

## Session Plan for: Ride Fit

<b>Name</b>		<b>Level</b>	SILVER
<b>Topic</b>	Ride Fit	<b>Lesson</b>	1 of 4
<b>Subject</b>	Daily Movement, Correct Bending, Carrying and Sitting. The Core	<b>Location</b>	Classroom/yard
<b>Resources &amp; Requirements</b>	Buckets/saddles to practice carrying, chairs		

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>During this session we will talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How activity/lack of activity throughout the day impacts physical health (pain and immobility)</li> <li>○ How regular movement throughout the day is more beneficial than one hour of exercise</li> <li>○ How the everyday movements can impact the health of muscles and joints, and better ways of moving to strengthen and mobilise the body</li> <li>○ The Core and how important it is for the functioning of the body as a whole and for sitting in the saddle in balance with the horse</li> <li>○ Ways of strengthening and engaging the core</li> <li>○ How this relates to riding</li> </ul>

<b>45 mins</b>	<p>1. Daily activity- Discussion (could discuss how much activity the members in the group do throughout the day). The activities that are done throughout the day and the way they are done will shape the body. Exercise has been designed to be done in chunks of time (1 hour in the morning for example), whereas the body really needs regular movement moments throughout the day to keep it mobile, strong and aligned. 1 hour of movement doesn't offset 8 hours of sitting, for example.</p> <p>2. Forward Bending: a movement that is done a few times during the day is bending forward. This is a movement that can cause a lot of problems for the lower back, so it is really important to learn how to do it in a better way. The hips should be the main fulcrum for the body, which means that when the upper body needs to be lower to the ground it gets there by the hips flexing, not the lower back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstration of poor forward bending technique: where the legs stay straight and the lower back is flexed/bent forward.</li><li>• Group to practice correct forward bending technique (using booklet as guide); lower back stays flat and bottom is pushed a little behind the body</li></ul>
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	<p>so the hips hinge. The knees can be soft, but should stay over the ankle.</p> <p>3. Carrying: This is something that is part of everyday activities, and it is a great opportunity to load the body in a different way and create strength in areas that might be lacking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Talk about activities on the yard such as carrying water buckets / haynets / feed and how carrying incorrectly can damage your back</li><li>○ Encourage group to think about what carrying they do and how could they make it easier e.g. split shopping into two bags, rucksack</li><li>○ Riders to practice carrying items such as water buckets, haynets, grooming kits, etc</li></ul> <p>4. Sitting: Ask how many people sit for most of the day such as office work? Following the booklet: as a group work through the mobility exercises. Ask the group to think about how they could incorporate this into their daily routine</p> <p>5. CORE - The core is the area from below the ribcage to the top of the thigh and involves all the muscles within this area; top, bottom, sides, front and back. The core is a unit of muscles designed to provide a stable base for the body when moving, allow for movement through the waist and to support the lumbar spine. Reasons why a strong core is important (riding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Helps to maintain health of the pelvis, hips, trunk and lower back</li><li>○ Fundamentally important for riders to be able to sit in the saddle in balance with the horse and be able to absorb movement.</li><li>○ True core strength is developed through consistent, varied movement</li><li>○ The core switches on to the appropriate strength according to what activity the body is doing, but it can only do this if the communications are working well, and communications begin with the lower back.</li><li>○ The best way to strengthen the core is to strengthen the muscles of the lower back. This helps to reduce lower back pain and ensures the rest of the core muscles switch on when they need to</li></ul> <p>6. Using the booklet as a guide: group to work through the lower back strengthening posture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Stand with feet hip width apart</li><li>○ With soft knees, move the pelvis back as if to sit in a chair</li><li>○ Rock the weight over the heels</li><li>○ Keep the knees over the ankles</li><li>○ Bring the arms up overhead and press fingertips together</li><li>○ Keep the gaze/head looking downwards</li><li>○ Feel the tension increasing across the lower back</li><li>○ Take 3 expansion breaths in this position</li><li>○ Return to standing by squeezing the glutes together</li></ul>
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<b>10 mins</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b> Discuss as a group how they can get more movement into their day. Challenge the group to add 10mins extra activity into their day or to practice the mobility movements above to see if they feel a difference.
<b>PROGRESSION</b> Learning movements so they become a movement habit Clearer understanding of how the core works Performing posture 2 x a day for at least 14 days	

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## Session Plan for: Ride Fit

<b>Name</b>		<b>Level</b>	SILVER
<b>Topic</b>	Ride Fit	<b>Lesson</b>	2 of 4
<b>Subject</b>	Mobility, Symmetry, Improving fitness and mental wellbeing	<b>Location</b>	Classroom or safe yard space
<b>Resources &amp; Requirements</b>	Mounting block Lead rope for stretches		

