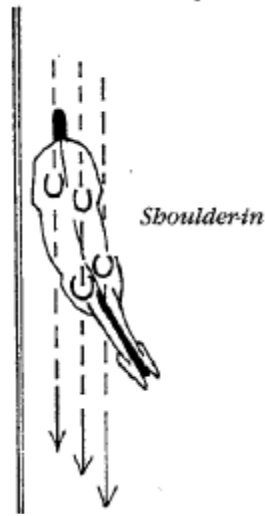


# Shoulder-In

[Source: Advanced Techniques of Riding]



## Definition

“This exercise is performed in collected trot. The horse is ridden with a slight but uniform bend around the inside leg of the rider maintaining cadence at a constant angle of approx. 30 degrees. The horse’s inside foreleg passes and crosses in front of the outside foreleg; the inside hind leg steps forward under the horse’s body weight following the same track of the outside foreleg, with the lowering of the inside hip. The horse is bent away from the direction in which it is moving.” [USEF Rule Book DR111]

“The inside hind leg is brought well forward in the direction of the outside foreleg. The inside hock is engaged more and carries most of the weight because of the diagonal position of the horse, the lateral bend, and the increased collection.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 39]

“Standing in front of the horse, one should see only three legs. The inside foreleg, the outside foreleg which hides the inside hind, and the outside hind.” [The Dressage Horse, p 140]

“Shoulder-in is a lateral movement in which a horse is on three tracks:

track 1 = outside hind,

track 2 = inside hind and outside fore,

track 3 = inside fore. The rider slightly displaces the forehead to the inside of the track. The horse is bent away from the direction in which it is moving. The bend through the body is created by the horse slightly lowering its inside hip and bringing its inside hind more under its body and into the track of the outside foreleg, allowing it to go on three tracks.” [Canadian Equestrian Federation Coaching Manual Level 3, p 23]

## Gymnastic Purpose

The objective of the shoulder-in is to achieve a higher degree of collection as well as ‘Durchlässigkeit’ (throughness), lightness, and better balance. This, in turn, improves the horse’s straightness.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 39]

“Because of the positioning of the horse to the inside, the carrying ability of the quarters is asked more [challenged], loaded more and flexed more – thus the horse gains in collection. Because of the positioning of the horse to the inside, the pushing aids can be increased without fear of not being able to hold it through [losing the bend] – this allows an improvement in Schwung.

The ability of the horse to bend through his length is advanced, improving the straightening ability of the horse. Through the gymnastic development of the horse’s quarters, the straightening bending work and the increased activity of the shoulders, the freedom of the shoulder will be improved. The forward-sideways movement refines the horse’s obedience to the leg and with it the entire “throughness” of the horse. Finally, the shoulder-in is a marvelous method to make the horse softer and more supple in the jawl.” [The Dressage Horse, p 140]

“Shoulder-in is used to supple and engage a horse and make him obedient to the aids. It is not only a suppling movement but also a collecting movement, because every step the horse must move his inside hind leg underneath his body and place it in front of the outside hind leg, which he is unable to do without lowering his inside hip.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 97]

### **Qualities Desired**

The qualities desired are correct bend, better collection and engagement of the inside hind leg, maintenance of the rhythm, regularity and balance as well as lightness, suppleness and ease of movement.

### **Aids**

“The horse is led into the shoulder-in with a half-halt. The inside rein ‘guides’ the forehand to the inside. The outside hand allows the shoulder to move forward and limits the bend passively. As in turning, the inside rein shows the way, the outside rein gives support, thus maintaining balance. The rider slightly weights the inside seat bone and checks that the shoulder does not come behind the movement. The inside lower leg lies closely to the girth to maintain the bend in the ribs, causing the inside hind leg to step forward, and maintain the sideways movement.

The outside lower leg is passive unless required when the outside hind leg falls out. To finish the shoulder-in, the outside rein and inside lower leg guide the forehand back to the track.” [The Dressage Horse, p 140]

### **Training Advice**

“In practice, the shoulder-in is continued coming out of the first corner of the long side, as the horse is already bending and it is easier to draw the inside hind leg underneath. One rides out of the corner as if one wishes to carry on with the turn leading with the inside rein and lower leg into the sideways movement. In the beginning, one uses less flexion and angle, that is to say, one rides shoulder-fore and then by increasing the flexion, leads into a few steps of shoulder-in.

Should the Takt (rhythm) and/or Schwung (swing/impulsion) be lost, or should the required bend be lost, one leads the horse back to the track, flexes him equally on both reins and rides him forward before beginning again with the shoulder-in.” [The Dressage Horse, p 141]

“If one feels that the bend is insufficient at the beginning of the shoulder-in, a correct course is to execute one or more voltes. Whenever one feels that the hind limbs are starting to disengage and to slacken, the best procedure is to ride forwards energetically toward the center of the arena until impulsion is restored and only then resume the lateral movement on the new track.”  
[Dressage, A Guidebook for the Road to Success, p 73]

### **Common Mistakes**

- “The horse’s neck is bent too much, often seen when the angle of the movement is too narrow.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 105] “This is mostly the result of too strong an inside rein action, causing too much bend in the neck. The fault is corrected by using less inside rein and stronger controlling influence of the outside rein (outside half-halt) with the hand carried lower and close to the withers.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 40]
- “The angle is too wide, which impairs the freedom, regularity and harmony of the pace, and restricts the impulsion.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 105] “This is usually caused by using the inside leg too strongly and too far back. The rider must also be careful that the horse does not tilt its head. This can be caused by using the inside rein too strongly or by the horse’s lack of acceptance of the outside rein.” [Advanced Techniques of Riding, p 40]
- “The impulsion is lost because of the rider’s preoccupation with bending the horse and pushing him sideways.
- The movement is not executed in the same manner on both reins, which also will influence the scoring of the General Impressions under Submission.”
- “Another problem is when the horse tilts his head in the shoulder-in. On the right rein especially, one can see that the right ear is lower. This can be because the rider hangs onto the outside rein, working with too strong an outside hand, or that the horse does not step evenly into both reins.” [Practical Dressage Manual, p 105]

Excerpt from the “USDF Training Manual”