# Horse handling and training series

## Part 3: Rider position – Fact sheet and questions

* Horses do not naturally possess the strength, straightness, and suppleness to be able to travel in consistent engagement. They rely on the rider to train and assist the horse with maintaining these attributes.
* Riders must train their bodies to guide the movements and energies of an uneducated horse.
* Riders must train to be athletic so that training and riding is more compassionate and effective.
* The body must be in the centre of the crucifix or the centre of the horse.
* The heels should be in line with the hip or just in front of the hip.
* Body position through the waist can be in the neutral position (sitting straight up), leaning back onto your pockets, or leaning slightly forwards.
* The rider’s hands should be in the athletic position. The exact position depends on the individual horse and is related to how educated the horse is. The more uneducated a horse is, the more the rider’s hands will need to move to guide and train the horse.
* Flexion with one rein is a simple exercise used to train the horse to flex and is also used to identify how educated a horse is, where their sweet spot is, and to improve their flexion. In this exercise, assuming the horse is capable, the rider will bring the horse’s head around to the point of the shoulder, but no further.
* Horse flexion positions have been numbered 1 to 5 to assist with learning. Position 1 is the most flexed to the inside, position 3 is straight, and position 5 is the most flexed towards the outside.
* The horse should never be flexed past the point of the shoulder.
* When the rider changes direction, position 1 is always to the inside or to the direction that the rider is going. For example, if the rider is going right, the position 1 is on the right and the position 5 is on the left.
* The aim of using the flexion points 1 to 5 is to achieve lateral and vertical flexion.

### Questions

1. In a few sentences, why it is important for a rider to train their body to be able to educate a horse, and train their body to be athletic?
2. Where should the body be positioned?
3. Where should the heels be positioned?
4. List the 3 positions that the body through the waist can be in.
5. Describe where the hands should be positioned. Should the hands always be in the same position?
6. Why would a rider use flexion with one rein?
7. List some of the benefits of using one rein flexion.
8. Where should the outside hand move when doing one rein flexion?
9. What is the furthest point that the horse’s nose should come to when doing one rein flexion?