

Discover Western Dressage Symposium Outline

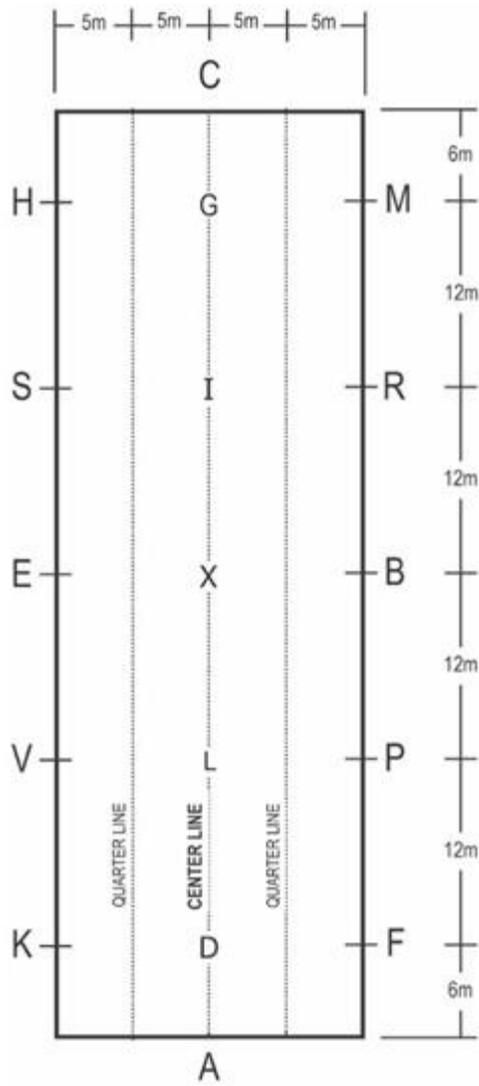
Introduction: Western Dressage is a new discipline for ALL horse breeds. It is open to all riders, regardless of age or background.

Western Dressage combines the time tested principles of classical dressage training with western stock horse tradition, emphasizing lightness and harmony with the rider. It is a systematic and progressive system of training for the western horse and rider that results in a horse that is physically strong, balanced, supple, and flexible. This equine athlete demonstrates a calm, confident, attentive attitude and is happy to do his job. Horse and rider move as one.

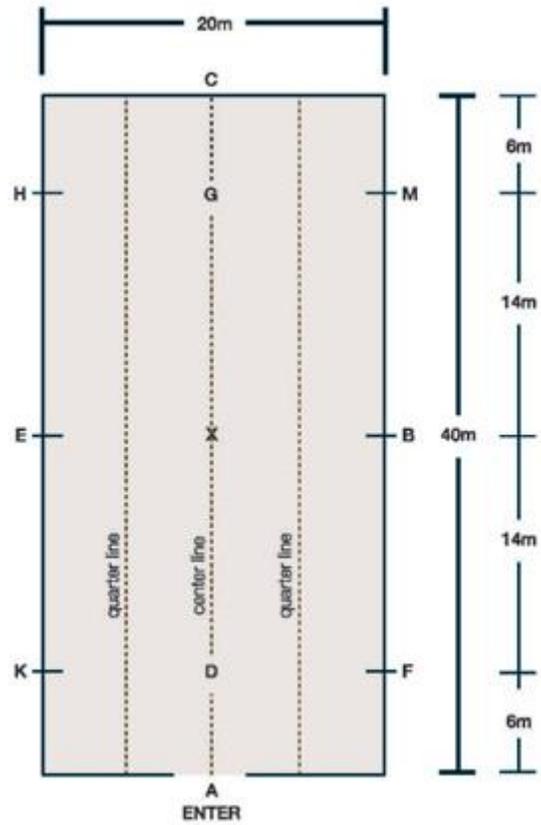
Western Dressage offers a gymnastic approach to the training of the young horse, or can be used to repurpose older horses from other disciplines. Correctly ridden, horses can benefit from Western Dressage training throughout their lifetime and enjoy long and active careers.

Western Dressage is good for the horse, and good for the rider. It offers a better way to ride and train, with no artificial gadgets or devices. It is based on respect for the horse and a desire to work together as a team. A Western Dressage partnership should culminate in a happy, harmonious horse and rider relationship, with the horse willingly and of his own accord performing the requested gaits and maneuvers.

