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# Turns & Flexions

# Dressage

## Part 2

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To check whether you are using the aids correctly or not, practice walking in a circle of 20m (66ft in diameter) on a soft surface which has just been raked smooth. You can then study your tracks and see exactly where you are going wrong.

The common faults are to use too much outside hand so that you pull the horse's head to the outside, thus allowing his shoulder to fall inwards. Another is to use too much inside hand to pull the horse around the turn as to make his shoulder fall outwards, and to fail to control the movement of the hind-quarters with your outside leg so that the quarters swing out. Turning a corner too sharply will also result in loss of balance and rhythm.

When changing rein you will have to change the aids. For example, if you are changing rein across the centre of the school, you will have positioned left, turned left and straightened. You must then position right, and turn right. To do so, you will need to change the action of each separate leg and rein aid, which, if you are not careful, could cause the horse to quicken his stride. You can prevent this by using the half-halt before each change of direction, which will also help to improve your horse's balance.

Turning exercises are best performed at the working trot, when impulsion, rhythm, and straightness are the easiest to maintain. At the walk you will have to work harder on most horses to produce smooth bends whilst moving forward with regular energetic strides. Changes of direction at the canter necessitate a change of leading leg each time. You will have to make the transition at the stage through the trot or the walk. **HT**



Below, the correct bend on a circle seen from above. There should be an even curve along the length of the horse's spine.



### FAULTS:

The common mistakes made when turning, as a result of wrongly applied aids, are shown below. If you find that you are unable to maintain an even bend on a turn, return to practising school figures.



Too much inside hand has been used, causing the offside shoulder to escape.



Too much outside hand has been used, causing the nearside shoulder to fall inwards.



Too little outside leg has been used, causing the quarters to fall outwards.