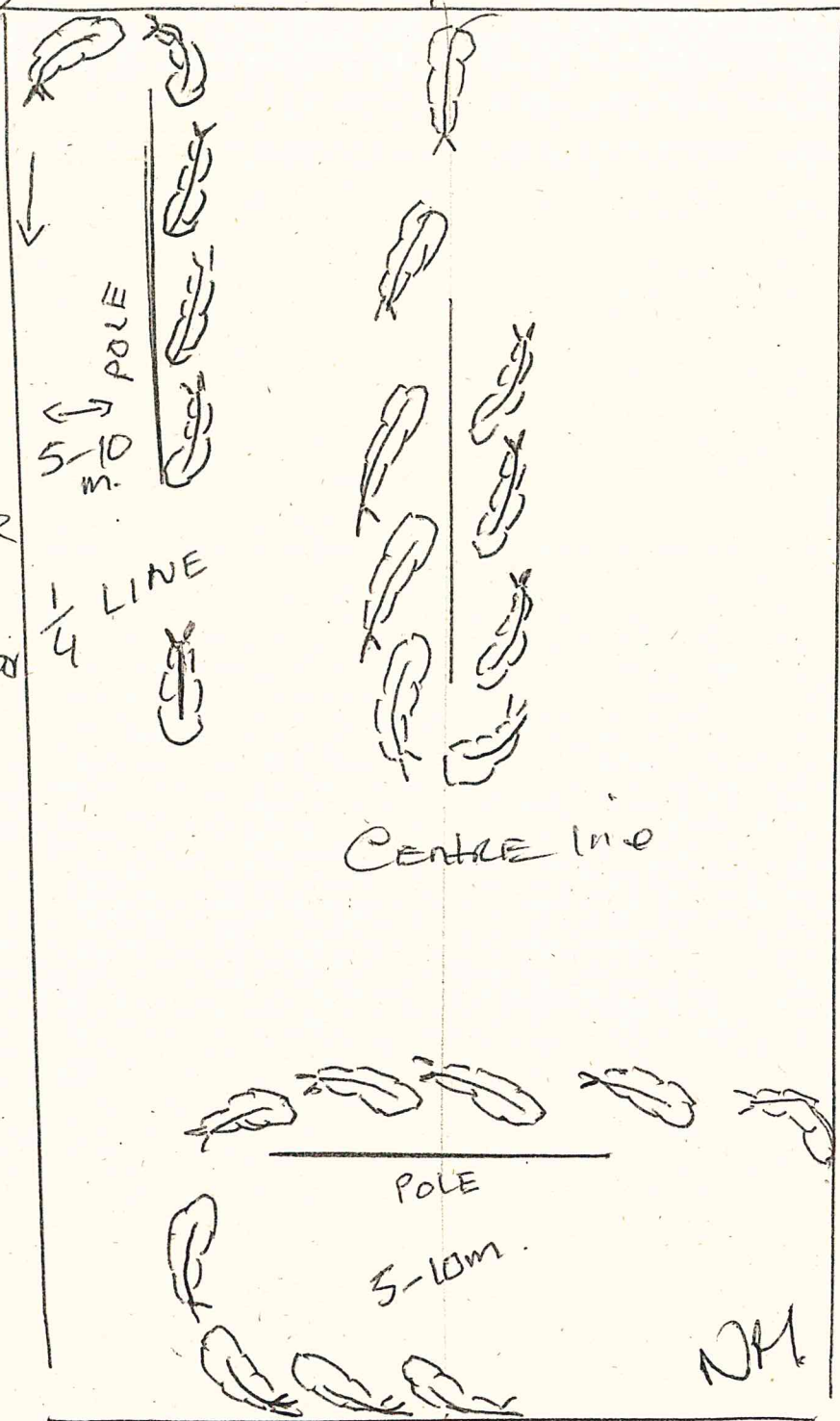
OVER - FIND THE CAUSE - THIS WON'T GO AWAY IN THE TEST ARENA IF NOT UNDER CONTROL + UNDERSTOOD IN TRAINING.

