

# AQHA *eBooks*

## Practice These Patterns

- Horsemanship
- Hunt Seat Equitation
- Showmanship



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In each chapter, professionals break our practice patterns into parts to better help you conquer them.

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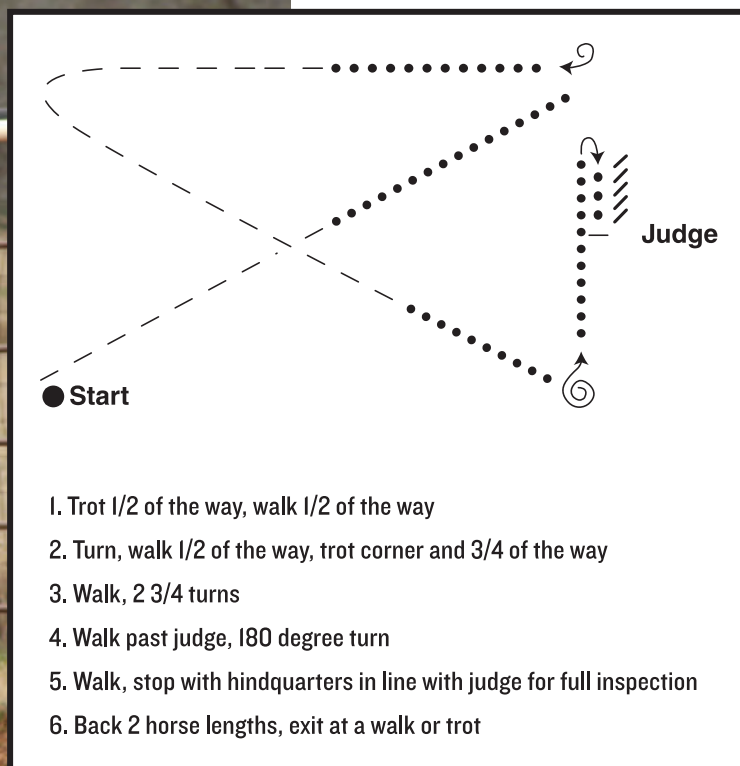
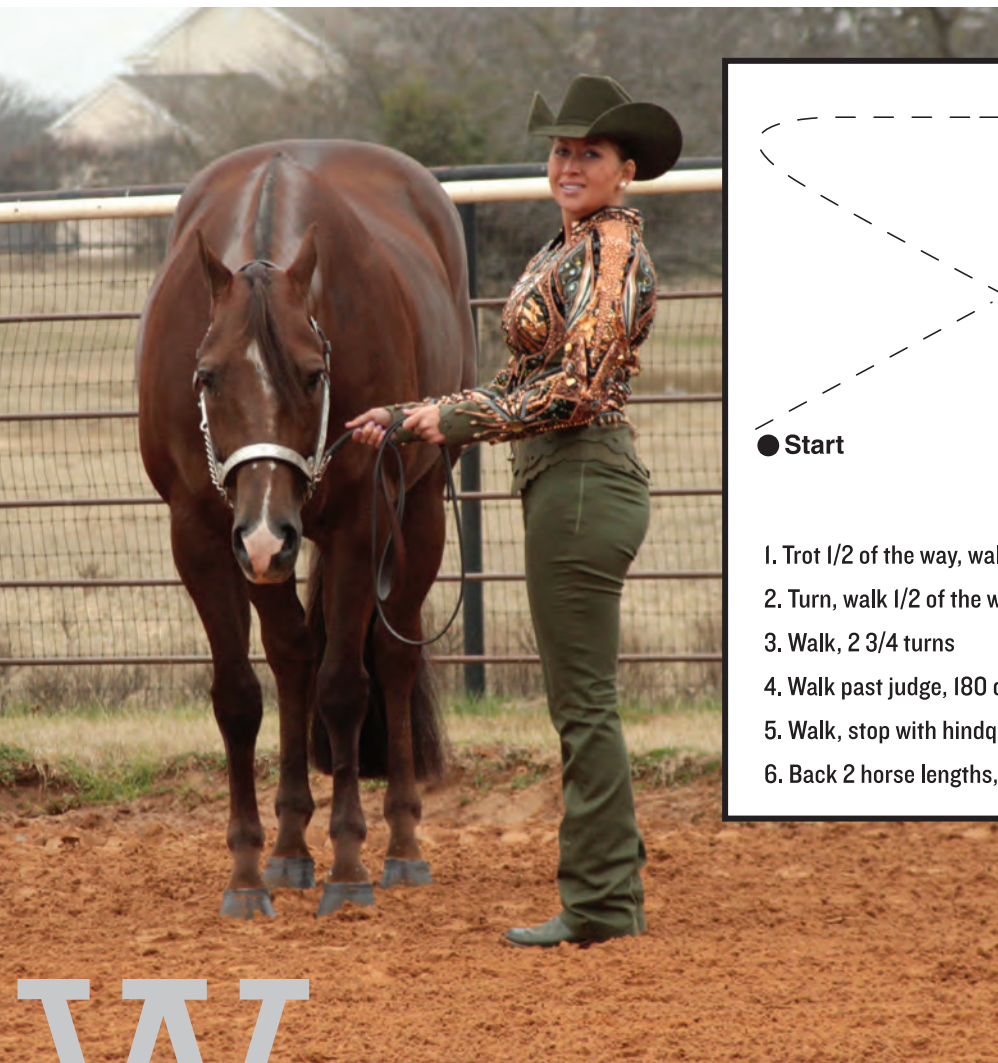
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# How to Practice This Pattern: Showmanship

By AQHA Professional Horsewoman Jenny Jordan Frid



quer this pattern, and in these photos, you can see my client Alyssa Neiberger demonstrate it. I'm going to break down this pattern into small pieces so you can practice at home along with us.

