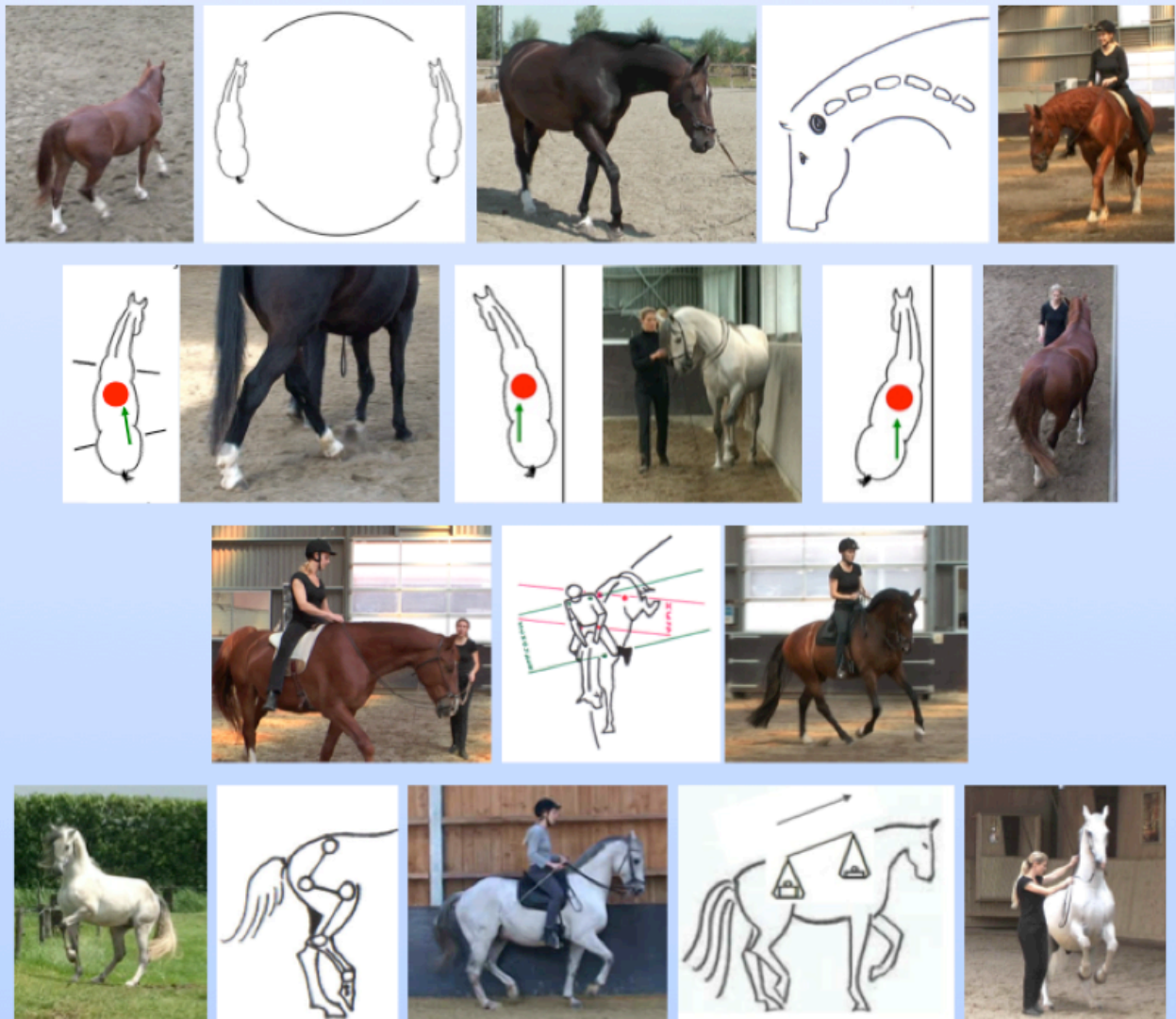


An introduction to **STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING**



Marijke de Jong

PREFACE

Is your horse tense whilst being ridden? Does he not want to turn to one side? Or does he always walk too fast or too slow? Does your horse often strike or does it even rear or buck? Perhaps he is often lame when you ride it? Does your riding sometimes feel more like a fight, because your horse always pulls at one side of the bit?

You are not the only one who sometimes feels this way! A lot of riders face these problems when they ride. Sometimes it seems that people enjoy grooming their horse much more than actually riding.

If you have tried everything to solve these problems, and got told that “it must be a problem between the horse’s ears”, then perhaps Straightness Training is your solution. For my horse Maestro, it was THE answer to our problems:



Here you see Maestro in June 2003. He was very unbalanced and his asymmetry and crookedness made many tasks difficult for him, which caused him to fight against many things. He did not let himself be longed. He would break free in big spaces and cantering was impossible. At high speed, he would almost go straight through the corners. Also, he used to run in trot and turning to the left was nearly impossible.

Straightness Training was the solution!

By straightening Maestro, he is now able to canter in a relaxed manner and do piaffe and levade easily.



Thanks to straightening exercises, he is mentally and physically in balance and it is a pleasure to ride him.

