

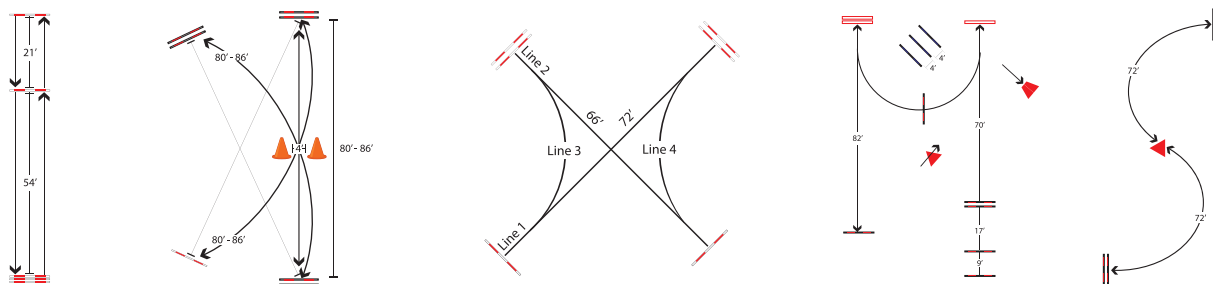
Michael Alway Laine Ashker Tim Bourke Stephen Bradley Molly Hooper Bull Jan Bynny Daniel Clasing
 Sloane Coles Robert Costello Sally Cousins Phyllis Dawson Martin Douzant Phillip Dutton Will Faudree
 Sandy Ferrell Peter Foley Patty Foster Ariel Gald Peter Gray Sam Griffiths Melissa Hunsberger Justine Jarvis
 Stephanie Jenkins Allison Kavey Ingrid Klimke Anne Kursinski Capt. John Leginham Mary Lisa Leffler



Margaret Rizzo McKelvy

GRID PRO QUO

52 Powerful Jumping Exercises
 from the World's Top Riders



Boyd Martin Caroline Martin Sinead Maynard Tik Maynard Jenni McAllister Margaret Rizzo McKelvy
 Heather Parish Richard Picken Caroline Powell Valerie Pride Waylon Roberts Jenn Schuessler
 Kim Severson Brett Shear-Heyman Eric Smiley Allison Springer Sheryl Sutherby Meghan Truppner
 Skyeler Voss Danny Warrington Whitney Weston Sharon White Kelley Williams Ryan Wood

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OF EXERCISES BY TYPE

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EXERCISE

Traditional Gymnastic

EXPERT

Ariel Grald

*of Ariel Grald Equestrian
in Southern Pines, North Carolina*

This is a great exercise for riders who have limited jumps to work with, and perhaps limited space. The setup is easy, and the distances are versatile for horses of varying abilities.

/ MATERIALS NEEDED

- 4 jump poles
- 4 set of jump standards
- Flower boxes or other filler (optional)
- Extra ground poles for warm-up

/ SETUP

- You can place this exercise most anywhere in your arena, as long as you can approach it from both directions.
- Place a few ground poles randomly around your arena for warm-up.

▽ About the expert:

Based at Annie Eldridge's Setters' Run Farm in Vass, North Carolina, Ariel Grald has competed through the five-star level on her long-time partner Leamore Master Plan. Ariel enjoys developing young horses through the top levels, as well as helping riders reach their goals. ♦

