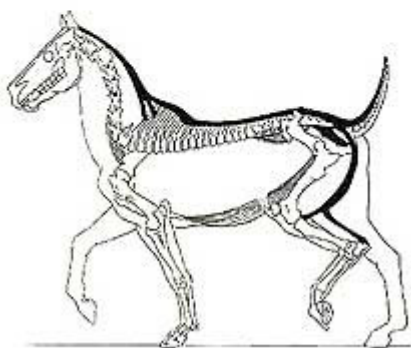
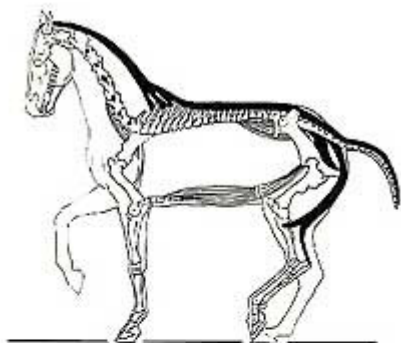


The LG Bridle™ Mailer

Monthly Feature: Training Tips from Monika.

How do I do that again - collecting, bending, flexing?

We have been receiving many questions from participants of Monika's clinics and private lessons on how to get their horse to look as good as when Monika was riding it. So here are some tips and reminders from Monika's instructions.



These skeletal views make it clear why collection is defined as "a particular posture that makes weight-bearing easiest for the horse." In collection, three key points along the vertebral column arch upward: (1) the

loins coil (2) the part of the back that would be under the saddle arches upward (3) the base of the neck is raised relative to the loins. Horse A produces an ideal piaffe, a highly collected trot-in-place; horse B trots forward completely "upside-down" -- an example of anti-collection. Both images are taken directly from photos of real horses. Notice how different the placement, weighting, strikedown, and swinging of the legs is in A vs. B. This illustrates a law: vertebral dynamics govern limb dynamics, or put more simply, whatever the back, neck, and loins are doing governs what the limbs can do.

When the horse is leaning on the rider's hand.

The First Priority is to be completely consistent:

That means at the slightest sign of the horse leaning against your hands, you immediately transition down to the next lower gait, i.e. walk, and immediately start trotting again. The same is true for 'becoming lazy' or 'running away' (which inevitably leads to leaning against the hand), transition without using much rein/hand (remember using your seat, tighten buttocks, heels down), if needed use the arena rail (ride toward the arena rail and ask your horse to stop just about 10 feet away from the rail). You can also use 'shoulder in', or back up your horse for a couple of steps, and immediately start up again. Where there is no hand (rein pressure) the horse can't lean against it! Remember short actions, consistent re-

actions from the rider, and immediately after giving the rein queue (asking the horse) release the hand/rein pressure, use the leg pressure, wait for the horse's reaction/answer, and then try again. The horse has to learn to collect on his own and to remain in this collected posture. Initially, aids have to be constantly repeated, (and then waited for the response of the horse), and then responding to the reaction of the horse again. Generally, this is very easy, but it requires total concentration and attention from the rider, as well as quick response/reaction until the horse has learned



that there are no other alternatives. Then one can relax with a content horse that knows what to do to have it comfortable - A horse that knows that action from the rider is to correct undesired behavior, while passiveness from the rider is a reward. This is a principle that EVERY horse can and will learn, EVERY HORSE!

Quick Tips and Reminders

Keep your horse attentive:

...by riding short sequences, small circles, changing direction often, transitioning down into a lower gait and back up. Riding long straight lines makes your horse long, while smaller circles help keeping your horse collected and bent.

Active - Passive:

When the horse is doing what you want - be passive! Be only active when you ask the horse for something. The most difficult lesson to remember is to release rein or leg pressure when the horse responds to the rider's aid. The ultimate goal again is to become rein independent and work toward using the least amount pressure needed to get your horse to do something for you....

Monthly Message

Exercise your horse daily if possible. If you don't ride, do some free lungeing in your round pen or small arena for 20 – 30 minutes daily. Take a walk with your horse.

Upcoming Events

Monika is available to come back to the USA in the summer or fall of 2007 if there is sufficient interest. Email lgbridle@gmail.com to let us know about any interested groups.

And The Last Word Goes To?

Riding bitless requires more sensitive and technically better riding than riding with bit. (Monika Lehmenkühler)