Would you like to achieve this too? Start with reading this eBook and take your training with your horse to the next level!

Enjoy!

Marijke de Jong

THIS IS VERSION 2.1 OF THIS EBOOK

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Marijke de Jong is a horse trainer and is not a veterinarian or medical professional and therefore does not offer medical advice. The opinions in this eBook are based upon her own personal experiences or other publications. For any health and medical issues or if your horse has a medical condition please consult your veterinarian or another medical practitioner. Health is complicated and consists of many parts and training is only one part.

It is very important that you seek professional assistance when you have no or little experience with Straightness Training. If you have no experience in correct longeing, work in hand or riding it is strongly advised that you seek an expert to help you master these aspects of horse training.

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1. INTRODUCTION

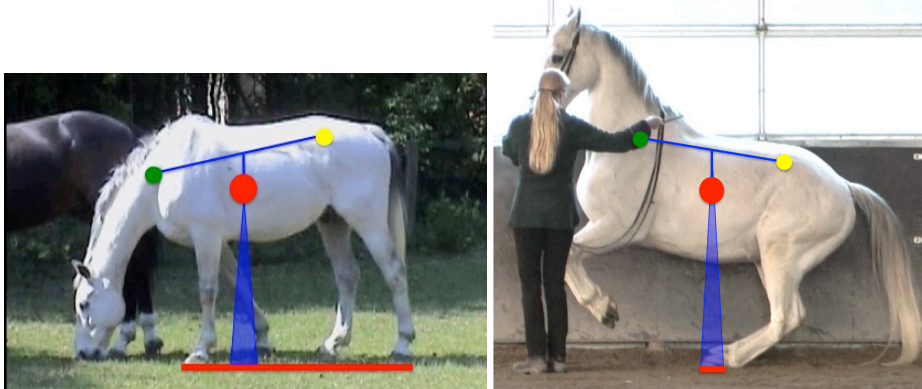
The horse is not naturally built to carry weight. Therefore, if we want to sit on it as a rider, we need to prepare the horse to carry us properly. This is done through dressage, with Straightness Training as an essential part of it.

1.1. NATURAL ASYMMETRY

Every horse is naturally asymmetrical. Just like every human, every horse is left- or right handed, both in the frontlegs and the hindlegs. Also, the horse is bent to the left or right in its body and it carries more weight on the frontlegs than on the hindlegs. This causes an uneven distribution of the weight over the four legs. When the rider does not recognise and correct this imbalance, this can lead to problems. The goal of Straightness Training is to develop the horse symmetrically in body and limbs.

1.2. STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING

Straightness Training consists of a series of gymnastic exercises for the horse in which it learns to stretch, to tense and to relax its muscles. The horse will learn to shift the center of mass more back and he will develop the carrying ability of the hind legs to free the fragile front legs. The Straightness Training exercises make the horse fit, supple, strong and muscular so it can carry the rider more easily.



Straightness Training during dressage makes the horse symmetrical in body and limbs. It also develops the horse's balance and divides the weight equally over all four legs. By straightening the horse, we enable it to carry the rider properly. Also, well thought through gymnastic exercises keep the horse fit as a riding horse until old age.



Dressage is based on the natural movements of the horse. In the wild, we can observe beautiful "dressage" exercises such as piaffe, passage and levade.

1.3. EVERY HORSE IS UNIQUE

In the 17th century, Grandmaster in the art of riding Antoine de Pluvinel (1552 – 1620) already described the natural asymmetry of horses. Also, François Robichon de La Guérinière (1688 – 1751) and Gustav Steinbrecht (1808 – 1885) wrote about this phenomenon in their books.

Just like people, horses can be left-handed or right-handed and asymmetrical. We tend to think that faces of people and the snout of horses are symmetrical, but these pictures show that they are not. In fact, they are asymmetrical.



Not only are snouts and faces asymmetrical, but the body and the limbs are also not symmetrical. All horses are in fact born asymmetrical.

The perfect symmetrical horse is yet to be born!

Just like people, horses can be left-handed or right-handed and asymmetrical. This makes it crooked in body, limbs and movement.

But this asymmetry cannot be categorized easily. Every horse has a unique asymmetry and needs tailor-made Straightness Training.

Watch your horse, discover his specific asymmetry and try to rebalance your horse by using customized Straightness Training.

But first let me tell you this: It's a delusion to believe that a horse can be straightened 100%.

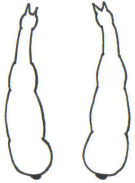
The 80-20 rule applies here: 20% of the crookedness causes 80% of the problems. In other words: it is the extreme crookedness that causes most problems, not the remaining crookedness.

So it's important to reduce extreme crookedness and asymmetry in the body and muscles, but a slight asymmetry will always remain.

2. DIMENSIONS OF NATURAL ASYMMETRY

Every horse is naturally asymmetrical in body and limbs. The natural asymmetry or crookedness can be divided into several areas:

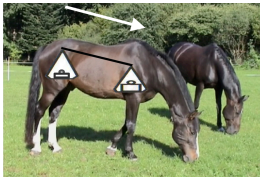
1. Lateral asymmetry



Every horse bends more easily to one side than to the other. The left- or right-bending through the body of the horse is the so-called lateral asymmetry.