But before you do, I have some thoughts to share about practice.

Most larger shows post their patterns online these days, so exhibi-

When I first saw this showmanship pattern from the 2014 Adequan Select World Championship Show, I thought it was an easy pattern.

But the more I looked, the more the

tricky details popped out at me. Our wonderful customer Anne Wilson really worked hard and won the world championship in that class.

I believe any exhibitor can con-

tors can practice at home. But then when exhibitors get to the show, they might discover that the pattern isn't laid out in the arena exactly the same way that they have been practicing. When my clients and I are practicing at home, we try to move the pattern around to different parts of the arena in different directions to alleviate any surprises once they get to the show.



Keep your line straight from the start cone through your trot-walk transition and all the way to the end of the line, which is farther away than you think it is.

It's possible to practice too much, especially if you have one of those wise, older horses that can figure out the pattern. If he figures it out, he'll be turning before you're even

thinking "turn." You'll need to practice little pieces at a time and only run the pattern in sequence a couple of times.

Everyone learns differently. If you need to set up cones in a barn alley and run the pattern on foot several times, do it. If you find it more helpful to talk through the pattern, do that.

You can't be embarrassed to do something that works for you.

### **X Marks the Spot**

When you start this pattern, before you begin your trot or do anything else, you need to locate some landmarks. You need to know where the center is – immediately in front of the judge – and you need to make sure your lines are going to connect for the whole pattern.

The smoothness and completeness of your pattern is what will make it special.

If you look at the pattern on the previous page, you can see it makes a giant X. If your lines aren't connected, you won't make a perfect X.

I want the end of this first line – the trotting, walking line – to end in the same plane as the final line. You'll have to walk farther than you think you need to, so you can be sure of ending in the right spot.

At the starting cone, pick your end

destination and trot toward it in a straight line.

The judge is in the center, so that's where you break to a walk, but make sure to keep your face going the same direction as your horse. First, if you turn to look at the judge, you have a strong chance of your horse bending its body away from you. Ideally, you want to keep your horse's body as straight as possible. Second, the judge is close enough to notice your glance. Instead, keep your face forward and use your peripheral vision to find the center.

For practice at home, pick an object that can stand in for the judge. In the photos, we've used a tall director's chair, but you can use anything you have handy – a bucket, a halter hanging from a fence. Make that transition when your horse's head is at the judge.

As you break to the walk, make the transition as smooth as possible.

Sometimes downward transitions can be more challenging than upward transitions. Ease your shoulders back just a little – you don't want the horse to stop – and break to the walk yourself.

Continue walking forward in a straight line, projecting confidence in yourself and your horse. The judge will be able to tell.



Walk farther than you think you need to – no, seriously, farther than that. Again, you'll use your peripheral vision to see when your horse's hip is in line with the line that's going to be right in front of the judge. Bring your horse to a smooth halt.

### **Preparing for the Corner**

Now that we have stopped from the walk, it is time to execute the turn. It looks to be a little less than a 270-degree turn. During the turn, focus on keeping your horse's body straight, keeping his topline level and make sure you stop straight on the next line.

Once you have completed the turn and stopped straight, pick up the walk. The stronger and more confident the walk, the better. However,

try not to walk faster than your horse can, or else your horse might jog off early in an attempt to keep up.

Once the horse's nose is to the halfway point of this line, ask for the trot. I love to see a strong confident trot, but keep in mind the left-hand corner coming up, and it's somewhat tight. You do not want to be trotting so fast that your horse "fish tails" around the corner. You want a confident pace that allows you to make that corner with ease.

One thing people worry about is staying within the lines of the pattern. This fact is definitely on my mind. However, I think going a step or two past the start cone will create more space to execute a more flowing and balanced corner. Once you have made the corner, do not be

afraid to step it up a notch in your trot and make it stronger.

Know where the middle of the pattern is so you can easily find the three-quarters mark where you are going to ask for the walk. If your horse can break well from the trot to the walk, this is the place to show it off. If this is a weak point for you and your horse, be a bit more conservative. It is important that the horse have a flat-footed four-beat walk in this transition. Once you know you have the walk for three full steps, then you can get a bit stronger in your pace.

When you stop from the walk, your goal is to have your horse's hindquarters on the next walk line, allowing you to travel straight forward upon completing your pivot to

Build pace throughout the turn that begins this part of the pattern.



Inspection is the art of the pattern where you can really show your horse. Your body language should tell the judge to pick you and not someone else.



assist in giving the overall appearance that all of your pattern's lines have a connection.

## The Big Turn

It's time to complete the two-and-three-quarters turn. There are a few key things to focus on during the turn: keeping the horse's body straight, the top line level, the approach and the speed of this lengthy turn.

If you start this turn at full speed, you will be running out of pace by the time you reach the end. I like my students to build pace to make the turn more fluid and attractive. I would suggest starting the turn slowly, increasing your pace slightly at the 90-degree point.

The second increase should hap-

pen around the 270-degree point (three-quarters into the first turn), bringing you to your top speed at the 450-degree mark (one and a half turns in), which you need to maintain for the remainder of the spin. Finish with a strong and straight stop that will set you up for the next maneuver. If you feel unconfident with increasing your speed throughout the pivot, make it your goal to maintain your energy throughout the entire spin.

When moving into the walk out of your turn, be cautious not to move too quickly and allow your horse to pick up a trot. Instead, walk off, know you have the walk for three strides and then begin to build your pace. Keep your eyes straight ahead and focus on stepping one foot in

front of the other. This is of even greater importance now because you will be traveling directly in front of the judges.

