

Notes from Manuel Trigo clinic March 1 and 2, 2014

Saturday AM

Holding the reins 3 and 1.

Three reins in left hand, right snaffle in right hand

Left snaffle comes in under pinkie and out top of hand

Left curb comes in between pinkie and ring finger and out top of hand

Right curb comes in between ring and middle finger and out top of hand

Right snaffle in right hand

Whip in right hand

Holding the reins 4 in one

All four reins in left hand

Pick up the reins the same as 3 and 1

Move right snaffle rein to left hand between thumb and first finger. This rein will now come in the top of the hand and out the bottom.

Adjust the reins so snaffle and curb both give contact. Keep the reins somewhat shorter than normal.

The curb reins must be in contact to teach this method. Contact on all four reins should appear equal.

If you are not using a whip, the correct position of the right hand is on the right leg at the junction of the leg and the torso with the thumb pointing to the front (at horse's withers) and the elbow back (and slightly out) and shoulders back and square.

An alternate position for the right hand is to hold it in the position described below for holding the whip. This places the right hand above the rein hand. It makes it easy to subtly use the right hand on the right snaffle if needed.

A Whip, if used, is short—traditionally this was a green twig. It is held in the right hand (upside down relative to normal whip position). Butt of whip is down and lash is up. The right hand, holding the butt of the whip is positioned in front of the lower part of the sternum and approximately one hand width forward of the body. The tip of the whip is held near and above the left shoulder. Thus the whip is at a slight angle from the center of the body to about the middle of the collar bone of the left shoulder. The whip does not touch the body.

To use the whip as an aid, hold it in the right hand, but use it on the **left** side of the horse.

To turn to the right, move the right hand so the point of the whip is near the left side of the horse's neck. Help the horse bring the forehand to the right.

To turn use as a forward aid, turn the right hand so the tip of the whip comes to the left side of the horse's body reaching over your left leg to touch the horse's side behind the left leg.

Practice both of these often. Drop the reins and pick back up repeatedly until picking up is second nature. Practice with and without the whip with 4 in one.

Exercise: 10 meter circle to shoulder in to 10 meter circle

Good relaxed walk on 10 meter circle, when shoulders of horse leave the wall to begin the second circle, glide into shoulder in along the wall. Left hand moves with inside front leg. It moves to the right as the front leg crosses and slightly crosses over the withers before moving back to the left as the horse reaches with the outside front leg.

You may need to use the right hand momentarily on the snaffle rein to help the horse learn the correct response. You must use more seat and legs and less hand with this system.

When using the reins 4 in one, the hand must move back and forth in lateral movements. In shoulder in, it moves with the movement of the front crossing leg.

Exercise: as above, but when in shoulder in, transition to canter on 10 m circle.

Spanish walk was done at the end. For a horse that is rushing the Spanish walk, do only two steps (L—R) and then go back to normal walk for several steps and then do two steps again. Alternate these until horse does two steps in relaxed way before adding more steps one at a time.

Saturday pm

Manuel broke down the old alta escuela basic test into segments and had the group work on each segment. This test is available from his web site. {I had difficulty finding it, but I am not a computer person.}

He discussed the presentation phase first. Riders are not allowed to wear a helmet during this phase, attire is to be traditional. Later he said a deduction would be made if you used a helmet. All horses line up in parallel at one end of the arena and walk in this line to the judge and then halt. The judge indicates to one rider at a time to walk the horse forward. The rider then halts so

that the judge can move freely around the horse and look at the horse and the attire of the rider. The judge then indicates to the rider to return to the line. The rider must back into the same spot in the line. He said to look behind you to ensure that you back straight and don't back into another horse.

Since the test is available, I will just repeat the comments rather than explaining the exercises in the tests.

--Bend for the shoulder in should be same as for a 6m circle.

--Fixing the trot:

You can't lose the quality of the gait during the shoulder in. To preserve the quality of the trot, look for a trot between passage and trot with lots of energy and suspension.

At home, rise during the medium trot at least initially to improve it. During competition, do not rise. You must sit.

Work on cadence first—control this with the seat. The cadence will slow as you lengthen. Do not slow the trot with the hand. Your horse must follow your rhythm going forward with a slow cadence. To have cadence, the horse must push with the hind leg.