Because of this asymmetry the horse has a hollow side and a more stretched side.

2. Horizontal imbalance



The unequal weight distribution between front legs and hind legs is the second dimension and the so-called horizontal imbalance.

Naturally, all horses carry about $\frac{3}{5}$ th of their weight on the shoulders and $\frac{2}{5}$ th on the hind legs

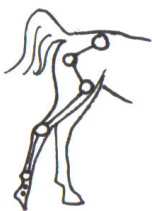
3. Front legs



The left- and right-handedness in the front legs is the third area of asymmetry.

Just like humans, horses are left- or right-handed. The weight on both front legs is not equally divided. This can lead to strain injuries in one front leg.

4. Hind legs



The left- and right-handedness in the hind legs is another dimension of natural asymmetry.

One hind leg usually is more pushing, the other one carries better. The carrying hind leg is more supple and steps under the center of mass easily. The pushing hind leg is longer and straighter and can push the horse forward.

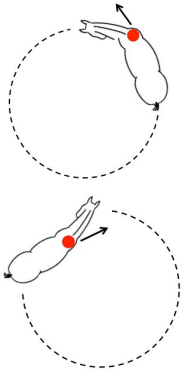
5. Front-back ratio



The fifth area is the slight sideward movement of the horse because of narrower shoulders compared to the hips.

Naturally, the horse walks with its shoulders crooked in front of its hips. When the horse is not straightened along the wall of the arena, this effect is enhanced because the shoulders of the horse are narrower than its hips.

6. Diagonal imbalance



The center of mass being off-centre and more towards one of the front legs compared to the other is the so-called diagonal imbalance.

A horse that is not corrected for natural asymmetry and natural balance, falls in on the inside shoulder or out over the outside shoulder. This creates a diagonal imbalance, a diagonal movement of the center of mass towards one shoulder.

7. Vertical imbalance



Vertical imbalance is another aspect of natural asymmetry.

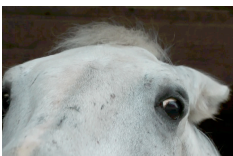
The movement of the center of mass can make the horse move slightly sideward.

8. Imbalance top-underline



If a rider does not correct all the dimensions of asymmetry and imbalance mentioned earlier, this usually results in a bad posture and an incorrect use of abdominal muscles and back muscles and in an imbalance in the muscles in the topline and underline of the horse. This can lead to tension and problems in the back.

9. Mental imbalance



Tension in the back leads often to stress and imbalance in the mind. A horse with a short topline is always 'ready to flee'. This makes these horses very alert. So tension in the back causes mental tension. Horses have a right brain and a left brain and these brains have a different influence on the horse. A horse that's in a state of fight or flight will use his right brain more.

10. Asymmetric chewing



Most horses chew asymmetrical, so they will use one side of their teeth more than the other side. This gives asymmetrical musculature on the fore head.

3. OVERVIEW OF PROBLEMS CAUSED BY NATURAL ASYMMETRY

Asymmetry is not a problem for a horse, it is precisely the contrary: in the wild it is important for survival. Problems only arise when the rider's weight is added to a horse. If a rider does not correct all the dimensions of asymmetry, this usually results in an imbalance in the muscles in the topline and underline of the horse and this can lead to tension and problems in the back and over straining the front legs. And tension and/or pain in the body often lead to stress in the mind.

Below you will find all of the most common problems caused by asymmetry.



3.1. RIDING PROBLEMS

- To be able to perform the exercises to one side and not to the other
- Trouble with turning
- Falling in on the inside shoulder
- Falling out over the outsider shoulder
- Uneven contact on the reins
- Hard in the mouth
- Holding on to the bit on one side
- Heavy in the hand
- Leaning on the reins
- Not stretching the neck
- Incorrect strike off in canter
- Disunited in canter
- Lateral movements in walk and/or canter
- No square halt
- Backing up in a straight line is impossible
- Speeding up automatically
- Prancing
- Slow
- Hard to sit to in trot
- Rider and saddle slide to one side (the stretched side). Rider ends up sitting crooked.
- Little freedom in the shoulders
- Short steps
- Irregular rhythm or bridle lameness

3.2. MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

- Alert
- Nervous
- Protesting
- Striking
- Rearing
- Bucking
- Ears flat when doing specific exercises
- Panicking

3.3. PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

- Tilting the head
- Head shaking
- Grinding its teeth
- Tongue hangs out of the mouth
- Swishing the tail
- Back problems
- Kissing spines
- Dull coat
- Lumps on the back
- Strain injuries in front leg(s)
- Irregularities in the gaits
- Lameness
- Navicular disease
- Joint problems (SI, knee, hip)
- Bone spavin
- Galls

3.4. OTHER CAUSES

The problems listed above can of course also have other causes besides natural asymmetry. Of course, the following aspect should be considered, since the horse is a prairie-dwelling animal that needs movement and social contact.

