

Direct to  
your goal.



RITTER DRESSAGE

Arena Basics And  
Continuing Exercises 1.1



## **Welcome to the Arena GPS 1.1- You mobile assistant coach.**

This compilation offers exercises with graphics and brief instructions that you can take with you into the arena in order to get training ideas.

Periodically, I will add more exercises. Some of them will be specifically designed to prepare and improve certain movements, while others will focus on a specific gymnastic topic, or simply improve the horse's suppleness, straightness, and balance.

The old masters discovered early on that riding accurate arena patterns is the prerequisite for balance and straightness, which in turn are the prerequisites for accessing the haunches. Therefore, accurate patterns are crucial to gymnastically useful work.

In combination with transitions and lateral movements, the arena patterns are one of the most important tools the rider possesses in training the horse. We use round patterns, such as circles, voltes, serpentines, and ovals, as well as angular patterns such as rectangles, squares, and triangles.

When the exercises are complicated, it is best to show the horse the pattern and the “work space” at the walk first.

Afterwards, you can enrich the basic exercise by adding specific patterns of aids, lateral movements, etc. Once the horse is able to perform the exercise well at the walk, you can try it at the trot. As soon as the horse can do it well at the trot, you ride it at the canter. Most exercises can be customized to the individual needs of each horse, by either leaving certain elements out or by adding others. This way, you can ride the same basic exercise in a simple version at the walk with a Training Level horse, and a challenging version with an FEI horse at the canter. You should look at the exercises I introduce here in the Arena GPS as suggestions and inspirations.

Ride the exercises a few times the way I describe them, but by all means, don't hesitate to develop your own alternative versions by playing with the individual components. Experimenting leads to very interesting observations that deepen our understanding of the cause and effect chains very much.

## There are different types of exercises:

- Testing for specific abilities and skills
- General suppling
- Targeted gymnastic development of individual muscle groups
- Preparing and/or improving dressage movements
- Improving the horse's balance and body awareness
- Explaining certain aids and types of movements

The exercises work as diagnostic tools as well as therapeutic tools. On the one hand, they show us where the horse's training deficits are, i.e. where a muscle is stiff or weak, or where the body awareness and coordination are lacking. On the other hand, the exercises improve precisely these deficits.

From the green horse's first day on the longe line to the highly trained Olympic horse, there are only six basic demands the horse needs to be able to fulfill: **go forward, stop, bend, turn, sidestep, and reinback.**

Therefore, the exercises developed here consist of combinations of these basic demands. Some exercises contain only two or three elementary demands. Others contain more. The number of basic building blocks is very limited, but the number of possible combinations is almost infinite.

In gymnastic training – and consequently in the Arena GPS – bending in motion plays a central role, because it produces and improves straightness, suppleness, and the swinging back, as well as impulsion and collection.

The bending work in motion is divided into three phases:

1. Bending and turning (corners, voltes, circles, serpentines)
2. Sidestepping while bending against the direction of travel (turn on the forehand in motion, leg yield, shoulder-in)
3. Sidestepping while bending in the direction of travel (turn on the haunches, passade, pirouettes, haunches-in, renvers, half pass)

This sequence should be observed during the work, in terms of the horse's long term overall training, as well as during each training session. All dressage movements mobilize certain muscle groups and joints in the horse's body, which I have listed below. When you know these correlations, you can design specific gymnastic exercises to target individual parts of the body:

- **Neck/poll:** flexions, milling
- **Shoulders:** corners, voltes, figures of eight, turn on the haunches/passade/pirouette, full pass, stirrup stepping
- **Back:** curved lines, lateral movements, stirrup stepping
- **Hips:** lateral movements, turn on the forehand in motion, stirrup stepping, reinback
- **Stifles:** lengthening the stride

## General Tips For The Application Of Exercises And Movements

If you observe a mistake during an exercise or a movement, you can interrupt it in order to ride a new exercise that teaches the horse the mobility, coordination, or understanding he needs to overcome the problems in the original exercise. No exercise or movement is so important that you can't interrupt it for an explanatory or corrective exercise. Afterwards, you ride the original exercise again, in order to check and see if the horse can now execute it better. If an exercise turns out to be too difficult, you can ride an easier version or replace it with an easier exercise that addresses the same issue.

If you want to work a specific hind leg, you bring it underneath the body through a lateral movement, then you load it, for instance through a narrow turn and/or by stopping into this hind leg.

