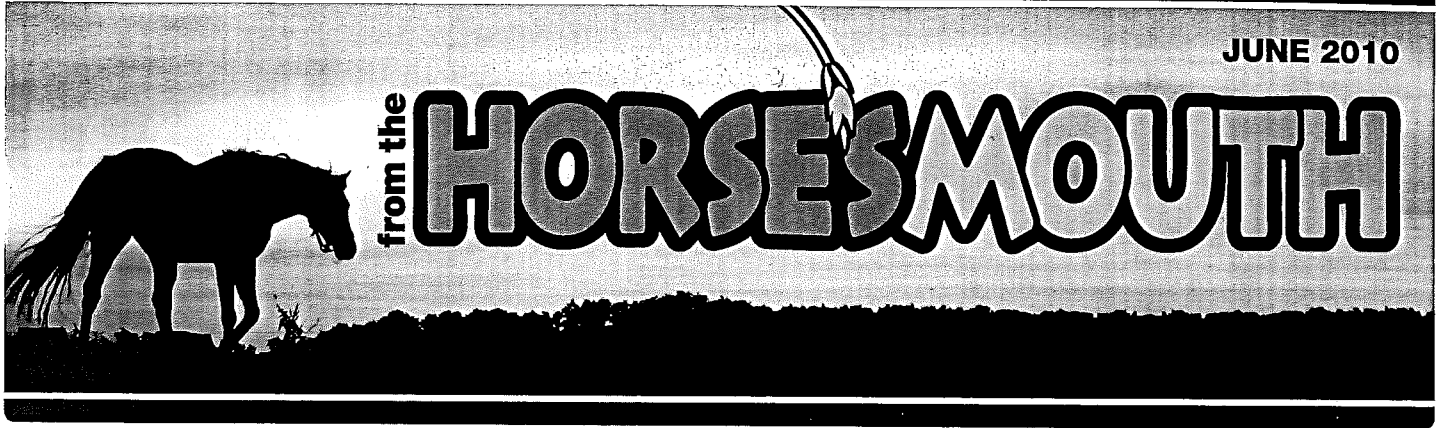


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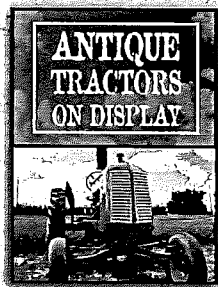
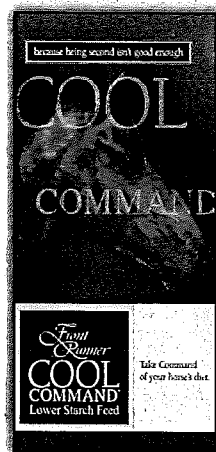


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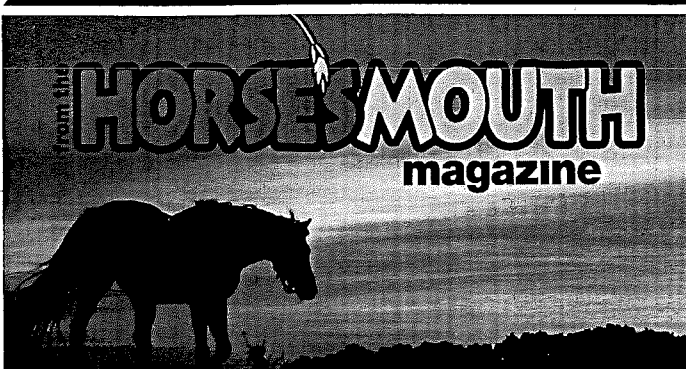
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SUPPLING THROUGH CIRCLES



HORSE LOGIC
Improving communication with your horse

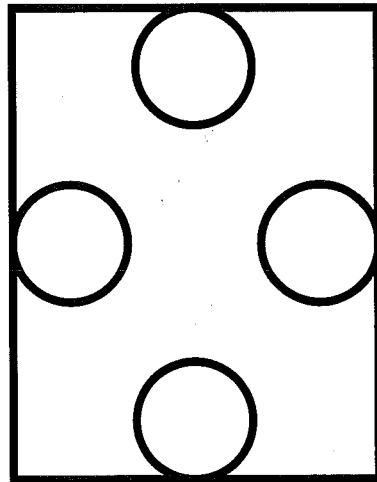
Does your horse have a favorite direction to be ridden in? Does he ride more smoothly and with better contact in one direction? I have a straightforward exercise that can help correct and straighten your horse. This exercise takes 2 basic shapes and uses them to loosen and stretch your horse so that he will be easier to ride in either direction. It will also help you to coordinate your aids and improve your timing with the aids.

