

Answers to Questions Asked

By Elizabeth Graves copyright 2009©



Liz and Magic working canter in the snow

I've been getting a lot of wonderful e-mail from people working this winter on many things with their horses. I hope it will help again to share some of my experience with those of you that are working with your horses or wondering about my answers to many of the questions I receive.

1. Long and low is not the same thing as **down and round**.

Folks seem to be using these two terms interchangeably and they are not. The execution and shape of each is important and is very valuable in every horses training, it is necessary to achieve the highest of quality work in any finished horse.

2. All horses should be **taught collection**, gaited horses too. Teach this in your walks first, as the walks of gaited horses also must be of quality and utilizing collections helps the body, not only in good performance but also is about keeping your horses body healthy so it will last for many years with proper use.

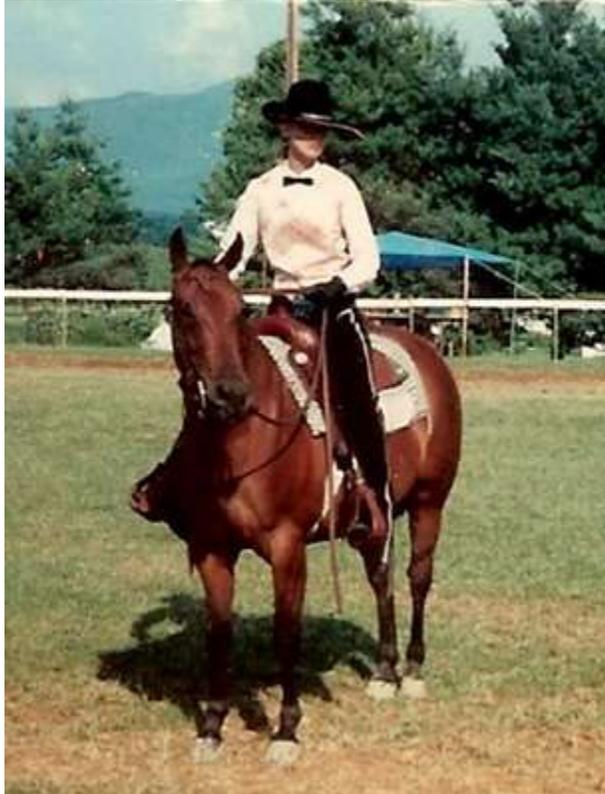
If your gaited horse also has a trot, teach collection at the trot to, another good way to keep that body healthy.

3. Yes, you can **trot your gaited horse**, it's a long standing myth that has come out of the built up walking horse world long ago that you cannot trot your gaited horse. Still we are battling those old myths today.

This myth should not be an element in the world of naturally gaited horse training. Just teach the trot with specific signals, and only to be brought up when asked for by the rider.

4. Trotting your gaited horse **will not** make the **gait go away** forever, if gait has been bred to be in your horse it will always be there, you may have to learn how to bring it out by not get in its way from letting it happen.

5. Yes, you can canter your **gaited horse**, yet another myth put out there by so many over the years that don't know how to ride a horse that canters. Lacking the knowledge to help support and guide a horse in the learning phase of how to carry a rider and canter at the same time, they actually get in the way of a horse doing so hence the myth evolved...



6. Yes, gaited horses are supposed to learn to and **can back** like non-gaited horses and should be taught how, just don't do it with a built up horse or you'll pull the pads, again another myth out of that same culture.

7. Yes, gaited horses should **stand still** when you mount and not be in any moving forward phase.

8. It is a **myth** that **all gaited horses have the same shoulder angle**, if you just get out there yourself and do some marking of various bodies, even in the same breed you will see the reality if you chose to. Sad so many folks have been led astray due to unethical teachers looking to keep the public confused for their own personal gain or reasons. It's up to us to open our eyes and really learn to see with them.

9. Don't think putting your horse in a "**Frame**", this tends to hold folks hostage in what they think a horse should look like in carrying it's self. A better way to think is the *word "Shape"*, what is the proper shape my horse's body should be in to execute an exercise or gait. Stay within that horse's individual conformational structure. They are not all built the same hence they can have very different shapes while doing the same thing as another horse.

10. A horse's head being positioned **behind the vertical** does **not mean it is collected** and is one of those tell tale signs it is not, it's just been taught to carry its self in a **down** crammed and jammed shape just as we can also have an **up** crammed and jammed shape.

