

The Program by Carl Wood
Lesson 3 & 4

3. Circle down into a spin. Walk in a circle about 20 feet across. Make it as round as possible. Horse must be looking where he is going just like in a turn. You have outside leg pressure and out side hip down. Gradually pick up both your hands towards your inside shoulder pulling back just a little as you go. (Make sure your inside leg is off!) Spins are from forward motion so don't ask your horse to back up. We want the hind legs to stop and the front legs to continue going forward crossing the outside leg over the inside leg. At first just ask for one step over and walk out of the spin. Go back into your circle and bring it down again. As the horse improves add more stopovers until you can do a complete 360 spin. Don't worry about speed at this point just concentrate on correctness. Do several in each direction then go to the other direction. In your daily exercise program you should repeat this exercise a couple of times before your work out is finished.

4. Forward Reverse Arc. (Same side hand and same side leg.) All horses have a tendency to drop their shoulders and this is one of the most misunderstood problems riders have to deal with. Ever notice that your horse seems to make his circles smaller and smaller in a lope? How about diving off in the direction of a lead change? Or having trouble going in a straight line loping down the arena? Then you need to understand how to pick up a shoulder and put him back where he should be. Go back to your 20' circle and instead of using outside pressure we will slip our inside hip and leg around him and take our outside leg off. Now take your inside rein and pick it up and back a little to bend his neck and head towards your inside leg. Your outside hand is pretty much left alone at this point. The horse should hold his bend but move out of his circle thus making his circle more egg shaped. Don't hold it too long. Here you must start to feel what is happening under you. You should feel like a car on ice that he is slipping out of his circle no matter how you turn the steering wheel. As soon as you feel that shoulder slipping you must return your outside leg and center yourself in the saddle again and resume your circle. (Hint!!! If you were to place your cheek on your inside shoulder and look down your arm to your hand you should be pointing or aiming where you want that horse's shoulder should go.) The proper position for the horses head is bent down and he should be looking up at you with his inside eye. If his head is up in the air his shoulder is not up and maybe you need to go back to that very first bending exercise. Do several of these in each direction before going to the other direction. This is to be done at a trot a little later. Picking up the horse's shoulder really aids in crossing over for lead changes, canter departures, spins, and role backs. If your horse over bends to the inside just apply a little outside rein pressure. In time I want my horse to do a complete circle before I let go of his shoulder. In other words if you are using right rein to pick up his shoulder then you should eventually be able to move him in a complete circle to the left. (Head facing outside of the circle)