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>During this session we will talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mobility – Joint mobility is essential to help riders sit in the saddle in the best position. Muscle health/length will dictate how healthy and mobile joints can be</li> <li>○ Symmetry - Everyone is one-sided in their body and this creates crookedness. This crookedness is taken into the saddle, where it can affect how the horse is able to move. Learning how to use both sides of the body more evenly is really important for sitting in the saddle with more balance</li> <li>○ Riding is a physical activity that requires some cardiovascular fitness. It is important to add some of this into your day so you don't get fatigued during your lesson</li> <li>○ It is just as important to consider your mental wellbeing as well as your physical health</li> </ul> <p>This session will cover some basic exercises/stretches to help with mobility and some ideas to help improve your; symmetry, fitness and mental wellbeing.</p>

<b>45 mins</b>	<p>1. <b>Shoulder Mobility:</b> shoulders can become very stuck and immobile, especially if riders are working at a desk job for a large portion of the day. Stiffness in the shoulders can translate as neck pain, mid back pain and it can manifest in headaches.</p> <p>Riding requires that the arms are able to be independent from the body and the reins, and in order for this to be possible, the shoulder joints and the shoulder blades have to be mobile.</p> <p>Work through the shoulder mobility sequence as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Standing with feet hip width apart</li><li>○ Place thumbs on hips</li><li>○ Slide thumbs up the sides of the body to the armpits, keeping the elbows high</li><li>○ Take the back of the hands to the back of the head</li></ul>
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- Take the arms straight up over the head
- Make a big circle with the arms to bring them back down again to the sides of the body

Riders to practice shoulder mobility sequence

2. Ankle mobility is essential for being able to keep the lower leg in the right position in the saddle and to allow for some of the horses movement to be absorbed. High heeled footwear shortens the muscles of the calves and reduces the mobility and strength of the ankle. This can affect the riders balance when walking, and doesn't prepare the body well for riding.

Ankle mobility exercise:

- Using a rolled up towel/bolster/stack of books, place the ball of one foot at one end.
- Place the other foot on the ground just behind the foot on the bolster
- Maintain alignment through the rest of the body; hips stay over heels, ribs over hips, shoulders over ribs.
- Depending on how much stretch there is through the calf, move the foot not on the bolster to be slightly in front of the other one. This increases the stretch in the calf.

3. Symmetry; left and right handedness creates a cycle of crookedness in the body which becomes a normal movement habit. This means routine tasks are always performed in the same way, every day which serves to confirm the crookedness and one sidedness

Riding requires that what is able to be done to the left can be done in the same way to the right, i.e. that both sides are symmetrical. The dominant hand will likely have a different contact on the reins than the non-dominant hand, and this can affect how the horse moves. Stronger through one leg compared to the other. To reduce the effect of one-sidedness, try to use your non-dominant side to do routine tasks such as:

- Brushing teeth
- Picking items off the shelf
- Getting dressed
- Opening doors
- Using the mouse on the computer

Challenge the group to do this for 2 weeks!

4. Improving fitness

Ask the group for ideas as to why riders need to be fit to ride?

Ask them to assess their own fitness:

What do they think happens to their position as they get tired and how do they think that affects the horse?

Ask the group to come up with some suggestions on how they can start to improve

	<p>their fitness: Walking, take stairs not lift, etc. Challenge them to implement this into their day and then re-assess in 6 weeks.</p> <p>5. Mental well-being Taking care of your own mental well-being can be as important as taking care of yourself physically</p> <p>6. Positive mindset Mastering a mindset that serves you positively will ensure you progress along your riding journey with less anxiety. Practise mastering a positive mindset – discuss with the group situations where they could use this during their riding.</p> <p>7. Physical activity Physical activity is essential for good mental well-being. Riding is a fantastic way to get activity into your day. Ask the group to think about how riding or just being around the horses makes them feel.</p> <p>8. Taking time out for yourself Taking the time to do something for you is essential for good mental health, riding is definitely included in this!</p>
<p><b>10 mins</b></p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b> Recap importance of joint mobility for riding and position. Set the home challenges discussed above.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROGRESSION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Awareness of joint mobility in the saddle; heel positioning and contact Awareness of symmetry and how this affects their contact in the saddle/discuss how they might ride better one way than the other Create a community cardio group activity</p>	

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## Session Plan for: Ride Fit

<b>Name</b>		<b>Level</b>	SILVER
<b>Topic</b>	Ride Fit	<b>Lesson</b>	3 of 4
<b>Subject</b>	Individual Lunge lesson/mechanical horse session	<b>Location</b>	Arena
<b>Resources &amp; Requirements</b>	Horse suitable for lungeing or mechanical horse		

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>15 mins</b>	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Explain that during the session you will be working on some mounted exercises to help increase the rider's mobility - discuss with rider if there are any areas they would like to focus on, or if there is a specific element of their position they would like to work on.</li><li>○ Encourage rider to work through any stretches/warm up exercises they use before riding</li><li>○ If the rider has not had lunge session before explain the process and why it is useful for improving rider position</li></ul>