This walk line is going to feel like it takes you forever, but stay after it. I want you to connect this walk line to where you stopped your horse's hip for the first pivot. Once you have stopped, complete the 180-degree turn and make sure to stop your horse straight and square before you start the next line.

## The Most Important Part

What is the most important part of this next walk line?

Making sure that when you stop, your horse's hip is even with the judge.

I have mentioned several times

that a strong, confident walk is important, however, now might be the time to slightly soften things up. A powerful walk at this point might hurt you if you cannot stop the momentum and land your horse's hip on the judge. To make certain you stop in the correct spot, I encourage people to count their steps. Once your foot lands on the imaginary line right in front of the judge, make that Step 1 in your mind, then Step 2 and on that third step, think and say, "Whoa." This count works for most horses. If you have an extremely long horse, you might need to add an extra step into your count.

Once you have stopped, ask your horse to set up. With this maneuver complete, step back and present your horse.

The inspection is an extremely important element in the pattern. It is the only time all day you are up-close and personal with the judges. Make it count! I suggest doing two important things.

One, pay attention to your horse while you are being inspected by keeping the horse's head and neck straight as well as checking the horse's feet to make sure they don't move. What if they do move? Fix them. That is what showing your horse is all about.

Two, when you're doing your cross-overs and presenting your

horse, be confident and strong. I always say, "Tell the judge to pick you, not someone else."

Once you've been excused, it's time to back your horse. The pattern instructs exhibitors to back two horse-lengths, which can be anywhere from eight to 10 steps.

At this point in the pattern, you are standing right next to the judges, so that straight is most important and the pace of your back is secondary.

I tell people to get the back started, know it is going well, then build your

pace as you go before softening to the stop. The back needs to be correct, but it also needs to be pretty.

The pattern gives you the option to walk or trot out. I say trot out with gusto! However, if you have a horse that does not do well with applause or you are out of strength to trot again (this was a long pattern!), then walk out confidently. You need to do what is best for you and show your horse to the best of his ability that day. If you need to walk, then walk.

That's it!

## WATCH THE PATTERN IN ACTION



**JENNY JORDAN FRID** won the reserve world championship in showmanship in 1989 as a youth and the amateur world championship in showmanship in 1995. Since becoming a professional trainer, Jenny has guided eight amateurs and youths to their own world championships, including the 2014 Adequan Select world champion in showmanship, Anne Wilson. After spending time in the corporate world, Jenny now works full-time with her husband at Robin Frid Show Horses in Denton, Texas. She is an AQHA Professional Horsewoman and accomplished clinician. The DVD "Showmanship Clinic by Jenny Jordan" is available through Quarter Horse Outfitters at [www.aqhastore.com](http://www.aqhastore.com).

# How to Practice This Pattern: Horsemanship

By AQHA Professional Horsewoman Jill Gomes Newcomb



When Level 1 exhibitors look at patterns, they can often become overwhelmed by the length of those patterns and think they can't perform them.

But I think any exhibitor can perform any pattern in any class. Every pattern you see should be made up of pieces that you already know as part of your normal routine.

In horsemanship, you'll see the basics of walk-jog-lope. You'll see turns, both rounded and square. You'll

see backing and all the other maneuvers that you practice every day.

The trick to making a pattern correct is breaking it down into pieces so you can see what you already know and make a plan to ride it.

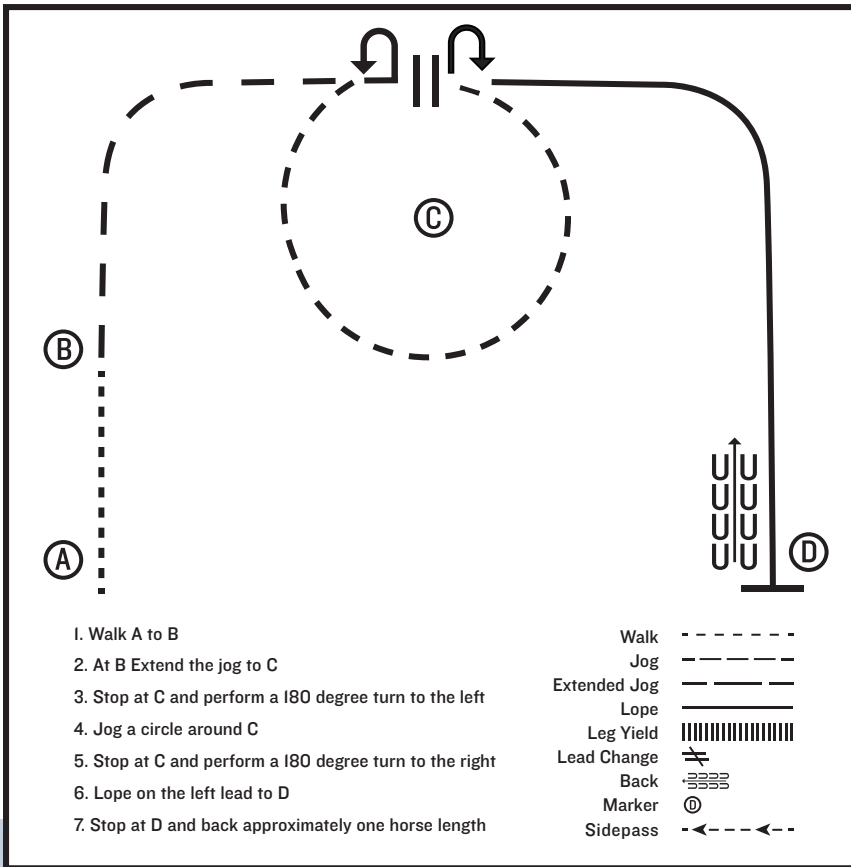
The pattern I'm analyzing in this article was the youth, amateur and Select horsemanship pattern at the 2014 Sun and Surf Circuit in Del Mar, California. The pattern was created by HorseShowPatterns.com, and my demonstration rider is

Megan Hawkins of Ocala, Florida.

