

Life Tips #3

Sandra Sokoloski

So I have been on a move-better-in-your-life crusade (who has stopped using drive-thrus!?). Look back at the previous two articles in this series if you don't know what I mean. Nevertheless, I have a couple more ideas for movements you can do in your life that will make your riding position more effective and your body healthier.

Think of how many times you go up even just 2 or 3 steps each day. In and out of the house, the garage, the tack room, and so on. Probably at least 20-30 steps each day? If that isn't the case then seek out a staircase a couple times a day. Before you go up the stairs, go into your 2-point position. Climb the stairs without changing

position from the hips up. Make sure you plant your whole foot, including the heel, on each step as you climb. Feel that you are sinking back into your glutes and pushing up from your heel. Does 'butt back and weight in your heel' sound like a familiar refrain? Make a careful note if one leg feels weaker than the other.

The second task is to practice reaching in a way that is going to allow your arm to be more relaxed and free. Most arm tension issues in riders arise from overusing the latissimus dorsi muscle. The 'lats' muscle goes from the front of the arm down past the ribs and waist and

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attaches into the middle and lower back areas. We have made our lives so convenient that we have little cause to ever reach, and this muscle seldom gets used in its stretched position.

Think of reaching into the top shelf in the kitchen or clothes closet with your left arm. Let your weight shift into your left heel, keeping your heel on the floor. Point your right toe to push your arm even higher. Feel the stretch in your whole left side. Reverse to reach with your right arm and make sure that anytime you need to reach you keep alternating sides. Again, note if one side feels a lot different than the other. Doing this as an exercise with an imaginary top shelf is a great way to improve your 'release' and to use in a warm-up before you get on your horse.

Move better, live better, ride better!!



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Donna Bassett

403.400.3528

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