

Rosie Simoes

Christine Traurig Lesson

Dacquoise, "Dax", is a 2014 Hannoverian (Doctor Wendell x Auburn Abby) gelding bred and owned by Amy Mckay.

Warmup

As we began walking, Christine emphasized the importance of starting all horses on a loose rein in a marching free walk if possible. It is important that the horse is relaxed at the beginning of the ride, but if he is too tense and tight sometimes it is more beneficial to go to the trot, and then come back to the walk later once the horse is more settled. It should be a goal to walk the horse loose at the start of each ride, so that the walk is swinging with overstep.

Starting the warmup with simple suppling lines and patterns, such as serpentines and leg yields help to gymnastic loosen the horse and improve the ride ability. We then moved to using trot canter transitions on the circle to improve suppleness, ensuring that Dax stayed in a good balance before, and after the transition.

Acceptance of Leg Aids

Throughout the ride Christine stressed the importance of tempo-regulating half halts and being able to add body bend without Dax wanting to speed up from the bending leg aids. Often when the rider brings the leg near to influence the horse in the rib cage and on the hind legs, the horse's instinct, especially a horizontally build, sensitive horse like Dax, is to go faster and more downhill. Christine explained that then the rider tends to ride lighter with their legs because they feel they cannot manage what is in front of them when the horse speeds up with increased weight in front. This, Christine emphasized, is when it is important to be tactful with the leg, but still educate the horse to accept it in a way that produces more throughness through the body.

Exercise for Shoulder In

Christine had a very simple yet effective approach to increasing the acceptance of my leg aids.

To school a young horse shoulder in, we rode a leg yield from the quarter line to the rail. Immediately following, riding a 10 meter circle to increase bending around my inside leg and turning the shoulder, prepared Dax for a shoulder in down the long side. When I felt I was losing control of the outside shoulder and bend around my inside leg, Christine instructed to ride an additional 10 meter circle. This allowed Dax to regain the balance needed to bring his shoulders to the inside while allowing me to increase the suppleness in his rib cage and explain to him that the leg is for bending, not speeding up.

