

Recently with the assistance of a Dressage4Kids scholarship I was able to do some winter training on my new horse Carlyle with Sam and Pierre St. Jacques and kept a daily journal. I learned a lot of new things and it was a big change from my small pony Wiley. Carlyle seems like a big mover to me and I have a lot to learn.

These are the common things I was learning and working on....a lot of what I worked on was how my position either for the good or the bad affects the horse and then learning the basics to make the harder movements easier

- Focus on keeping hind legs under him at all times and not trailing out the back...this was something Sam and Pierre focus on all the time...bending the hocks
- Pierre likes to have me supple Carlyles neck to the L and R while warming up while staying on the line of travel like for instance on a circle...Carlyle can be a hard to connect into the bridle and soften over the back
- They also like to warm up with 'adjustable gaits' like bigger trot to smaller trot for example...big canter to small canter
- Keep the horse forward in the lateral movements and don't slow down during them
- Do canter - walk transitions without leaning forward
- Relax legs/do not grip (this is a big problem which I was told male riders tend to be tighter in their hip flexors and grip more with their legs and that lifts your seat out of the saddle)
- Push hips and hands toward the bit and focus on having independent hands from seat
- Keep hands together and don't bounce hands or have uneven hands...I hold my R hand higher than my L hand...and even bridge the reins to practice
- Use shoulder in for warm ups and downward transitions
- Ride more on the quarter lines to make sure Carlyle is truly on the aides and I am not depending on the wall for support
- If he is not going forward then he is jammed up and I need to supple him
- Looking up...I have a terrible habit of looking down
- look to the horse's outside ear to use outside rein more effectively and use outside rein to keep him straight

- Carlyle going left needs to be almost counter bent to be straight
- Make sure to collect for flying change and don't swing my leg in the flying change....L change is hardest

I also attended a goal setting lecture given by Sam at our local GMO utilizing the SMART method of goal setting: Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Time Conscious

- Long term goals - 12 months
- Short term goals - 3 months
- Training goals make competition goals succeed so you need to set both
- Goals should be realistic and specific
- Horse is your partner
- Have a good plan that you discuss with your trainer
- Always have positive self talk as negative self talk is a goal killer
- Be aware of time and be flexible to reorganize goals as they are met or need more time
- Pick a reward

My goal moving into 2019 competition season is to compete at second level and get experience showing at a new level and with a new horse...so some of my short term goals are working on turn on the haunches and counter canter and canter/walks...the turn on the haunches is what I struggle with the most....