

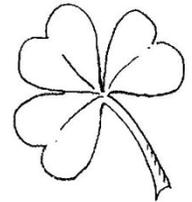
SAMPLE # 1

FLATWORK SKILLS

TEAL LEVEL

BIG KID BARRELS

OBJECTIVE: Students will improve simple or flying lead changes and practice jumping off an angled approach by riding a cloverleaf pattern at the canter.



EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- 3 BARRELS
- 2 JUMP STANDARDS WITH CUPS & POLES
- 2 CONES
- STOPWATCH

PREP

Set barrels in triangle formation as for barrel racing. Place empty jump standards approximately 10' apart on X to form invisible jump between first and second barrels; leave poles and cups safely stored for now. Set cones at A end of arena to create start and finish line.

INTRO

As students warm up at the walk, discuss how cross-training benefits riders and horses in all disciplines. **ASK: How do you think the barrel pattern can benefit a dressage horse? A show jumper?**

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LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Bending around barrels at walk and trot, with an emphasis on riding from inside leg to outside rein.

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Emphasize: Turns should be large, especially early in the warm-up. To add variety, have students turn around all three barrels on one rein, or add a circle around each barrel.

 **Review:** Canter transitions, starting with trot/canter and working up to walk/canter/walk. Add a few transitions between true canter and countercanter if students are capable.

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 **Discuss:** Skills involved in riding a clean barrel pattern at the canter.

Emphasize: Even if horses have automatic flying changes, simple changes are a good way to test relaxation, straightness and obedience.

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 **PRACTICE:** Send students one at a time through cloverleaf pattern, executing a **simple change between jump standards both** times they pass through (between first and second barrel and between third barrel and finish line). Repeat, but start pattern on opposite lead. An optional third round can include flying changes.

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 **PRACTICE:** Build invisible jump into a small vertical (approximately 2'). Allow students one practice round through cloverleaf pattern, **jumping vertical on an angled approach** before the first two barrels and approaching straight on centerline after the third barrel. For an additional challenge, ask students to change lead over the final jump. If time and skill allows, add a **final round against the clock**.

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REVIEW

- ? Was it easier to change lead over the jump? Why do you think this is?
- ? Does your horse find one lead particularly hard to land on? How could you help him?

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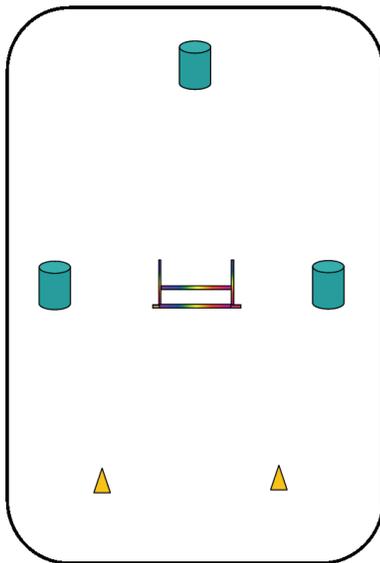
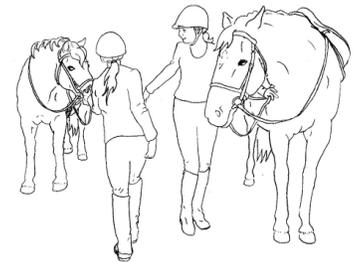
SAMPLE # 1

BIG KID BARRELS

TEAL LEVEL

FUN AND GAMES

- 🐾 **Award a prize** for the fastest round - but establish time penalties for missed lead changes, knockdowns or accidental breaks of gait.
- 🐾 Pattern riding smoothly? **Challenge students to a horse swap.** You can level the playing field by combining two timed rounds: one with students on their own horses and one on another horse.
- 🐾 Highly-skilled students can practice the **Three-Leaf Clover of Doom at the canter.** Each student rides an individual cloverleaf pattern, starting with a different barrel, with the goal of finishing the pattern at the same time - and avoiding collision.
Omit the jump until students are very good at this!



PREREQUISITES

Teal Level skills can take a while to acquire, and horses often need to be brought up to the level along with students. You may end up with a wide range of ability levels within a group.

Luckily, this lesson is fairly adaptable. The only absolute necessity is the ability to **maintain a canter through an approximately 15m turn** around each barrel. Lead changes can take place through the trot if students aren't quite ready for simple changes through the walk; you can set the jump as a ground pole for non-jumpers or horses or riders unfamiliar with jumping off an angle.

However, your students will get the most out of the exercise if they have already practiced more sophisticated **lead changes** and/or **holding a line** over a fence. **You could teach this lesson twice:** once to introduce the exercise and evaluate each horse and rider, and the second time after several weeks or months of practice, to review and let students have fun with the race.

FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 This exercise is challenging enough to keep **private students** occupied without anyone to race - but if they really want to run the pattern against the clock, **have them compete against themselves** and start with the opposite barrel on the second trip through the pattern.
- 🐾 **Be mindful of each horse's strength and fitness level.** The lesson is demanding and canter intensive, and ideally you'll want to stop **before** horses start breaking gait or looking for evasions. If a horse's performance does start to suffer due to fatigue, **reduce the difficulty of the exercise** by lowering the jump or simplifying lead changes so that horse and rider can end on a positive note.

