

What Gait Is It?

By Elizabeth Graves
Photos by Christiane Yeardley.



In this issue we are lucky enough to have photos submitted from Australia. It's always fun to see others folks from around the globe discovering and enjoying the gaited breeds as much as we do here in the USA.

The gait we are looking at in these photos is considered by many to be one the smoothest possible. As it is one of a neutral back level, it is rather easy on the horse. This gait (as are many others) is of an alternating 2-hoof, 3-hoof support phase sequence.

Note that no legs are working in lateral pairs or diagonal pairs or even closely together, but instead each leg is picking up separately and setting down at a different time.

This gait is termed as lateral in the hoof fall sequence, meaning the order in which the hooves set down. This does not mean it is lateral in pick-up or set-down of timing. Lateral in footfall sequence has nothing to do with the timing of the legs, but means that a hind hoof on one side will set down before the fore hoof on the same side, and then the other two legs on the opposite side will land in the same order. Starting with the left hind it has a left hind, left fore, right hind, right fore order. This gait is of an even 1-2-3-4 beat.



Photo #1
Left hind is in full downward weight bearing position.
Left fore is halfway through its forward advancement.
Right hind is still in a support phase, but the heel has just left the ground getting ready to leave and advance forward.

Right fore is in full weight bearing position.

In this photo we are looking at a three hoof, support phase being two hinds and one fore.



Photo #2
Left hind hoof is still in full weight bearing position.
Left fore is almost completed its forward advancement and is still off the ground, but about to set down.
Right hind hoof has lifted off the ground and has just started its forward advancement.

Right fore hoof is still in full weight bearing position, but is about to lift off the ground at the heel.

In this photo we are looking at a two hoof, diagonal support phase.

Meet the Horse and Rider

by Judy Ryder Duffy

This month's pictures are of Yvonne Lehey. We have been long-time Internet friends, through the study of horsemanship.

Yvonne, originally from France and Germany, is now settled in Australia with her family and her gaited horses. She trains and rides her horses, using a combination of various methods (basics of classical dressage and natural horsemanship), which she has learned from well-known teachers/horsemen, such as Dr. Deb Bennett, Mark Rashid, Andrew McLean and Alexandra Kurland. She particularly loves riding and training gaited horses and owes most of her knowledge in this field to Lee Ziegler, Liz Graves, Mary Donald and the few Aussie "locals" including Jorge de Moya and Christiane Yeardley.

The horse in these pictures is Flamenca (pedigree name is MGR LA TIGRE), an eight-year-old Peruvian Paso mare.



Photo #3

Left hind is in full weight support phase, but soon to lift off at the heel for forward advancement.

Left fore in a full downward support position.

Right hind is touching at the toe and is about to start bearing full weight.

Right fore has lifted off the ground and has started its forward advancement, but is not yet to the halfway point.

This photo is one of those that shows so well that fine line between coming out of a 2-hoof lateral support phase and just about to be in a 3-hoof support phase of this gait.



Photo #4

Now it's time to challenge your self and look ahead and figure out what the next photo may look like. Ask your self "where are they now?" and imagine drawing arrows on the hooves pointing the direction of weight or travel. Then ask, "where are they coming from?" and "where are they going to?"

Soon you will be able to see all this in the moving horse and work past still photos.

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The Gait in these photos is the Paso Llano of the Peruvian Paso; the characteristics of this gait are the same as the running walk, except that there is little head movement (as opposed to the head nod of the running walk). Instead, the unique characteristic of this gait is called termino which is an action of the scapula extending outward, which causes the entire front leg to swing outward in its forward advancement.

