

RIDING SKILLS PROGRESSION

Below are some of the skills acquired as riders progress in lessons based on the Long Term Equestrian Development (LTED) model as well as the Learn To Ride/Rider Levels.

Rider progress is very individualized and not necessarily linear (some skills will be acquired easily and others take longer to master). Some riders are interested in learning to jump, others prefer to specialize in dressage, some enjoy training in both or maybe even another equestrian discipline (there are many).

The steps are guidelines ~ they are not carved in stone and will depend on the rider/horse combination.

If you/your rider is at the early levels, you may not yet be familiar with the terms of the higher levels ~ not to worry!

Lunge Lesson Program (Usually takes 12 -16 lessons, but may vary)	Learn to work safely around a horse/pony; leading, grooming, tacking/untacking and mounting; how to start, stop and steer while instructor controls the horse on a lunge circle; learn sitting, rising and 2-point position on lunge at walk and trot. As skills are learned, the rider practices and masters skills off the lunge on a circle and works going large in part of the arena.
Rider Level 1	Riding in a small group at walk and trot, including changing rein, changing rising diagonal and transitions.
Rider Level 2	Awareness of rising diagonals; riding accurate circles; maintain balance without stirrups at walk/trot; starting to canter short distances and bring horse back to trot; trot a course of poles.
Rider Level 3	Demonstrate confidence, safety and control. Riders should be able to keep a steady contact with horse's mouth; ride accurate transitions; knowledge of rising diagonal; rising and sitting trot without stirrups; know whether they are on the correct canter lead; ride trot poles to a small X in 2-point position; ride a course of trot poles focusing on pace, line and position. Riders should also be able to ride a sequence of transitions, circles and changes of rein (a dressage test).
Rider Level 4	Riders can co-ordinate use of independent aids (hands, seat, legs); riding straight and maintaining a steady rhythm; starting to understand 'feel' and demonstrate bend. Riders are capable of independent warm-up and can trot a small course and canter single jumps up to 2'.
Rider Level 5	Demonstrate control, presentation and confidence. Riders should know the 5 rein aids and be able to ride accurate bend on circles and serpentines; accurate simple changes of lead and transitions; trot small jumps without stirrups; understand pace, line and position as well as stride control. Riders at Level 5 should be learning how to lunge correctly.
Rider Level 6	Riders understand riding forward from leg to hand with impulsion, while maintaining rhythm and suppleness; understand the difference between bend and flexion; be able to ride demonstrate turn on the forehand/turn on the haunches. Riders should also be able to accurately ride a Training Level dressage test. Riders are able to jump a 2'6" course in canter using simple changes of lead and demonstrating correct release over jumps.
Rider Level 7	Ride confidently without stirrups at walk, trot and canter; demonstrate accuracy in circle size/shapes, transitions; serpentines in canter with simple changes; lengthening and shortening stride at trot; leg yield. Ride a 2'9" course with consistent rhythm, impulsion, confidence, safety and control. Riders are able to ride a 1 st Level dressage test.
Rider Level 8	Riders are beginning to ride true impulsion and engagement, with bend and straightness as required using inside leg/outside aids; ride a Medal-type course at 2'9"/3'0 with confidence and authority; be able to add a stride in a line and demonstrate feel. Confidently ride a First Level or above dressage test and improve a horse's way of going.

If you are interested in learning more about Long Term Equestrian Development and the Learn To Ride/Rider Level Program here are some useful resources:

[Long Term Equestrian Development](#)

[LTED Hunter/Jumper](#)

[LTED Dressage](#)

[LTED: A Parent's Guide](#)

[Rider Levels: An Overview](#)

[Rubrik of Rider Level Horsemanship and Riding Skills](#)

[Learn To Ride Study Guide](#)

You can find out more:

[Equestrian Canada ~ LTED Model](#)

[Ontario Equestrian ~ Learn To Ride Program](#)