For many horses/riders, when the horse slows the cadence he begins to lose impulsion. To prevent this, use legs in time with slower cadence—revitalize the impulsion. Ask for something more like passage. Use the legs together.

If you are on a young horse, a big, forward movement must come first and cadence second.

Sunday am

We continued working on the cadence of the trot.

For medium trot

First, slow down the trot (cadence)

Second, stretch the gait

Third, add speed

Exercise: do a shorter trot along the short side and medium trot along the long side.

Allow the neck to stretch forward

Come with the legs every two steps

Push forward

The speed (ground coverage) must increase and the cadence (rate of steps) must decrease.

To learn this, do it in rising trot. Only when the horse is supple can you start sitting.

In the medium trot you must stay a little forward to stay in balance with the horse and stay up longer on the upward posting movement.

Exercise: go from medium to working trot with no reins

Rebalance the horse up (with the reins) then release the reins and make the stride shorter with your posting rhythm. Stay up longer to get the cadence.

Exercise: development of walk pirouette—we were riding 3 and 1

Walk along the wall, nice relaxed, swinging walk. Ask the horse to step in with haunches, then big step around with shoulders, repeat until direction is reversed.

Keep the big walk as the horse crosses over. {half pirouette}

Start with a larger half circle and gradually make it smaller keeping the good walk.

Second exercise, do haunches in on a larger circle and gradually spiral in on the circle until you are doing the pirouette. Maintain good swinging walk.

Alternate leg, hand, leg, hand in time with hind and front legs that are crossing.

Bring the horse up with the right snaffle. If you need to use both snaffle reins to bring the horse up, open the curb fingers to relax the curb and then use both hands up.

Leg positions

The horse does not have a go button on the side. You must train him to respond to different leg positions.

When you use the leg, it should move and then return to neutral. Don't keep it locked in one position.

The neutral leg position is the “normal” position. The leg should be positioned with the heel, hip and shoulder of the rider in a vertical line. This positions the foot across the girth: heel behind and toe in front. There should also be a vertical line from knee to toe.

Positions in front of the neutral.

1. The leg comes an inch or two forward to halt.
2. The leg comes a couple more inches forward for the signal to back. To back up, the rider's torso must come slightly forward to raise the seat bones and lighten the seat. In this position the heel is close to the front edge of the girth. This is also the position the leg moves to during Spanish walk. Legs alternate during Spanish walk with the leg forward at the time the horse is raising the front leg on the same side.

In later discussion of backing, Manuel says to move the leg to the backup position and then back to neutral alternating sides with the movements of the back legs. Right leg moving back to neutral tells the right hind to move back.

Positions behind the neutral.

There are three leg positions behind the neutral position. As the leg moves further back it indicates more degrees of collection

1. Toe near middle of girth—some collection
2. Toe near back edge of girth—more collection
3. Toe a couple of inches behind the girth—maximum collection

The leg does not have to go far back, but there needs to be a clear distinction between the positions for the horse.

Notes from Manuel Trigo clinic April 18 and 19, 2014

Saturday am

Exercise 1: Work on cadence on the lunge line.

Helper acts as a pivot. Rider should be able to slow the posting and get the horse to slow down the cadence.

Work first with longer reins and then with no reins

You should be able to slow down the cadence until the horse walks without the reins.

As the horse advances, slowing of the cadence but staying in the trot will build to passage.

With a young (or less trained) horse, as you slow the cadence, the horse will walk.

With a more advanced horse, as you slow the cadence the horse will passage.

Control the cadence with the seat of the rider.

Forget the horse, control yourself.

Exercise 2: Still on lunge with no reins (or holding buckle with two fingers)

Stay in the slow cadence for several steps, just above the limit at which the horse wants to walk.

Do the slowest possible trot without dropping into walk.

Exercise 3: still on lunge as above

Keep the slow cadence and come with the leg to create impulsion

Keep the same cadence and rhythm

Touch with leg to increase impulsion in the same cadence

Increase the speed (cover more ground) in the same cadence by getting the longer step.

On the circle, use a little more inside leg

Use the legs two or three times maximum. Then allow the horse to maintain.

The horse must learn to stay where you put him.

As you advance, try to get a couple of passage-like steps.

Rise longer, stay up a longer

Slightly squeeze with both legs all the time

Ideally you should be able to passage with the reins loose.

