

Lesson Topic: Turn on the Forehand

Purpose

This movement teaches the rider the use and effect of the forward and sideways driving aids. It teaches the horse obedience and response to these aids. As he turns his hindquarter around the forehand in walk steps, it improves coordination and brings about suppleness. Turn on the forehand teaches the elementary coordination of the aids essential to the further development of the rider. The turn on the forehand prepares the horse and rider for leg-yielding. Both exercises can be used in combination and provide the rider with effective gymnastic schooling that creates a supple and willing horse.

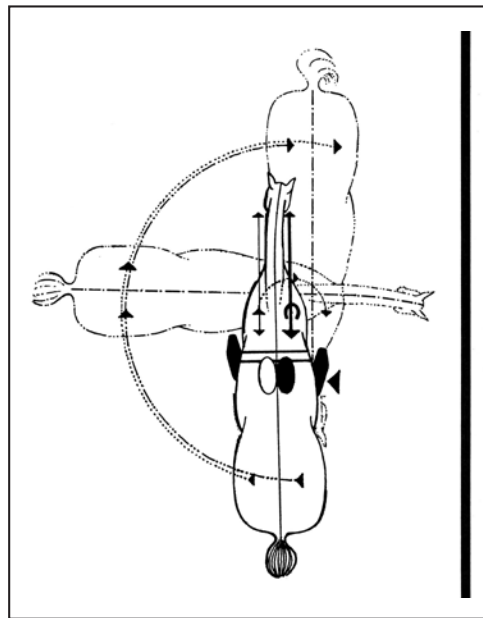
Execution

From medium walk on the inside track (about one meter in from track) the horse is brought to a square halt. The horse is on the bit. Position him slightly through the inside poll and jaw into the direction of the turn. This makes the former outside his new inside. Shift your weight more to your inside seat bone without collapsing your torso. Place your inside leg slightly behind the girth and drive him step by step around the forehand. He steps around his inside front leg. The rider carries a whip in the inside hand to reinforce the leg aid if needed. The outside leg behind the girth receives and feels every step and prevents the quarters from rushing. The supportive outside rein keeps the neck straight at the withers and prevents falling out through the outside shoulder. In the beginning, be satisfied with two or three steps. Halt and praise the horse before you continue with the completion of the half-turn. Praise and walk or trot on to refresh the forward idea. Repeat in both directions.

Once the horse understands the exercise, it can be ridden anywhere in the arena, but allow room for the quarters to turn and avoid using the track, as he may not have room for his neck and head without contacting the wall. The turn on the forehand can be ridden in 90°, 180°, or 360° turns.

In a correctly executed and balanced turn on the forehand, it is important that:

1. The horse's front feet continue to step clearly up and down in walk rhythm and that the pivoting point of the turn is next to the inside foreleg.
2. The horse is kept straight through the withers, being positioned only at the poll.
3. The inside positioning makes possible the bending of all the joints of the inside hind leg so that it can lift up and cross over in front of the outside hind leg.
4. The rider's inside leg is actually placed only very slightly behind the girth. Putting it too far back diminishes its positive effect and may displace the rider's weight to the outside.



Turn on the forehand away from the rider's right leg.

Common Faults

1. Rider pulls on inside rein when using inside leg, pulling the horse's neck off its base. The effect of the inside leg pushes the horse out of balance over the outside shoulder and the quarters cannot turn because the connection through the whole spine has been lost at the withers. The horse drifts sideways.
Correction: Keep outside rein supported by seat and back to prevent collapse at the withers. Rider needs to separate seat and leg aids from upper body to use leg aids independently from torso, arms, and hands.
2. Rider lifts seat, leans forward, weight on toes and pulls on both reins causing the horse to rush backwards with hollow back, either above or behind the bit.
Correction: Teach rider to sit down without tension and improve his or her independent seat on the lunge, practicing transitions with seat and weight aids.

3. Horse gets “stuck” due to either loss of balance onto forehand or lack of understanding; or horse may actually back up if rider is drawing on both reins.
Correction for both: Put forehand in front of hindquarters to get onto a straight line and ride clearly forward in trot.
4. Horse does not understand forward-sideways driving leg aid and twists himself out of contact through the outside shoulder, head high.
Correction: Instructor helps from the ground by tapping the horse lightly with the whip behind the rider’s leg. Rider sits in correct balance, quietly keeping the horse straight and light on inside flexion.
Note: Introduce the green horse to moving the quarters sideways around the forehand from the ground without a rider as part of lungeing or work in hand.