

# THE OUTSIDE REIN

While traveling on straight lines, the horse should go forward evenly to both reins. But in order for the horse to remain relaxed and in balance when moving on curved lines, he must move out into the outside rein. This will allow him to balance himself and relax the muscles in his inside rib cage.

In order to better understand why the horse should move into the outside rein on a curved line, it is important to understand the consequence of the horse leaning on the inside rein. If the rider is not successful in using half-halts to prepare (rebalance) the horse for the turn, the horse may lean into the turn and take too much support on the inside rein, and as a result, fall on the forehand.

If the horse is ridden on a curved line while carrying too much weight on the forehand, he will be forced to place his weight over his inside shoulder, and perhaps even to counter-bend, so that he can keep his balance. This causes the horse to tense and makes it difficult for him to step under himself with his hind legs. As a result, he loses engagement and self-carriage. If the rider succeeds in bending this tense horse inwards, he has achieved it by pulling on the inside rein - and the horse will most likely react by tilting his head.

Now, let us return to the rider that proceeds correctly...

The rider begins by making half-halts to move as much of the weight as necessary from the front legs to the hind legs, so that the horse can stay in balance when he begins to turn—see the chapter in this section called Riding Through Corners. When the horse's center of gravity has shifted further back, he is better prepared to follow the rider's weight, which can now be moved inward. The rider shifts his weight inward by lowering his inside heel and knee, while at the same time pushing his inside hip forward slightly. When the rider attempts to place his weight inward, he must be careful not to collapse his inside hip and lean to the inside.

It is the horse moving out into the outside rein that creates the bending around the rider's inside leg. In other words, when the horse feels a need to reach to the outside rein, he almost offers to bend to the inside.

The horse seeks contact to the outside rein when the rider, by driving with the inside leg, sends energy diagonally through the horse's body to the outside rein, which gently meets this energy. But we must not forget the rider's outside leg when talking about the outside rein. When asking the horse to bend, the rider's outside leg is normally placed a little further back than normal, keeping the rear-end from falling out and acting as a training wheel. We want to prevent the hind

end from drifting outside the curved line on which we are asking the horse to travel. The same aids are used to create the bending that is required in movements such as shoulder-in, turn on the haunches and half pass.

***In order to bend the horse correctly so that he can remain upright and in self carriage on a curved line, he must be ridden diagonally out and into the outside rein.***