(PIROUETTES ARE OFTEN CO-EFFICIENTS.)

# THE TRAINING TOWARDS PIROUETTES

2

Hopefully -  
will help to  
ENCOURAGE  
RIDERS TO  
"STRETCH" THEIR  
ZONES OF  
COMFORT without  
going into  
the "PANIC"  
ZONE:



LEVEL  
Adv - F.E.I

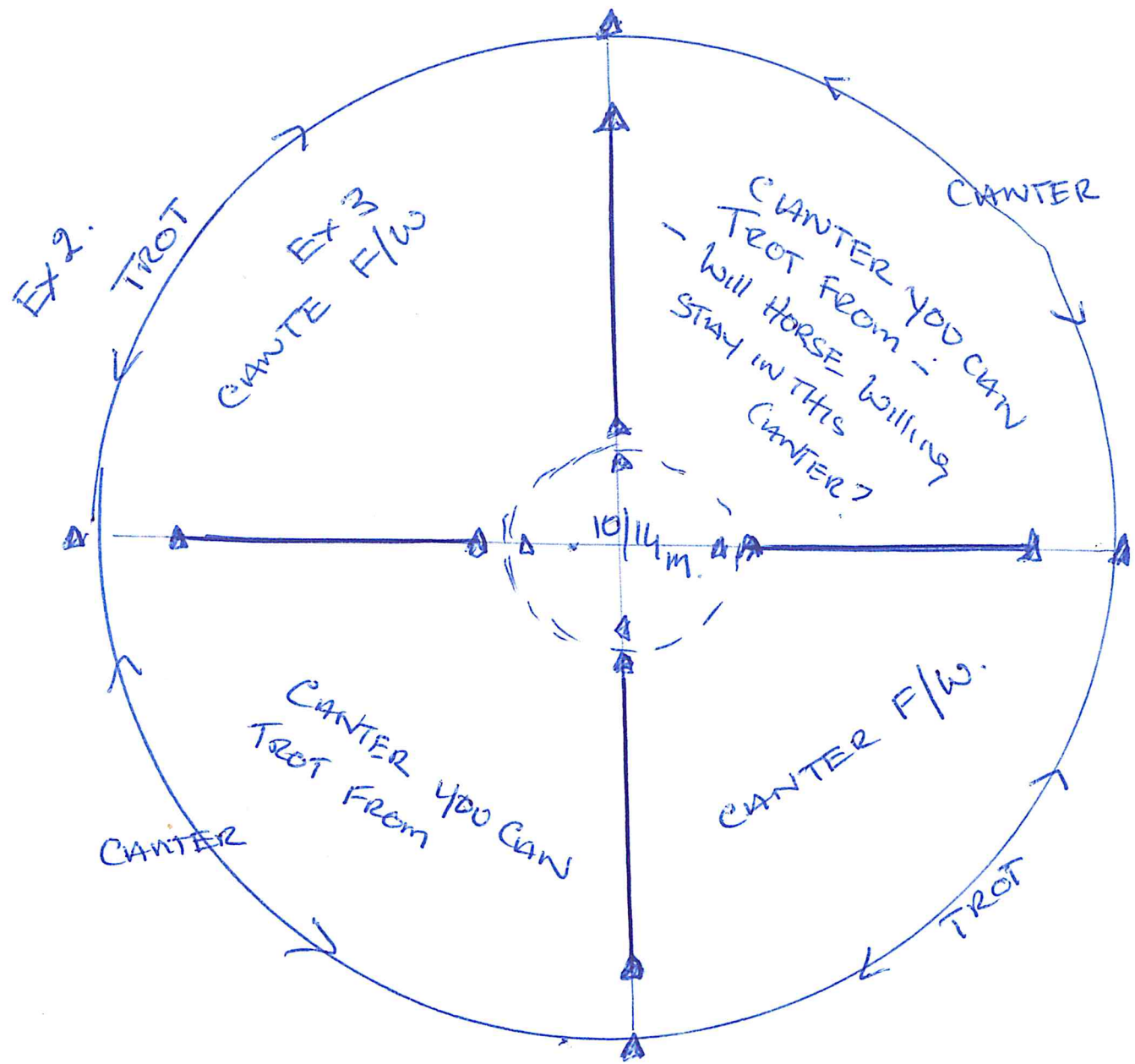
REMEMBER  
- PIRouETTES  
ARE THE HIGH  
IN CANSTER  
Collection  
EX. Proceed  
CAREFULLY.

