



Government
of South Australia

PONY CLUB ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

73 Wakefield St, ADELAIDE, SA 5000,
phone: (08) 8232 5922, fax: (08) 8232 1729,
e-mail: pcasa@chariot.net.au, web: www.ponyclub.asn.au



PATRON:
Hon. Caroline Schaeffer

LUNGEING NOTES AND INFORMATION

(Reviewed August 2009)

REASONS FOR LUNGEING

Reasons for lungeing are:

- when training the young horse it teaches obedience to the aids including voice, rein and whip.
- when training the young horse, and done correctly, it improves balance before the horse is ridden.
- retraining a spoilt horse.
- exercising a horse that cannot be ridden.
- when training the rider, by using suitable exercises lungeing can improve the seat and balance.
- observing the horses movements or behaviours from the ground.
- bringing a horse into work that does not have reasonable muscle tone/topline to carry a saddle/rider.

The purpose of lungeing is not:

- to wear out a horse before riding. This will not benefit the horse's education and will only make it fitter.

EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be in good repair.

“K” certificate and Level 1

- At “K” certificate level and Level 1 the horse must be lunged in a saddle.
- A simple snaffle bridle must be used. A dropped noseband can be used if necessary but not a cavesson or a hanovarian noseband.
- The lungeing cavesson must fit snugly around the horse's nose. If it slips it may rub the eye. The noseband should be quite tight and preferably have a jowl strap attached level with the eye that holds the cheek piece away from the eye. It should be fitted as low as possible and still remain clear of the soft area of the nostril. This allows more leverage on the horse's head and hence better control.
- Side reins are optional.
- The lungeing whip should be light and well balanced.
- The lungeing rein should be made of cotton webbing or nylon, and be approximately 30 mm wide and 10 to 11 m long. The loop in the end should be knotted or stitched closed. There should be a swivel hook at the other end.
- The horse must be booted or correctly bandaged on all four legs.

Plus, at “B” certificate and higher

- At “B” certificate level and higher, the candidate must also be able to show the fit of a roller.
- Side reins – preferably with rubber or elastic inserts (in good condition) must be used for “B” certificate and above. These are optional for “K” certificate and Level 1.

PRESENTATION OF THE RIDER

- In an exam situation the candidate must present in full Pony Club uniform. This includes an approved helmet with the chin strap done up.
- Boots must be worn.
- Spurs must not be worn as they can trip the candidate or get caught in the rein or whip.
- Jewellery is not permitted.
- Gloves are essential to prevent rope burn, and as a general safety measure.

AREA TO WORK IN

Ideally, the lungeing area should be a circular yard with radius of 7.5 m to 10 metres. It should be enclosed by a strong fence with nothing protruding on the inside. The working surface should be even and non-slippery.

If a round yard is not available, any small rectangular yard will do provided it is safe and has a good surface to work on. It is safer to have no fence at all, rather than one made of rope or rails which a horse could run through or become entangled in. It would be safer to 'make do' with the corner of the paddock under those circumstances.

Size of the circle - The horse should be lunged on a circle size appropriate to its level of education and physical development. The average minimum size of circle that any horse can physically perform is 6 to 8 metres. If the horse's nose is to the inside of its chest then the circle is too small.

Try to make the work on the lunge interesting. If you are bored, chances are so too is your horse. Vary the size of the circle, spending equal time on bringing the horse in as letting it out. Always spend equal amounts of time on each rein. Vary the rein that you begin lungeing from.

The horse can be made to work on some straight lines whilst lungeing - to the effect that it can be lunged on squares. This is made possible by the lunge stepping or jogging some strides to move the horse forwards and straight. Including some straight lines will lessen the strain on the horse's legs caused by too much turning (especially the inside legs) and will encourage contact into the outside rein.

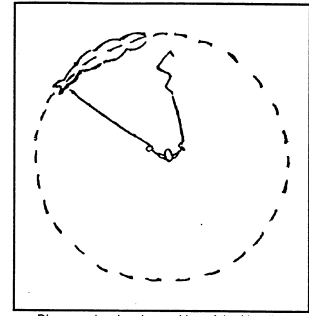
HOW TO LUNGE

The candidate should stand with a balanced and relaxed stance – similar to the position in the saddle – i.e., good posture, feet apart, hands in front of the body with supple elbows and wrists. It is important to concentrate solely on the horse and how he is responding.

