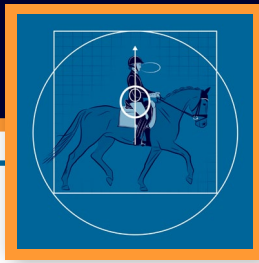


Dressage Rider Position

MINI COURSE





*“There is one principle that should never be abandoned, namely,
That the rider must learn to control themselves before they can control their horse.
This is the basic, most important principle to be preserved in equitation.”*

–ALOIS PODHAJSKY

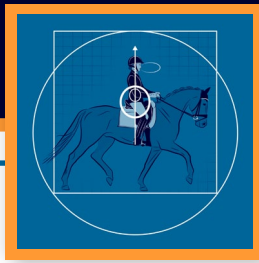


- Do you feel insecure in the saddle?
- Are you bouncing?
- Do your hands go up and down and jerk on your horse's mouth?
- Are you unable to establish a steady contact?
- Do you ride in a chair seat?
- Do you lean to one side?
- Do you lose your stirrups?
- Do you pitch forward or back in a transition?
- Does your horse ignore your leg aid?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you need to focus on improving your rider position. Your position is what allows you to communicate with your horse!

Focusing on your position is the single most important thing you can do to improve your riding. The correct position is what allows you to stay safe and secure in the saddle so that you don't end up in the dirt. When you are in the correct position you will be able to communicate effectively with your horse, absorb your horse's movement, and apply clear and effective aids!

Most all of the training issues that you're having with your horse can be traced back to your rider position. If your horse is crooked - **you** are probably crooked. If your horse won't go forward, **you** are probably doing something to block this forward movement. If you're having trouble with a transition, **you** are probably getting out of balance. Only a rider in the correct position can make the correct aids. You must work on improving your position so that you can stay balanced and secure in the saddle, absorb your horse's movement, and make clear and effective aids.



INTRODUCTION

Hi! For those of you who don't know me I'm Amelia Newcomb, a Grand Prix rider and trainer based in Southern California. I am passionate about sharing my knowledge about horses and riding, and helping you "learn, to love your ride." When I started out riding at the age of 9, I was terrible. I literally fell off 11 times in the first year I was learning to ride. I was so bad that my trainer nearly told my parents I should quit! I was not a natural talent and the truth is, no one is born knowing how to ride. It is something we must learn.

My goal with this Mini Course on Rider Position is to help you improve your rider position making you feel more confident and secure in the saddle. As you improve your rider position, you become a better rider and your horse will be happier.

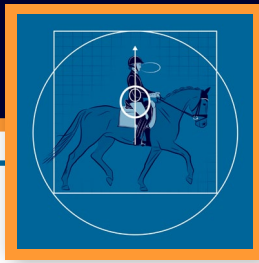
This journey to improve your rider position will have its ups and downs. To keep you on track, I would like to personally invite you to join my private Facebook Group, [Amelia's Dressage Club](#), by clicking this link.

It's a safe space to ask questions, celebrate wins, and to get support. It is a positive and supportive community of riders and I often offer advice in the group. I can't wait to get to know you better!

Happy Riding!

