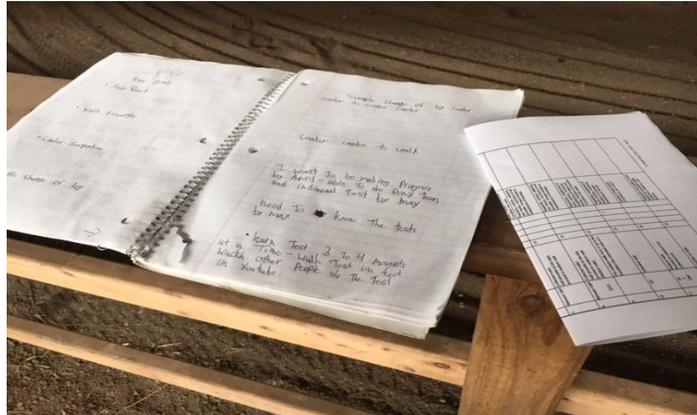


Donnie Brady / Working towards FEI Pony

To start my series of lessons Samantha St Jacques had me work on setting goals and reviewing tests. So I wrote out a series of goals and movements from the tests I needed to practice. Together we reviewed what I wrote and what I should work on and set a timeline to help me get there...



This lesson we chose to work on developing some skills towards the counter canter to counter canter change in the test using our winter home arena as she was giving a clinic there...since our arena is small we focused on a single loop change...some of the things she focused on were:

- not being in a hurry to canter with the simple change across the middle
- don't short change yourself with small loops in a smaller arena
- Don't lean to inside for canter depart / eyes up / chest open / keep seat plugged into saddle / no tipping forward

My homework from that exercise was:

- Timing the lead change through the trot and then trying the counter canter change through the trot before we add in the walk transition

On the next two lessons with Sam at her farm with a bigger arena we added:

- 2 more loops with timing lead changes through the trot
- More jump at the canter and take time to establish new inside leg
- Working on picking up counter canter leads on long side (R counter canter is his hard way) and control of the counter canter

- Then finally able to do some counter canter to counter canter lead change through the trot (not yet ready for the walk)

We also practiced our canter-walk transitions and they are getting better to do this she had me:

- canter small circles into walk pirouettes in both directions
- Make sure I get the outside leg/rein especially when I go for the R canter-walk to straighten his neck cause he likes to hollow on the R side



We are always working on our connection and some of the things I remember her focusing on were:

- Pushing the hindlegs to the bridle and no jiggling of the bit...connect the horse to the bridle through the hindlegs....always focusing on getting him forward and stepping under....use the hindlegs to fix an unsteady bridle and push hind legs closer to the bridle rather than pull him back onto the bit...
 - Also keeping my hands together and stop waving my R hand around / eyes up (look at myself in the mirror) and tall posture

We have also spent some time practicing half pass and developing my understanding of that skill. We have worked on picking a line either from letter to letter across the arena / letter to center line and then go straight / straight on center line to letter:

- Want to make sure entrance and exit into half pass is complete

- First step of half pass needs to be outside hind stepping over and under so turn on diagonal but hind legs right away stepping over
- Get to where I am going and make his front leg/shoulder reach over
- And not to much haunches

Video of me practicing what I have learned at home:

<https://vimeo.com/251565827>

Thank you to Dressage4Kids so much for providing me with this opportunity...I learned so much this winter and it really kept me going even though the weather has been challenging...I want to use the last 2 lessons to work with Pierre St Jacques and will send a report when those are over...

Donnie Brady