



www.CoventryEquestrianCenter.com

*A Day in
the Life at
Coventry*

Horses out
today and
yesterday
romping in
the snow.

Turning the Shoulders

When someone first told me I had to get the horse on the outside rein to turn, I thought what! This does not make sense. But, over the years because no one explained why to me, I figured it out. Simply turning the horse from the outside rein, keeps the horse's horizontal balance (back to front). When the horse is in balance it works equally in both directions, and performs more efficiently and effectively. When you show dressage you perform geometrical figures that mirror one another. Essentially what you are showing is how well you have trained your horse in both directions ~ to the left and right and then you get the judges opinion on how well you are training the horse!



To the left is a photo of a horse turning to the left from the outside rein. Notice his head is in the middle of his shoulders. He is in balance and not falling onto the inside shoulder or "popping" the outside shoulder which happens when you turn from the inside rein. This rider is using an opening or leading inside left rein (so the horse does not bend), her left shoulder (torso/seat) is moving in the direction she is turning the horse and her outside rein is keeping the horse

straight and turning. Looks simple.

A good exercise to learn to turn the horse from the shoulders is the quarter turn. Here is a link

to an article I wrote about quarter turns in 1991. <http://blythdale.tripod.com/coventryequestriancenter/id42.html> A good book about turning the horse from the shoulders is Dressage with Kyra: The Kyra Kyrklund Training Method. It is hard to find a photo of a 'popped' shoulder or a horse that is not straight and, as result loading equally on both sides of it body, because I am always shooting for that perfect photo and my students are that good. Ha ha ☺ But from the archives here are two photos that at least clarify the concept of turning the shoulders and a "popped" shoulder. The photo above is one of my favorites of a horse stepping under and starting to stretch.

You can see how he is bent left and the right shoulder is *s l i g h t l y* "popping" to the outside. This is a mild exam-



ple of a popped shoulder but it gives you an idea. In the photo below the same horse and rider are straight and the horse's shoulders are behind the horse's neck and head, not off to the side. The USDF training scale, Relaxed, Rhythmic, Contact (round) Straight and then Impulsion... are the basics of training.