Amelia





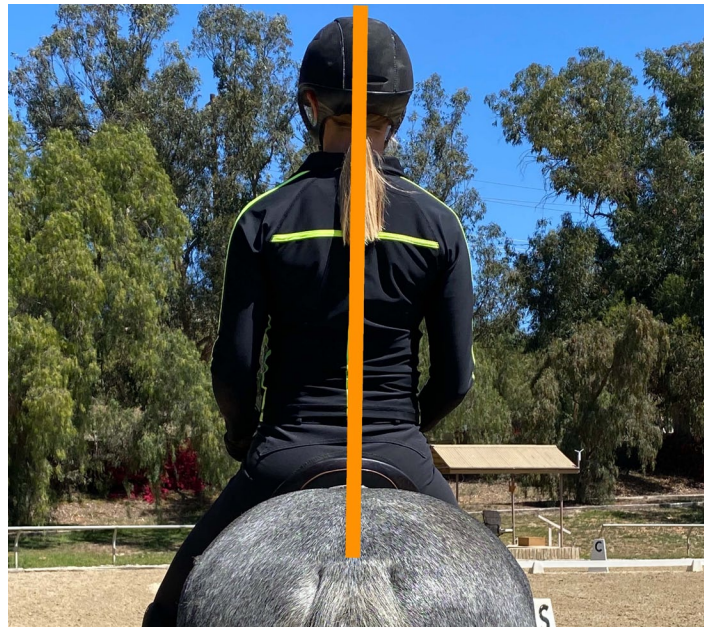
STEP #1: FIND THE CORRECT ALIGNMENT

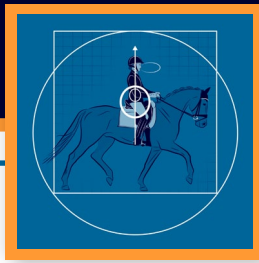
A fundamental part of your riding position is your alignment and symmetry. Sitting straight on the horse and in the proper alignment helps your horse balance. It allows you to absorb the motion of the horse, and also to influence the horse with your aids.

Three lines will get you in the proper position:

1. Straight line from your ear to shoulder to hip and heel
2. Straight line from your elbow to the horse's mouth
3. Straight line from your head, down your spine, and to the horse's spine (this line ensures symmetry and straightness)

These are the three fundamental lines in your position. If one of the lines is broken, you will be out of balance in the saddle and you won't be able to communicate effectively with your horse! Most riders tend either to tip too far forward and the lower leg goes back, or lean too far back and end up in a chair seat. Which are you?





STEP #1: FIND THE CORRECT ALIGNMENT (Cont.)



Chair Seat

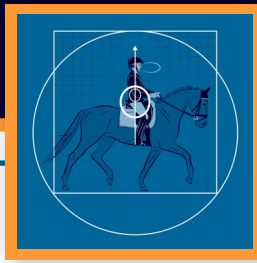


Leaning Forward

The corresponding videos are in a [YouTube Play List](#).

Click the link below to watch the first video that will help you with your alignment:

[**Alignment: Your KEY to Stability and Security in the Saddle**](#)



STEP #2: DEVELOP AN INDEPENDENT SEAT

You must have the correct alignment to be completely independent in your seat. Your seat is arguably the most important part of your position. The main function of the seat is to absorb the motion of your horse's movement. While it may appear that the rider is "sitting still," they are actually moving a lot to absorb the motion of the horse. The seat goes from above your knees to your ribcage and includes the upper thighs, seat bones, pelvis, lower back, and lower abdominals.

The seat also plays an important role in regulating your horse's speed and balance. Your seat is the root of all half-halts, if you're having trouble regulating your horse's speed or if your horse is falling on the forehand, this is where you need to look to solve the problem.

Here are several videos that will help you to develop your independent seat:

[How to Sit the Trot](#)

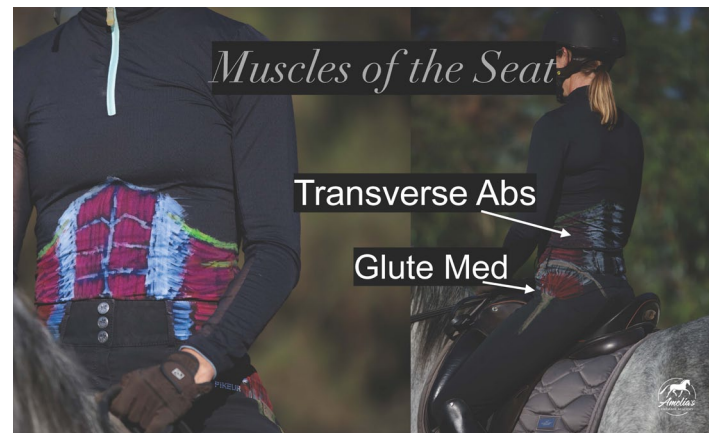
[Common Mistakes in Sitting Trot](#)

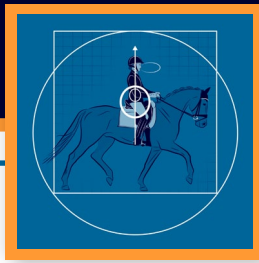
[Canter Seat: How to Sit the Canter](#)

[How to Half Halt from Your Thighs and Seat](#)

[The Half-Halt Explained](#)

The main muscles involved in stabilizing your seat are your transverse abs and your glute med muscles. These muscles keep you stable and upright in the saddle and also allow you to follow and absorb the motion of your horse.





STEP #3: THE LEGS

The legs are the driving aids - they are what you use to get your horse moving forward. It is essential that your horse is responsive to the leg aids so that you can create energy and impulsion. Until your horse is moving forward, you cannot work on anything else!