**Walk A to B. At B, extend the jog to C. Stop at C and perform a 180-degree turn to the left.**

When it's your turn, be waiting with your horse's nose at the cone. Walk quietly and confidently to Cone B, preparing in your mind to cue for the extended jog at Cone B.

Breaking it down, you already know how to transition from a walk



Focus on keeping your circle the same size on both sides of the cone. Ride a circle, not an egg.

to a trot. Make it as smooth as you straight line until you get it right, and your horse are capable of then add the turn to the right.

doing. If you need to practice this In that turn to the right, be sure to skill, you can work on it on a keep your body position upright and

square. You don't want to lean into the curve.

As you stop, make that stop square and firm. Be sure to complete the stop before you start thinking about the half-pivot that comes next. Always ride to the end of each maneuver.

As you start the half-pivot, keep your weight on the left hipbone and ask with the right leg.

Again, in your practice sessions, you can work on this maneuver in a straight line. Jog your horse to a stopping point, then pivot back onto the track you just left as smoothly as possible.

That's a good week's worth of skills practice. To keep your horse from anticipating, you can alternate between pivoting right and left as you practice.

**Jog a circle around C. Stop at C and perform a 180-degree turn to the right.**

Even though we ended last week's practice with the 180, I'd like you to start this week by working on a transition from that half-pivot to the trot. If I were judging this pattern, I would give extra credit for the smoothness of that transition.

As you break into the trot circle, think a lot about making that circle

You'll need to practice the counter-canter with your horse to make sure he's strong enough to do it correctly.



round. It's a detail that will make you stand out. Make sure the circle is a circle, not a square or an egg. Make sure each half of the circle is about the same size, not lopsided.

It can be harder than it sounds, which is why you're going to practice it this week. Put a cone on the ground and practice trotting in a circle on both sides of a cone or other marker. Don't just use both sides of the cone – swap between trotting left and right circles from the starting marker so your horse doesn't start anticipating.

Concentrate on keeping your shoulders still and square.

Now add the last bit: Trot a circle, stop and perform a 180-degree turn away from the circle.

You practiced that half-pivot both ways last week, so you already know that you and your horse can perform a 180-degree turn. Continue

practicing that maneuver this week just to keep yourself and your horse fresh on it.

### **Lope on the left lead to D. Stop at D and back approximately one horse length.**

The pattern calls for the horse to lope on the left lead while making a turn to the right, so that's a counter-canter, an advanced maneuver.

If you've never done it before, your horse could become confused if you ask him to lope on the "wrong" lead. To practice it, start by loping on the left lead in a straight line. Arc him slightly to the right for a few strides, then go straight again, so he can get the feel of it. Bend again, then go straight again.

Don't just drill-drill-drill this maneuver. It takes a lot of strength to counter-canter, and like any new

exercise, it's going to take a while for your horse to get the idea and build up the strength to do it correctly.

Keep your arc slight until you're confident in your ability to keep your leg on your horse and your own ribcage lifted. Gradually increase the angle of the curve until it resembles the one drawn on the pattern. You can also change to a snaffle bit and ride two-handed to keep your horse's body and form correct beneath you.

You want to be sure you have control of your horse's shoulders and hips.

To keep your horse from anticipating, practice counter-cantering to the left and to the right this week.

In this particular pattern, once you get to the end of the curve, you're riding a straight-line lope on a left lead – exactly the way you've been practicing. Keep your eyes up and just past your destination so that your chin doesn't drop.

At the end of the pattern, the judges are looking for a nice, square stop. Deepen into your seat bones, keeping your shoulders upright and relaxed, and ask for the stop.

To back a horse length, you should feel eight steps. Make it easy on yourself by counting 1-2-3-4 steps of your horse's front feet. Stop your horse again, so the judge knows that you asked for the stop and didn't just

The smoothness of your backup and stop is the last impression you'll make on the judge. Practice backing quietly, smoothly and quickly.



be the “judge” as you ride the pattern. Maybe that friend can videotape you as you ride.

After you finish, you can give yourself one do-over if you want, but then get off your horse, talk to your judge and look at the video. How did that pattern feel to you? Was it correct? Was it smooth? Were there parts you can work to improve?

And here's the most important question: Do you and your horse feel more like a team after your month of practice?

If so, your hard work has paid off in the best way possible.

quit riding. Make that last stop square, too. It's going to be the last impression the judge has of you and your horse, so make it a solid one.

As you practice, work on asking your horse gently to back up so that he's not startled. You want his head and jaw quiet as he moves backward.

these maneuvers, and you and your horse are ready for the test.

To make it more like a horsemanship class at a show, ask a friend to

## WATCH THE PATTERN IN ACTION



### Putting It Together

Your horse is smart – probably too smart – and you don't want him anticipating the pattern.

To put it all together, you can either walk or trot your horse through this complete pattern a few times before you put it all together.

