

Confident Horsemanship:

5 Ways to Rein in Negative Thinking for Adult Horse Riders



By Anne Gage, The Horse Riding Confidence Coach

Many adult horse riders wrestle with self-doubt, overthinking or doubting their ability to be a good partner for their horses. However, you can control and change negative thoughts. It starts

with awareness and practical tools to shift your mindset. Here are five ways to rein in negative thinking and develop an empowering mindset.

1: Recognize the Patterns
You can break free from negative thinking by developing awareness of your habitual thought and language patterns. Keep a journal and write down the recurring thoughts you have about riding. Most of those thoughts are rooted in fear rather than fact. Once you've identified the negative patterns, ask yourself: "Is this true?" If it is true, ask what you can do to change it. What help or training do you or your horse need? That turns limiting thoughts into solvable problems, which empowers you to ride confidently.

2: Movement For Body and Mind
If you're stuck in a loop of negative thinking, get active. Stretch before riding, go for a walk, or do groundwork

with your horse. Movement shifts your focus. Spending time on the ground with your horse before you get in the saddle builds trust and helps reset your mindset. This connection carries over when you ride, helping you feel more grounded and less overwhelmed by negative thoughts.

3: Focus On Something Good
Look at riding challenges as learning opportunities. Instead of dwelling on what went wrong during your ride, focus on what went well. Did you feel more in sync with your horse? Did you overcome a fear? Write it down. Keeping a journal can shift your focus from what's not working to what is. As you make finding something good a regular practice, you'll notice a positive shift in your mindset both in and out of the saddle.

4: Find a Support System
Sharing your thoughts with a trusted friend, fellow rider, or coach can

lighten the mental load. Sometimes, just talking brings a new perspective to challenges. Keep your conversations solution-focused, not venting sessions. Surround yourself with positive, encouraging people who support your mindset growth. The more you connect with like-minded people, the more you realize you're not alone.

5: Choose Empowering Language
How you talk to yourself affects your mindset and performance. Instead of saying, "I'll never get this," or "I'm not good enough," use empowering language like, "I'm making progress every day," or "I can handle this." This change in language causes a ripple effect that boosts confidence and helps you stay calm during challenges. And remember, your body language matters too! Standing with your shoulders over your hips, your chest lifted and open, and breathing deeply from your diaphragm signals calm confidence to your mind, your

body, and your horse. You have more control of your thoughts than you realize. With awareness and practice, you can shift your mindset, deepen your connection with your horse and enjoy every ride.

Author Bio: Anne Gage, The Horse Riding Confidence Coach, shares advice and tips for horse riding women of a certain age. From managing riding nerves and anxiety, understanding your horse's behaviour, building a deeper partnership with your horse, and more. Whether you're a lifelong horse rider, just coming back to riding after time off, or just starting out, learn more at <https://confidenthorsemanship.com>



Palm Partnership Training™ Building A Partnership With Your Horse

How to do a Figure Correctly Let's get ready to show & grow!

By Lynn Palm

A Gentle Reminder... For this next series on training, you'll be your own trainer for 80 to 90 percent of the time. You will learn to find those remarkable feelings when both you and your horse come into balance, regardless of discipline. Being in the Dressage Court (arena) will help you attain that balance. We all want those feelings with a horse, regardless of what saddle you're riding or what breed of horse you swing a leg over. We all dream of moments of being in synchronization with our horses. These moments keep us hungry to learn more and achieve more difficult tasks with our horses. Remember, this Western Dressage discipline will steal your heart and create a passion for riding in harmony with your horse. Remember, too, that dressage is simply the foundation to ride correctly, and for the horse to be confident and willing with whatever performance you choose!

I'm looking forward to the next several months, when I'll share tips and guidelines for understanding the simplicity of learning (in written format, at least) Western Dressage training from Introductory Level to Level 5. Could be the start of my new



book....!