The person lungeing should aim to stand in the center of the circle with the horse working actively on command, but during training the handler may need to move towards, and with, the horse to insist on obedience either to send the horse on, or to shorten the rein if the horse is tending to hurry. Try to remain in the centre of the circle and not move about with the horse. By doing so you will become aware of the horse falling in or out on the circle.

Vary the paces with frequent transitions within and between paces (including usage of the halt). If the horse is going too fast it should not be pulled onto a tight circle as injury may result. The handler must have complete control of the rein at all times. The lunge rein must always be taut and untwisted, maintaining a light contact between the handler and the horse's nose. It should never be on the ground! Any adjustment to the reins should be made from hand to horse so the loops do not get tangled.

The whip should be used as an aid not a punishment; it can control the forward movement of the horse, and it can help keep him “out” on the circle by pointing towards his shoulder or ribcage. As a forward driving aid use the whip in a flicking movement. It should never be dropped as it can be tripped over. The whip should be carried under the arm, with the butt forward and the lash held, not dragging when approaching the horse after it has halted. It should be held upright in the hand when leading.



USE OF THE VOICE (very important)

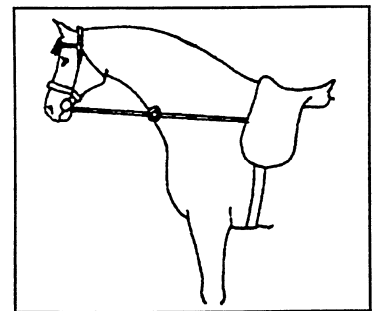
The words used must be distinct with varying tones so the horse understands what is expected of him – sharper to go faster and slower for steady. The commands should be accompanied by a distinct movement of the whip. In the case of a young horse or a horse learning to lunge it may be necessary to repeat the command several times before the horse responds. Be careful to use only a few words and to use the same one under the same conditions to avoid confusion.

Begin with a warm up, without side reins. Start with the horse’s most supple side – usually the left. Take the reins in the hand of the direction you are travelling – i.e., on the left rein use the left hand. Take the whip in the opposite hand. Ask the horse to walk on, using the whip towards his shoulder to send him out onto the circle. Insist that the horse walk until asked to trot, and so on.

Always make the horse walk at the beginning and end of every lungeing session. Too many horses will stop and turn in as soon as they walk as they anticipate halting. To finish it is preferable to halt the horse on the circle and make him stand whilst the slack in the lunge rein is retrieved. If, however, the horse has been taught to come to the handler, this will be acceptable, as long as the handler has control of the rein and it does not end up on the ground. Remove the side reins and allow him to stretch. If he is not to be ridden, a couple of circles of trot allowing the horse to relax his back and neck muscles and cool down is a good idea. Never lead a horse in side reins. It is advisable not to lead the horse with the lunge rein. Use a normal lead rope to lead him to and from the lungeing area.

FITTING OF SIDE REINS

The side reins must be adjusted to allow the horse to extend the neck forward and downwards. The reins must never “pull” the horse’s head into position. A good indication that the reins are correctly fitting is that the horse is in a comfortable position at the halt.



Bear in mind that the horse may duck behind the contact of the side reins. To compensate for this make sure that the horse’s head position is generously in front of the vertical at the halt. If the horse is worked in over-tight side-reins it will not develop top line and will instead develop resistant muscles on the underside of its neck and will lose freedom in its shoulders.

It is not advisable to walk or canter the horse with side-reins as it restricts movement of the topline in these paces.

Side reins are ideal for horses who are 'strung out' as long as they are driven **forwards** and are always tracking up. Side reins are not suggested for horses with short necks. Side-reins are not recommended for horses who lean or pull on the bit but they can be very useful for horses who are reluctant to take a contact.

Introduce the side reins slowly. They can be very dangerous if a horse reacts to them by rearing. Do not ride with side-reins for the same reason.

FITTING OF CHAMBON

A chambon is designed to “correct” horses that carry their heads too high; it acts by causing pressure on the bars of the mouth and the poll once the horse’s head gets above a certain height. It is useful for this purpose but should not be used continuously as it tends to cause the horse to stay in a long, low frame – i.e., once the problem is fixed the chambon should be discarded. Some dressage riders at higher levels do not recommend the use of a chambon.

