

THE COG AND THE TRAINING SCALE

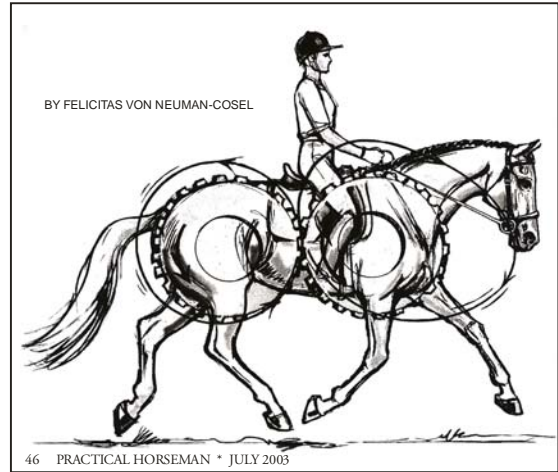
In the cog illustration, notice which way the circles rotate. The rider must be thinking of the hind legs coming towards her for the back cog to rotate smoothly, and the front cog she needs to have the idea that her hands are moving forward without completely letting go of the loose contact. If her timing is off with her seat and leg connected to the hind end and her reins and arms connected to the front end, the cog will either jam or it won't connect and rotate smoothly.

The Basic Training of the Training Scale is Rhythm...Looseness...Contact. These Basic Training elements are easily explained in the idea that your horse has two cogs rotating inside of him.

The rear cog is Rhythm. The rider must think 1...2...1...2...metronome for instance at the walk or trot on the hind legs. The rider's body and legs can slow the swing down or let it longer. That holding of the rider's core helps the horse's swing to slow into an even rhythm.

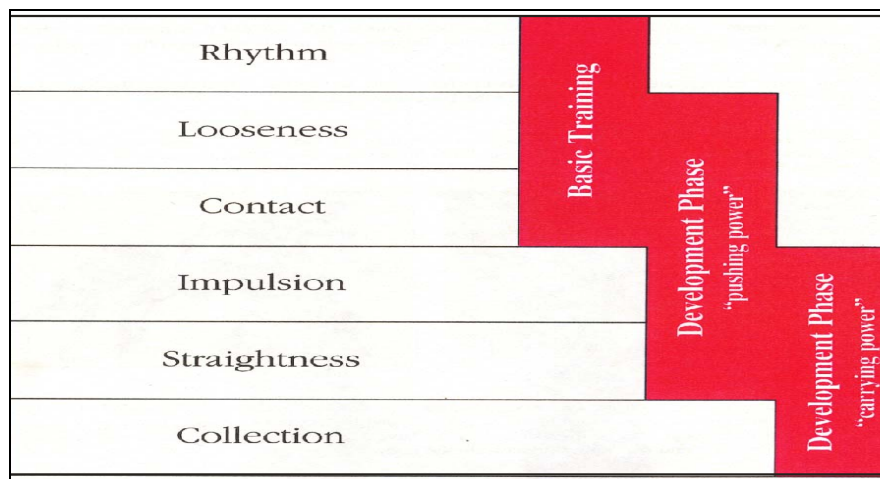
The front cog is associated with looseness first and contact second. The horse must know that he can stretch his neck, therefore the rider must never be tight on the reins. The horse needs to know that he has his head and neck for his balance. The rider feels as if the neck muscle in front of the saddle is always stretching a bit. Then the horse lets the rider know when to shorten the reins to meet the contact.

The contact is a dynamic thing. When the horse gathers his hind leg rhythm and the horse's chest elevates, the rider can, in a forward thinking way, feel the horse's mouth and take up the contact. Then the connection begins and the balancing between the aids works.



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The Training Scale



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With the idea of helping Pony Clubbers understand the biomechanics of horse and rider better.
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