

COUNTING STRIDES

By Khaled Assem



Land in canter, keeping a soft rein contact

Count the first stride out loud

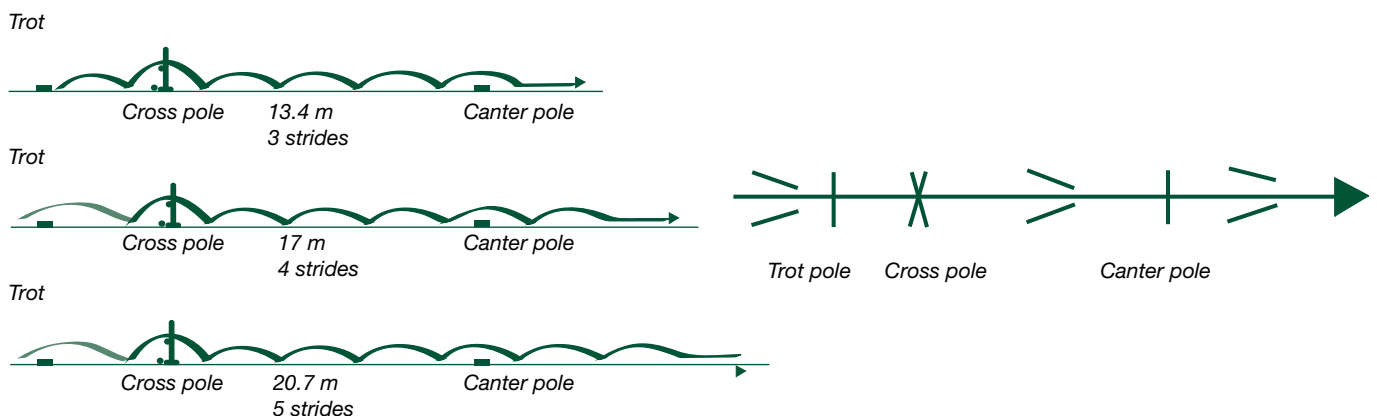
Count the second stride

FEELING A STRIDE FOR NOVICE RIDERS:

TO BE EFFICIENT, A SHOW JUMPER MUST DEVELOP HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JUMPING EXERCISES AND THEIR USE ALONG WITH OTHER BASIC AIDS SUCH AS RHYTHM, BALANCE, STRAIGHTNESS AND RIDING A TURN CORRECTLY. THIS WILL ENHANCE AND REFINE THE RIDER'S ABILITY TO FEEL A STRIDE.

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES WILL HELP THE RIDER UNDERSTAND THE WAY HIS HORSE MOVES AND RESPONDS, ALLOWING THE RIDER TO DEVELOP HIS ABILITY TO FEEL AND COUNT STRIDES OVER CORRECT DISTANCES. THEN, FINDING THE RIGHT TAKE-OFF POINT WILL COME INSTINCTIVELY.

NATURALLY, REFINEMENT OF THE RIDER'S FEELING AND ABILITY ENHANCES THE COMBINATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HORSE AND RIDER ALLOWING THEM TO CONNECT TOGETHER, FURTHER.




With a ground pole at 2.8 meters away from a cross pole, approach in trot, land from the cross pole in canter and do one non-jumping stride before going over another ground pole 6.1 meters away.

Then, move the canter grand pole

progressively further away one canter stride at a time to give two, three, four or five non jumping strides.

Throughout each exercise, count each stride and keep the canter constant so that you consistently

meet the canter grand pole at the right take-off point.

Even though the rider is not jumping a second fence, cantering to a pole on the grand gives the same take-off and landing points as if were a real fence. 

BASIC GRID DISTANCES

It takes experience to build a grid. Start with small fences and progress a step at a time. The height of the cross poles should be 50-70 cm (20-27 in) and they should have a ground line approximately 50 cm (20 in) away. The height of the other fences should be 0.7-1.2 m.

EXERCISE	DISTANCES
Walk poles	80 cm – 1 m
Trot poles	1.25 – 1.45 m
Trot poles to cross poles	2.5 – 2.9 m
Single trot placing pole to cross poles	2.5 – 2.9 m
Cross poles from trot to a vertical in one stride	5.8 – 6.4 m
Vertical to oxer in two strides	9.8 – 10.4 m
Vertical to oxer in one stride	6.1 – 6.7 m
Cross poles from trot to a bounce	3 – 3.3 m
Canter poles	3 – 4.25 m

DISTANCES FOR TRAINING EXERCISES

The following distances can be used for training purposes. Always start an exercise with distances that your horse finds easy. When jumping a fence from trot, the first canter stride after the fence will be a little shorter than when the approach to the fence is in canter, hence the different distances. When using canter poles, place them the same distance apart as if they were two verticals.

NUMBER OF NON-JUMPING STRIDES	APPROACHING FIRST FENCE IN TROT			APPROACHING FIRST FENCE IN CANTER		
	Cross poles to canter pole	Cross poles to single oxer	Cross poles to oxer in gymnastic grid	Oxer to oxer in gymnastic grid	Canter pole to canter pole	Vertical to vertical
1 stride	6.1 m	5.5 m	5.45 m	5.5 m	7.3 m	7.3 m
2 strides	9.75 m	9.15 m	8.8 m	9 m	11 m	11 m
3 strides	13.4 m	12.8 m	12.2 m	12.5 m	14.6 m	14.6 m

About the author:

Khaled Assem is a certified Level 2 FEI trainer. He has been training for 15 years, competing internationally for 10 years and locally for 25 years.