INTRODUCTORY LEVELS: Here's a reminder... The horse should show smooth transition and a willingness before, during and after the rider's commands. The rider

should show invisible, light aids during all transitions. **REQUIREMENTS:** Easiest to hardest task: Tips to understanding how to do a Figure correctly

***20 meter half circle at the working jog** — E to B or B to E The half circle is to be 10 meters from the line of E or B, in order to make the half size of 20 meters. ***20 meter circle at the working jog**

TIPS ABOUT BASIC LEVEL GAITS & DEFINITIONS:
Free jog — This pace is two-beat of moderate lengthening of stride and frame compared to the Working Jog and is done without hurrying. The horse should stretch forward and down over the top line with relaxation maintaining balance, tempo, and regularity of the jog on a loose rein. ***Halt: 4 seconds** Balanced in transition to a square, straight halt. Horse should demonstrate immobility, willing, smooth transitions. He should show regularity and quality of the walk, and a willing, smooth and straight transition to the halt. ***20 Meter circle at the working jog** The importance of the Balance and Bend: the size and shape of circle with inside bend; regularity and quality of the jog; straightness. Straightness is controlling the horse's body alignment through the rider's leg and rein aids. Straightness is absolutely necessary to achieve balance of the horse in order to show willingness, relaxation, consistent tempo in the gaits, and movement which will be free flowing. Balance and bend in the turn and corners; straightness on the diagonal; regularity and quality of the jog. ***Free walk on 20 meter half circle** Horse willing to freely stretch his neck forward and down; relaxation; swing through the back; ground covering stride; straightness; willing, smooth transition; regularity and quality of the free and working walks. ***One loop 5 meters off the track** Importance of balance and correct changes of bend on loop; regularity and quality of the gait; balance and bend in the corners. ***Palm Equestrian Academy generalinfo@lynnpalm.com 352-362-7847** • Cyril and Lynn offer clinics throughout the country and abroad as well as online coaching. Join them on their teaching tours or their Palm Equestrian Academy European Journeys.

From Lynn: I like to see the rider post to the jog here, it feels as though it allows a light rider on the horse's back to allow an easier stretch of the horse's back muscles. **Working lope:** The lope is a gait with three equal, regular beats with time of suspension after the third beat. While maintaining the three beat cadence, the horse must go forward with even and elastic steps. The back must be relaxed and the shoulders free; there is an obvious push from the hindquarters and the hind legs step actively up under the horse. The horse maintains light contact with the bit and his nose shall be on or slightly in front of the vertical in this level.

Balance and bend in the turn and corners; straightness on the diagonal; regularity and quality of the jog.

***Free walk on 20 meter half circle** Horse willing to freely stretch his neck forward and down; relaxation; swing through the back; ground covering stride; straightness; willing, smooth transition; regularity and quality of the free and working walks. ***One loop 5 meters off the track** Importance of balance and correct changes of bend on loop; regularity and quality of the gait; balance and bend in the corners.

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Elizabeth Bates Wins \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix at Ottawa National

Ottawa, Ontario — Elizabeth Bates won the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix.

Held on the grass field, the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix saw seven horse and rider combinations deliver clear rounds over the track set by course designer Shane Wooley to qualify for the "jump-off." Returning mid-way through the jump-off, Bates was again clear in a time of 42.37 seconds to move into the lead riding Heartbeat W. None who followed could catch her time, giving Bates the win. "I walked my plan, and I rode exactly what I had planned," explained Bates. "I have always loved grass arenas, and the course design has been very fair with very friendly courses to jump."

