

1. **Rhythm and tempo** must be established first. If horse is running with quick, short strides or lazy, dragging gaits, then he can't establish rhythm. Counting helps you time your aids - apply half-halts or whip signals as the inside hind leg pushes off. Keep the circle round.
Quick horse - longe at a slower trot on slightly smaller circle, encouraging slower tempo with gentle half-halts in rhythm with the inside hind leg and soothing voice aids, then let him back out on a bigger circle.
Lazy horse - point the whip at the inside hind leg each time it swings forward and use stimulating voice aids like a cluck. Flick the whip upward at his flanks or hocks; touch him with the lash if needed.
2. **Relaxation** can be achieved once a steady working tempo is established. Trainer needs to have a quiet tone of voice and gentle rein aids. **Signs of relaxation** are - eyes soft, ears relaxed, deep breath, snorting gently, stretching the neck and head down and relaxing the back, chewing the bit softly. Maintain inside bend.
3. Now the trainer can ask for **engagement**, which comes from the hind legs reaching forward under the horse with each stride, producing **free forward movement with a swinging back**. Once the horse is relaxed and loose with good rhythm, then he can be asked for a longer stride within the same tempo, i.e. bigger step at the same speed. Use a **leading rein** out and downward while **pointing the whip** at the hind leg each time it pushes off.
Lazy horse may need strong driving aids - stepping toward his hindquarters or snapping the whip. Goal is to get the horse "tracking up", stretching down with acceptance of the bit and to round his back and neck while keeping the correct bend to the inside of the circle.

Benefits of longeing the rider:

- 1) build confidence in the rider
- 2) improve rider's suppleness so can move better with the horse
- 3) improve rider's balance and position
- 4) help develop an independent seat

Dangers:

- 1) be in a safe, enclosed area with no other riders around
- 2) use an experienced longeing horse and instructor
- 3) attach a pommel strap for the rider to grab if they lose their balance
- 4) warm horse up in both directions before rider mounts
- 5) remove any side reins when rider mounting or dismounting
- 6) when ready for no reins, secure them so always within reach of rider
- 7) don't overtire the rider or the horse

Horse won't go forward - use "Out!" while shaking whip at his shoulder as you step forward, then drive him forward from behind. **Parallel longe** so you can reach him with the whip if needed.

Swinging in - follow him until he reaches a wall, then step behind him and drive him forward. Shorten the longe so you can stay close to him; **parallel longe** as long as needed. For trained horses, use side reins and send forward strongly.

Lazy - don't nag at him, but insist that he respond to your commands promptly. Use the whip immediately on his flank or above his hock and **parallel longe**. Frequent transitions help keep his attention.

Rushing - keep the whip quiet or even turn it backwards. **Parallel longe** so you are closer to him and move forward towards his neck when asking him to slow down with repeated half-halts. Make the circle smaller to slow him down while moving with him - "body block".

Balance on the circle at the trot has to be achieved before a horse can canter on the longe. Use **side reins** adjusted for his level of training. Longe at a slow trot using half-halts until he remains upright and bends correctly on the circle without leaning or pulling. **Frequent transitions** are the best way to improve balance and strengthen his hindquarters.

Suppleness is ability to track correctly in both directions, even tho all horses have a weaker, stiffer side. Correctly adjusted **side reins**, circle **round** and the right size, and **frequent changes of direction** all help.

Acceptance of the bit can be helped by longeing horse in side reins; use elastic-type if mouth is oversensitive. Signs of success include foam in the mouth and steadier head carriage.

Improve the canter - correct longeing can help the horse's canter under saddle because requires more balance, strength and suppleness. Using side reins, do trot-walk-trot transitions to improve balance and impulsion. Make circle a little smaller; ask for the canter, then let the line out to 20m.

Improving movement on the longe #1

1. Rhythm and tempo
2. Relaxation

Improving movement on the longe #2

3. Engagement

Benefits and Dangers of Longeing the Rider

Longeing Issues: Disobediences

Longeing Issues: Balance, suppleness, acceptance of the bit and improving the canter.