- HORSE SHOULD REMAIN "ON THE BIT"
- RELAXED + COMFORTABLE WITH THE EX.
- CONFIDENT: HAVE SUFF. STRENGTH / MUSCLE to endure WITHOUT STRAIN ON HIND LEGS.
- RIDER LEANS TO FOCUS: CONTROL THE STEPS + Tempo: SIZE OF STEPS - LENGTH OF STEPS. SPEED OF STEPS + HOW MANY STEPS.
- THEY MUST LEARN TO CONTROL: TO APPROACH THE TURN - THE COMING OUT WITHOUT CAUSING DISRUPTION TO BALANCE, POSTURE OR COMPOSTURE.

FREE INNOV.

Ex. 2. - TROT / CANTER

Ex 3 - NOV - 1 QUARTER, A CANTER WE CAN TROT FROM. - Then F/W. AGAIN



NOV  
Ex. 4 - Canters we can walk from - Then on open without breaking.  
 - eventually, add walk when horse is clearly in front of leg + not on the hand.  
 Build gradually

Ex. 5 NOV./Elem: WALK one  $\frac{1}{4}$  - CANTER (Direct) (From walk)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  quarter etc.. Calm. BAL. Obed. Round thru' Back  
 Soft in hand.

NYL

Pre/Nov

Ex 2: TROT/CANTER in EACH  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Ex 3 - NOV: 1 QUARTER - A CANTER YOU CAN TROT FROM -

Then a more F/w. CANTER:

- RESPONSE, ABILITY to step a little more under WITHOUT loss of POSTURE, dependence on the hand - diving down - crookedness -
  - The "STRETCH ZONE" - How much is too much too little, Then back to Comfort Zone:
  - Neutral Rides not HORSE MUST GET INTO PANIC Zone.
  - Can this exercise be done within the quarter?
  - What can we do about it?
- Both Reins

Ex 4: Nov.

