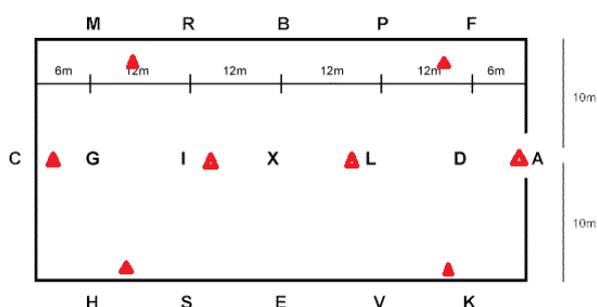


## Lesson Plan 1: Walk and Trot a 20m Circle

**Set up:** In a 60 x 20 metre dressage arena set out 20 metre circles with witches' hats at A and C. Have the arena divided into 2 halves by coming across the centre line from B to E, and tracking left or right at E.



**Time:** Keep the exercise in walk for 10 - 15 minutes unless the riders have warmed up prior to the lesson (in which case the warm up can be shorter).

### **Explanation:**

After warming up, the rider will commence on the large arena track on the left rein in walk, and upon reaching A, ride a 20 metre circle in walk. At A make a transition to trot and ride the 20m circle again. Follow the witches' hats to keep the circles accurate. Upon reaching A go large and at B turn left across the arena.

At E track right and walk. At C ride a 20 metre circle in walk. At C make a transition to trot and ride the 20m circle in trot. Upon returning to C go large. At B, walk and turn right. Upon reaching E track left and commence the exercise again. Allow the horses to walk on a loose rein before finishing off.

### **What to look for:**

When commencing the exercise at walk, the instructor begins to watch each rider's position. The priority here is the rider's centre of gravity (keeping the ear, shoulder, hip and heel line). The riders should sit evenly on both seat bones (not lean into the circle), even though they need to be looking around the circle.

Check the horse's straightness (spine alignment with the track the rider is travelling). The riders should be checking for the beginnings of flexion and bend, so should be able to see their horses' inside eyelash to create some flexion around the circles.

Riders should also be aiming for their horse to either stay on the bit, or at least keep their poll in the same position from the walk into the trot and return (i.e. no pulling or throwing of the horses head into and out of transitions). The instructor is also looking for the accuracy in the 20 metre circles. Once the riders are competent, the witches' hats can be removed to check the rider's accuracy.

**Aim:** Look for consistent rhythm into and out of the circles. If the riders are not yet riding their horses on the bit, make sure they ride the horses straight down the long sides and aiming for flexion around the circles. Riders should have awareness of the rhythm, thus working on awareness of the horses' movement for the riders.

*More advanced riders may complete this exercise in trot and canter*