It is best to start out with your normal warm up routine. This should take about 15-20 minutes. After your warm up you are ready to start the "Suppling through circles" exercise which is the work session of your ride. This is a very valuable exercise that can be made progressively more difficult by making the circles smaller as well as increasing the gait at which the exercise is performed. This exercise is very helpful in loosening a horse that is stiff either direction, as well as improving rider timing and use of aids.

You start this exercise at the walk and then progress in gait as your skill increases. You will start by riding on the rail. As you are riding on the rail, you add a circle on each side of the arena. The circle should be added towards the center of each side, so you will be riding 1 circle for each side. This includes both the short and long sides of the arena. My recommendation is to start with 20 meter circles (the average size of a lunge circle), and also start with the walk.

You ride this exercise by riding around on the rail (outside) of your

arena. Then in the center of each side you ride a circle, maintaining the gate at which you are riding. For example you are riding down the long side at the walk, towards the center you start riding your 20 meter circle (this is the size I recommend to start with) while maintaining the same speed of walk, and return back to the rail, continuing with the exercise. You will then ride the next side at walk as well and start your circle as you approach the center of that side.



Now you can add trot into this exercise. If the trot is more difficult for you and your horse, start by only changing 2 of the circles to trot circles, and leaving the others at a walk. For example you can trot on the long sides and walk on the short sides. After you are comfortable with trotting 2 of the circles proceed to trot all 4 of the circles. As the trot becomes easy you start by adding 2 canter circles, while keeping the other 2 at trot. Once this is fairly easy to do you can canter all 4 circles.

As the speed becomes easier you can start gradually reducing the size of the circles. As you are reducing the circles size reduce the speed again until it is easier for you and your horse to ride. For example start by trotting the smaller circles, perform this in both directions before adding the canter. Always stay within you and your horses comfort level for any exercise. You can also add more circles to the long sides, and also alternate with different shaped circles as well. For example, on the long sides ride a larger circle and the short sides ride slightly smaller circles. You can mix up the circle shapes and sizes as long as both you and your horse are comfortable.

After repeating this exercise for several weeks you should notice an improvement in your horses suppleness and in his ability to ride either direction easily.

Enjoy the warmer temperatures and stay safe. The next several articles will be more exercises and work sessions to allow you and your horse to progress as a team.

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Sara McKinness

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nell, Indiana, for a man to leave his new bride alone and go riding with his pals on his wedding day. The penalty is a week in jail. (What if the bride wants to go riding with her saddle pals?)

In Bismark, North Dakota, every home within the limits of Bismark must have a hitching post in the front yard.

Budds Creek, Maryland, has an antique law which prohibits horses from sleeping in a bathtub, unless the rider is also sleeping with the horse. (Finally, a law that makes sense! This is how I prefer to sleep! Pass me another margarita please.)

In Headland, Alabama: "Any man on horseback shall not tempt another man's wife. (Heavens no! Get off your horse first!) An unmarried horseman should not stop overnight when the woman is alone."

Bluff, Utah's legislation regarding the Sabbath: Women who happen to be single, widowed or divorced are banned from riding to church on Sunday. Unattached females who take part in such outlandish activities can be arrested and put in jail.

Citizens are prohibited from buying, selling or trading horses "after the sun goes down" in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, without first getting permission from the sheriff.

In Schurz, Nevada, they have an old law which prohibits the trading of a horse after dark.

In Pee Wee, West Virginia, people are prohibited from swapping horses in the town square at noon!

A unique law in Pine Ridge, South Dakota where horses are banned from neighing between midnight and 6 a.m. near a "residence inhabited by human beings."

And in Pocatigo, Georgia, horses aren't allowed to be heard neighing after 10 p.m. (OK, how do you enforce this?)

Paradise, California, retains a most unusual law that says it is illegal to let a horse sleep in a bakery within the limits of the community. What about goats, cows, etc.?? Only horses are mentioned.

In Sutherland, Iowa, a law governs how horses may be seen when on the streets during evening hours. The animal must always have a light attached to its tail and a horn of some sort on its head.

No rodeos in this town! No man is allowed to ride his horse "in a violent manner" if he happens to be in Boone,

North Carolina.

Female riders in Clearbrook, Minnesota, be aware of this one governing the heel length of a horsewoman's shoes. Any such woman can wear heels measuring no more than 1-1/2 inches in length.

A loony clothing ordinance in Upper-ville, Virginia, bans a married woman from riding a horse down a street while wearing



"body hugging clothing." A \$2 fine can be imposed on any female rider who wears "clothing that clings to her body."

An attorney can be barred from practicing law in Corvallis, Oregon, should he refuse to accept a horse in lieu of his legal fees.

Trying to find a wife? Watch out in Tranquility, New Jersey that you don't violate this law. The law states that a person can't distribute handbills while on horseback as a means of advertising for a wife.

It is against the law in California for horses to mate in public within five hundred yards of any church, school or tavern! The penalty can be a \$500 fine and six months in jail. This law isn't clear as to whether the horse or the owner is fined and jailed.