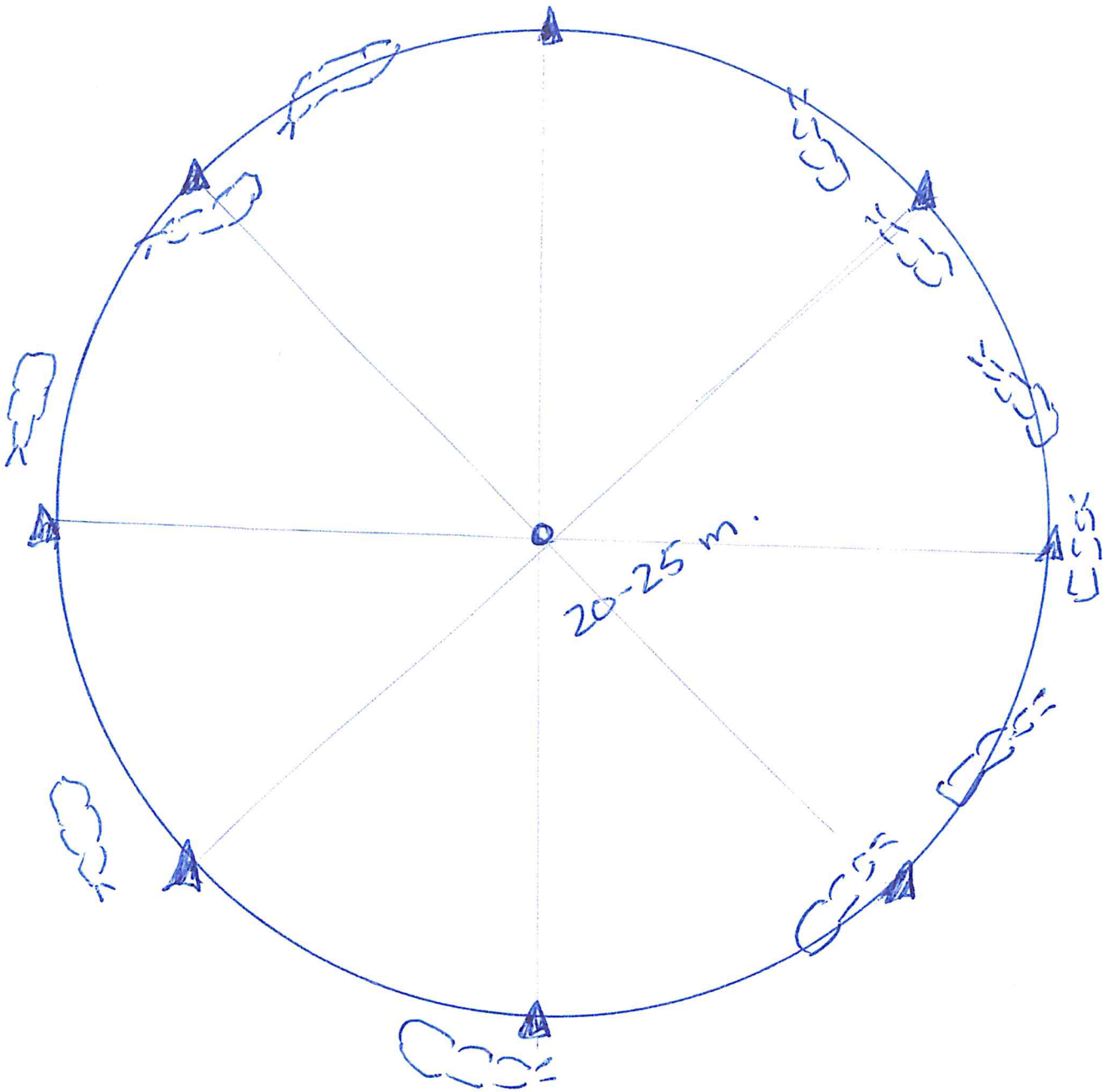
Same exercise - ~~then~~ a Canter we can walk from - Then on again without breaking: Eventually add walk as long as horse is in front of the leg + NOT on the hand: Build gradually

Ex 5. Nov/Elem

Walk one  $\frac{1}{4}$  - Canter (From walk)  
 $1\frac{1}{4}$  etc.: Calm, Bal. Obedient, Lowed Head  
The Back, Soft in the Hand

CO-ORDINATION  
1m. EITHER SIDE OF BITCHES. THAT.

EX. KNIT 1 - MISS 3 - TAKE THIS DOWN WHEN CONFIDENT  
- BOTH RIDER + HORSE.  
BUILD UP TO EVERY CONE.



BRAK: RHYTHM  
CO-ORDINATION  
TIMING

SUPPLING / STRAIGHT

RIDER DOING AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE  
CONCENTRATION + FOCUS  
ABILITY: HORSE "WAITS"

N.M.

