



Coventry Equestrian Center

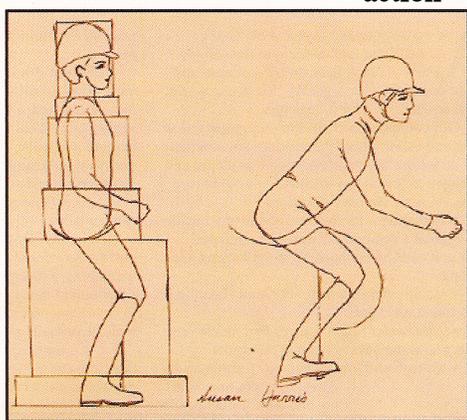


In Stride w/ Coventry Report #154
www.CoventryEquestrianCenter.com



➡ Horses survived being in all week last week. Remember, if it rains the horses are not getting turned out.

Going with the Horse, or behind the action



Drawing by Susan Harris, Senior Level IV Centered Riding Instructor for Cortland, NY

After reading the George Morris article I wrote, someone asked me what is "going and not going with the motion of the horse?"

To the left is a drawing of a rider sitting in correct alignment on a horse ~

ears, shoulder, hip and ankle all in one vertical line. When the rider goes to jumping position, or two point the hip and ankle still stay in alignment. See how the rider has brought the hands forward in jumping position to counter act being forward? A lot of riders try to leave their hands by the withers when in jumping position, not good. You have to move them forward to counter act the already forward position. And, how do you move them forward, from the elbows, of course! So these two riders are going "with the action of the horse," and are not behind the action of the horse.

As, George Morris states, and every other person who teaches riding, **correct form equals correct function on the horse.** Often riders get frustrated, and ask, "what am I doing wrong, my horse does not understand me and is not responding the way I want." When simply it is a lack of good form or inability to clearly communicate to the horse that is causing the problem.

First, the rider has to learn the correct position of riding, then learn how to go with the horse with out impeding the three natural gaits of the horse, and then learn how to influence the horse with the aids using the correct timing of the aids that work in harmony with the natural gaits of the horse. Horses are not robots, and they basically adapt to the signals of the rider. How a horse responds is typically rider influenced.

A rider that is in the wrong position will always be riding out of tune, or harmony with the horse. One of the worst

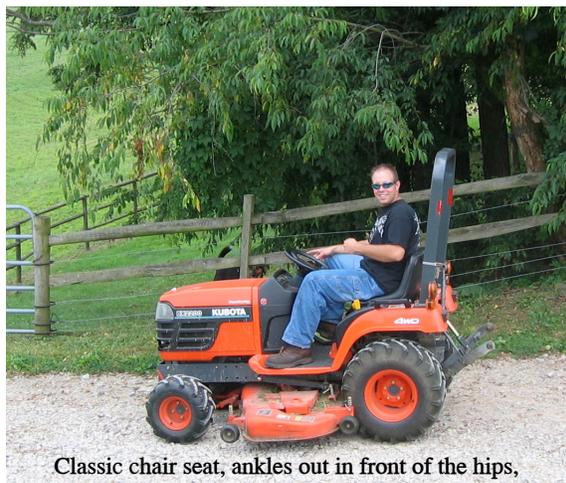
riding habits, that I see too often, is the rider who rides behind the action of the horse. This is called a "chair seat." Riding in a chair seat, when the ankles are in front of the hips, will always put a rider "behind the motion of the horse." It also keeps the rider from being able to "go with the horse" because they are constantly behind the motion of the horse.

You cannot stand on the ground with your ankles in front of your hips, you will fall down, on your buttocks. The only reason a rider can incorrectly sit on a horse with the ankle forward putting them behind the motion, is because the horse's back supports them. If you took the horse away, they would again fall on their butt. A correctly aligned person, if you took the horse away, will land on his feet.

Riding, a lot, in jumping position teaches a rider to keep the leg (from the knee down) under the hip. I am constantly asking riders to get into jumping position to get the lower leg where it belongs, then come into a posting trot while maintaining the correct leg position. Sounds easy. But, the rider also is not suppose to hold the leg there, but allow it to stay there. If the rider grips with the legs or joints, then that will interfere with the ability to allow the joints of the legs to "go with the horse," and absorb the motion of the horse's gaits, or for the rider to simply use a leg aid. Yikes, and you thought it was easy...hardly, riding is a life time pursuit!

Teaching riding is teaching the correct form on a horse so a rider can then influence the horse with the correctly positioned aids. Riders who are learning need to read the classical texts to become educated. Listen to videos, dvd, read the books, what ever it takes to enhance your understanding of this equestrian art.

From Wikipedia: The Seat: Most of the time, the seat stays in a neutral position in the saddle, neither restraining nor encouraging forward movement, simply following and absorbing the horse's motion. In general, the rider's hips should be placed so that they mimic the position of the horse's hips, and the rider's shoulders mirroring the position of the horse's shoulders. This allows the rider to follow the movement correctly, helps to keep the rider balanced in the saddle, and helps to guide the horse with minimal effort.



Classic chair seat, ankles out in front of the hips, rider sitting on coccyx instead of seat bones causing the back to round and roach! If we took the tractor away, he would land on his butt. Yes, this is funny, but riders sit like this on horses, no wonder they are "behind the action."

Open this link to read about my clinic experience with George Morris

<http://blythdale.tripod.com/coventryequestriancenter/id73.html>