The chambon should be introduced to the horse gently. Introduce the effect of the weight on the poll by pulling the cheek straps of it with your hands (above the bit) until the horse realises that it should give to the chambon and not resist against it. Whilst lungeing bring the horse's nose slightly to the centre of the circle until it gives and then release.

The chambon should be fitted so that pressure is greatest at the poll and not on the bars of the mouth. It should not be so long as to hang where it can become entangled in the horse's front legs.

The chambon is recommended over side-reins for horses who lean. The chambon is ideal for a horse with a short neck, to relax a tense horse, and a horse that is reluctant to 'let go' and swing through its back - as long as it is driven **forwards** at all times! The chambon is not recommended for horses who avoid taking contact.

All lungeing aids are easily abused. If in doubt do not use them. Do not use an aid if you do not know all about its usage. There is nothing impressive about using an aid. Like all aids, their purpose is to solve a problem. Once the problem has disappeared - so too should the aid. Remember that you can't take lungeing aids into a competition with you so never rely on a lungeing aid to do the work you should be striving to achieve in the saddle!

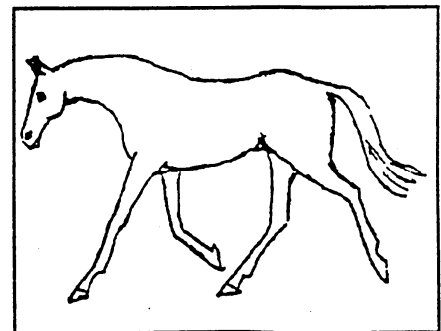
WHAT TO LOOK FOR FOR VARIOUS CERTIFICATES

The horse’s head must always be ahead of the vertical (perpendicular). If he overbends he avoids working properly through from behind and the purpose of the exercise is lost. At all levels the candidate must have control of the horse. The horse must be round in shape and the horse should be “straight” – i.e., his hind feet following the tracks of his front feet.

The horse should show a correct outline for the stage of his training (refer to the “outline” diagrams). The head and neck long and low for novice – permissible for “K” and “B” levels, and progressively higher as he becomes more supple and better balanced – at “A” and “H” levels. At all stages the horse should show active, engaged hind legs.

“K” Certificate, “C Star” Certificate and NCAS Level 1

Walk and trot only are required. The candidate should recognize when the horse is going correctly and should be working towards establishing a good walk and trot. As side reins are not required for this level, the horse will be in a long, low frame, but he must stay out on the circle and be moving forward well and swinging through his back.



“B” Certificate

Walk and trot only are required but both paces should be well established and forward moving. The walk should have a good four beat tempo, with the horse tracking up and staying out on the circle. The trot should be an even swinging trot with back relaxed and horse “stretching” into the bit, with the hind quarters well engaged. The candidate should be able to show a few lengthened strides on request.

“A” and “H” Certificates

The candidate should show all the work required for “B”. The horse should now be more established in his work, showing greater engagement and lowering of his hindquarters. Medium trot should be demonstrated on request. This should be a nice lengthening of stride, with the horse maintaining his balance and tempo.

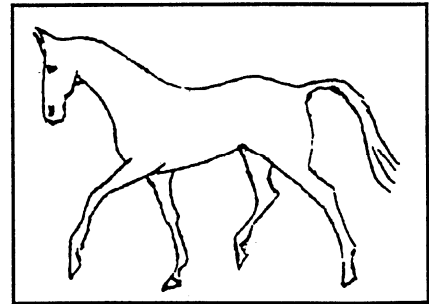
The candidate is also required to show work at the canter. The horse should remain calm and balanced in the upwards and downwards transitions. The canter itself should be three beat, forward moving and relaxed.

“A” and “H” candidates should be able to explain why side reins and ancillary equipment are used and how they should be fitted to achieve the best results – for example, side reins should be fitted to provide a contact to drive the horse up to the bit so all the above criteria can be improved. They should not be fitted so they “pull” the horse into shape.

Side reins and ancillaries should only be used once the horse has learned to go forward on the lunge in a balanced frame with hocks under him.

The “A” and “H” candidate must be able to show a more advanced outline where the frame is shorter and the balance moved from the forehand more over the hind-quarters.

The hocks are lowered and more underneath the horse. The head and neck are higher and the face approaches the vertical.



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