

Tips for your walk test

We all know what 'rhythm' means but in regard to horses, it involves more than just what we might put in musical terms as 'beat'.

Rhythm is the first of the dressage training scales and applies to all paces so it is helpful to have a really clear understanding of what this means and what a judge means by rhythm in any comment made.

Rhythm is the first, essential building block to think about in your horse's training and there are three main aspects to this:

1. Regularity of the beats
2. Regularity of the **correct** sequence of footfalls
3. Tempo – the speed of the rhythm.

Walk

A correct walk has four **evenly** spaced footfalls. If you listen to a horse walking along a road, you should hear 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 beats.

When the even spacing between those footfalls is lost, you get what is called a **lateral walk** that looks more like the way a camel walks, i.e. with both fore and hind legs on the same side moving almost at the same time, so the sound would be, 1,2 – 3,4. The **even** spacing of the footfall is lost. This is not a correct walk and a judge would comment on it.

The walk pace requires each of the two long back muscles to relax alternately so riders remember to **breathe** and stay **relaxed** yourself!

A correct walk is one of the best indicators of good training, no wonder that in BD tests walk movements are given double marks.

The correct tempo (speed of rhythm) for a walk will depend to some extent on the size or natural length of stride your horse has.

A bigger, longer walk stride will have a slower tempo(speed). A way to imagine it is to picture soldiers marching, purposeful and brisk, but unhurried and hopefully relaxed!

Happy walking!

Everyday Dressage Walk Test 7 (2022) Ridden

RIDER NAME..... HORSE.....

			Max Marks	Judge's Marks	Judge's Remarks
1	A X	Enter Halt, salute	10		
2	X-M MCH	Diagonal line medium walk Turn left Medium walk	10		
3	H	Circle left 10m diameter	10		
4	E X B	Turn left Halt 4 seconds proceed in walk Turn right	10		
5	F	Circle right 10m diameter	10		
6	A	Serpentine 3 equal loops finishing at C	10		
7	CMB B-X X-E	Walk ½ circle right 10m ½ circle left 10m	10		
8	EAB B E	Walk ½ Circle 20m free walk on a long rein Medium walk	10		
9	A X	Down centre line Halt salute Leave arena	10		
Collective Marks					
Paces (freedom and regularity)			10x2		
Impulsion (desire to move forward, suppleness of back and engagement of hindquarters)			10x2		
Submission way of going (attention and confidence, ease of movements, acceptance of bridle)			10x2		
Rider's position and seat; correctness and effectiveness of aids			10x2		
Total Marks			170		

Percentage

Judge's Name _____

Judge's Signature _____