Elizabeth Bates of Brussels, Belgium, made her trip to the Ottawa National show jumping tournament worthwhile by winning the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix with Heartbeat W on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, ON. Photo by Sunkist Media

zev Nadeau of Stittsville, ON, was also double clear but a slower time of 44.59 seconds left her in the runner-up spot riding HHS Fairy Fort, her 11-year-old grey Irish Sport Horse mare. Stephanie Bourassa of Laval, QC, also left all the rails in place riding Guss de Kergane, an eight-year-old Selle Français gelding, to take third with a time of 45.83 seconds. American competitor Virginia Bonnie of Upperville, VA, filled the next three places in the final standings. The 20-year-old was double-clear for fourth riding Curtis SL and incurred four faults in the jump-off with both Helderado and Efodea to finish fifth and sixth respectively. Of Heartbeat W's personality, Bates noted, "He is not a people person. When I got him, he was not at all relaxed and he did not trust me. He has come around. He is super kind. If you go hacking, he'll stop and look up at the sky, appreciate the view, and listen to the birds. He really wants to be chilly, but he has so much fire in the ring. Those are always the type of horses I've ended up with."



Elizabeth Bates of Brussels, Belgium, made her trip to the Ottawa National show jumping tournament worthwhile by winning the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix with Heartbeat W on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, ON. Photo by Sunkist Media

The Ottawa National League Show Jumping Team event alongside teammates Sean Jobin aboard Coquelicot vt Heuvelland Z and Nicole Walker riding Atout des Trambles. "A big bonus is having a really nice venue to ride in."



Local competitor Mackenzie Nadeau of Stittsville, ON, was double clear to take second place riding HHS Fairy Fort in the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix. Photo by Sunkist Media



Stephanie Bourassa of Laval, QC, took third place in the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix riding Guss de Kergane. Photo by Sunkist Media

Ottawa National

arena, good stabling, and lots of space. I love the show. Hats off to the organizer. This is really a show worth coming to." Bates will continue to follow the Major League Show Jumping tour for the rest of the season before returning to her Breakaway Equestrian business in Belgium where client and investment horses are waiting. The Ottawa National tournament concludes on Sunday, September 15, and features the \$10,000 Maplebrook Farm Young Horse Series Finals, Maplebrook Farm partnered with Wesley Clover Parks to provide increased opportunities for young horse development throughout the season, and

all class and nomination fees were waived for horses that enrolled in the series. The Ottawa National also features the CET Medal and JC Medal Regional Finals, which serve as qualifying events for Toronto's Royal Horse Show in November. For more information on the Ottawa Equestrian Tournaments, visit www.OttawaEquestrianTournaments.com. All competitor information is available at www.ottawaequestriantournaments.com/calendar. Get the latest updates, news, and photos by following Ottawa Equestrian Tournaments on Facebook here and Instagram at @OttawaEquestrianTournaments. Share your Ottawa Equestrian Tournaments experience by tagging #TenYearsOfTournaments and #RideTheParks!



Elizabeth Bates, pictured aboard King of Kannan, is presented as the winner of the \$15,000 Cityscape Grand Prix at the Ottawa National show jumping tournament by Taylor McRae (left), Show Activities Manager for Wesley Clover Parks, and Victoria La Valle, VP of Cityscape. Photo by Sunkist Media

- 1. Elizabeth Bates / Brussels, Belgium / Heartbeat W / 46.60 / 0:0 / 42.37
- 2. Mackenzie Nadeau / Stittsville, ON / HHS Fairy Fort / 0:0 / 44.59
- 3. Stephanie Bourassa / Laval, QC / Guss de Kergane / 0:0 / 45.83
- 4. Virginia Bonnie / Upperville, VA / Curtis SL / 0:0 / 41.92
- 5. Virginia Bonnie / Upperville, VA / Helderado / Kannan / 1
- 6. Virginia Bonnie / Upperville, VA / Efodea / 0:4 / 46.45
- 7. Jade Lalonde / Candiac, QC / FE Golden Eye / 46.45
- 8. Elizabeth Bates / Brussels, Belgium / King of Kannan / 1
- 9. Paul Halpern / Saint Anne des Plaines, QC / Jerlot W / 46.45
- 10. Colleen Loach / Dunham, QC / Kapital Creation Z / 4

LongRun's TB Star of October

Belentime

Belentime is a handsome 16.2 gelding, foaled in 2018. He will make a great partner to an intermediate or advanced rider in low level eventing or jumping disciplines. If you're interested in meeting Belentime, please contact LongRun!!

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