After the horse has successfully executed an exercise, you can change direction, gait, location, topic, take a break, or even finish the workout as a reward. You should not, however, leave the location until the horse has shown some cooperation. Otherwise, the horse can draw the wrong conclusion and become disobedient.

Every exercise serves as a preparation for the following ones, similar to the rungs on a ladder. It makes sense, therefore, to prepare for difficult transitions or movements.

The skillful selection of exercises brings the horse into the best balance for the envisioned movement. Every exercise has a certain effect on the horse's gait and posture.

This effect has an "expiration date". You must not, therefore, allow too much time to pass between the individual elements of an exercise sequence. Otherwise the beneficial effect of the previous part of the exercise will be gone and you have to start over. You also have to start over if a mistake happens during a sequence of exercises, because we want to take advantage of the cumulative effect of the individual parts of the exercise.

After an exercise you always have to evaluate in which direction it was more difficult and in which direction it led to the greater improvement.

# Contents

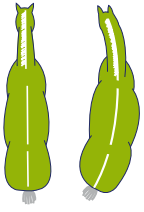
<b>Circles &amp; Voltes</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Variations On Circles, Voltes And Serpentine With And Without Lateral Movements	
<b>Ovals</b> .....	<b>19</b>
With And Without Lateral Movements	
<b>Squares, Rectangles, Diamonds, Triangles</b> .....	<b>24</b>
With And Without Lateral Movements	
<b>Combinations Of Lateral Movements</b> .....	<b>33</b>
On Curved And Straight Lines	
<b>Half Passes</b> .....	<b>50</b>
With Preparatory Exercises	
<b>Stirrup Stepping</b> .....	<b>59</b>
For Trot And Canter	



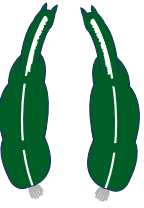
# Legende



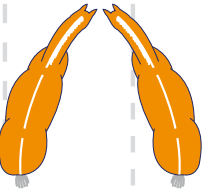
**Red and blue lines:**  
they show the line of travel.



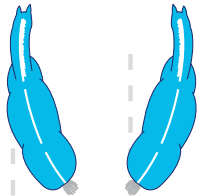
**Light green horse:**  
the green straight and bent horses show the horse going forward or backward.



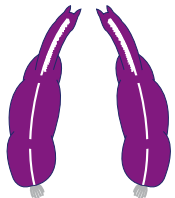
**Dark green horse:**  
shows the horse in sidestepping exercises.



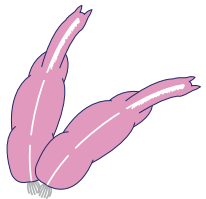
**Orange horse:** shows the horse in shoulder-in/  
counter shoulder-in.