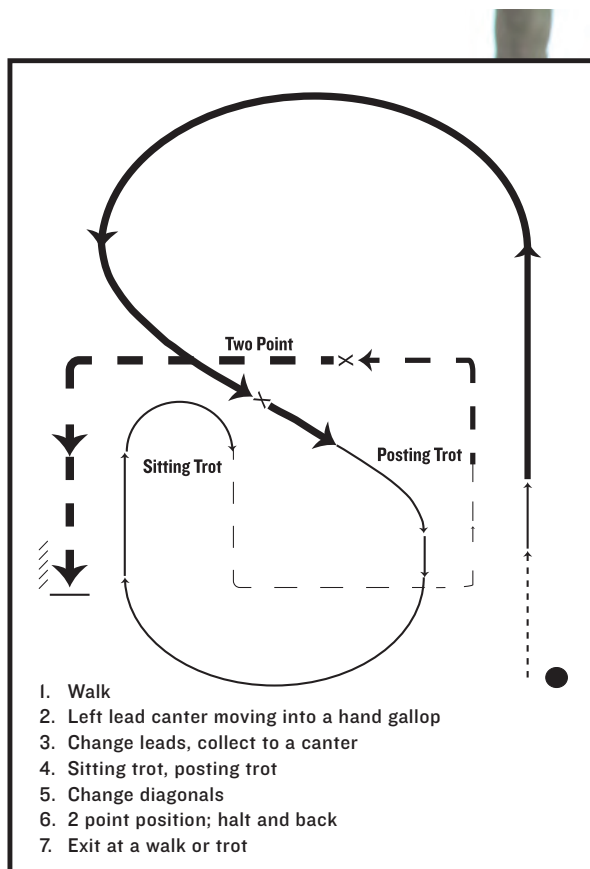
When it's time to put it all together, think of three things:

1. Concentrate on being smooth.
2. Complete one maneuver before you move to the next one.
3. You've already done each of

AQHA Professional Horsewoman **JILL GOMES NEWCOMB** has been involved with showing American Quarter Horses since childhood. Jill, an AQHA judge, trains horses, youth and amateurs from her facility in San Marcos, California, specializing in all-around events.

# How to Practice This Pattern: Hunt Seat Equitation

By AQHA Professional Horsewoman Stephanie Lynn



When you first look at a full hunt seat equitation pattern like the one used at the 2014 AQHA World Championship Show, it's easy to become overwhelmed.

There are a lot of pieces and parts to put together, and I think it's important to ease into it with a soft eye.



When a horse looks at something new that might be difficult with a hard eye, we see nerves and possibly some spooking. When a rider looks at something new that might be difficult with a hard eye, it's easy to concentrate on the pinch points and get trapped in negativity. Neither response is desirable.

I'd like you to look at this pattern or any other new pattern with a soft eye, not for the parts that might be difficult but the parts where you're going to shine. This pattern is going to be good for you and your horse. Maybe that hand gallop is going to show off your horse's beautifully willing attitude. Maybe your sitting trot is amazing.

If you think first about all the places the pattern can make you look like a star, you'll be thinking of the pattern with more pleasure than dread.

Then I'd like you to try a trot-through. Michelle Lahnala-McLean, the 2008 amateur world champion in hunt seat equitation, demonstrates this pattern riding Do You Wanna Dance.

### **What's a Trot-Through?**

In a trot-through, you ride your horse through the pattern, walking where the pattern says to walk and trotting through the rest.

You're going to pick up the correct diagonals, post when the pattern says post and sit when the pattern

says sit.

The advantages are that trotting through will help you understand the pattern's placement in the arena.

When you first look at this pattern, you can see that initial line is going to take up the whole distance of the right rail, and what you want to make sure of is where the top of the arena is, where the bottom of the circle should be placed and where those sharp corners are going to be.

Then when you go through the pattern at the trot, you can start visualizing, "OK, here's where I pick up that left-lead canter and move into the hand gallop," and "here's where I need to be moving into my two-point for the hand gallop."

You'll get a truer picture of the pattern in your head from atop your horse than you will walking through it on the ground.

A trot-through will also help you figure out where the points of resistance are going to be for your horse, because there's a chance your horse will lean one way or the other. There's a chance your horse will drop his shoulder or push toward the gate or any other opening in the fence. That's what horses do.

A trot-through is where you find your horse's weak spots in regards to this particular pattern and where your horse is going to need a bit of additional help from you.

If you make a "mistake" – for instance, if you trot past where you should have gone on the big circle – keep on going. When you finish the pattern, go back to that general area and trot it again, fixing it correctly in your mind.

I don't want you to stop. When you stop, you can put that stop hard in your mind as part of the pattern and get a mental block about what happens after the area where you made that mistake.

## **What the Judges Want**

It's important for riders to plan, because what the judges are look-

ing for is a rider who is confident in getting her horse from section to section.

If the rider has to think too hard about her body position, she's going to appear stiff, and her horse is going to feel that. As a judge and trainer, I want a rider not to be thinking about where her hips are going to be in a two-point. The ideal is for all those physical issues to feel natural so she can concentrate on making her horse look good.

We want a rider who looks like she's making decisions, and those decisions are what the horse is reacting and responding to. We want a rider who has a connection with her horse and who is actually in charge of the position. If the horse were to drop a shoulder or to look outside the circle, an effective rider would have a feel for that, would not be distracted, would get control of that horse and keep right on course.

Having that connection and complete control and confidence are what we look for in hunt seat equitation.

This class is judged on the rider and her ability to communicate a plan to her horse. Sometimes we see a horse that isn't very happy about the rider's plan, and the horse's body negatively reflects

what the rider is doing. You see the gapped mouth and fighting the bridle, and that's all reflected in the rider's score.

If you have a great plan ahead of time, you'll be able to concentrate on your horse and show that confidence in your body. Your great plan starts with a good trot-through.

