

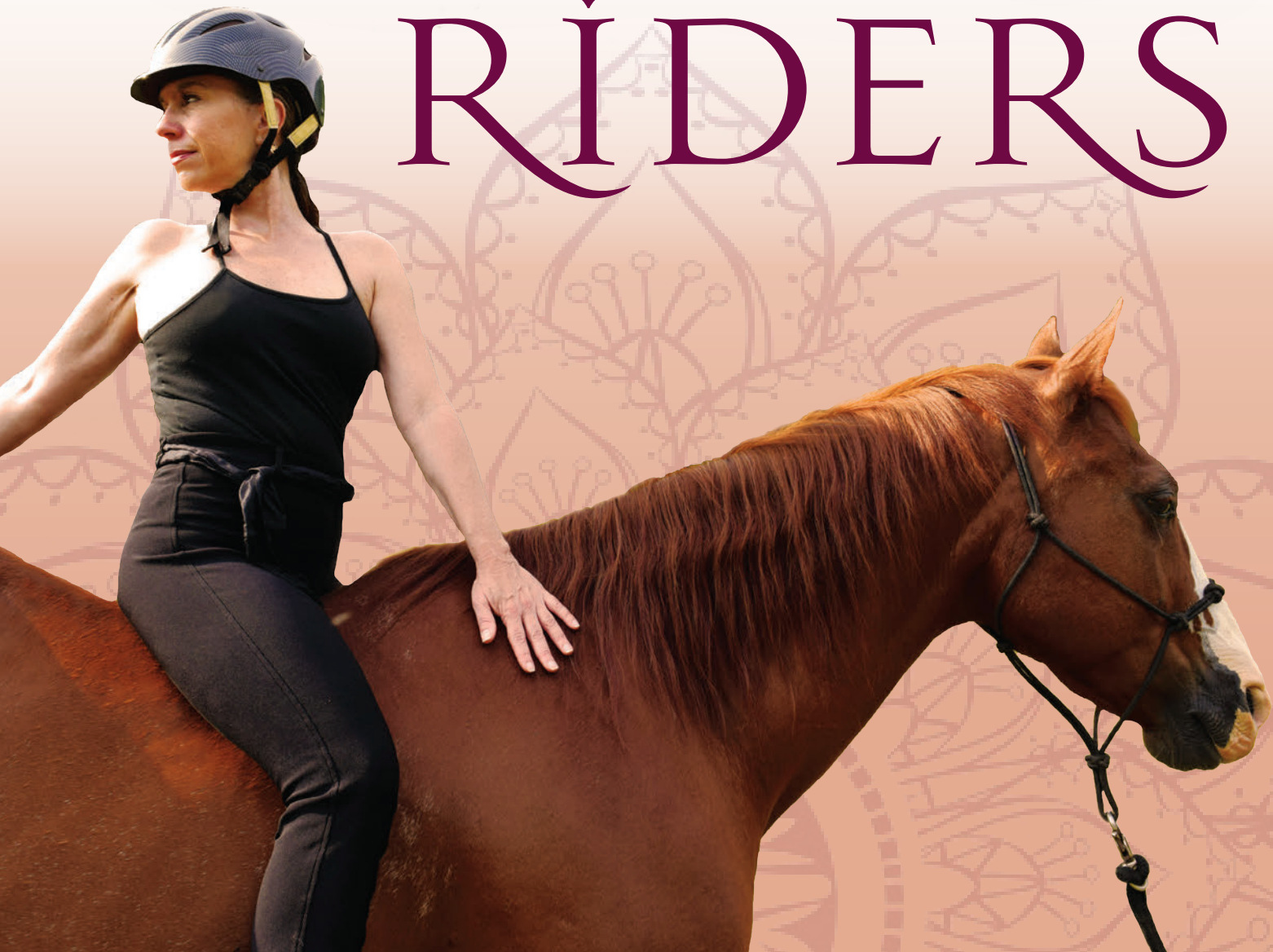
CATHY WOODS, CREATOR OF BODY, MIND, EQUINE