SAMPLE #2

JUMPING SKILLS

TEAL LEVEL

RIDEABILITY COURSE

OBJECTIVE: For students to turn a simple hunter-style track into a challenging, technical equitation course testing transitions and straightness.



EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- MINIMUM OF 9 PAIRS OF STANDARDS, CUPS AND POLES TO CREATE FULL COURSE

PREP

Set course at approximately 2'3", or a starting height appropriate for all horses and riders. You can use or reuse any course for this exercise; we recommend using the layout in **#2 Working Hunter**, but build the first jump with a short pole to create a skinny.

INTRO

As riders warm up at the walk, discuss the concept of rideability. **ASK: What do you think it means when we say a horse is very rideable? How can you help your horse achieve this quality?**

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LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Changes of transition within gait as well as between gaits. Challenge students to ride as many transitions as possible within a timed, self-directed warm-up period, gradually increasing in difficulty.

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 **Discuss:** Practice self-evaluation of warm-up. **ASK: What effect did the transitions have on your horse?**

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 **Review:** Warm up over a single fence, alternating between approaching in the trot and canter. Once students are jumping smoothly, have them jump the 72' line twice, changing the number of strides in the second line by lengthening or shortening.

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 **Discuss:** Additional ways of testing rideability when schooling over a course. Talk and walk through course track until students can ride from memory.

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 **PRACTICE:** Send students out to jump course with the following challenges: **#1**, canter **skinny** fence. After **#2**, transition to **trot** and hold to fence **#3**. After bending line from **#4** to **#5**, **walk**, then transition to **countercanter** and hold to second bending line. Before fence **#8**, ride **15m circle**. After fence **#9**, straight line **halt**.

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Emphasize: Patience and persistence is expected - perfection is not! Allow additional circles as needed, especially for strong horses or students who struggle with transitions.

 **PRACTICE:** If time allows, ride course a second time with the goal of improvement and the option of raising fences. **Course can be reversed to practice on right lead.**

REVIEW

- ? What element of the course did you find the most difficult? Why?
- ? What other variations could you add to this course to test rideability?

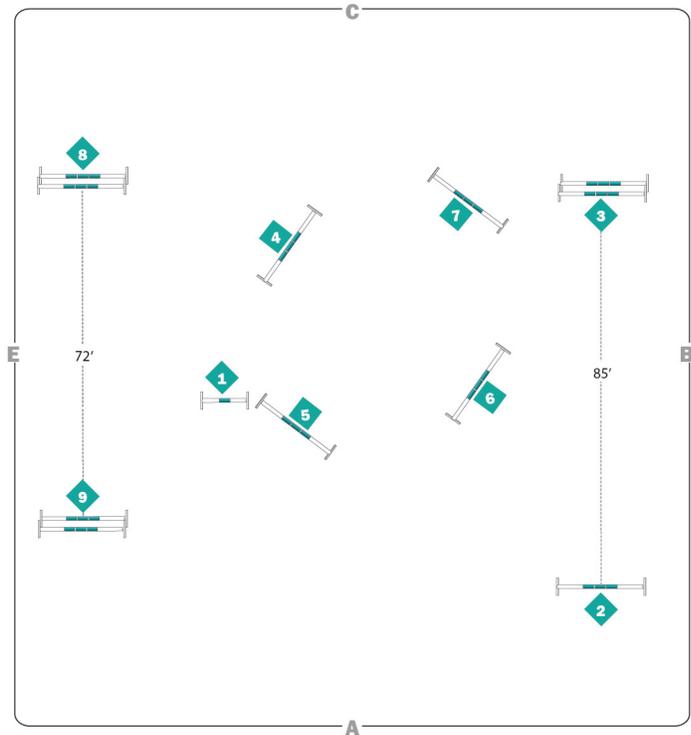
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SAMPLE #2

RIDEABILITY COURSE

VARIATIONS

- 🐾 **Change the location** of the additional tasks for the second round.
- 🐾 **Introduce a new challenge**, such as circling or changing lead between two fences in a line.
- 🐾 Advanced students can **swap horses** before the second round.
- 🐾 Allow private students with fit horses to **ride three rounds**, omitting the rideability challenges in the second trip around the course. Does the first course improve the second? Does the second make the third more challenging?
- 🐾 **Ask students to create their own course**, either by setting their own rideability challenges between fences on the existing course, or taking fences in the order of their choice as in Take Your Own Line.



ON A RAINY DAY...



Teach a course design clinic, providing students with plenty of scratch paper and pencils. Draw the layout of this course on a large dry erase board and discuss distances and choice of obstacles. Ask students to convert the hunter track into a tricky equitation course testing rideability, then a twisty jumper course with rollbacks and options to turn inside or outside other fences. Play videos showing typical course design for hunters, equitation and jumpers, and finish by having students work individually or as a team to design their own courses for all three disciplines.

Need sample course maps? We've got you covered:

<https://horsesenselearninglevels.com/resource-center/about-patterns-and-maps/>

FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 **Space out waiting students carefully in group lessons**, ensuring that riders on course can use the whole arena for transitions and additional circles if needed.
- 🐾 This lesson can be extremely challenging, especially for riders on bold, forward horses. **Emphasize that the course is a training exercise, not a competition.** Students should be generous in their praise when their horse is obedient, and willing to accept their own responsibility for communication breakdowns. Be sure to **stop on a positive note**, even if it means shortening or modifying the course!