## **The Pattern**

### **Walk. Left lead canter moving into a hand gallop.**

Those transitions start with the walk, as does this pattern. We're looking for a nice, forward walk, not a creepy-crawly walk with halting steps. All of the gaits should be as true as the horse is capable of making them. Although the walk is a small part of this pattern, it's part of the pattern and will be judged accordingly.

The judges are going to give you a stride or two to move from the walk to the left-lead canter before they expect you to move into the hand gallop, so they'll be looking for a willing step in that transition.

We want to see a horse that doesn't get sideways, one that maintains that nice straight line with collection.

Moving into the hand gallop on the left lead around that big turn, ideally,

the horse will maintain the same arc in his body from beginning to end. If you look from where the pattern line leaves the straight line and begins to arc toward the far side of the arena, we want to see a horse that doesn't drop a shoulder or drag the rider to the rail.

As judges, we're also looking for a horse that willingly moves up and follows the rider's rein and leg. We're looking for a nice lengthening of stride, just as the horse would do if they were beginning to get on course in a hunter class. It's not the actual jumping pace we're looking for, but a nice forward pace that you would initiate a course with.

### **Change leads, collect to a canter.**

Once you've established a straight line off that quarter, you're going to come through the diagonal line into the lead change. There aren't markers in this pattern, but it looks like it's in the center of the pattern, looking from top to bottom, so we'll be looking for the rider to be aware of where the center is and ask for that lead change there.

Making that change a stride before or after the exact center isn't going to be a fault, but we want the riders to make a good-faith effort to make

their pattern look like the image as it's drawn. If the rider comes around the corner and immediately changes leads, we'll consider that a severe penalty for an early change.

Use the time on that diagonal to get your horse set up for a clean change. Ideally, that would mean the rider will stay in a hand gallop and maintain the same pace and position. If it looks like the rider had to force the horse over, the judges are going to notice.

And we're looking for a flying change there. I'm not going to say you can't do a simple change, because the pattern doesn't specify, but it will be extremely difficult to be in the hand gallop, drop to the trot for two strides and then hit a hand gallop again. But if that's what your horse has, then make that simple change the best it can be.

After the change and two or three more consistent strides at the hand gallop, smoothly collect your horse back down to the canter. We want the horse to come back calmly, no resistance or fighting the bridle.

Just as the rider and horse were balanced in the hand gallop circle, we're looking for balance in the slower canter circle.

At the top of that circle, there's a relatively tight corner before the sit-

ting trot. That corner almost simulates a rollback like you might see in equitation over fences classes. That tight turn is a place where a rider can really show off the horse's balance and handiness.

### **Sitting trot, posting trot.**

At the sitting trot, we're looking for an organized trot, not a western jog trot.

This pattern asks for square corners, which is unusual in hunt seat equitation. Some larger horses are going to have difficulty, because of the length of their bodies, in making that square corner. The rider needs to ask calmly – don't whip the horse around and overturn – and rely on the judge to see the degree of difficulty. The rider also needs to keep the horse going straight from one corner to the next.

It's impressive when a rider comes out of the first square corner, maintains that good, strong working trot and then marches right into that next square corner and comes out of it in a perpendicular straight line again.

It will be easy for weak riders to make the second turn too soon, but if you'll notice, the line on the pattern goes almost all the way to the initial start line. When you come out of that second corner, you need to know



exactly where you plan to pick up the posting trot and pick up your diagonal.

You might sit-trot for six strides across that horizontal straight line, make the second square corner at the sit-trot, sit about four more strides, then rising trot for four strides then square corner again.

### **Change diagonals. Two-point position; halt and back.**

You'll notice that the change of diagonal came up quickly. But if you've ridden that bottom straight line out far enough, you'll be giving yourself a little more space to make the cor-

ner, clearly maintain the right diagonal and then change the diagonal all before getting up in two-point. Getting all that done on a big-strided horse takes some space.

Give yourself enough room to show the judge how well you handle the tricky bits.

When you get into two-point going straight across the arena, your horse might have a tendency to get a little slow here. If things have been going well in your pattern, it's easy to think, "I got the hard part done!" but instead we're looking for you to bear down and maintain focus. Keep the horse between your leg and rein

because that's a tough corner to make in two-point.

Keep your seat elevated and come around on a straight line again. For that last straight line, the judge will be able to measure your straightness or lack of it against the wall or fence. If you're not straight, it will be more obvious.

At the stop, we're looking for a nice, square stop. Your horse should stop willingly, without pulling you out of the saddle or throwing you backward into it.

I'll point out, too, that if you're on a horse with a spur stop, you need to either not use it or disguise it as

The hand gallop should be balanced with the horse between the rider's reins and legs.



much as possible. Hunters are about forward, and we never want a horse to go backward from pressure with the leg – only forward.

It's a small part of the pattern, but it's one of the last things the judges will see – right before they call out a score. Make a positive impression with that stop, not a negative one.

Then, we want to see a few nice steps backward without any resistance. The competition has gotten so tough that riders are always looking for a way to show off and be a little better than the next rider, but running backward in pattern classes is not something we want to see. A

nice, controlled step with the horse picking up its feet cleanly is considered a good back.

It's important for riders to realize that there's no perfect match. There's no perfect team. It's all about degrees and constant improvement. If you find this pattern difficult today but keep working at it, you might find this pattern easy a year from now.

## Winning Exercises Hand Gallop

This pattern calls for a hand gallop, which is a lengthening of the horse's stride – not a quickening of the legs.

It's not a change in pace but a change in the distance a horse's stride carries him.