McAllen, Texas, has outlawed citizens from taking pictures of horses on the Sabbath. Any person who "disturbs" or "otherwise antagonizes a horse" in this manner will be subject to a fine of at least \$1.50 and can be jailed for as much as "three full days and nights."

In Burdoville, Vermont, it states that "no horses are allowed to roam loose between March 1 and October 20!

In case you have an accident in Hor-tonville, New York, here's their antique law: "The rider of any horse involved in an accident resulting in death shall immediately dismount and give his name and address to the person killed.

Watch out in Rhinelander, Wisconsin if you are riding a horse while intoxicated! An old ordinance takes care of the problem. Such a horseman, per the law, must be given a "large dose of castor oil." Who doles out the penalty? The horseman's wife! Refusal to take the castor oil results in a fine!

In closing, a summation of Clergy-man Henry Ward Beecher's view on the art of lawmaking holds so much truth. "We bury men when they are dead, but we try to embalm the dead body of laws, keeping the corpse in sight long after the vitality has gone. It usually takes a hundred years to make a law; and then, after the law has done its work, it usually takes another hundred years to get rid of it."

And of course, only in Texas:

"No shooting of buffalo from the second story window of the hotel."

"You are unable to tuck your pants into one boot unless you own ten or more cattle."

"When you are released from jail, you must be given a horse and a shotgun, if you request it." (I know where I want to serve time!)

Have a good ride and for heaven's sake, obey those silly horse laws in your home state; I don't want to see you get arrested!

Author Cindy K. Roberts is a contributing feature and column writer that has a lifetime experience with horses and mules.

Cindy's equine heart, and passion for the wilderness rich in wild west history keeps her on the road with her paint horse, "Cowboy" and palomino mule - in search of the cowgirl spirit. Cindy can be reached through her web site everycowgirlsdream.com or write cindy@everycowgirlsdream.com



Cindy Roberts

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Legal Bits

By Yvonne C. Ocrant
Attorney at Law

EQUESTRIAN HELMET LAWS: ARE YOU IN OR OUT?

The dangerous nature of equestrian activities and the need for increased safety measures has become an increasingly hot topic over the past several years with accidents including rotational flips at Rolex, crashes at the Derby, and, most recently, Courtney King-Dye's fall while schooling dressage in Wellington, Florida. Reviewing these and other equestrian related accidents proves that helmets can, and do, minimize injuries. As a result, state and local equestrian helmet legislation has been proposed to require helmets in equestrian events, some defining the type of helmet, the equestrian event, and/or the age of the participant. While the increased protection helmets provide is arguably undisputable, the need for legislation mandating helmets in equine activities is a continuing debate. This article introduces the development helmet laws, outlines the current state of legislation and debate, and provides considerations for the entire equine industry on this hotly contested issue.

An Introduction to Helmets in Equine Activities

Equestrian helmet legislation began with the horseracing industry. In 1956, jockey LeRoy Nelson died from head injuries sustained at the Caliente Race-track. The California Horse Racing Board made it mandatory for all riders to wear a helmet while exercising or racing horses on the track. The United States Pony Club (USPC) has always required helmets and has been credited with developing the first protective hat for non-racing equine activities. USPC even sent their helmets out for testing and requested the American Society of

Testing and Materials (ASTM), which had developed headgear standards for other sports, to develop standards for equestrian helmets. In 1990, the ASTM published the specification which is now recognized as the safety standard for helmets used in the majority of eques-

helmet had been worn.

Plantation, Florida became the first city in the United States to adopt mandatory helmet legislation by enacting an ordinance requiring children under the age of 16 to use approved helmets when riding horses on public property

Equestrian helmet legislation began with the horseracing industry.

trian sports. The Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) is a separate non-profit organization which certifies protective equipment, including the shock-absorbing capacity of helmets, the effectiveness of the harness strap to hold the helmet in place during a fall, and the helmet's ability to handle extreme temperatures. In 1983, the USPC adopted the ASTM/SEI standard for helmets. The USPC safety study showed a 26% decrease in the number of reported head injuries and a 62% decrease in the number of facial injuries when comparing figures from before the 1983 standard and those from 1983 to 1990.

The Development of Helmet Laws and Ordinances

Equestrian helmet legislation often arises out of tragic accidents where injuries could have been lessened or lives saved if an approved equestrian

and parents and horse providers were required to enforce this law. The law became effective in 1999 after a 15 year old girl died when her horse bolted into a fire hydrant and threw her to the pavement and the medical examiner concluded that a helmet might have saved her life. Ironically, approximately two weeks after the girl's accident, her fourteen year old friend fell from a horse and was kicked in the head. The boy survived with only minor injuries while his cracked and demolished helmet likely saved his life.