Developes

Subbiness

Strength

Focus

STRAIGHTNESS

Self Carriage (Bal)

Engagement [if correctly done only]

Confidence

Know The Comfort

Zone:

Stretch Zone with ease

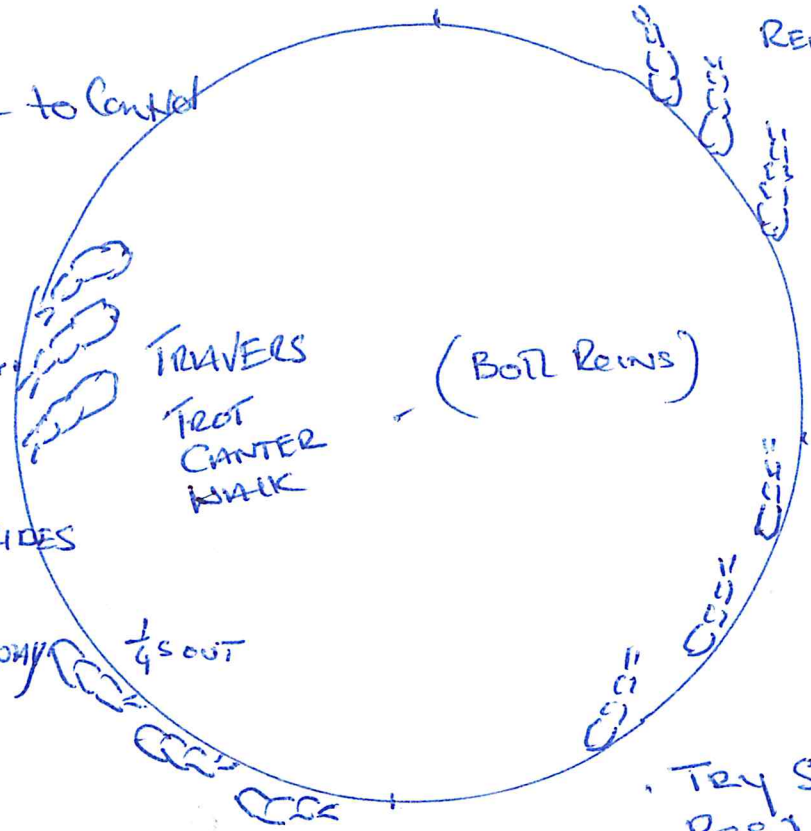
Never let these into

Panic Zone

towards 1/2 Passes / Pirouettes.

Rider must learn to control  
Line:  
Tempo  
Angle  
Bend  
Throughness  
Turn the ex "otion"  
at will.

- 10 : 5 STRIDES  
SIDEWAYS - 5 STRIDES  
STRAIGHT / F/W  
8 STRIDES sideways  
etc.



Reverse  
TROT / CANTER

Shoulder in / FORE  
TROT / CANTER

- Try Small Amounts
- Rest
- EVALUATE YOUR EFFORTS
- TRY AGAIN - MAYBE WITH ADJUSTMENTS.

ALWAYS BE OBSERVANT of line : A horse that is not on the line is avoiding the exercise + a rider thus mis used their aids : Position of rider is a very important point with the exercise!

CEASE the exercise whenever there is a major problem - re-establish calmness + start again within the "comfort zone".