When the horse's feet go faster, the horse looks more and more like a pogo stick, with quick, choppy strides, rather than the elegant lengthening we're looking for in any hunter seat classes.

If your horse is shorter, with a normal canter stride of 7 to 8 feet, then at the hand gallop, the canter stride might be 9 to 10 feet. If your horse is larger, with a 10-foot canter stride, then the lengthening might put that stride at 12 feet.

To ask the horse to lengthen, I

have the rider sit down in the saddle and actually press from a seated position to lengthen that stride so she can use all of her aids – her seat and her legs – to push that horse up into the bridle and then move into the two-point once the horse moves forward. This is the correct way to ask for a hand gallop.

Once the horse starts to lengthen, I ask the rider to go between the hand gallop and the canter, alternating on the circle.

Another really good exercise is to set up a couple of poles to establish a base level, such as six strides apart. Ask the horse to canter in his natural step – and again, we’re talking about the horse that struggles to lengthen the stride. First you’ll ride across the poles at the horse’s natural step and cadence. Then as you come back around the circle, you will ask the horse to stretch out and lengthen enough that between those two poles, the horse canters five strides maintaining the same rhythm and cadence.

The rider can go back and forth between the natural canter and the lengthened stride, and the poles will help you gauge whether you’re accomplishing your goal.

We see so many riders that go too slow in a hand gallop – and the canter, for that matter. It is not accept-

able to lope in equitation – the canter should be forward and ground covering. The hand gallop is an extension of the canter and a rider, together with her horse, needs to be comfortable going forward at home.

### Engaging the Hindquarters

With greener horses, you’ll sometimes find that the horse doesn’t want to engage his hindquarters in the hand gallop, preferring to use his neck and shoulders to balance himself.

The first exercise I talked about for establishing the hand gallop is also beneficial to encourage a horse to use himself correctly.

On a large circle, the rider goes back and forth between a seated canter and a two-point canter. Every time you come back to the seated canter, you’re bringing the horse back together between your rein and legs.

If the horse is pushing out in his barrel, close your outside rein and leg. If the horse isn’t engaged enough, use both legs, both reins, and push him forward to engage his hind legs more.

### Reverse the Pattern

Just as humans can get mentally “stuck” on a particular piece of a pattern, so can a horse.

When a horse gets stuck, he can become stubborn or even act out. Often that behavior can become focused on a particular part of the pen.

I don’t want my horses to become stuck, and I have found that reversing the pattern can break down any barriers.

For example, this pattern calls for the pattern to start on the right side of a pen. Instead, I ask my rider to start on the left side of the pen.

By working backward, we can take the horse’s mental imagery out of the equation while still working on sections of the pattern that need development: guiding, direction and gait changes.

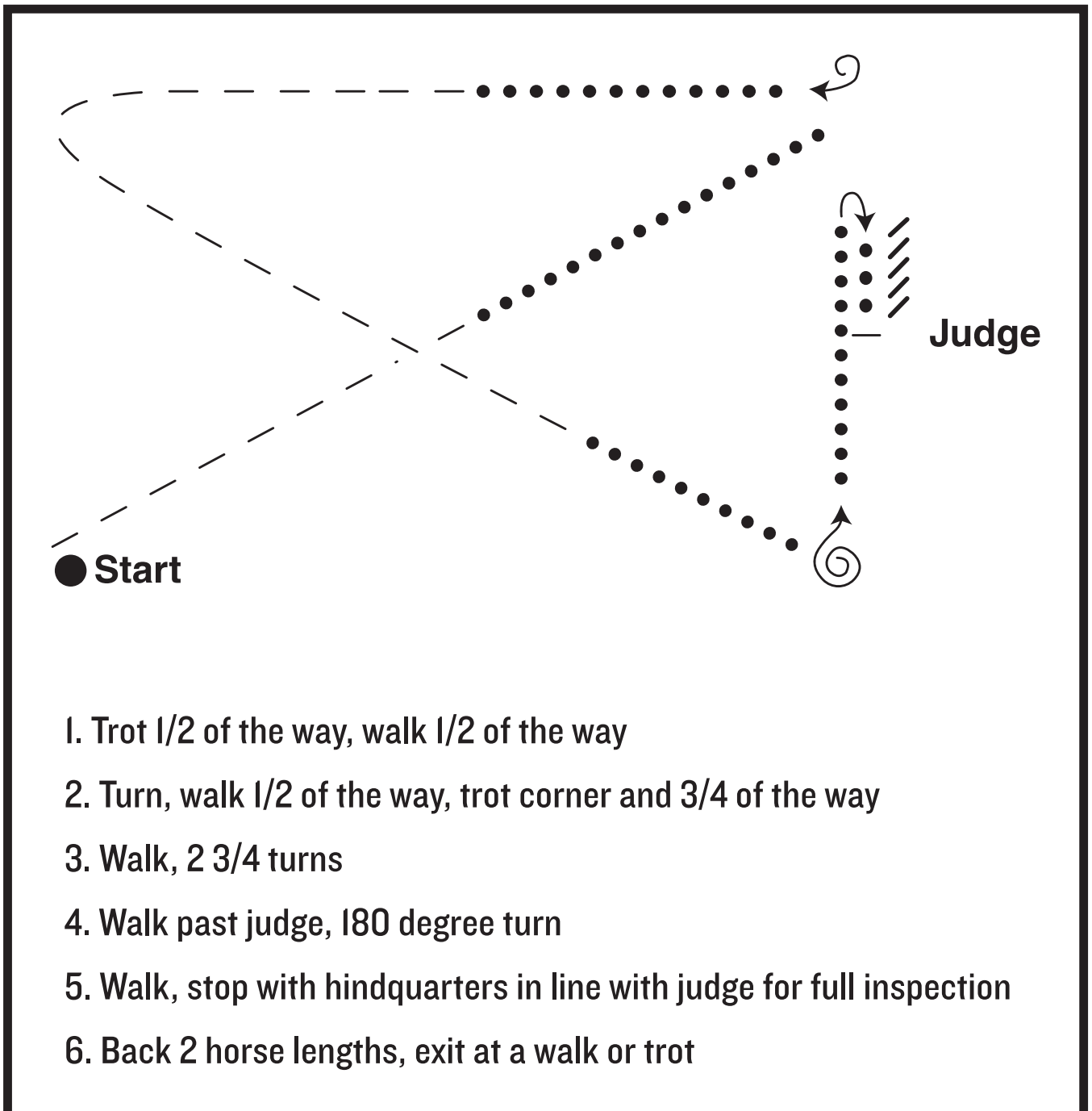
Please remember that partnerships are not built in a day or even a year. These exercises can strengthen your partnership with your horse and ultimately your personal equitation skills.