**Light blue horse:**  
shows the horse in haunches-in (travers)/renvers.



**Purple horse:**  
shows the horse in the half pass.



**Pink horse:**  
shows the horse in a pirouette.



**Yellow and blue circles:** cones



**Magenta dot:**  
shows a stirrup step when the corresponding leg is on the ground.

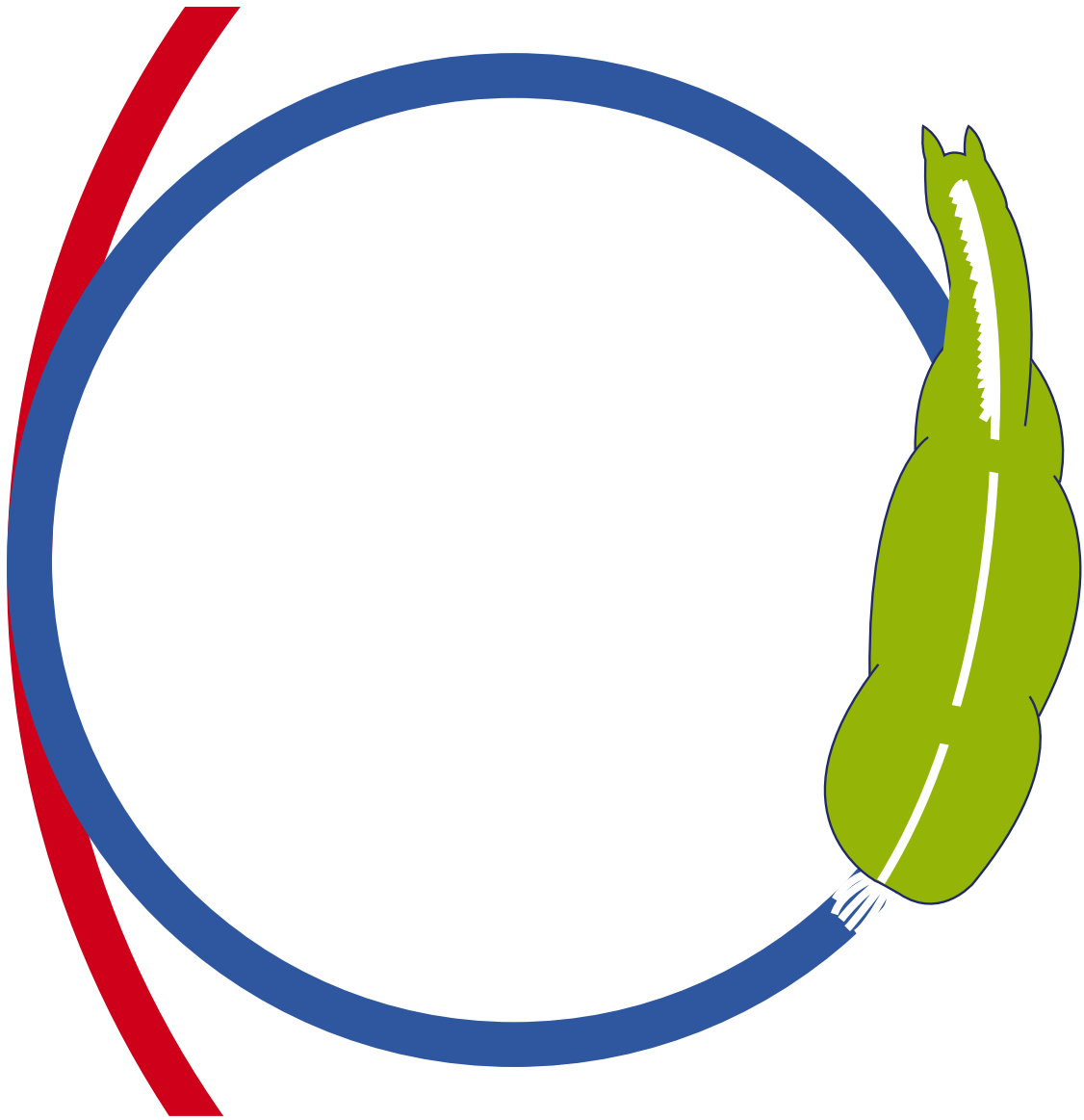


**Magenta line:**  
shows a half-halt or rein aid, either with one rein or with both.



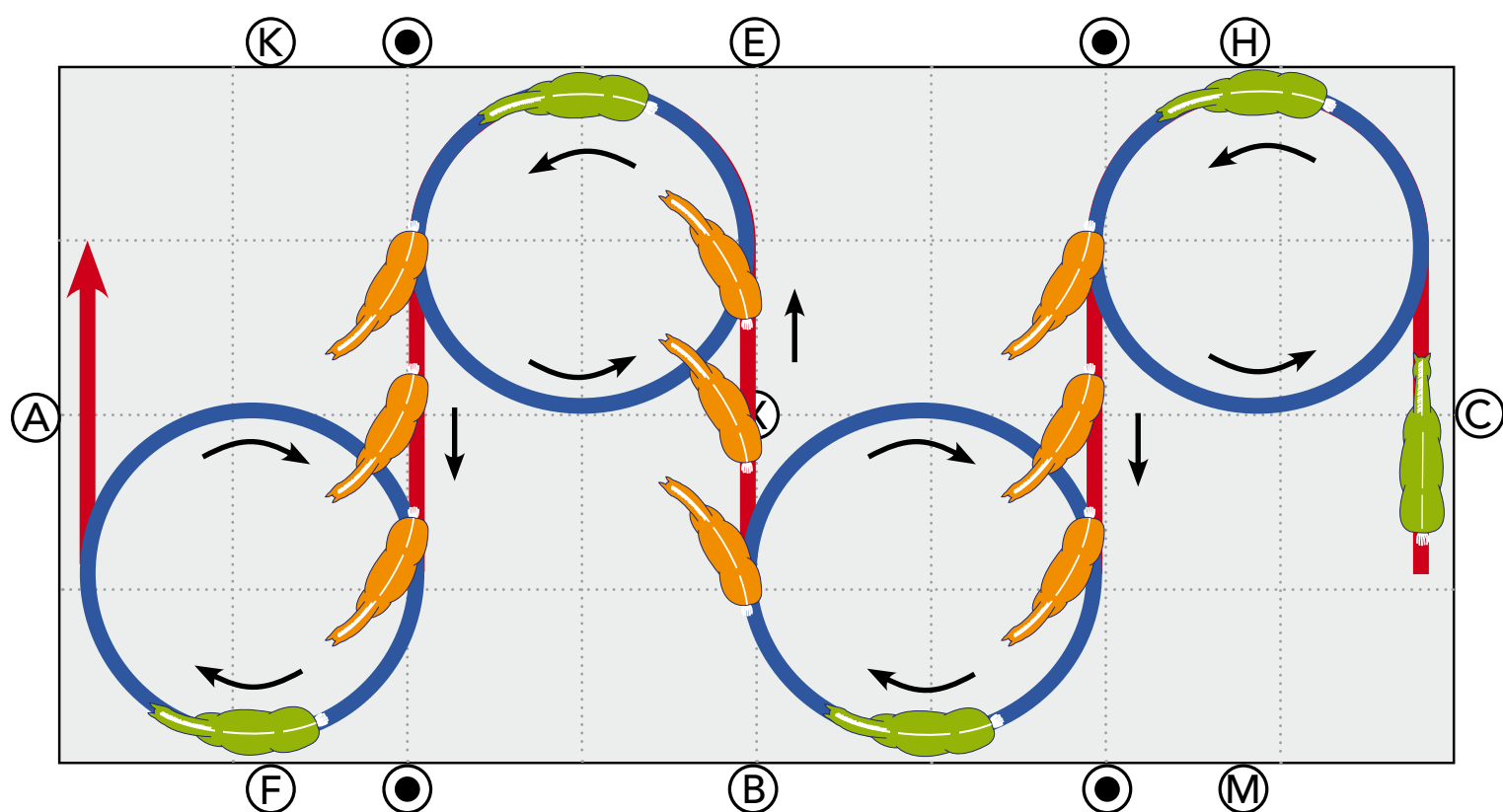
**Magenta Squares:**  
shows a leg aid/driving aid.

