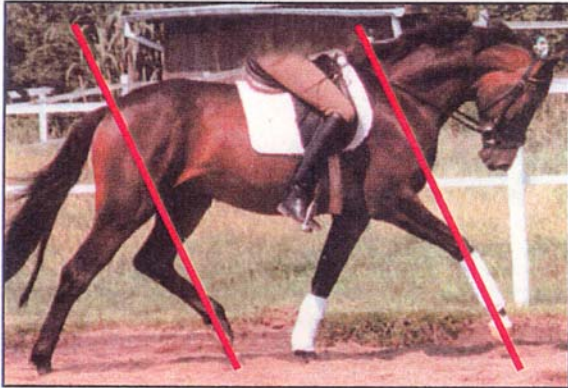
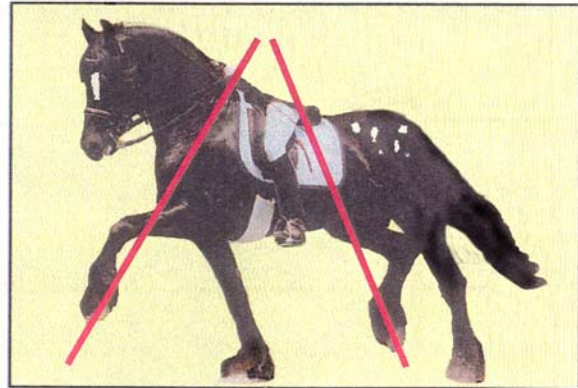


## LEG MOVER VS. BACK MOVER



*Parallel Horse*



*Trapezoid Horse*

Notice that the Parallel built horse carries his hind legs up underneath his belly, whereas the Trapezoid horse carries his hind end out behind his body.

The rider is the influence on both horses. The parallel horse is stretching over his back and neck. The trapezoid horse is not being ridden over his back and neck with the chest elevated up and the hind-legs coming under easily. The trapezoid horse is a more difficult horse to come in connection to the rider because his hind-end tends to stay out the back, even when engaged. The trapezoid rider must be super savvy on how the horse's hind-leg rhythm connects to the seat/torso and leg; without letting the horse fall out behind, as he will easily do the instant the rider lets go of the stomach muscle connection.

### Swing of the Back

The rider has a huge influence on the horse that he or she is riding. The rider can develop the swinging horse or they can block the swing and make the horse into a "leg mover." A "leg mover" does not swing with his back and hind-quarters at all. The horse uses his joints and legs to move along, placing a huge amount of unneeded pressure on his limbs. These horses have only so long before their legs and joints break down. The horse with the swinging back and hind end will be a happier horse, and has the chance to climb the Training Scale to become a strong horse. These horses last a whole lot longer, have a longer career, and bring a beautiful picture to those who like to watch. When a horse performs unwillingly, with tension, it's usually from a rider not training down to the basics of the Training Scale each day, i.e. Rhythm...Looseness...Contact...etc. Contact often comes first to the unknowing rider. Because our brains are wired to always think on our hands, when riding our leg-moving horse without rhythm and looseness the horse doesn't use the swing in his body. The swing is blocked by the rider. These horses are often drilled over and over to do the tricks from point to point without any natural freedom, lightness or brilliance. It's important that these horses go back to reaching for the bit with a swinging back, even if the stride is tiny, and start the training scale process all over. The horse must trust the hands, seat and legs of the rider for the swing to begin. And then we can gather the power under us and play with the balance and swing.

Written by Betsy LaBelle

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

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