AQHA Professional Horsewoman **STEPHANIE LYNN** was the 2015 AQHA Professional Horsewoman of the Year. As a trainer, she has produced AQHA world champions, All American Quarter Horse Congress champions and national champions in open, youth and amateur. She is also an AQHA judge. Stephanie’s autobiography, “A Lifetime Affair,” talks about her life training horses. Stephanie serves as the director of operations for the National Snaffle Bit Association. Her website is [www.stephanielynn.net](http://www.stephanielynn.net).

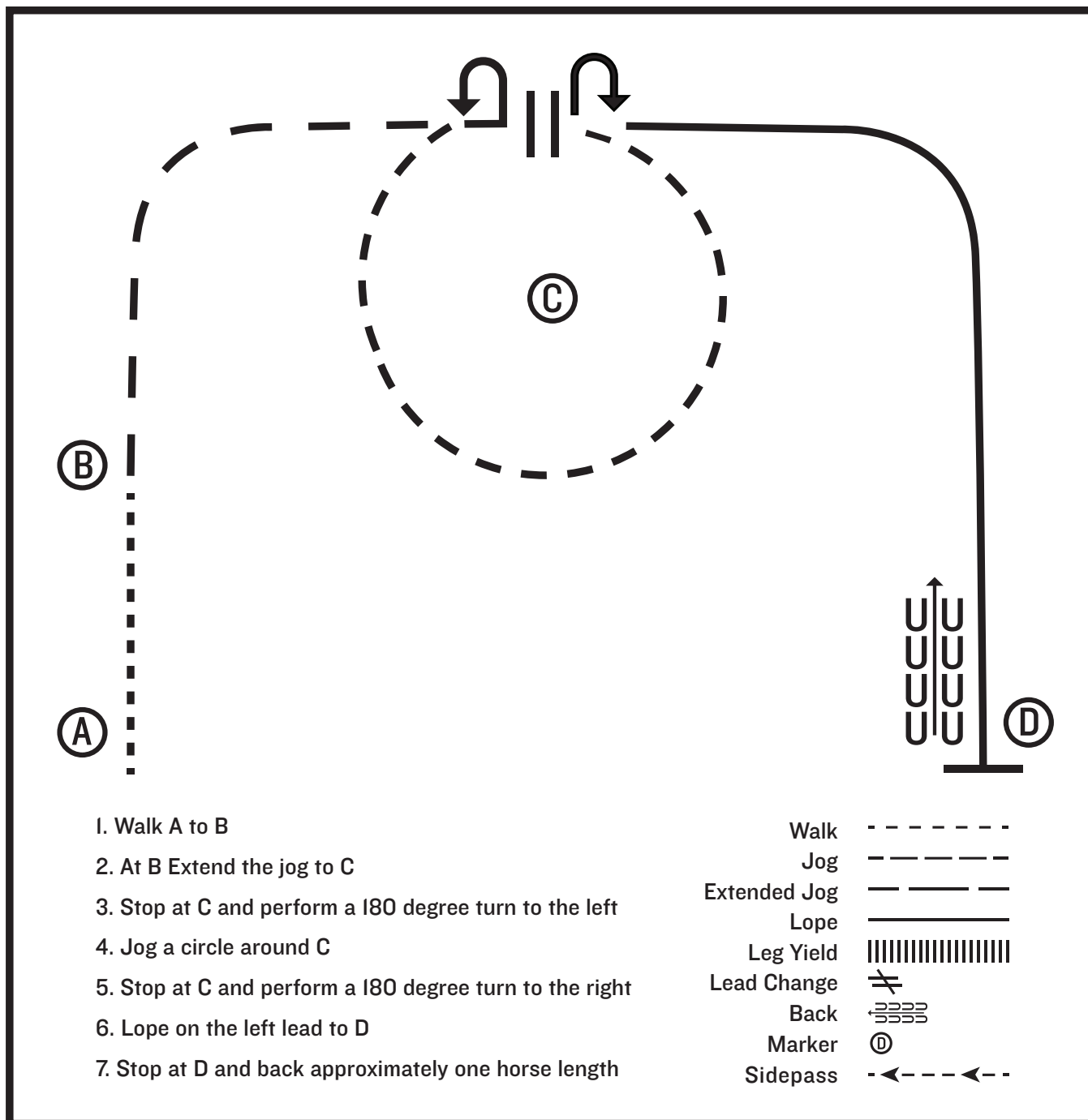
# WATCH THE PATTERN IN ACTION



# Showmanship



# Horsemanship



# Hunt Seat Equitation

