



Canter Test 2: Trot-halt, leg yield and walk-canter: modified for 20m x 60m arena

1.	A	Enter at trot and proceed down the centre line.	Straightness of rider			
			Rhythm and tempo			
2.	C P	Track right. Halt, immobility 3-5 seconds.	Position in trot (X2)			
			Trot-halt transition			
3.	P PFA	Halt-trot transition Trot	Halt-trot transition			
			Synchronisation (X2)			
4.	A E	Turn down centreline and leg yield to track before E. Transition to walk.	Leg yield			
			Rhythm and tempo			
			Straightness of rider			
5.	Before C C	Walk-canter transition 20m circle in canter	Walk-canter transition			
			Rhythm and tempo			
			Position (X2)			
6.	C	Rising Trot	Not marked			
7.	BLK K	Change the rein Trot	Synchronisation			
			Contact			
			Rhythm and tempo			
8.	A B	Turn down centreline and leg yield to track before B. Transition to walk.	Leg yield			
			Rhythm and tempo			
			Aids			
9.	Before C C	Walk-canter transition 20m circle in canter	Walk-canter transition			
			Accuracy			
			Synchronisation (X2)			
10.	C Before E	Trot Walk	Canter-trot transition			
11.	ELF	Change the rein, showing some stretch forward and down on a long rein.	Rhythm and tempo			
			Relaxation of horse			
			Stretching down.			
12.	Between F and A A L	Trot Turn down the centreline. Direct transition to halt. Immobility, salute.	Straightness of rider			
			Accuracy			
			Trot-halt transition			
Total						Maximum 96



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This test is for horses who are just beginning canter work in the arena. We introduce canter work fairly late in the horse's training. Only once he has built his strength and balance through lateral work in walk and trot, is he ready to begin canter in the arena. The horse is used to cantering in straight lines, in open spaces, and is now established and balanced in rising and sitting trot. He should easily be able to maintain balance in direct and indirect transitions between halt, walk and trot and throughout lateral work in walk and trot. We introduce walk-canter transitions almost immediately once canter work has begun, because it is easier for the horse and rider to maintain balance in the direct transition. A balanced transition is the key to a good canter. We do not expect the horse to maintain the canter for very long, because at first it is hard for him to maintain the quality of the gait for more than a few strides. Quality is more important than quantity. In this way, we are setting the horse up to remain balanced throughout the canter, and produce a balanced downward transition as well.

The trot work in this test can be ridden sitting or rising, except when specified. As always, the trot should have a slow and calm tempo. The test does include a change of rein in rising trot, which allows the horse a bit of a break from sitting trot if it has been used elsewhere. In the sitting trot, the movement is absorbed by the rider's seatbones, moving alternately in time with the two halves of the horse's back. If both seatbones move together instead of separately, the rider is not correctly synchronised, and can result in too much movement of the rider's body, hands, legs and head.

In the canter, the rider's hips move in a circle –forward, up, back, down. The “up” part of the movement synchronises with the moment of suspension, and helps keep the horse off his forehead. Too much forward and back, or “polishing of the saddle” blocks the movement. The rider should emphasise the “up” phase of the circle, and in reality moves very little in the saddle.