In order to use your leg effectively, it is important that your leg is in the correct position and that your stirrups are the correct length. You should have about 80% of your weight in your seat bones and 20% of your weight in your stirrups.

Here is a video that will help you with your stirrup length:

[Stirrups and Stirrup Length](#)



Make sure that your heel is under your hip. When you're in the saddle and you glance down, if you can see your toe in front of your knee, then your leg is too far forward. If your foot is back in your horse's flank, it's too far back. When your leg is too far forward or too far back it makes your leg less effective and it also disrupts the following motion of your seat. Furthermore, you want to maintain a light pressure with your knee into the saddle. You should not grip with your knees but your knee should not be flopping out of the saddle either.

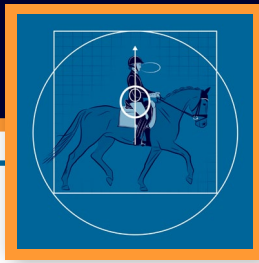
With a hot horse, you will want to keep your legs on more of the time so that your horse learns to accept the leg. With a lazy horse, you want to make the leg off more so that when you apply the leg you get a response. The goal is that the leg aids are invisible and come only from the calf, so you always "ask nicely" with these invisible aids and then follow through with a bigger kick if needed.

Here are a few videos that will help you with your leg position:

[STOP Nagging](#)

[How to Keep Your Legs Still](#)

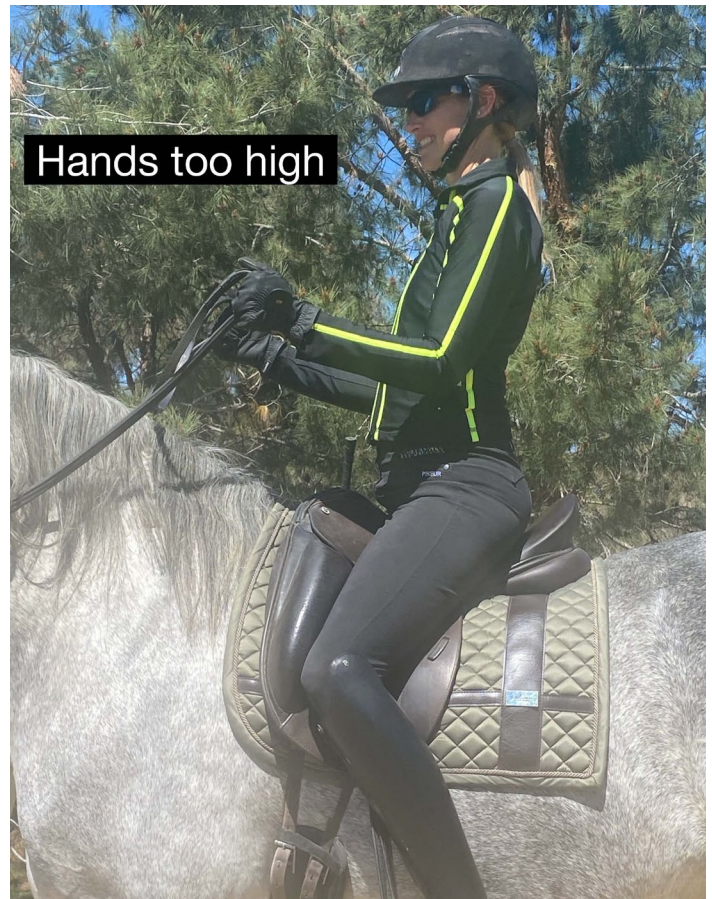
[How Not to Grip with Your Legs in the Canter](#)

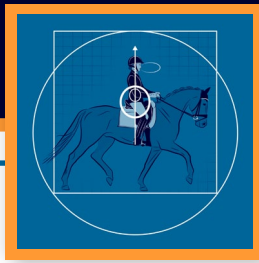


STEP #4: THE REINS

Believe it or not only about 10% of your aids should be from your reins! About 70% of your energy goes to your seat, following the motion, about 20% to your legs and only 10% to the rein aids! Most all riders tend to use too much hand and not nearly enough seat and leg.

For your rein aids, make sure that you have a straight line from your elbow to your horse's mouth. Some riders straighten their arms and lock their elbows. Others ride with their hands too high. Either one of these faults will inhibit steady and supple contact with your horse.