- Proper feed, plenty of roughage
- Fresh air and sunlight
- Freedom to move in a paddock or field
- Contact with other horses
- A saddle, bridle and bit that fit correctly
- Using a block to mount the horse prevents back problems.



When all this is considered and specialists such as veterinarians, dentists and others do not offer a solution, and different kinds of bits didn't help, then natural asymmetry might be considered as the cause of the problems.

It is always important to deal with the cause of the problems and not just with the symptoms. For example, it is not advisable to use side-reins and/or special bits to fix problems with the horse's softness in the mouth or head / neck position. The symptom: Not coming towards the riders' hands is not coming from the horse's mouth, but from the cause: its natural asymmetry.

It is important to reduce the natural asymmetry in order to make the problems disappear.

The rider has to recognize the natural asymmetry and imbalance and has to help the horse to develop the horse symmetrically in body and limbs.

Natural asymmetry is a muscle problem which can be solved by training the muscles. This training is called Straightness Training.



Asymmetrical



Correct bending

4. DIMENSIONS OF STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING

Natural asymmetry is a muscle problem, which can be solved by training the muscles. This training is called Straightness Training. The end result is a straightened horse.

A straightened horse:

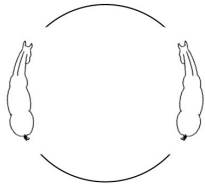
1. is symmetrical developed in body and limbs;
2. is symmetrical in movement and can perform all exercises equally to the left and to the right;
3. will let itself collect and lift in the front.

The goal of dressage is a “riding balance”, in which 3/5 of the body weight is carried by the hind legs. Only a straight horse lets itself be collected and lifted in the front to relief the front legs and to support the back.



In Straightness Training the rider becomes the personal fitness trainer of the horse to accomplish balance. A straightened horse is in balance in the following dimensions:

1. Lateral symmetry



A straightened horse lets itself be bent to both sides. It can bend flexibly to the left and to the right.

2. Horizontal balance



The body weight is equally divided over all four legs. The center of mass is kept in the centre, keeping the horse in balance.

3. Front legs



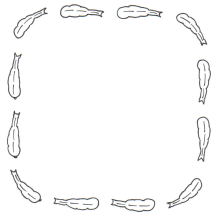
Both front legs show equal shoulder freedom.

4. Hind legs



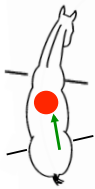
Both hind legs of a straightened horse can push and carry equally.

5. Front-back ratio



During training the horse has his hips and shoulders in alignment. Especially when going along the wall, it is important that the rider places the shoulders in front of the hindquarter.

6. Diagonal balance



Straightness Training prevents the horse from falling in on the inside shoulder or out over the outside shoulder, thus preventing a diagonal movement in the center of mass.

7. Vertical balance



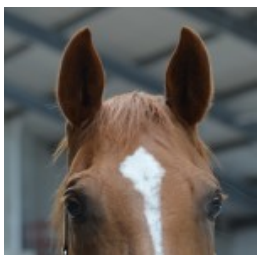
Straightness Training keeps the horse balanced vertically.

8. Balance in top-underline



Straightness Training enables correct usage of the back and abdominal muscles. It is important both physically and mentally for the horse to maintain a forward down position.

9. Mental balance



Due to Straightness Training the horse not only gets into physical balance but also mentally and emotionally. The horse relaxes physically and mentally.

The horse will be more confident and will be less stressed. He will become more focused on the rider and will not resist the aids.

5. SIX KEYS OF STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING

Straightness Training consists of 6 keys that allow the horse to develop symmetrically in body and limbs:

Key 1: Lateral bending



The first step of Straightness Training is lateral bending of the horse's body. Lateral bending is a collective name that we use for everything that happens in the horse's whole body to gain the ability to bend with the arc of the circle in both directions. Especially by stretching short muscles and contracting long, weak muscles, the horse can bend to both sides.

Key 2: Forward down



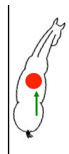
When the horse releases its back as a result of the lateral stretching of key 1 the horse can lower its neck forward down. By stretching the outside of the body, the back muscle on that side lengthens. A long back muscle cannot keep the head of the horse up, causing the horse to lower its head into a forward down position.

Key 3: Stepping under



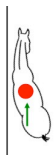
Correct lateral bending engages the inside hip, causing the inside hind leg to step towards the center of mass. The forward down movement of the horse makes the hind leg swing forward. Correct stepping under is a requirement to be able to work on the next keys (bending the hind legs).

Key 4: Bending of the inside hind leg



When the horse can perform proper lateral bending, it is capable of stepping under the center of mass with its inside hind leg. Then, this hind leg can start to assume some of the weight from the front legs, making it bend more. This is done through shoulder-in.

Key 5: Bending of the outside hind leg



The next key is to bend the hind leg as an outside hind leg. This is done through haunches-in. The outside hind leg steps under the center of mass, which causes it to bend. The haunches-in reduces the pushing of the outside hind leg and stimulates it to carry weight.

Key 6: Bending of both hind legs



When the horse has learned to bend its body and both hind legs individually, we can ask the horse to bend both hind legs simultaneously. We use the exercises pirouette and piaffe. A straight horse now allows itself to be collected and lifted in the front.