Exercise: working trot to medium trot on the diagonal

To transition to medium trot, maintain the same cadence but get the horse to take longer steps (“speed up” = cover more ground)

After you get the longer steps, further slow the cadence

Accelerate for 2 or 3 steps and then stay at that “speed” and work on improving cadence and developing a longer neck.

Working to Medium transition gives you the acceleration.

Saturday pm

Yielding the haunches

Exercise: circle 10 m and ask horse to yield the haunches into the circle = haunches in on the circle.

Exercise: half circle (10 m) and leg yield/counter shoulder in on diagonal back to the wall

Maintain a good walk throughout.

Use the pelvis at the walk in shoulder in—swing in the walk rhythm

Exercise: yielding haunches at the canter (like exercise 2 at canter)

Counter canter on L lead

Half circle in counter canter

While returning to wall on the diagonal, yield the haunches outward (to same side as counter canter lead).

Exercise: do haunches in at the canter

Exercise: pick up counter canter and leg yield tail to wall.

Manuel called this a shoulder in. This confused many riders who learned shoulder fore

on the inside lead.

Example you are in right counter canter on the wall. Bring the head in, but keep the haunches moving along the wall. Horse is jumping in the direction of the lead he is on.

You are cantering in the lead of the direction of travel.

Exercise: Canter on a square always at an angle to the wall/line. Alternate with haunches in/shoulder in with a lead change at each corner.

For a left square:

Bend of horse is always to the L

Head to inside on R lead

Change lead at corner

Haunches to inside on L lead

Change lead at corner

Head to inside on R lead

Etc.

Exercise: Start on right wall in right lead canter (counter canter). Make a diagonal toward the center and yield the haunches to the right.

The "bull" charges at the horse haunches

The horse yields the haunches away, drawing the bull

Change the lead to L lead and make a tight circle around and behind the bull so you can "stab" it.

Sunday morning

We will work today on backing, medium walk, simple change, collected canter

Backing

Incline upper body slightly forward to take weight off the hind legs

Squeeze with legs (in forward position?) and bring hands up to help lighten front end

Rub legs backward in alternating diagonal movements and use diagonal hand

Maintain the squeeze throughout. Don't release

Synchronize with hind leg

Practice exercises in reverse (like 10 m circle backing up)

Practice shorter steps and faster movement and longer steps and slower movement.

To turn, make a short rubbing movement with the inside and a longer rubbing movement with the outside.

Challenges:

Back straight and then turn at a specific spot

Back in a circle around a cone

Back in a serpentine between cones

Back in a figure 8 (straight lines on diagonals in this example): back in ½ circle, straight on diagonal, back in ½ circle in opposite direction, straight back on diagonal.

Change the seat and bend to change direction while backing

You are NOT using the legs to push the croup—just to get the horse to take longer steps on one side so that he makes a circle.

Direct pirouette:

Exercise: use a cone a few feet from the wall

Haunches in on the long side

Keep the same walk while bringing the haunches in

Stop the haunches at the cone and make the ½ pirouette

Horse must keep same walk and step under as crosses front legs on larger circle

Simple changes: goal is canter, one step of walk and canter on the other lead

Long side:

Start on wall -- canter –walk—canter –walk

Bring horse up in the canter before the walk

Collect yourself as you bring your horse up

Rub the legs forward and alternate as the horse walks

Canter 4 steps then walk.

To lift the front:

use the seat first

then inside leg

then hand if needed to lift up

“sit your horse back and bring him up”

“sit your horses”

Improving the walk:

The hands must move with the horse’s head at the walk. The hand movement follows the shoulder movement.

Shoulder in right:

Right hand holds (as left hind steps under) then L hand crosses over the neck slightly with the left front leg, then right hand opens and leads the shoulder into the next step

Get a good medium walk and then close your eyes and allow the horse to move you
Try pressing the hands on the mane with one hand on top of the other (fist over fist) to feel the movement

It takes three months (for Manuel???) to get a horse to walk correctly
The collected walk is not slower
Collect your horse, the horse steps higher

To work on collected canter:

- Get a good shoulder in in walk (45° angle)
- Collect the horse in shoulder in
- Canter onto a 10 m circle for a few steps
- Back to walk
- Back to SI on the wall

Do many (1000's of) transitions. The longer you stay in the canter, the worse the quality.

Exercise: Serpentine with walk step(s) as you cross the center line