New York became the first state to mandate helmet use for minors (under the age of 14) in 1999 after a 23 year old woman from Buffalo died as a result of falling from a Western saddle during a trail ride. The general purpose of the bill was to decrease the number of head injuries resulting from horseback riding accidents and was

supported by the fact that other sports less dangerous than horseback riding, such as bicycle riding, already had mandatory helmet laws. The law also requires any horse provider to provide helmets to beginning rider and riders under 14 years old and to offer helmets to all riders regardless of age or experience, and provide helmet safety information to all riders.

Ontario, Canada enacted a statute in 2001 after a rider's horse bolted and she fell from her saddle with her foot tangled in a stirrup and dragged about 150 meters – she was not wearing a helmet. The owner of the ranch and the head trail guide were arrested and charged with criminal negligence. The Ontario statute requires anyone under the age of 18 to wear a helmet while riding a horse and requires any premises containing a horse riding establishment to post a sign stating that: "Helmets to be worn by all persons under age 18."

Norco, California enacted an ordinance in 2007 after a Christmas Eve death of a 12 year old Norco resident who was thrown from a horse and suffered massive head injuries.

Florida passed a state-wide law in 2009 after a 12 year old Loxahatchee resident, not wearing a helmet, died from injuries sustained after a horse she was riding backed into a tree and fell over.

Some states have tried and failed to enact legislation, and some have revised their proposed bills which eventually became law. For example, California and Texas have both introduced bills that have failed.

California, critics pointed out that competition rules required specific headgear for competition and that the proposed law would require riders to choose to abide by the competition rules or break the state law. They also advocated their right to choose the hat of their choice whether because of tradition, heritage, or other reasons. Notably, now USEF rules for Western competition state that a helmet may be worn without penalty.

Texas' proposed bill initially required "rodeo helmets" for all rodeo participants under 18 years old. After strong opposition by the Texas High School Rodeo Association, the bill was revised and, with

the support of the Association, passed to only mandate helmets and vests for bull riders under 18 years old.

Maryland and Massachusetts are currently considering proposed legislation.

The Opposition to Helmets and Helmet Laws

Challenges to wearing helmets include the appearance and tradition of those on the market. Manufacturer's attempts to develop helmets which resemble Western cowboy hats have failed due to their large appearance and size. Opponents challenge the fit of helmets complaining they are uncomfortable, hot, and bulky. They say that helmets only protect a small part of the body and therefore do not offer "complete" protection and that the most risk is only in competition and therefore they are not needed in training. Some also say that helmets are only needed for beginners. Opposition to mandatory helmet legislation includes conflict between the law and competition rules, resistance to the government controlling whether an individual wears a helmet or not stating it should be left to a personal decision (like the motorcycle helmet debate), and the enforceability of helmet laws in remote public areas such as state parks or if the law is expanded to private lands.

The Support for Wearing Helmets is There, But the Support for Legislation is Not

Helmet manufacturers, government legislatures, medical associations, and most equine associations support helmet safety. The manufacturers publish safety statistics and advocate that all riders wear a helmet meeting the well recognized standards and have worked hard to improve the fit and design to meet customer demands for safety and style. Government legislatures cite injury statistics to encourage helmet wearing as in the public interest to reduce medical costs on the general public. Medical associations support wearing helmets in all disciplines of horseback riding. Equine associations actively educate members about helmet safety and encourage members' use through campaigns and rules allowing helmets without competition penalties.

However, equine participants are not so unanimously supportive of mandatory helmet legislation. Most individuals recognize the safety risks of being on or around horses, however, many of these same people feel stronger about the freedom of choice when it comes to wearing a helmet.

While the Debate Continues, Consider These Precautions

If you are an individual who rides your own horse in Illinois and there are no local laws, barn rules, or boarding or liability contracts that require you to wear a helmet, you have the right to choose to ride with or without one. If you are a professional or facility providing horses, provide helmets to these riders and only provide ASTM/SEI certified helmets or helmets that otherwise meet the required standards for the intended activity. Chemicals, time, extreme temperatures, and involvement in a fall can affect the integrity of the helmet and therefore it is recommended that helmets be replaced every five years or after any type of fall. Finally, this author recommends professionals and facilities utilize separate Hard Hat Agreement, in addition to your liability release, to be signed by any adult who voluntarily elects to engage in an equine activity without a helmet. This Agreement should state that there are increased risks of riding without protective head gear and the participant agrees to release the professional and/or facility for any injuries, including death, that may result from not wearing a helmet and/or from any injuries, including death, that may have been prevented if proper head gear had been worn.

This article is intended for informational and educational purposes only. It is provided with the understanding that the author is not rendering legal advice to From the Horse's Mouth readers. If you have questions or concerns regarding this article's subject matter, you may contact the author, a licensed equine law attorney, at yocrant@hinshawlaw.com

Yvonne C. Ocrant

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