



RIDING POSITION



The rider's balance greatly impacts the comfort and balance of your horse, as well as your own safety, comfort and effectiveness in the saddle.

To be in balance, there should be an invisible straight vertical line that runs down from your ear through your shoulder, your hip and your ankle. If you don't have any one to check your position for you, a good rule of thumb is that when you look down at your

leg you should be able to see the tips of your toes only. Two-point or jumping position is the exception to this line from your ear to shoulder, but your hip and ankle should still be in alignment with each other.

The most common balance problem is the "chair seat" where the rider's feet are pushed out in front of them which creates a whole series of problems. It incorrectly puts the rider behind the motion of the horse, pushes their seat bones into the horses back, and makes their position very insecure. The second most common problem is when the legs are too far behind the rider, which incorrectly locks the knees and hips.

Taking riding lessons from an experienced and professional instructor is a great way to brush up on your skills and work on your position.

"A centered, balanced rider with good awareness of her body and that of her horse can help her horse develop correct musculature, and move with balance and freedom of motion. The horse has a chance to work in harmony with his rider and take pleasure in his work rather than develop stress, and all too often, pain. This freedom of motion leads to efficiency of movement, which in itself produces beauty."

—Sally Swift, *Centered Riding 2*