

Foundation for Perfection Checklist

A) Willing Submission

When a request is made the horse willingly performs the task requiring little to no pressure. **It is the horse's idea.** After initial contact the horse performs the task on a **loose rein** and with **no leg pressure**. If it is truly the horse's idea we should not have to drive them to do the job.

1 – Displayed 0 to 10% of the time during the ride.

2 – Displayed 20 to 40% of the time during the ride.

3 – Displayed 40 to 60% of the time during the ride.

4 – Displayed 60 to 80% of the time during the ride.

5 – Displayed 80 to 100% of the time during the ride.

1

2

3

4

5

B) Good Communication

Learning to read, feel, and understand what the horse is saying in response to our request (Communication involves two individuals, what is the horse saying?). We communicate through the horse's **driving** and **underlying** factors along with **feel, timing, and balance**.

Driving – Comfort, Companionship, Self-preservation

Underlying – Confidence, Energy

Head Height (Confidence Indicator) – Shows how confident and relaxed the horse is while doing a job. Head height reflects the level of communication. When the rider shows the horse where to put their feet, head height reflects the horse's understanding of where their feet are supposed to be while doing the job.

1 – No confidence, poor communication, high head height, self-preservation and looking for comfort and companionship away from the rider and the job. Not sure of where to put their feet, and not experiencing feel, timing, and balance with the rider.

5 – Total confidence in the rider and job, great communication, low head height, confident in where to put their feet while doing the job, experiencing comfort in the job, companionship with the rider, and being ridden with feel, timing, and balance.

Head Height – Intensity of job and consistency of head in relation to how many rides the horse has.

1

2

3

4

5

C) Balanced Life to Direction Ratio

Direction – When the slack is taken out of the rein, the horse puts the slack back in the rein with suppleness through the poll and loin with: 3) **horizontal**, and 4) **vertical flexion**.

Six Signs to Identify Horizontal Direction

- 1) Broken in poll horizontally, hairline should curve between ears (poll).
- 2) Nose should be directly underneath the eye, no head tilting.
- 3) Cannot see white in eye, horse should be looking back not forward.
- 4) Front feet and hind feet should follow on the same path made as the nose.
- 5) Horse's body should arc around our leg.
- 6) If horse has horizontal direction should make perfect circles.
Horizontal direction walking = perfect circle walking, horizontal direction trotting = perfect circle trotting, etc.

1 = Standing – displays 1, 2, and 3 in six signs to identify Horizontal Direction.

2 = Walking – displays 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in six signs to identify Horizontal Direction.

3 = Slow Trot – displays 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

4 = Trotting – displays 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

5 = Loping – displays 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Horizontal direction 1 2 3 4 5

Vertical Direction

When the slack is taken out of both reins the horse breaks in the poll vertically resulting in the horse's nose being perpendicular with the ground.

1 = Standing, 2 = Walking, 3 = Slow Trot, 4 = Trotting, 5 = Loping

Vertical direction 1 2 3 4 5

Life – Ability to move the horse with any given speed at any given time.

1 – Takes many steps to drive into a lope from standing, horse goes from standing, to walking, to trotting, then finally loping.

5 – Can jump into a lope from standing instantly, horse goes from standing to loping at any given time.

Life 1 2 3 4 5

Life to Direction (horizontal) Ratio = _____

More life than direction = Lack of confidence in horse

More direction than life = 5:3, 4:3 ok, if life is 2 or less horse is lazy and will begin losing direction. Balance the ratio.

D) Solid Foundation of Maneuvers (Mechanical)

The ability to move the horse's feet in any direction, to accomplish any job. (4 stages)

Stage 1 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**

- Stopping the inside front foot, and walking all the other feet forward around it.

Stage 2 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**

- Using the hindquarters to pull the horse in a reverse motion.

Stage 3 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**

- Shoulder and hindquarters moving together in a lateral motion.

Stage 4 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**

- Stopping the inside hind foot, and pulling all the other feet forward around it.

E) Solid Foundation of Maneuvers (Mental)

Horse and rider begin to receive insight into how they can move together in perfect unity to accomplish a job. Horse experiences willing submission, good communication, a balanced life to direction ratio, and a mechanical foundation of maneuvers all at the same time. It's like you are riding in the dark and somebody switches on a light, all resistance leaves and it makes perfect sense to *you* and the *horse*. The horse becomes as light as a feather, moving in perfect unity with the person. There is no resistance in doing the job. We are able to pick up the feet and move them wherever we want. These are the "ah-ha" moments when riding a horse.

1 – No mental foundation

2 – Brief seconds during the ride

3 – Moments of consistency throughout the ride

4 – Relative consistency throughout the ride

5 – Total consistency throughout the ride

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

Training for the Cross †