

The Path to Flying Change

How to overcome roadblocks for a seamless lead swap on the fly.

By Cindy Hale

Does this sound familiar? Your baby green hunter is stylish over fences and quiet on the flat, but he lacks lead changes. Or your jumper cross-canthers around many of his turns, costing you valuable seconds on the clock. Before you resign yourself to pastel-colored ribbons—or none at all—consider that most horses aren't born with a desire to automatically swap their leads. They must be taught to seamlessly switch from one lead to the other, and to do it on cue. As you've no doubt discovered, missed lead changes and disjointed cross-canthers won't win blue ribbons in the show-ring.

Unfortunately, the road to clean lead changes can be a bumpy one. Here are the typical steps you'll encounter as you journey from simple basics to effortless flying changes. Jumper trainer and instructor Mary Beth Molt of Endar Equine in Temecula, Calif., will be your guide.

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

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