

## Lope Easy

**Learn what it takes to slow the lope, with techniques from a reining expert.**

*By Jennifer Nice*

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The three primary gaits--walk, jog and lope--are common denominators shared by all the western showing disciplines. Of the three gaits, the lope is the most difficult to master. It is the fastest and requires the most forward impulsion, and yet excessive speed is penalized in most show pens. The question western riders most frequently ask, whether they are showing or just pleasure riding, is "How do I slow my horse down at the lope?" Many riders fail to understand that the ideal lope is not achieved by speed control but by balance. In order for a horse to lope correctly with a distinct three-beat gait that is the competition standard for all disciplines, including pleasure, he must learn to carry himself in a balanced manner. Once he has mastered balance, he can lope slower.

**\*\*For the full article, pick up the March 2007 issue of HORSE ILLUSTRATED.\*\***

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