It is extremely important that your reins function independently from your legs and seat. You must not accidentally pull on your horse at the same time as you are asking them to move forward.

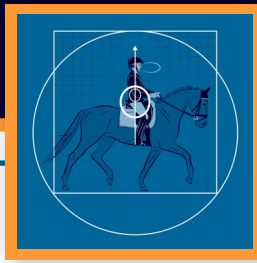
When you use your reins to turn or supple your horse, you want to always start with the smallest invisible aid possible - do not go first to pulling back with your elbow. You do not want to look like you're trying to start a lawnmower when you are riding your horse! Start with opening and closing your fingers on the rein. If that does not get a response from your horse, then go to your wrist. Bend your wrist inward

and upward so that you can see your pinky finger. If this doesn't work, then use the elbow. Often riders just resort to pulling back with the elbow - this will create a horse that is stiff and braced in the contact.

The Sequence of Aids:

1. Fingers
2. Wrist
3. Elbow





Here are some videos to help you with your hands:

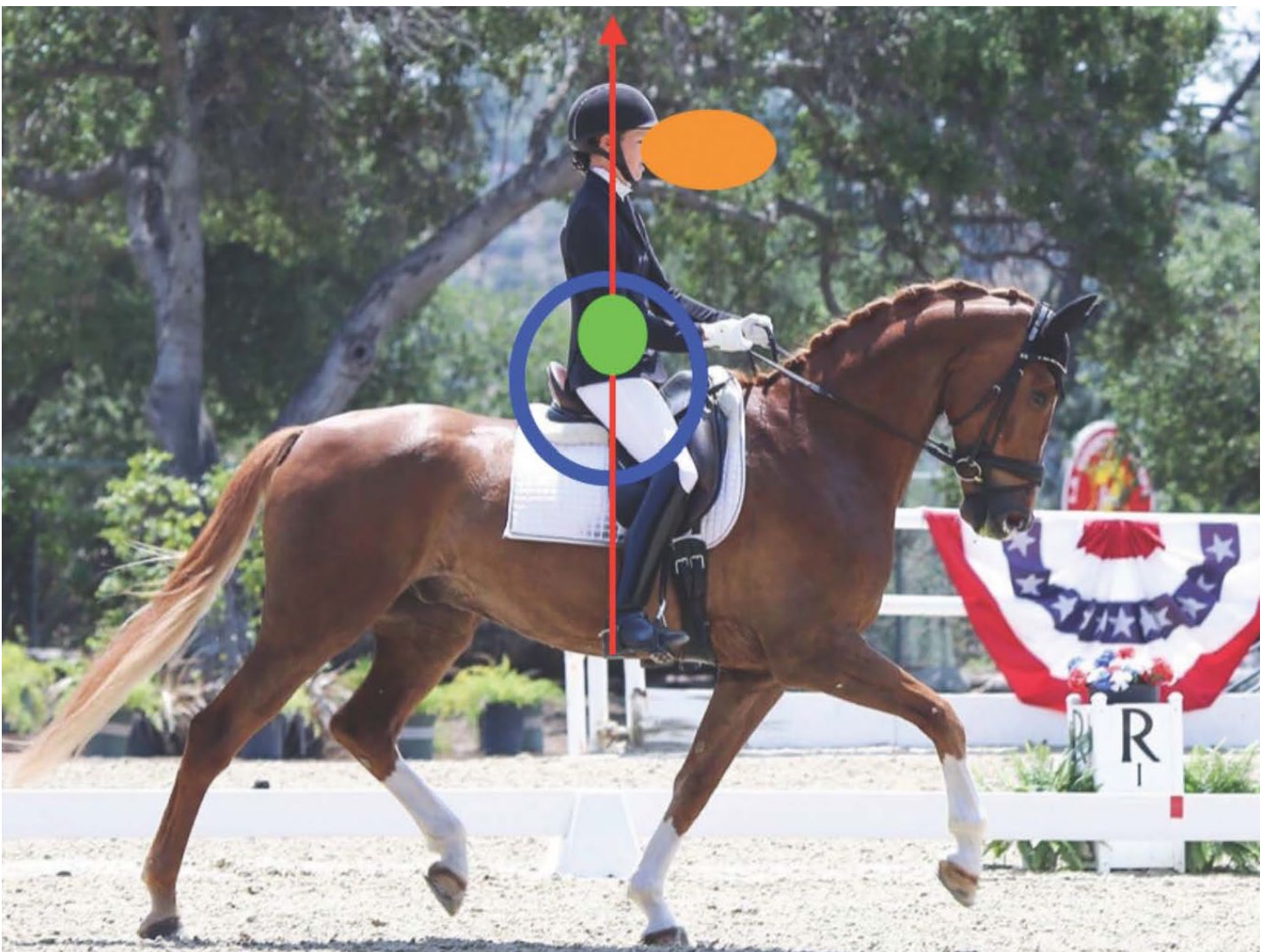
[How to Hold and Use Your Reins Properly](#)