The result of the six keys is a balanced and symmetrical horse. The horse can bend to both sides, has equal shoulder freedom, pushes and carries equally with the hind legs and can carry more weight with the hind legs.

6. STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING PILLARS

The horse can be straightened in five ways and the six keys are used in each training pillar:



1. Groundwork



2. Longeing



3. Work in hand



4. Riding



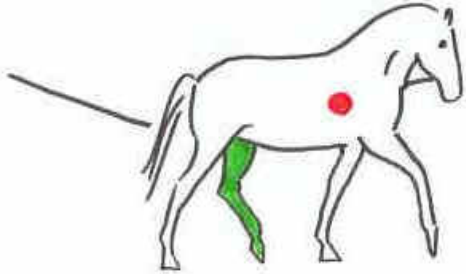
4. Liberty

Every training pillar consists of a series of gymnastic exercises to stretch, contract and relax muscles. It makes the horse fit, supple, flexible, muscular and strong so that it can carry the rider properly. Every Straightness Training component will add a different dimension to an exercise and all training components strengthen each other. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts!

And the five training pillars ensure the horse to not only develop symmetrically in body and limbs, but also to find balance in heart, mind and soul.

6.1. GROUNDWORK & LONGEING

The goal of longeing is to exercise the horse on both reins. The horse is asked to walk with lateral bending while placing its inside hoof under the center of mass. Because of the stretched outside muscles, the horse releases tension in its back and moves in a forward down position.

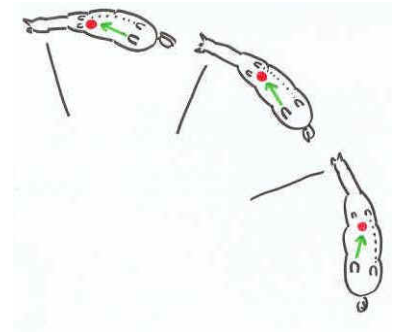


LFS

The structural theme in longeing are the first 3 keys of straightness training:

1. Lateral bending
2. Forward down tendency
3. Stepping under

The first three keys are also called the “LFS” of the horse. The L is for Lateral bending, the F stands for Forward down and the S for Stepping under the center of mass.



On both reins, the horse is asked to walk with correct lateral bending, which makes it release its back muscles. Also, it brings forward the inside hip so that the inside hind leg can step under the center of mass. This is done in walk, trot and canter. When the horse has learned to move with these three elements –LFS- on the longe, you will have made a great step forward in the education of the horse.

When the LFS is correct, the horse moves in a balanced way and with a correct forward down position of head and neck. This makes the use of side-reins unnecessary.

Exercises

On the longe, the horse learns the following exercises:



1. Forward down at a standstill

The first exercise to teach the horse is to bring its head and neck forward down.

Ask the horse to stand still and to give to the pressure behind the ears that is applied by bringing the rein of the cavesson downwards. As soon as the horse lowers its head, you stop the pressure and reward the horse.



2. Stelling & bending at a standstill

In the second exercise, stelling and bending is asked of the horse. Stelling positions the skull to the left or to the right, bending concerns the whole body, from head to tail. The horse must remain standing still while doing this exercise. Once the horse relaxes, you release the pressure and reward the horse. When done correctly, you can see that by asking stelling, the horse bends through its entire body. This results in a forward movement of the inside hip.



3. LFS in hand

The third exercise is to ask the horse to move on a circle with correct Lateral bending, a Forward down position and a hind leg that Steps under. While in this exercise, stelling and bending is asked through the cavesson. At the same time, the head is asked forward down and at the same time you engage the inside hind leg to step under.



4. LFS on the bigger circle

After the horse has learned through the first three exercises to step under, walk in a forward down tendency and maintain the correct bending, it can now be taught to walk further away from the trainer on a bigger circle.



5. Transitions

When the horse can maintain the LFS in walk, he can be asked to do this in trot and in canter. When the horse can maintain the LFS in all three gaits, non-progressive transitions such as from stop to trot and from canter to walk can be executed.

6.2. WORK IN HAND

The goal of work in hand is to supple up the horse to both sides, teach the horse Straightness Training exercises and prepare the horse for riding. The rider can teach the horse all lateral movements from the ground. This way, the rider/trainer can observe the horse from the ground in all gaits and, for example, see which hind leg is the weakest.

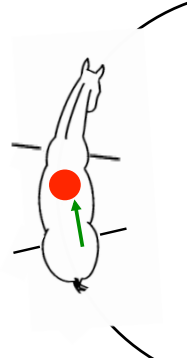
LFS

The structural theme in work in hand is – like in longeing - the LFS again:

1. Lateral bending
2. Forward down tendency
3. Stepping under

In every exercise, the horse is asked to walk with lateral bending in order to cause it to release its back muscles. It also brings forward the inside hip so that the inside hind leg can step under the center of mass.

Keys 4, 5 and 6 can also be practised in hand: bending the inside hind leg (key 4), bending the outside hind leg (key 5) and bending both hind legs (key 6) to take weight off the front legs.