<p><b>30 mins</b></p>	<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Tailor session to suit individual rider with the focus on position and rider awareness of their own position</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In halt or walk, run through 2-3 expansion breaths</li><li>2. In walk with stirrups and reins, run through alignment of shoulder, hip and heel</li><li>3. Ask rider to check weight on seat bones and if left and right feel even</li><li>4. Talk through positioning of seat bones to check if pelvis is in neutral</li><li>5. Rider to move pelvis into neutral if required</li><li>6. Assess upper body positioning; shoulders relaxed and down, over the ribs</li><li>7. Elbows are by the sides of the body. Tell the rider to press down into the elbows to stabilise the upper body position</li><li>8. Hand position; alignment with forearm</li><li>9. The neck is in line with the upper body, so the head is sitting in alignment</li><li>10. Warm the rider up in rising trot on both reins</li><li>11. Exercise suggestions (either in walk or halt), that will help the rider's mobility:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Arm circles / shoulder circles / shoulder shrugs</li><li>○ Go through shoulder mobility movement learnt in the Silver Award.</li><li>○ Move arms overhead, out in front and out to the side with the focus on keeping the pelvis and trunk as still and as even as possible</li><li>○ Place hands on shoulders and turn the upper body from the waist to the right and to the left. The pelvis should stay still and even in the saddle. The</li></ul></li></ol>
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	<p>twist should come from the waist and upper body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ankle rotations</li> <li>○ Bring both knees up to the front of the saddle and then slowly rotate the hips outwards and lower the legs back down. This is a great hip opening exercise and it makes the rider really aware of their seat.</li> <li>○ Turn the toes in towards the horse’s sides, and out away from them. This is a hip mobilising exercise and great to do when the hips are in a riding position</li> <li>○ Swing the legs in alternate directions from the hips</li> <li>○ Holding the legs out from the hip</li> <li>○ Holding the foot up to stretch the front of the thigh</li> </ul> <p>Make sure the rest of the rider’s body stays in alignment and their weight stays even over their seat bones during the exercises.</p> <p>12. If the rider is secure and confident – include some work without stirrups</p> <p>Focus on maintaining alignment and return to expansion breathing periodically throughout lesson</p>
<p><b>15 mins</b></p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Discuss with the rider the mobility exercises that are most relevant to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did they find this hard?</li> <li>○ Did they feel more secure in the sitting trot?</li> <li>○ Did they feel improvement in the rising trot?</li> <li>○ Discuss areas to focus on during their riding sessions</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROGRESSION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regular individual sessions to allow rider to focus on position</p>	

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## Session Plan for: Riding Fit

<b>Name</b>		<b>Level</b>	Silver
<b>Topic</b>	Ride Fit	<b>Lesson</b>	4 of 4
<b>Subject</b>	Engaging the core	<b>Location</b>	Arena
<b>Resources &amp; Requirements</b>	Horses suitable for riders, possible method to take photo/video of riders to allow them to see own position		

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>10 mins</b>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This lesson will recap suppleness and mobility covered in the lunge lessons.</li> <li>○ There will be some work without stirrups.</li> <li>○ Discuss positive mindset and how each rider can use this during the session e.g. if any riders are apprehensive about working without stirrups they could use their positive mindset.</li> <li>○ Recap mindful breathing and alignment from Bronze and check each rider's position.</li> </ul>
<b>50 mins</b>	<p><b>ACTIVITIES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage riders to warm up before they mount up, this could be as simple as leading their horse around the arena</li> <li>2. Encourage riders to spend some time in halt or walk to work through some exercises to improve their own mobility, either before or after warming the horse up</li> <li>3. Rider to work on their own alignment, coach to support to find correct position</li> <li>4. Once horses are warmed up riders can quit and cross stirrups</li> <li>5. Riders to work on maintaining position in walk without stirrups and coach to explain how they can engage their core</li> <li>6. Encourage riders to use their positive mindset, before trotting so they are confident and focused</li> <li>7. Introduce short bursts of trot with the riders engaging their core</li> <li>8. Work through transitions and school figures, focusing on maintaining position</li> <li>9. Take back stirrups and continue to work through transitions and school figures with the focus on maintaining balance and position through correct alignment and core engagement</li> </ol>
<b>10 mins</b>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Discuss with the riders whether they felt more secure in the saddle after these exercises.</p>

**FOR THE CHALLENGE. FOR THE LOVE.**

	<p>Identify when they felt they lost security or balance and make an action plan for the rider to work on these areas.</p> <p>Discuss how they put their positive mindset into practise and when in the future they could use this.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROGRESSION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Continue to use a positive mindset throughout riding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Continue to strengthen the core to improve rider security, practise engaging the core throughout future sessions.</p>	

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