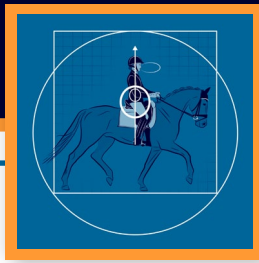
[Struggling with Rein Length for Contact?](#)

[Improve Your Hands: 3 Tips for Better Contact](#)

Dressage is HARD

Dressage is hard, but I hope this mini course has inspired you to improve your position! It takes a lot of time and practice to figure out how to control and manage your body in the saddle. It is also extremely important that you take care of your own fitness; exercising when you are not in the saddle. Keep working at it and stay consistent. Riding is a lifelong journey and it's all about taking consistent steps in the right direction.





THE END?

This is it, the end of this mini course. Sad it's ending? Me too. Rider position is a key element to improving your riding. If you want to continue to dive deeper into a program specifically on your position check out these options:

RIDER POSITION SEAT AND LEGS WORKSHOP

Riding from your seat and your legs is an essential part to becoming an effective Dressage Rider! This workshop will help you to understand how to develop your seat to become a more effective rider. Many riders struggle with really connecting their seat into the saddle and having an effective leg to send the horse forward!

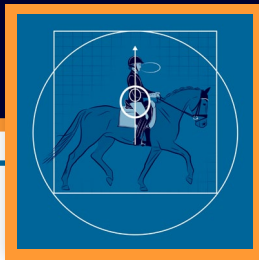
This workshop will help you to transform your riding position!

It includes:

1. Three unmounted exercises designed by a Physical Therapist
2. Riding without stirrups
3. Riding with your eyes closed
4. Transitions within the gait
5. 60 Minute Lecture on Rider Position Seat and Legs!

Click here to learn more about the [Workshop](#)





DRESSAGE RIDER POSITION MASTERCLASS

Transform your rider position in the next 6 weeks with this in-depth 6 week program. You can expect to learn exactly how to use your seat, legs, and hands both on the horse and off of your horse. This unique course includes both mounted and unmounted exercises to transform your body and riding position!

You will get instruction to fix rider faults, theory of the biomechanics of both you and your horse, specific unmounted exercises designed by our resident physical therapist to strengthen and activate the muscles that are needed for riding, and work through the material with the support of your great instructors.

This is your chance! I believe in you! And I know how much you want to improve your riding. Invest in yourself and in your education and trust us to help you become the rider you've always dreamed of! We're here to help you feel confident, balanced, and effective in the saddle so that you can stay glued in when your horse gets excited!

Taught by Amelia Newcomb, this course is also co-taught with Stephanie Seheult, DPT who is part of an elite group of physical therapists recognized by the USEF to treat equestrian athletes.

This is a 6-week course and each week you get a new videos, worksheets, and exercises released to you.

Week 1: Riding Position Basics

Week 2: The Seat

Week 3: The Legs

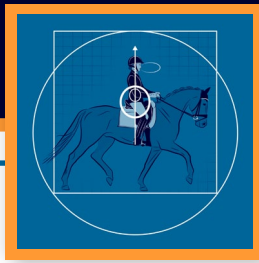
Week 4: The Hands, Arms, and Shoulders

Week 5: Circles, Turns, and Lateral Work

Week 6: Asymmetric Riders and Final Wrap up

Click here to enroll in the [Rider Position Masterclass](#)





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Our mission at Amelia Newcomb Dressage is to help you

LEARN, TO *love* YOUR RIDE

We have a ton of FREE resources, click below to be directed to the links.

[Amelia's Dressage Club —
Private Facebook Group](#)

[Amelia Newcomb Dressage on Facebook](#)

[Amelia's YouTube Channel](#)

[The Dressage with Amelia Podcast](#)

[FREE Rider Assessment Quiz](#)

[Amelia's Website](#)

[FREE PDF: Canter with Confidence](#)

