

Straighten Up and Fly Right

by Jane Zubia of Satin Gaits

For years I have listened to horsemen I respect speak about a really broke horse traveling straight. These horsemen come from many different disciplines, so straightness is a common trait that all riders should be working towards.

I am amazed how some small thing will make a big difference to the horse's performance. Not too long ago I was working with a rider who had a very inconsistent gaited horse. She told me her horse only did his really nice gait sometimes when heading towards home while the rest of the ride he usually paced. She was hoping I could help her regain the consistently smooth gait he had when she brought him.

As I watched the horse and rider pace around the arena, I noticed that this horse was very interested in his surroundings and the other participant's horses. He wasn't scared or nervous just curious and enjoyed checking everything out. I talked to the rider and asked her to take notice of how much her horse was looking around. Next I asked her to bring her horse back into alignment anytime he looked away. I encouraged her to relax but stay focused so she could take care of any deviation from straightness as soon as she noticed it occurring. In less than 3 hours her horse was beginning to gait more like he had when she first purchased him. Because of better alignment, both horse and rider were enjoying their ride and due to an improved positioning the horse was able to fly right again!

Every day I am with a horse, I observe in order to notice the minute things that might make a huge difference to the horse's performance. I have proven to myself that straightness immensely helps gaited horses gait better and more consistently.

Remember, straighten up and let your horse fly right!

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