

Drill Team Patterns

Drill teams can add a new dimension to your riding. Get started with these printable patterns.

Illustrations by Tom Kimball

Joining a drill team for competition or pleasure can add a new dimension to your riding. All you need to get started is a dedicated group of riders with willing horses and somewhere to practice. Although many teams look for uniformity, horses can be of any breed, color and size. If you're interested in joining a drill team but have none available in your area, contact the coach or an experienced member of any existing team for tips on starting your own. Now that you've read *The Thrill of the Drill* in the July 2008 issue of *Horse Illustrated* and are familiar with the basics, print out these drill formations for your team to try out. Good luck! Click below to open the drawings below in PDF format

THE BASICS

Straight Line Abreast

This is one of the most basic drill maneuvers. Riders line their horses up side-by-side with saddle horns in a row. The exercise starts at a walk with a lot of space in between horses. As horses and riders become more comfortable, the space between them can be decreased and the speed increased.

If this is too overwhelming at first, the exercise can be completed with two riders and horses in the formation, then eventually four, et cetera.

Nose to Tail

While the straight line abreast maneuver accustoms horses and riders to riding side-by-side, the nose-to-tail exercise lines the team up front to back. This can be done along the rail or in a serpentine around the arena.

Pairing Up

Everyone rides single-file down the centerline, and as they reach the end of the arena, the first rider and horse turn left. The second rider and horse turn right, and so on. When these two lines meet at the centerline again, riders and their horses pair up and continue riding.

90-Degree Turn or Flank Turn

Riding single-file along the rail, riders turn their horses to the center of the arena at the same time, transitioning from riding nose-to-tail to riding abreast. When they reach the other side of the arena, they turn in the opposite direction so they are riding nose-to-tail again.

ADVANCED MANEUVERS

Mini Sweep

Everyone rides along the rail of the arena in an oblique pattern: Looking at it from the side, each horse's nose should be in line with the knee of the rider in front of it.

Pinwheel

Two riders stand their horses side-by-side in the center of the arena, facing opposite directions. The others line up alongside, facing the same direction as their center, or pivot, rider. Then the whole formation rotates around the two pivot riders, who circle their horses in place. Everyone must ride a little faster than the rider to his or her inside to keep the line straight.

Full Team Crack

Riders and horses line up in the oblique pattern, and everyone moves around one pivot rider and horse in the center of the arena. Again, everyone placed outside of center rides a little faster to keep the line moving straight.

CROSSING PATHS

Single File Cross

Half of the team rides single-file down the centerline of the arena while the second half rides across the arena,

perpendicular to the other line. The lines alternate crossing the center and make a cross pattern.

The more advanced version of this is to ride a cross in pairs, so each rider and horse crosses two lines of traffic while passing through the center.

Figure Eight

The team rides a continuous figure-eight, and horses and riders cross paths in the middle. The challenge here is to maintain equally sized circles on both sides of the figure.

Interlocking Circles

Instead of riding in a figure-eight, there are two separate circles that intertwine at the center.