www.settersrunfarm.com

/ WHY

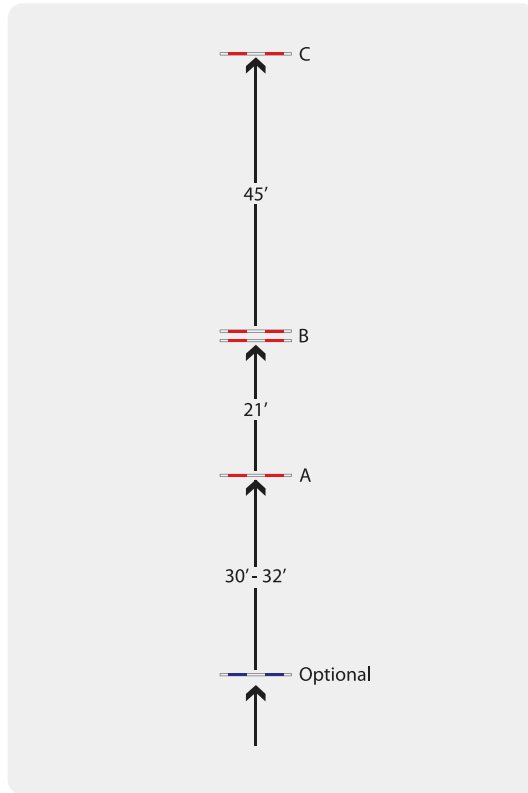
Throughout my everyday training, I try to keep a big focus on rider responsibility versus horse responsibility. To keep it very simple, the preparation for any jumping exercise—namely creating a good, balanced canter to jump from—is completely the rider’s responsibility. Once you get on your line for the exercise, it’s the rider’s job to stay balanced in the middle and out of the horse’s way, as the responsibility is transferred to the horse.

The purpose of this exercise is to combine footwork with coursework. The 21-foot, one-stride distance is your footwork piece, and the 45-foot, three-stride distance is your coursework piece. The challenge is maintaining three strides of even length to your last vertical, and for the horse to remain careful for the last vertical.

Regardless of the level you’re competing, your horse is more likely to get flat and unbalanced the longer you have between fences. This is why practicing how to develop and maintain that perfect show jumping canter is so important. Three strides is the perfect distance to set yourself up for success.

/ HOW

Before you even jump the first jump, be sure your horse is sufficiently warmed up through his body. Try to start with a walk hack whenever possible, then ask him to lengthen and come back within each gait, along with some low-stress lateral work. While your expectations of the horse will change depending on his level of training, he



needs to listen to all of your aids, regardless of whether you’re flatting or jumping.

Once you’re confident your horse is properly warmed up on the flat, start trotting and cantering over the ground poles that you have scattered around the arena. This is the time for you to help create the shape and balance to the canter that is appropriate for jumping. Remember, at all times, the horse needs to be responsible for his own feet.

From here, simply start with the whole line of jumps (Jumps A, B, and C) set quite low for your level of jumping. This setup is not intimidating, so for a horse that knows how to jump, it shouldn’t be too difficult to start with all the

jumps in place. Of course, if you have a green horse, you can start with the poles on the ground and build it up jump by jump.

As you work through this line of three jumps, you want to keep a few things in mind before you raise the jumps. The biggest thing is to analyze your three-stride combination between Jumps B and C and make sure your horse is taking three even strides. If your horse is landing and rushing a little bit, add a landing pole after Jump B, and, perhaps, add another one in front of Jump C.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, when you have a horse that is a little lazy and behind your leg, add in a canter circle before Jump A. Practice going forward and collecting back on this circle, making sure you can go beyond your perfect canter and come back to a canter that's a little smaller than perfect, and finally settle in the middle on that perfect canter before heading to Jump A.

Another thing to consider is whether your horse is truly straight through the entire exercise, which includes the few strides before and after the entry and exit. If you have a horse or rider really struggling with straightness, add guide poles on the ground next to the jumps to help them out.

It's important to keep riding after Jump C, so give yourself something to ride toward. You can get creative with this, and it can be anything from a set of cones to ride through to a cavalletti set on a bending line. Remember your transition back down to the walk between jumping rounds is also part of your exercise. Make every transition count, rather than celebrating after the last vertical and letting your horse fall on his forehand or get crooked.

As you work through the exercise, there are two ways of making it more challenging. You can build up the jumps gradually until they are at your competition height. Or, you can make the jumps more visually interesting by adding or changing the fillers throughout your jump school. And for more advanced horses, use the distance to challenge them a bit by shortening the distances a little to teach them to compress and move their feet faster.

In addition, as a way to help work on finding that perfect distance while on course, you can add a ground pole two strides away from Jump A to help practice finding that distance. Just remember that the more poles you put on the ground, the more your horse has to think. I tend to either add poles or raise the jumps, but rarely both at the same time.