# *Circles & Voltes*



Variations On Circles And Voltes  
With And Without  
Lateral Movements

# Serpentines With Voltes And Shoulder-In

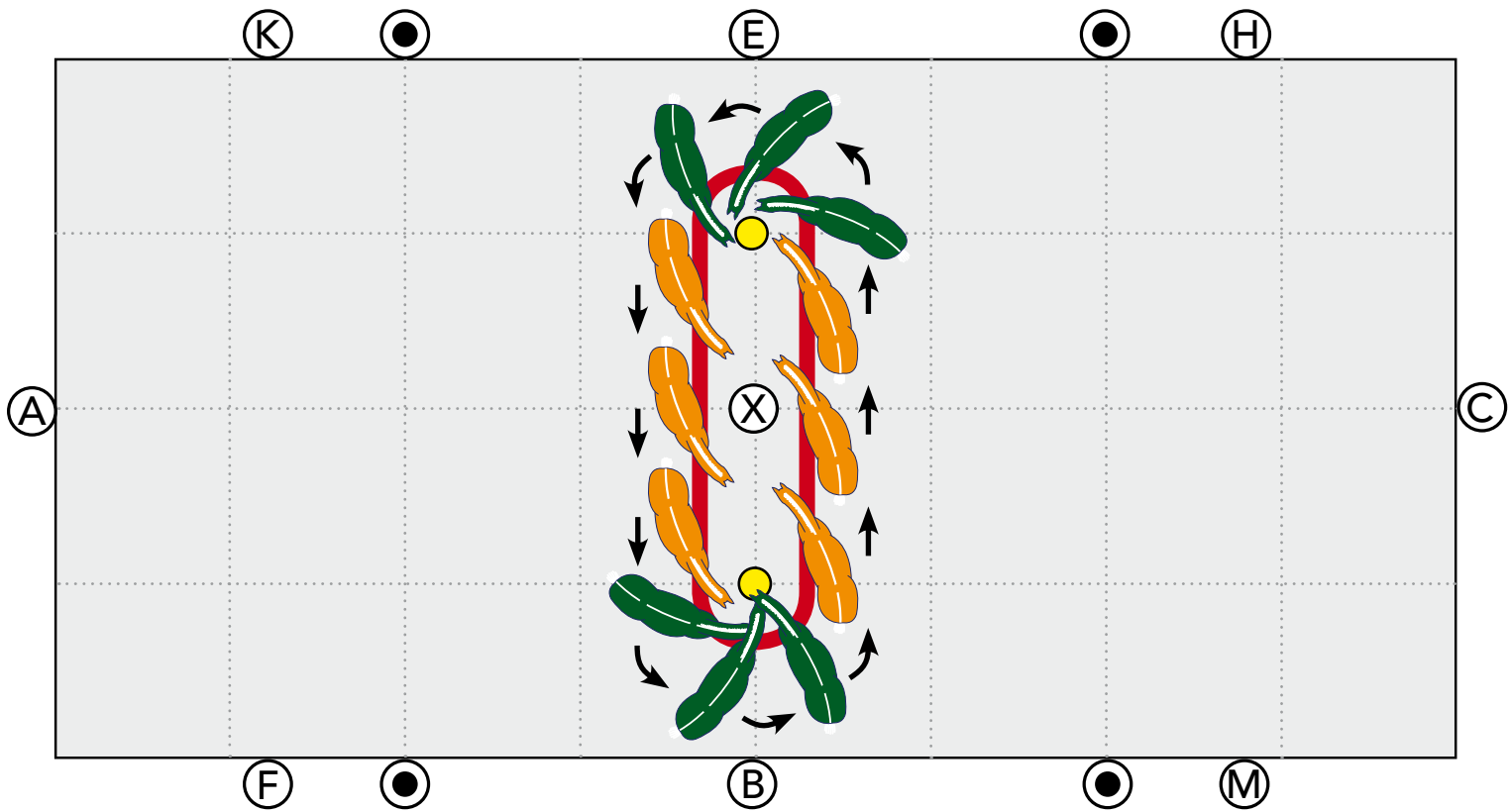


Ride a 4 loop serpentine, with a volte in each loop. The connecting lines between the voltes are ridden in a shoulder-in with the bend of the new volte. For instance, start on the left rein with a volte in the first corner of the long side. As soon as the horse's body is parallel with the short side, change the bend and ride a shoulder-in right parallel with the short side. On the opposite long side, ride 1 ½ voltes to the right. After the volte right, continue in shoulder-in left towards the opposite long side, etc.



**Tip**

*This exercise is very suitable for the walk and trot. Sidestepping supplies the lateral hip and abdominal muscles, turning onto the volte supplies the shoulder and pectoral muscles, and the change of bend mobilizes the spine.*

