



*The emphasis in developing a well trained horse should remain firmly on the mantra of SLR: Self-carriage, Line and Rhythm.*

# RIDING

# BETWEEN

# THE LINES

produces obedient, capable jumpers  
Part four in a five-part series with Chris Pratt

by Patrick Field  
photos by Michelle Dunn

In this set of exercises, Chris Pratt builds upon three previous installments of a series of exercises, getting to the heart of jumping problems. This set of exercises will provide countless hours of entertainment and produce obedient, capable jumpers able to deal with whatever the show ring throws at them come spring. These exercises are as important to the hunter and eventer as they are to the jumper, or really anyone else who desires a well-trained horse who will jump any obstacle at any

angle, any time.

In his warm up for this series of exercises, Pratt wants the rider to emphasize their horse's ability to lengthen and shorten stride, via flatwork, in both the trot and canter.

The horse must be both flexible and rideable, not stiffening or working against the rider, but accepting leg, hand and seat. Flatwork should prepare the horse for schooling over jumps and the questions that will be asked in each session – so make sure to prepare

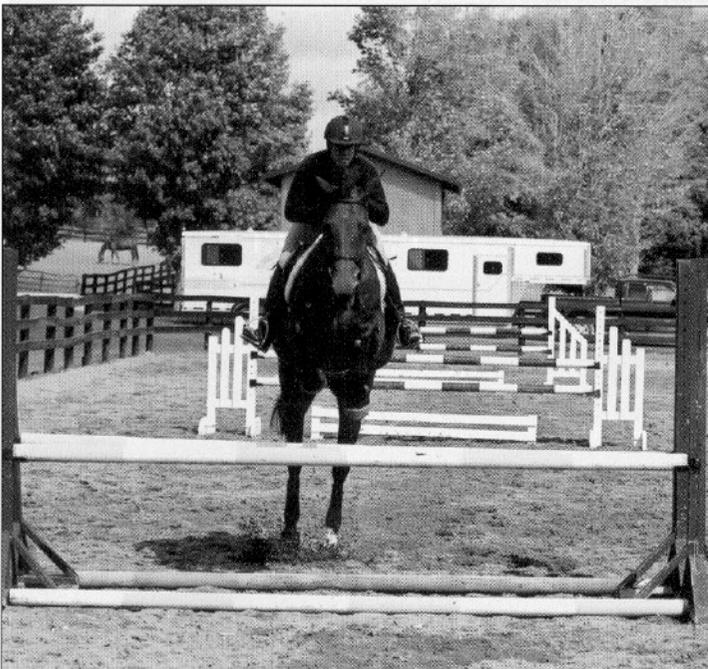


*The exercises shown are just as important to the hunter and eventer as they are to the jumper.*

accordingly for your work ahead. This way, riding between the jumps will result in having a properly balanced horse capable of producing a better effort at each obstacle. This is what every rider is constantly seeking every time they go to a jump. Emphasis should remain firmly on the mantra of SLR: Self-carriage, Line and Rhythm. The horse will be responsive, light and active.

In the first exercise, a line of three obstacles is constructed with 48 feet

## Exercise 1



*Squareness and straightness are two essential factors for this exercise to be executed properly. Remember to stay balanced on landing.*

between each obstacle. This will allow the rider to produce variations in the number of strides between the jumps. Initially, jump the line with three strides between each obstacle. Then, compress the horse's stride and do four strides between each obstacle in the exercise. Next, you can do three strides between the first two jumps and then compress the horse for four strides to the last jump. Change it around then, four strides to three strides. There are obviously many variations that can be achieved with these combinations, which is precisely the point of the exercise. Your

**A - three strides to three strides.**

Aim to maintain a forward canter from start to finish with the rider light in the saddle, using a longer release and riding the horse forward into your hand.

**B - four strides to four strides**

Maintain a more collected canter through the line using a deeper seat with a shorter release to produce rounder, shorter canter strides.

**C - three strides to four strides**

Develop a forward canter coming in to the first jump with the longer release over the first jump. Over the second jump, make sure you have a shorter release to enable you to collect immediately upon landing. Keep a little "behind the motion" with your upper body.

**D - four strides to three strides**

Begin with a collected canter and a shorter release over the first jump. Keep your leg on so that your horse jumps across the middle jump. A long release over the second jump will help the horse go forward to the last jump. Avoid the tendency to get ahead with your upper body to the forward jumps – the momentum here ideally comes from the leg, not the body.

**Make sure to do this exercise going both home and away from home.**