I often find that working through this exercise is enough for one jump school. But as your horse becomes more familiar with it, you can always use this as a warm-up as preparation for coursework. ♦

EXPERT

EXERCISE

Cavalletti and Coursework

Anne Kursinski

of Market Street in Frenchtown,
New Jersey

▽ About the expert:

Anne Kursinski is a five-time Olympian, two-time Olympic silver medalist, author, clinician, and international competitor. Her passion for the show ring and sport is strong. Along with competing and winning, she has been involved in the development and promotion of the sport. Through her Market Street facility in Frenchtown, New Jersey, Anne uses her great talents as a trainer and clinician to help riders achieve their goals. Her book *Anne Kursinski's Riding & Jumping Clinic* is a bestselling reference for those pursuing jumping disciplines. ♦

www.marketstreetinc.com

This exercise is perfect for riders who want to work on the rhythm and timing to their jumps. While this example utilizes one cavalletti in the center of the arena, you can adapt this to work over most any jump you have available to you.

/ MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 cavalletti

OR

- 1 jump pole and 2 standards

/ SETUP

- While this example utilizes a single cavalletti in the center of your arena, you can get creative and utilize most any sort of jump for this exercise.

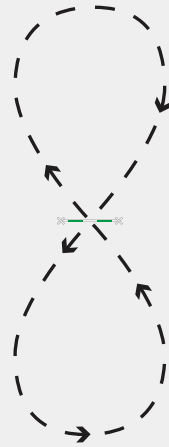
/ WHY

If you've ever come to one of my clinics, you've probably seen me work riders through this exercise. I like it for several reasons, including that a rider can set it up in her own arena and work on it outside of lessons. It also lets you work on your jumping without putting unneeded wear and tear on your horse's legs.

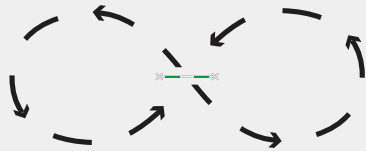
This exercise is all about the rhythm and timing to a jump. Counting out loud is also a mental exercise that many riders don't practice enough. And if you commit to practicing, you'll get it faster and it will only improve your riding. This exercise is like playing piano scales, but instead of scales, you're counting up to a jump.

The purpose of this exercise is to ride the rhythm and count your strides so that riding

EXERCISE 1



EXERCISE 2



One tip for successfully completing this exercise is to remember that it's better to start counting too early than too late. This way you aren't tempted to choke up on your horse to fit in your strides.

You will find as you practice this, your awareness of how far away you are from your obstacle will improve. As you work on your awareness, your ability to see your distance to a jump will improve. It's all about repetition and counting early.

PRO TIPS

your jumps without disrupting your horse's rhythm becomes second nature. You don't want to adjust your horse's strides to fit your counting, which is why I always count up (one, two, three), as I believe that counting down (three, two, one) promotes backward riding.

/ HOW

Start by warming up at the walk and trot in a figure-eight pattern over your cavalletti or ground pole in the center of the arena as illustrated in Exercise 1. You will want to have a long approach, meaning that you need to angle your approach to the the obstacle slightly from left to right and then right to left.

When you pick up the canter, concentrate on feeling when your horse's feet hit the ground the last time before "takeoff" over your obstacle. At this moment, say, "One," out loud. This helps train your mind to count in time with your horse's footfalls.

As you approach your obstacle the next time, aim to start counting two strides before and say, "One, two," out loud before takeoff.

Continue to challenge yourself until you can successfully count up to your obstacle from eight strides away.

As you extend your counting from "one" all the way to "eight," remember it's okay to make a mistake. Simply just repeat your number until you can do it successfully. And don't forget to give your horse, and yourself, a few walk breaks, as this is a lot of cantering.

Remember your horse will find his own distance to a jump without a rider's help. So it's your job to simply ride the rhythm and allow him to do his job.

If you want to increase the challenge of this exercise, change your line so you are coming to your obstacle off short turns from the long side (think a rollback), as illustrated in Exercise 2. The key to this new pattern is to look at your jump early, and not start counting until you're looking at your obstacle. You'll quickly begin to recognize how many strides away from the jump you are, even if you're still in your turn. This means that you're more likely to follow your horse up to the obstacle, versus holding your horse back and choking them into a distance.