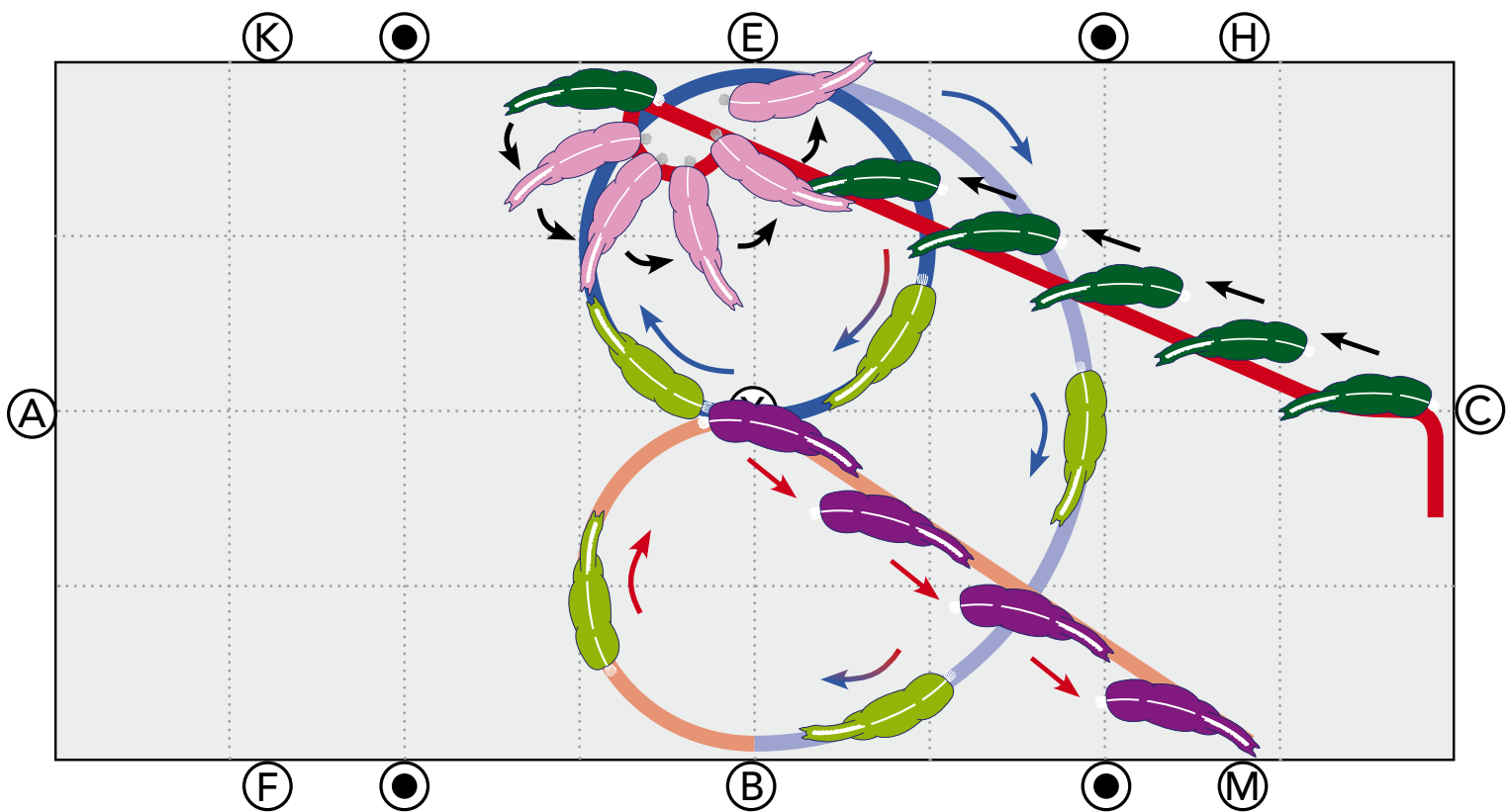


The sides are ridden in a shoulder-in. The turns at either end are ridden as a 180 degree turn on the forehand in motion from the inside leg. The shoulder-in can be ridden at the walk or the trot. The turn on the forehand has to be ridden at the walk.



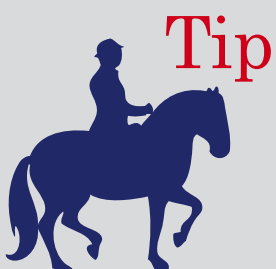
**Tip**

*The weight has to be shifted into the outside hind leg in the turn on the forehand in motion, so that the inside hind leg can move more freely. This exercise supple the hip muscles and the lateral abdominal muscles, which makes it an excellent preparation for half passes.*



- C - E: Leg yield diagonally towards the right
- E: 180 degree turn on the haunches left
- E: 10 m volte right
- E - B: half of a 20 m circle
- B - X: half of a 10 m volte right
- X - M: half pass right

*This exercise can be ridden in all 3 gaits. If you ride it at the trot or canter, come back to the walk for the turn on the haunches and resume the trot or canter afterwards. With advanced horses you can ride a half pirouette at the canter with a flying change after. This is a good preparation for the canter and for half passes.*



Copyright © 2014 Dr. Thomas Ritter and Alexandra Gaugl

Authors: Dr. Thomas Ritter and Alexandra Gaugl

Idea & Development: Alexandra Gaugl

Graphics, Design, and Layout: Alexandra Gaugl

Logo: Alexandra Gaugl

Texts, pictures and graphics are copyright protected.

It is not permitted to distribute, sell, lease, borrow, adapt, process, copy, license or transfer and use the contents in any other way. Exceptions are only possible with a written permission by Dr. Thomas Ritter and Alexandra Gaugl.

[www.klassische-reitkunst.com](http://www.klassische-reitkunst.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/equestrian.mobile.guides>

Disclaimer:

Dr. Thomas Ritter, Alexandra Gaugl and all other persons involved directly or indirectly in this medium are not liable for accidents or damages of any kind that could result from the exercises represented in this medium.