

INTRO LEVEL DEFINITIONS

See USEF Rulebook Chapter WD - WESTERN DRESSAGE

WESTERN DRESSAGE – The goal of Western Dressage is to develop a partnership between a happy equine athlete working in harmony with the rider. A system of progressive training produces a horse that is physically strong, balanced, supple and flexible; this equine athlete also demonstrates a calm, confident, attentive attitude and is happy to do their job.

A Western Dressage horse achieves this goal by using the principles of classical dressage training while emphasizing the lightness and harmony with the rider which is a hallmark of a Western Dressage horse.

WALK – A **well-marked four time beat** marching gait in a regular cadence and with equal intervals between each beat. This regularity combined with full relaxation must be maintained throughout all walk movements.

WORKING WALK – Four-beat, active, energetic walk with resolutely forward-reaching steps and confident stretch to the bit. Head and neck should swing naturally as a result of a back and free shoulders. The nose shall be on or slightly in front of the vertical. The hind feet should touch the ground into or beyond the prints of the forefeet.

Diagram:

FREE WALK – A relaxed walk with unconstrained, forward reaching steps where hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the footprints of the forefeet. The horse must be relaxed and be allowed complete freedom to lower his head and neck to stretch forward and down and out. The length of stride, rhythm, the relaxation and swing through his back are of great importance.

Diagram:

JOG – The jog is a **two-beat gait** of alternate diagonal legs (left fore and right hind leg and vice versa) separated by a moment of suspension.

WORKING JOG – An energetic, regular, two-beat jog; the horse must go forward with even and elastic steps. The back must be relaxed and the shoulders free, while there is an obvious push from the hindquarters. The hind legs step actively up under the horse. The horse must show proper balance and maintain light contact with the bit. The horse's nose must be on or slightly in front of the vertical. In the Introductory and Basic tests, the Working jog may be ridden either posting or sitting. In the more advanced tests, the Working jog should be ridden seated.

Diagram: - - - - -

HALT – At the halt the horse should stand attentive, engaged motionless, straight and square with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs. The neck should be raised with the poll as the highest point and the head slightly in front of the vertical. While remaining "on the bit" and maintaining a light and soft contact with the rider's hand, the horse may quietly mouth the bit and should be ready to move off at the slightest indication of the rider.

Diagram: 4-Seconds



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