And as always, remember that if you make a mistake in your counting, simply try again. ♦

EXERCISE

Coursework and Turning

EXPERT

Kim Severson

*of Kim Severson Eventing
in Charlottesville, Virginia*

This is a great exercise for those that struggle with remaining effective throughout an entire course of jumps. While it appears simple on paper, there are infinite possibilities to make this as difficult, or as easy, as you need it to be.

/ MATERIALS NEEDED

- 7 jump poles
- 7 sets of standards
- 2 cones

/ SETUP

- The two oxers can be set along the quarterline of your jumping arena, with the single fences placed close to your centerline.
- While the distances here are what I prefer, they can be adjusted to fit within your space.

▽ About the expert:

A lifelong horsewoman, Kim Severson bases herself in Charlottesville, Virginia, at her own farm. She is probably best known for the storybook partnership with Winsome Adante ("Dan") that saw three wins at Kentucky CCI5*—in 2002, 2004, and 2006—plus a team gold medal at the 2002 World Equestrian Games in Spain, and culminating with an individual silver medal and team bronze medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece. Known for her innate ability to transform an average horse into a top-quality competitor, Kim is also an experienced instructor who enjoys bringing the best out of her students. ♦

www.kimberlyseversoneventing.com

/ WHY

If you have been to one of my clinics, you have probably seen this exercise as it has become a favorite of mine, and I often have it set up in my arena at home. Two of the many reasons why I love this exercise are because not only is it easy for the clinic organizer to set up, but it is also an exercise that riders can take home with them and easily set up in their own arenas.

While there are only four jumps, there are infinite possibilities within the exercise, and the rider is able to tackle a variety of issues depending on what the individual horse needs to focus on. Additionally, as the skillset of the horse and rider increases, it is easy to increase the difficulty of the exercise.

Having taught for many years now, I have found that one of the biggest struggles for riders is to simply keep riding and keep being effective through an entire exercise. Whether it is at home or at a show, I often see riders collapse on landing and not give their horses clear direction as to what is next. I love using this exercise because I am able to give riders a clear plan, which teaches them to be a “thinking rider” throughout an entire series of jumps instead of through just one line.

Just as this exercise helps the rider become more organized, it does the same thing for the horse, as he is forced to regroup and reorganize during his circles between the cones. Whether you have an Advanced horse that likes to land off a jump and take over, or a “greenie” that tends to land in a heap, the middle circle helps the horse organize his body and tune back in to the rider, before carrying on to the next obstacle.

/ HOW

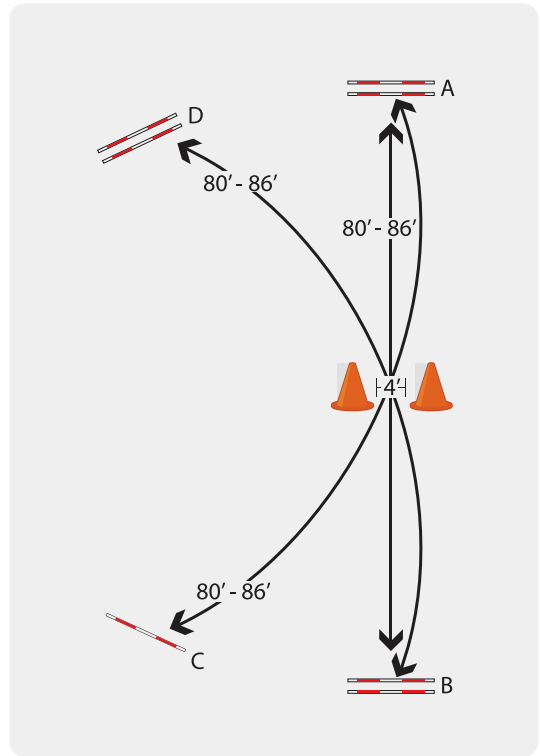
As part of your warm-up, introduce the first skill needed to make this exercise successful. Ask your horse to lengthen the canter, then quietly come to a halt from a simple voice command. Depending on whether you routinely use voice commands or not, it can take a few times for this new “button” to be installed.

