



Trot Test 1: Walk-trot-walk transitions, walk-halt-walk transitions, half 10m circles

1.	A X	Enter at walk and proceed down the centre line. Halt, Salute. Proceed in walk.	Straightness of rider			
			Rhythm and tempo			
			Halt - Walk transition			
2.	X	Half circle left 10m	Aids			
			Accuracy			
3.	EKA FB	2 or 3 sets of transitions between walk and slow trot, showing 3-6 strides of trot with each transition. Walk before M.	Position (X2)			
			Aids going into trot			
			Walk-trot transitions			
4.	BM M B	Proceed in walk. Half circle left 10m, with incline back to the track at B. Track right.	Aids			
			Rhythm and tempo			
			Synchronisation (X2)			
5.	BFA KE	2 or 3 sets of transitions between walk and slow trot, showing 3-6 strides of trot with each transition. Walk before H.	Synchronisation (X2)			
			Aids going into walk			
			Trot-walk transitions			
6.	H KA	Half circle right 10m, with incline back to the track at E. Proceed in walk.	Rhythm and tempo			
			Accuracy			
			Position (X2)			
7.	A AF	Halt, immobility 2-5 seconds. Proceed in walk.	Walk -halt transition			
			Contact			
			Aids			
8.	FBM MC	Free walk on a long rein. Take up rein contact before M. Proceed in walk.	Rhythm and tempo			
			Relaxation of horse			
			Stretching down.			
9.	C	Proceed up the centre line. Leave the arena at A.	Straightness of rider			
			Rhythm and tempo			
Total						Maximum 87



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This test is for horses who are beginning trot work in the arena. The horse should be confidently trotting in straight lines when riding in open spaces, with the rider in rising trot, and should understand the aids to trot. Horses can begin trot work with this test, or can skip straight to Trot Test 3 and come back to Trot Tests 1 and 2 at a later date if they find the frequent transitions too difficult.

Frequent transitions between walk and trot or walk and halt test the responsiveness of the horse and keep the horse interested. The half circles and changes of direction keep the horse focused, and help maintain balance and softness in the walk. If the horse has previously learned some basic lateral work in walk, this really helps with the accuracy, straightness and correct bend on the circles. The walk should be fairly slow in tempo, so that the horse can balance himself and lighten his forehand during the small circles.

In Sentient Riding, we aim to introduce and practice the trot transition before trot work becomes established in the arena. The quality of the transition determines the quality of the trot, so to begin with we focus on the transition and spend only a few strides in trot.

We are looking for the horse to respond quickly to light aids into trot, and to maintain his balance and lightness throughout the transition.

The rider usually remains in sitting trot so as not to disrupt the rhythm for such a short period of trot. As the trot is very slow, this is usually easiest for the horse and rider. However, the rider may select rising trot if it is easier. In sitting trot, the rider synchronises with the movement of alternate sides of the horse's back, by moving alternate seatbones. This will be extremely subtle at this slow tempo. The rider should not appear to move in the saddle.

A slow trot, which is maintained for only a few steps, is essential. At this stage of training, the horse does not have enough strength to correctly carry the rider in sitting trot for any more than a few strides. The short, slow trot also enables the horse to maintain excellent balance, enabling a smooth transition to walk.