



Balance is the key to success

Sandra Sokoloski

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Balance Is The Key To Success

Developing young horses is challenging, as it requires the rider to have both a good feel of balance & the strength to keep it without tension. Feeling if balance is optimal & the body symmetrical is one thing, the strength to maintain it with a wiggly, & possibly leaping, horse under you is another. Being able to stand/kneel on one leg (both sides equally well) on a stable/unstable surface (foam pillow, bosu, wobble board, narrow stick), with eyes open or closed, is a good start. Kneeling on an exercise ball is good too.

Having the strength to stay in balance when loads are added to your body is the best judge of your riding balance. Add to the above exercises, catching a heavy ball that is thrown to you from various directions, passing a heavy weight from hand to hand with arms straight in front or overhead, having someone push you around (with the best of intentions of course) & sideways or downward hopping are great additions.

For the hopping down, jump forward off an 18-24" surface & stick the landing (start & finish on 1 leg). For sideways hopping, stand on 1 foot in a simulated riding position. Jump as far to one side as you can & land without losing balance or collapsing body sideways. Then jump back again without putting the other foot down. For symmetrical balance both legs must be equally adept. The arms cannot flail around to help with the balance & the free leg must stay hanging beside the other without touching it (hint: hips must fold back to absorb landing).

Happy hopping & sticking all your 2 & 4-footed 'landings'!