Once your horse is halting fairly reliably based on the voice command, switch direction and again lengthen the canter, but this time collect the canter on a small circle then halt on the circle, still using the voice as the main aid to create the halt.

Once you are warmed up, start off by jumping the straight line of oxers (Jumps A and B). Count how many strides you got the first time through. Then, simply change direction and canter the straight line of oxers on the other lead, and once again count your strides. Often it will be different, which is to be expected as horses, just like people, often are dominant on one side. It is your job as a rider to try to get your horse to be as even and balanced on both sides as possible, which you will work on throughout this exercise.

The next step will seem overly simple but can be deceptively hard. Replicate the striding you just had between Jumps A and B. When the striding remains the same, great! This means you and your horse communicate well and are on the same page. When the striding is different, it means you need to work on being clear with your horse about what you're asking him. Thankfully, this exercise has a lot of opportunities to improve these lines of communication.

Before moving on to the next piece of the exercise, fit in an even number of strides based on your particular horse's stride length between Jump A and B. The first step to helping this happen is to make sure the distance is set up appropriately for the size of the arena, and that the cones are in place from the beginning. When the arena is smaller (closer to 120 feet in length), the distance should be closer to 80 feet. And when the arena is larger (more than 126 feet in length), the oxers should be set closer to the 86-foot distance. From here, you should find the most appropriate canter and number of strides for your level, which means you may



need to encourage your horse to open his step, or you may need to encourage him to shorten his step. Regardless of which situation you are in, the key will be keeping the canter consistent and rhythmic. And the key to a consistent horse is to be a consistent rider!

Once you are jumping from Jump A to B and vice versa on a straight line in a consistent number of strides, start to utilize the two cones in the middle of the oxers. To start, jump the first oxer (Jump A or B) then circle between the cones on whatever lead you land on. Ideally, the jumps will be set in the center of the ring, or minimally on the quarterline so you can approach and leave the exercise from either direction.

Then start to get picky and dictate the direction of the circle as you approach the first jump. If you land on the wrong lead, come to a trot before the cones, and pick up the correct lead at the start of your circle. No matter what setup you have, remain on that circle until you can maintain an even canter, then continue on to the second oxer.

For younger or more inexperienced horses, it may take a few circles to get organized, but don't circle too much as young horses often have a hard time maintaining a balanced canter for long periods of time.

Regardless of the level or type of horse, I find this center circle is extremely helpful. For example, my World Equestrian Games partner Fernhill Fearless ("Sparky") can often land, then try to take over. The center circle forces him to pay attention and remain rideable. To keep things even more interesting for Sparky, and some of my other more advanced horses, I will land and circle on the counter-canter, and maybe throw in a flying change to the correct lead before continuing on to the next step.

When you are riding on your own, you need to think about what skills you need to work on as opposed to what you find easy. If your horse tends to get strong between fences, force yourself to throw in a canter-to-trot or canter-to-walk transition on the circle for a few steps before picking up the canter again and continuing on. On the flip side, if your horse is slow off your leg, ask him for a few steps of medium canter on the circle before continuing. Remember, you will only get better when you challenge yourself and your horse!

Once you have mastered the straight line of oxers (Jumps A and B) with the circle in the middle, start to incorporate the two jumps (Jumps C and D) on the sides. Make up a course of four to six jumps and incorporate two to three circles in the course. For example, you can start with Jump A, circle, and continue right to Jump C, turn left and jump Jump B with a bending line to Jump D, and finish by continuing to the right to jump Jump A, circle and finish over Jump B. The possibilities are really endless, so use your imagination to create your own course.

As you can imagine, this is a great exercise for riders who struggle to remember courses because you can really break things down into pieces, then build on each piece until you have a mini course. As mentioned earlier, I also find that this exercise really helps riders who struggle to keep riding beyond the first jump on course. The circles are perfect for helping these riders regroup and reorganize so they feel prepared for the next part of the course. This exercise is also really excellent for people who just need to slow their minds down. ♦