YOGA

FOR

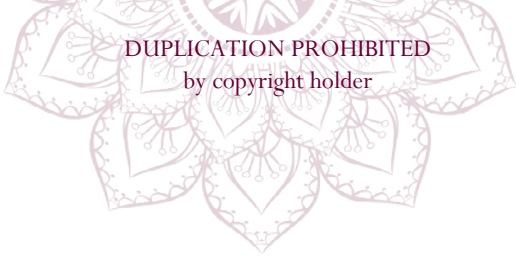


RIDERS



Principles and Postures to Improve Your Horsemanship

ON THE MAT ✿ ON THE GROUND ✿ ON HORSEBACK



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~ LOW LUNGE POSE ~

Strengthens and stretches legs, knees, ankles, and hip flexors, increasing lower body flexibility. This pose can also be a nice alternative to Warrior Pose (p. 115) if that posture is too challenging.

How to Do Low Lunge Pose

- ❁ As with most yoga postures, there are several varieties of lunges. The Low Lunge Pose is an exceptional stretch for riders (figs. 7.19 A & B). Begin from Tabletop position (p. 92). Bring one foot forward and between your hands. Some people may be able to swing the leg up into position, while others may need to take hold of the ankle to bring the foot in place.
- ❁ Slide the back leg out like you're doing a split, and keep your weight forward on your front leg. Take a peak down at your front knee and be certain the knee is aligned over your ankle (not the knee over the toes or beyond) and adjust accordingly. *(It is very important point in any lunge*



❁ **7.19 A & B Low Lunge Pose:** Look down at your front knee to be sure it is over your ankle (**A**). There are two slightly different variations, one with the back knee down (**B left**) and a more advanced option with the back toes flipped under and the back knee lifted off the ground (**B right**).



❁ **7.20 A & B Low Lunge**
Pose Variation: To add challenge, instead of bending forward with your hands on the mat on either side of the forward leg, you can stretch your arms up in the lunge (**A**) or press down on the top of the forward leg (**B**).

pose that the knee is over the ankle when lungeing, not over the toes—otherwise, it’s easy to injure or strain the knee joint.) Your hands are on either side of the front foot, your chest is on your front thigh, and your neck is in alignment with the spine (don’t tuck or hyperextend the neck). Your weight is leaning forward (not so much on the back knee), and the back leg remains extended as you continue to drop your hips and weight forward. As with all postures, do both sides.

❁ Variations can include removing the hands from the floor and reaching up or pressing down on the forward knee (figs. 7.20 A & B).



❁ **8.9 A & B Seated Yoga Seal:** Seated Yoga Seal can be performed both bareback and in a saddle. Clasp your hands behind your body (**A**), then raise the arms slightly upward (**B**).



~ SEATED YOGA SEAL ~

Expands the chest and deeply stretches the arms, shoulder blades, shoulder joints, and upper back. Helpful for averting upper body tension.

How to Do Seated Yoga Seal

- ❁ Clasp or interlace your hands behind your back. Raise the arms slightly upward, keeping your chin parallel to the ground (figs. 8.9 A & B).
- ❁ To deepen the stretch, tip forward (though I do not recommend this addition when doing this pose in a Western saddle as this places the horn dangerously close to your sternum).
- ❁ When done, slowly release the posture and feel the flood of sensation and energy.

~ TRIANGLE POSE ~

This is a healthy stretch and twist for the spine, creating alignment awareness and developing balance and focus

How to Do Triangle Pose

- ❁ Place a straight arm (aiming downward, with your palm facing outward, away from the horse's body) over the opposite side of your horse's withers. By gently pressing against your horse's withers (with the arm that has crossed over), you can deepen the twist of your body. The other arm is extended toward the sky (palm also facing outward). Gaze upward toward your fingertips, if that feels okay for your neck (fig. 8.10).



- ❁ **8.10 Triangle Pose:** Cross one arm over the horse's withers, so its palm is facing out. Turn your body so it is opening toward the side with the palm open, then extend the opposite arm toward the sky.

- ❁ Ultimately, the aim is for your arms to be in a sideways T position, but if you can't achieve this, just do the best your body will allow. If possible, rest your head on your horse so you don't create tension in your neck. A friend can help by letting you know how your alignment looks.
- ❁ Stay in the posture for a few deep breaths, giving the body time to respond, then switch over to the other side.