

DRESSAGE PERSPECTIVES

---

# **10 REASONS WHY THE CLASSICAL SEAT IS YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE!**

TROUBLESHOOT YOUR TEST  
RIDING IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS!

[WWW.DRESSAGEPERSPECTIVES.WORDPRESS.COM](http://WWW.DRESSAGEPERSPECTIVES.WORDPRESS.COM)

1. Are you getting the comment 'lacking impulsion' from judges? More leg is almost never the right solution. Work on your core balance instead. This encourages maximum impulsion from your horse. Good rider balance really does = higher marks!

2. Do you find your horse's tempo is inconsistent? With more relaxed thigh & seat muscles you will be able to 'read' your horse and feel exactly what you need to adjust. This allows you to apply the appropriate strength of aid for each moment in time.

3. Cadence is the difference between 'so so' and 'wow' movement. Relax your legs down the horse's sides. A leg that is softly relaxed allows the horse to move your hips freely and your seat muscles to become a soft cushion. This can unlock movement you didn't know your horse had!

4. If you find your horse runs onto the hand and out of balance make sure your leg isn't rattling. A controlled leg, that does not repeatedly rattle or tap, keeps the tempo slow enough for the horse to be in balance.

5. If judges are commenting that you have inconsistent contact, open your shoulders softly and let them flex with the motion of the horse. With light steady contact comes a more relaxed back and more consistent engagement.

6. The balance of your head and your choice of sight line has a big impact on how well you perform. Everything from your breathing & core balance to your use of the arena space will instantly improve when you look up and balance your head correctly.

7. If you're struggling to get the shoulder mass on line make sure you align your shoulders to the shoulders of your horse through corners, turns, circles and lateral exercises. Good core balance makes this much easier.

8. Are you losing the back end on circles? Remember your hips align to the axis of the horse's hips. This is not the same axis as your shoulders. Counter rotation means fewer marks lost for lack of bend.

9. Do you find you are running and losing cadence through lateral work? Calf aids talk to the horse about tempo, energy levels, collection and extension. Spurs are for refining the aids which position the shoulders and quarters. This separation of tasks gives steadier tempo, greater relaxation and clarity in your communication with the horse.

10. Do you often lose marks for wobbly centre lines and crooked halts? To ride great centre lines make sure you are sitting and aiding symmetrically. Keep your aids equal through both legs, seat bones and reins.

These might be simple tips but that is not to say they are easy! Some are quick things you can implement right away and others will realistically take a lot more time to achieve. Some, like your core balance, will just carry on getting better all through your life as a rider. The good news is your horses will go better and better for it, year on year.

Changing the way you sit is the one thing that can totally change your destiny as a rider but it takes time and it takes commitment. If you are serious about your dressage it is simply the best investment you can make.

*Good luck! :)*

Dressage Perspectives