OH

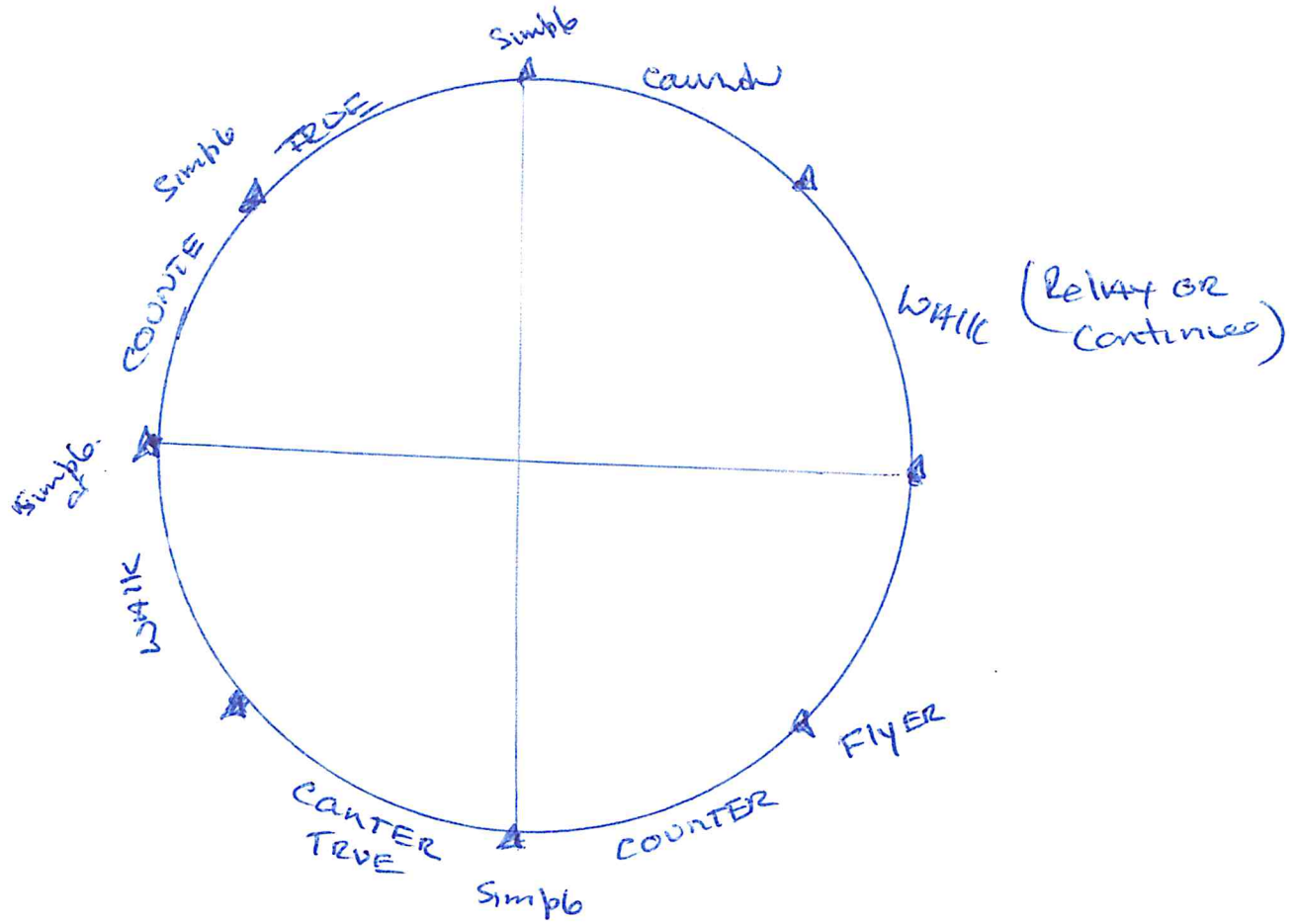


Advanced: CANTER WORK

Simple Changes + Flying Changes - From True + Counter

Build This UP Carefully : Pay Attention to Steady  
Suppleness, Bal. Focus  
Rhythm + Tempo. input. eye  
Contact Both Sides.

When/if confusion/acrobation occurs - stop exercise  
Re-evaluate: either make ex. easier, or start again



- Develops 'feel'
- Horse must always be Ready/Attention/Willing
- Rider's Focus
- Horse must feel/look comfortable with the exercise + not become acrobatic or 'rattled':
- Once exercise is built, Focus on Quality + Harmony. Both Rains.
- Teaches Horse to "wait" + Rider to be steady