Purpose: of the Discover Western Dressage Symposium is to facilitate the correct understanding of classical dressage principles and their application to the western horse. We will begin with an overview of the Training Scale, and move on to the Progression of Western Dressage Training. The purpose of the various movements and figures will be explained as we work up the levels. Theory will be put into practice with live demonstrations illustrating how various exercises can improve the quality of the gaits and their natural way of going. A special emphasis will be placed on the role of the rider as trainer and the importance of correct and tactful aids and a balanced seat.



The large dressage arena measure 20x60 meters.



The small arena measure 20x40 meters.

This outline was used for March 2016. It may be adjusted to accommodate each group.

Day One:

9:00 Classroom

❖ Introduction of Participants and Clinicians

❖ Western Dressage Goals and Objectives

- Review of the WDAA Rule Book

❖ Dressage 101: Basic Principles for Every Horse and Rider

- Rhythm – Understanding the natural gaits of the western horse, how to recognize a pure walk, jog, and lope
- Relaxation – What is suppleness?
- Connection – Difference between head-set and an elastic, following connection, how to achieve acceptance of the bit through acceptance of the aids
- Impulsion – Increasing energy and thrust
- Straightness – Improving alignment and balance
- Collection – Relative to the level, “absolute” vs “relative” elevation.

❖ Break

❖ Applying these Principles to the Horse

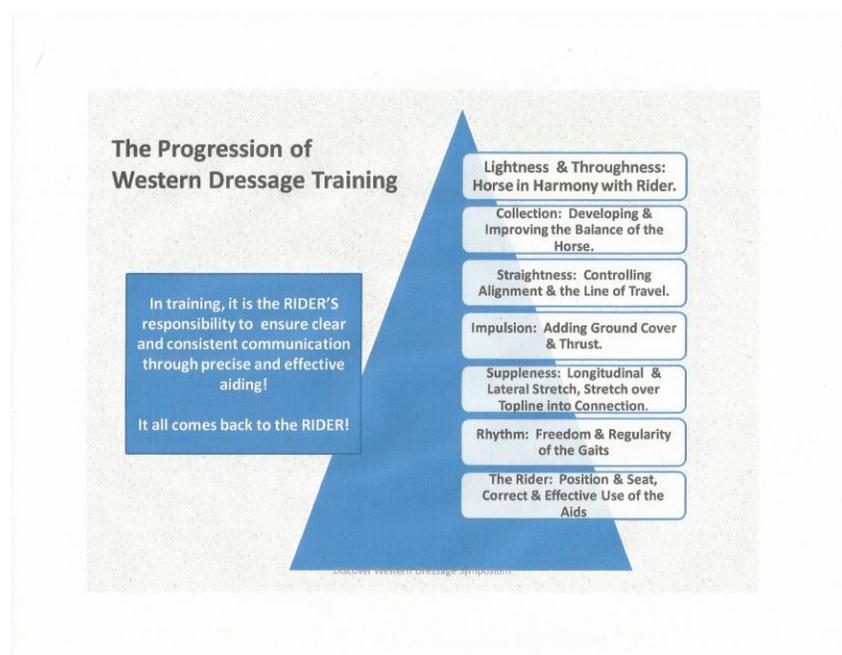
- Rider Position
- Correct and effective use of the Aids

❖ 12:00 Lunch

1:00 Demonstration

❖ Western Dressage Equitation

- Rider Position and Balance
- Clear and Effective Aids
- Horse in Front of the Leg
- Acceptance of Light Contact with the Bit
- Bending and Straightness
- Ride A Pattern



❖ **Western Dressage Suitability**

- Proper Tempo and Knowledge of Western Dressage Gaits
- Transitions
- Arena Etiquette

Day Two:

9:00 Classroom

Purpose and Criteria of the Test Requirements: Introductory and Basic Levels

- Circles, Serpentine, Loops, Corner Turn
- Transitions between gaits and within the gaits
- The Rein Back
- Geometry of the Arena

❖ **Break**

❖ **Collective Marks**

❖ **Coefficient Marks**

❖ **Discussion of Turn on Forehand, Turn on Haunches and Lateral Movements**

❖ **12:00 Lunch**

1:00 Demonstration

❖ **Western Dressage Geometry**

- Ride with Accuracy
- Walk Figures and Tests
- Practice Figures
- Test Riding Strategy

Suggested Reading:

WDAA Rulebook

Western Dressage Judge's Guidelines

Western Dressage Glossary of Terms

"Your Complete Guide to Western Dressage" by Lynn Palm

"The Riders Guide to Real Collection" by Lynn Palm

"Centered Riding" and "Centered Riding 2" by Sally Swift