Exercises

In work in hand the horse is taught the following exercises:



Circle

On the circle, the horse learns to bend to both sides, in a forward down position, with a hind leg that steps under the weight. The trainer asks for stelling and bending with the inside rein and asks the inside hind leg to step under by pointing the whip to the inside hind leg when it is in the air.



Shoulder-in

When the horse feels supple on the inside rein, the outside rein can be used to ask the horse to bring its shoulders inwards. In this exercise, the weight of the horse is placed in front of the direction of movement of the inside hind leg, thus making it carry more weight. The wall prevents the outside hind leg from falling out.



Haunches-in (also called quarter-in or travers)

In haunches-in, the outside leg has to step under to take weight and as a result it will bend more.

The trainer walks backwards in this exercise and asks the horse to keep the bending in the neck and body and to bring the hindquarter inwards.



Renvers

The renvers is practised in order to make the haunches-in more independent from the wall. This exercise is started from a shoulder-in on four tracks. Then the bending is changed, resulting in the renvers.



Half-pass

The half-pass is a renvers on the diagonal in which the horse no longer has any support from the wall. The start is as follows: The trainer turns away from the short side of the arena on a quarter-line (line between the wall and the center line) and changes the bending. It is important to keep the shoulders in front of the hips of the horse, to allow both hind legs to step towards the center of mass.



Pirouette

The pirouette is a renvers on a circle. The following exercise is very useful to teach the horse the pirouette:

Make a large circle on the short side of the arena. At X, change the bend and make a renvers circle in the other half of the arena. A pirouette can be executed by gradually decreasing the size of the circle.



Piaffe

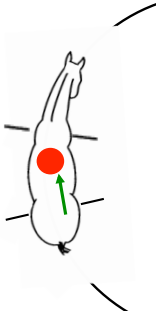
All exercises above can also be done in trot. By collecting the trot more and more, you can train the so-called “half steps” in trot.

In the end, after an intensive training period, the horse has become so strong that it can trot in place, creating piaffe. In this exercise, both hind legs have to bend and carry.

6.3. RIDING

All lateral movements the horse has learned on the ground can also be executed perfectly in riding.

LFS



The structural theme while riding is the LFS:

1. Lateral bending of the body
2. Forward down tendency of head and neck
3. Stepping under of the inside hind leg

In every exercise, the horse is asked to walk with correct lateral bending in order to cause it to release its back muscles. It also brings forward the inside hip so that the inside hind leg can step under the center of mass (key 1, 2 and 3 of Straightness Training).

Keys 4, 5 and 6 can also be practised in hand: bending the inside hind leg (key 4), bending the outside hind leg (key 5) and bending both hind legs (key 6) to take weight off the front legs.

Exercises

The horse is straightened while riding using the following exercises.



Circle

The circle is also the basic exercise when training the horse in riding. This exercise teaches the horse to bend correctly under the rider. The horse also learns to walk forward down to use its back correctly to carry the rider. An important point to remember is to ask the horse to step with its inside hind leg under the rider, to better carry the rider.



Shoulder-in

The circle allows the horse to bend its body correctly. The shoulder-in makes the inside hind leg more bendable and strong. The rider uses his so-called “versal aids”. Versal aids are these diagonal aids:

- Inside leg combined with outside rein



Haunches-in

The haunches-in exercise makes the outside hind leg more bendable and strong. The rider uses his traversal aids. Traversal aids are these diagonal aids:

- Outside leg combined with indirect inside rein



Renvers

The renvers is practised to make the haunches-in more independent from the wall. This exercise is started from a shoulder-in on four tracks. Then the bending is changed, resulting in the renvers.



Half-pass

The half-pass is a renvers on the diagonal, in which the horse has no longer any support from the wall. The start is as follows: The rider starts a shoulder-in along the wall and then asks the outside hind leg to step under to continue a renvers on the diagonal.



Pirouette

The pirouette is a haunches-in on the circle. To teach it to the horse, the following exercise is recommended: The rider asks a haunches-in on the circle and reduces the size of the circle gradually.



Piaffe

Finally, the horse is strong enough to bend both hind legs in piaffe.