*[Signature]*



Development of Change of Rein

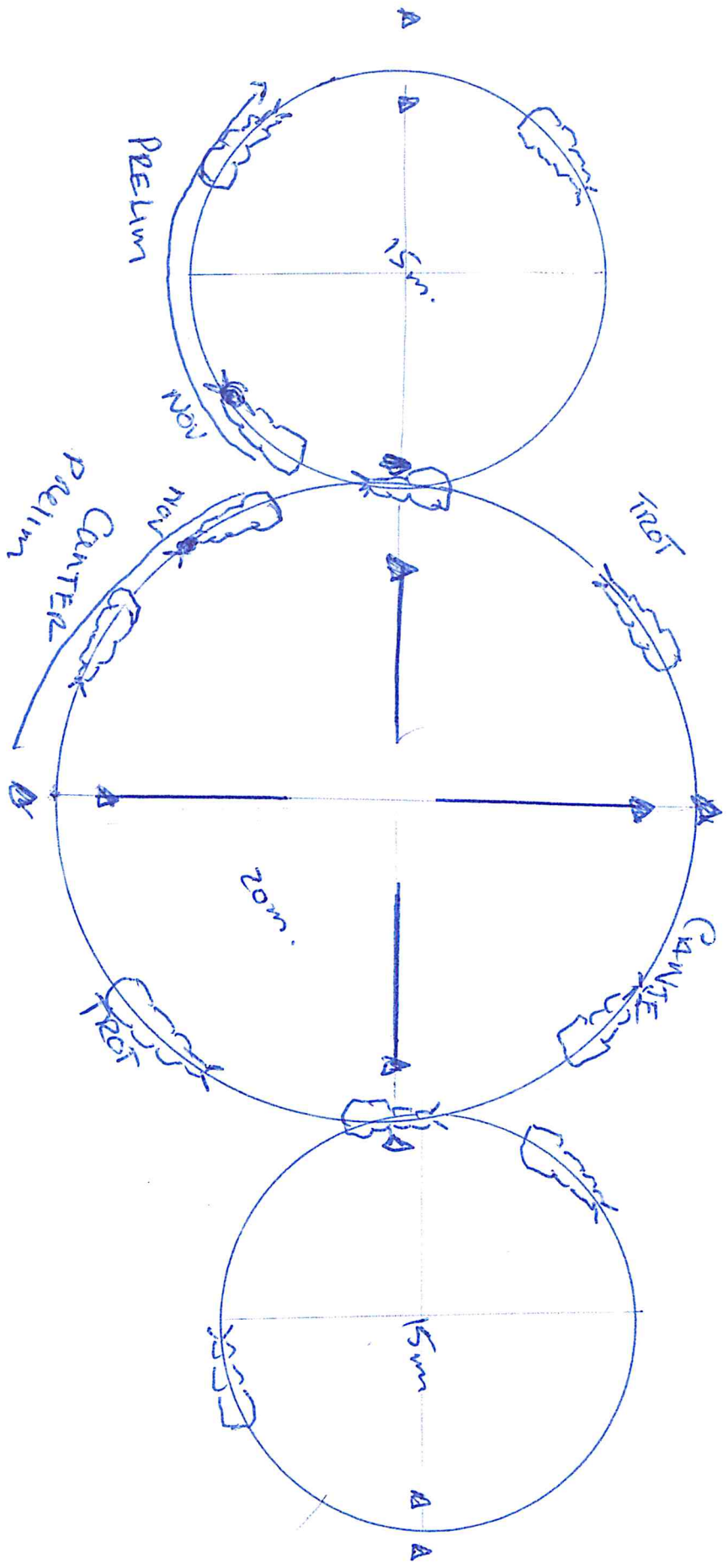
FROM TROT OR CANTER. - WATER WALK. Flying Change

PREPARATION: Positioning. To Response.

RIDERS Recognition of what long. Bal before

WORKING:

STREET ZONE  
COMFORT ZONE



All PARTS OF THIS EX. ARE "TEST LIKE" - AT A CORNER

POINT SOME THING MOST HAPPEN: USE THE LOOKING

FOR NO DISTURBANCES: A. WORK IN PROGRESS.

NEW