Benefits of longeing the horse:

- 1) exercise a horse that can't be ridden
- 2) settle a fresh horse before riding (watch for kicking!)
- 3) train the horse to obey voice commands
- 4) develop horse's rhythm, balance, suppleness while strengthening his muscles and getting him fit for riding if needed.

Dangers:

- 1) don't overwork since harder on the horse's muscles, tendons and joints. Limit 5-10 mins for green horse; 15-20 mins for a fit horse.
- 2) change directions every 5 min to avoid overworking one side and change gaits frequently to avoid boredom and fatigue.
- 3) don't longe in small circles, in deep footing or at a fast gait
- 4) no jump standards or other riders in the ring at the same time. If another horse longeing at same time, place a safe divider between their circles. Best place is a round pen with good footing.

1. **Parallel Leading** - walk along next to the horse in a large circle with whip wrapped up and tucked under your other arm and extra line folded in your other hand. Let out 4-10 ft. of longe line and teach the horse voice commands as you walk next to him - out, walk, halt - from both sides. This method prepares a horse for longeing.
2. **Parallel Longeing** - method used for horses that are green on the longe or that need more control because not obeying voice commands. Let the horse out 10-20 feet and walk in a large circle with him so you can control him better and be closer with the whip. Can use an assistant to walk next to the horse if needed at first.
3. **Regular Longeing** - handler pivots in one spot or walks in a small circle while the horse is out on a 20m circle. Used for trained horses.

Goals of longeing: obedience, rhythm, relaxation.

Warm up in one direction before attaching side reins.

Reins are always even length. Normal first adjustment is 4 fingers width between rein end and bit with horse standing normally. When shorten reins as you work, be sure head remains in front of the vertical. Elastic reins can teach the horse to lean on the bit.

If using a saddle, attach reins to the billets above the girth loop on the pad or thru the girth loop itself so they can't slip down. If using a surcingle, attach to the side ring for green and trained horses; upper ring is only for advanced horses.

Walk out to the horse to change direction or add/adjust reins since horse shouldn't be led around with reins attached.

Outside rein is attached first and removed last to stop horse from turning into you if spooked or rein frightens him. Only use side reins for trot and canter work, never at the walk since spoils the gait. As soon as attached, move horse forward. **Remove for cool down.**

Pole distances: 4 - 4 ½ ft. for horses so they step in the center of each space between the poles.

Benefits of poles:

- 1) stabilize the stride
- 2) teach the horse to adjust his stride
- 3) improve suppleness of the horse
- 4) when raised to cavaletti height (6"), helps with impulsion and roundness
- 5) relax a horse who rushes fences
- 6) when used in front of fences, teaches horse to jump straight and take off at right distance.

Benefits of grids: Shortened distances (<12' per stride) teach the horse to be careful with his front end and use his hocks more. Easy distances (<12'-12') develop confidence in horse and rider. Bounce is only 10' so no stride.

Saddle or surcingle should be fit behind elbow so won't interfere with movement of the shoulder. Don't forget 4 leg boots & bell boots in front.

Stirrups must be removed or tied up securely so won't bang into the horse.

Reins are twisted and throatlatch is run through to hold them in place.

Surcingle needs a pommel pad or saddle pad to protect the withers.

Longe line is 25-30' long and made of cotton webbing with a snap or buckle on the end - never a chain since ruins the contact.

Longe line should be attached through the snaffle bit ring and then run under the noseband in front of the noseband headstall and attached back to the line. Can also use a longe attachment. Over-the-poll attachment is very severe (gag effect); only used for maximum control.

Longeing cavesson noseband should be 4 fingers above the horse's nostrils so is up on the nasal bone and be fit snugly. Jowl strap fit snugly so cavesson cheekpiece won't get pulled over into horse's eye.

Benefits and Dangers of Longeing the Horse

Teaching a horse to longe

Side Reins: Attachment and length

Benefits of Trotting Poles & Grids

Longeing Equipment Fit and Use – the “Control Triangle” (besides side reins)