6.4. ST AT LIBERTY

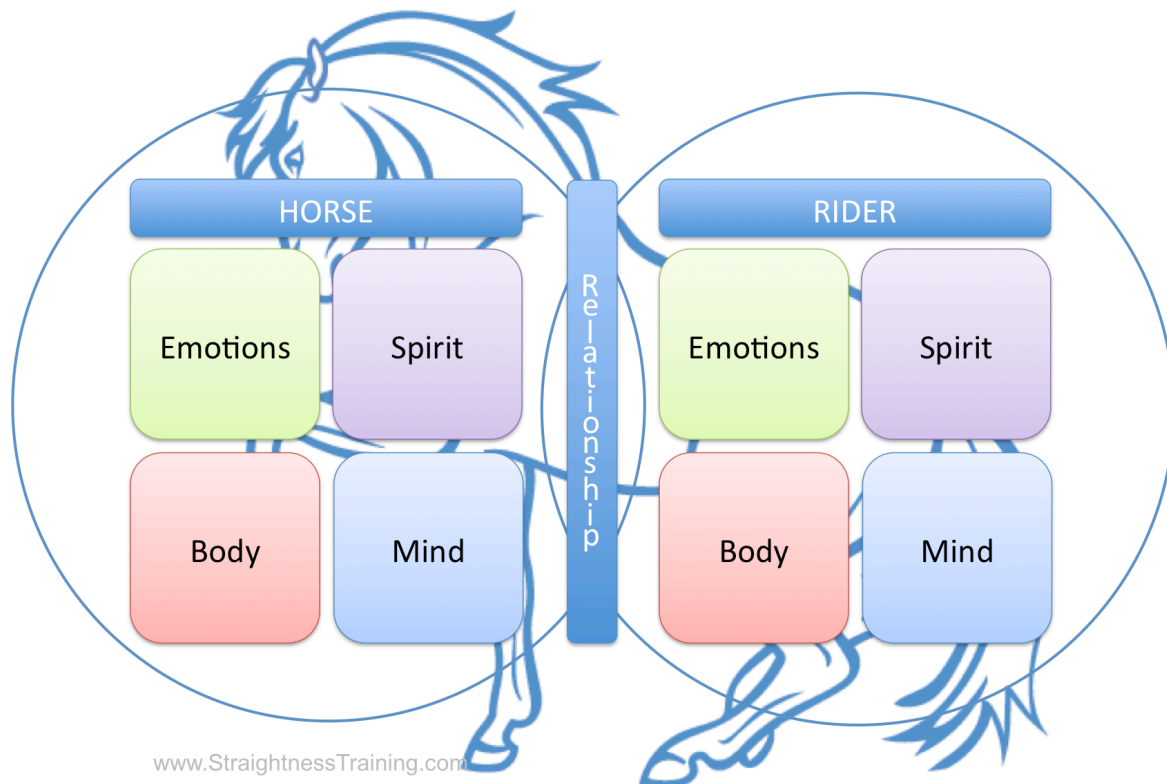
You might be able to do a wonderful piaffe with your horse and a bridle, but is he able to do it without? Does he WANT to do the piaffe rather than to be MADE to perform this exercise? Does he have not only a balanced body, but also a balanced mind? And do you have a balanced relationship, so that he stays with you during the exercise and doesn't leave you?

That's the power of doing ST at liberty, where you will find out if your horse understands you, if he trusts you, if he respects you, if he likes to work with you and if he WANTS to do what you want and takes responsibility for the actual behavior!

Because at liberty you can't control your horse physically, you can't MAKE him do something, and you can't MAKE him to behave.



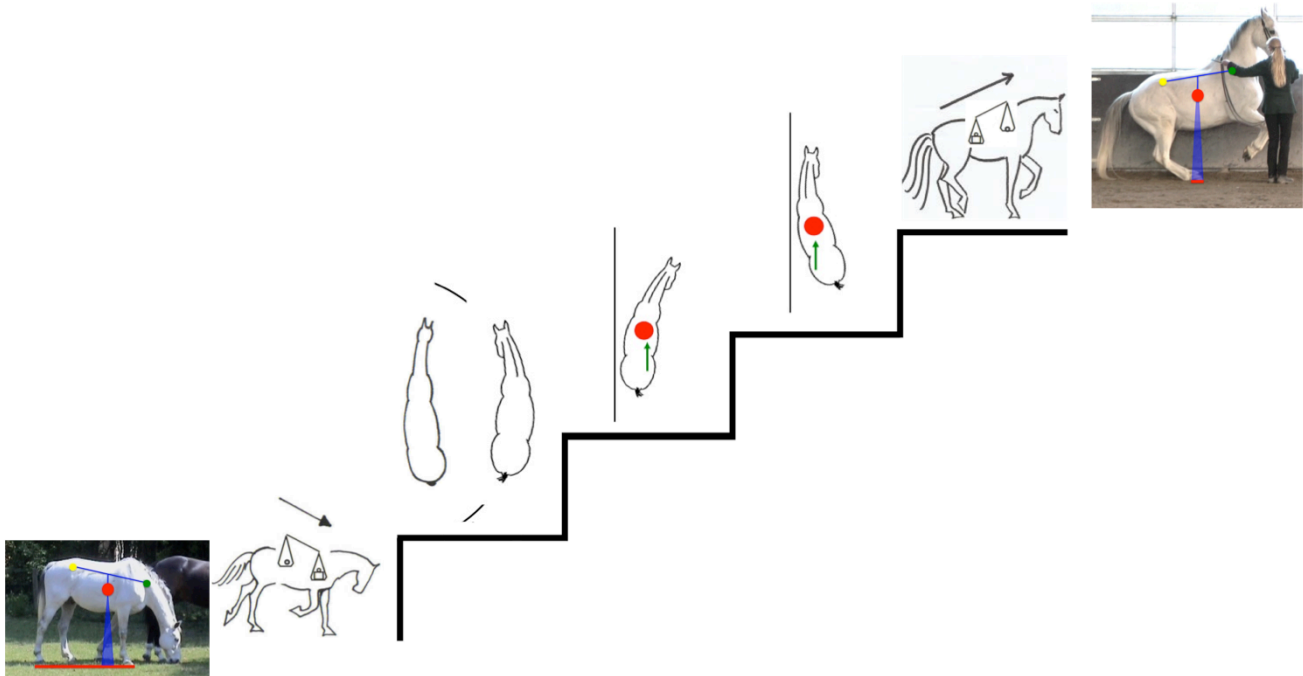
In Straightness Training we not only strive for a balanced body, but also for balance in mind, emotions and spirit, in both human and horse. Because a horse in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance is a pleasure to work with! And a rider in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance is a pleasure to work with for the horse! When everything is in balance you can conquer the world with your horse!



7. AFTER WORD

What can Straightness Training do for you and your horse?:

- You can develop your horse from a horse with (riding) problems to a light, cooperative riding horse. This horse-friendly training system helps you to eliminate riding problems. You will get more insight in how riding problems originate, you will learn to fix and to prevent these problems.
- You will learn to train in a logical, systematic system with well thought-through and progressive exercises and develop yourself to become the personal fitness trainer of your horse. Because of this clear structured system, you will have the proper basics to fall back on when you encounter problems, and to work from these basics to fix whatever problems you encounter. You can prevent and solve back problems and strain injuries using Straightness Training as physiotherapy. And, you can take it a step further and develop the talents of your horse to its maximum.



- Your horse will develop physically: it becomes more flexible and manoeuvrable, can bend more in the hindquarters and is easy and light in collection. Your horse will also develop mentally, be more confident and will be less stressed. Your horse will become more focused on you and will not resist your aids. When I look at my own horses and the many other horses that I have seen improving because of this system, I consider this to be the proof that Straightness Training works! It will work for your horse too!
- In previous years, I met many people that were not happy with their horse and their riding, and that now enjoy riding every day and with success. And everybody can execute the training exercises. It does not matter whether you are an experienced rider or not, everybody can learn to do these exercises.

Good luck!!!

Marijke de Jong

APPENDIX: THE CAVESSON

The cavesson is an important tool in Straightness Training in the first four training pillars: groundwork, longeing, work in hand and riding. By using a cavesson, it is possible to bend the horse's body from head to tail, to encourage the forward down tendency of the head and neck and to influence the stepping under of the inside hind leg (LFS).



The cavesson consists of a metal noseband wrapped around with leather, which shapes around the nose.

Three metal rings are attached onto the noseband. These rings are moveable, which makes it easy to change the rein.

A strap around the lower jaw prevents the cheek piece from moving up into the eyes.

The cavesson has been used for centuries to train horses. Grand master François Robichon de la Guérinière (1688 - 1751) writes about the cavesson in his book "École de Cavalerie". The Duke of Newcastle and De la Broue (circa 1600) also wrote about the benefits of using the cavesson.

Benefits

- ✓ The young or crooked horse is not used to bending its body and will constantly try to move with its body straight instead of bended. The cavesson was invented to teach the horse to turn, stop, place the head and hindquarter correctly and supple up the body and limbs without disturbing the mouth.
- ✓ Using the cavesson makes the horse much more supple in its body.
- ✓ With the cavesson, mistakes that are made by previous riders using a bit, can be corrected.
- ✓ When making the transition from cavesson to a bit, the horse will react lightly and attentively to the effect of the bit and will be easier in the hand.
- ✓ The cavesson is the ultimate tool to help a horse with Straightness Training.
- ✓ The cavesson is very easy to use in the training and easy to integrate in a bridle with bit.

THE STRAIGHTNESS TRAINING ACADEMY



Marijke de Jong's Straightness Training Academy aims to form a world wide professional group of loyal and dedicated horse trainers and instructors to the cause of improving health, joy and beauty in working with horses based on the principles of Straightness Training.

The Straightness Training Academy consists of the ST Mastery Program, the ST Evaluation Program and the ST Instructor Program:

- The **ST Mastery Program** offers you a rich and rewarding and balanced exercise program to get your horse fit and strong, no matter what breed or age. This program aims to transform riders into Straightness Training experts and experienced horse trainers.
- The structured **ST Evaluation program** is designed to evaluate and measure the level of skill of rider and horse. Through videos rider and horse can demonstrate their ability to perform the ST exercises that are outlined in ST Mastery. Via valuable evaluation forms with tips and advice the rider is able to set the next on his or her personal path to Mastery, wherever he's based in the world.
- When students have passed a certain set of evaluations in the Training Pillars groundwork, longeing, work in hand, riding and liberty, they can enroll in the international **ST Instructor Program**.

Getting your horse happy and healthy and becoming the good horse trainer you're meant to be, requires clarity, vision, and the ability to take action on a consistent basis on the right Strategies. Without a roadmap and Step-by-Step guidance, the process can be overwhelming. The ST Academy can accelerate your growth and save you years of unnecessary suffering and time-consuming trial and error. Our primary goal is to train you to think, act, and interact like an allround horse trainer, so you have skills that serve you for life. We'd love to have you join us:

www.StraightnessTrainingAcademy.com