
SECTION 3: The Lesson Program

A basic comprehensive lesson program is a good point of departure from which to adapt vaulting to the needs of an individual Pony Club program. The following sample program includes all the essentials:

Non-Vocal Music

Non-vocal music suitable to the activity, be it warm ups, barrel work, or on the horse, enhances any lesson or program and is required at competitions.

Warm-Ups

Warm-ups are the starting point for each lesson. They are practiced mostly on the ground though some are adaptable to the barrel.

Safety Exercises

Safety exercises are divided into three categories: 1) Ground exercises, 2) exercises performed on the barrel and 3) exercises performed on the moving horse.

Mounts and Dismounts

Exercises to develop mounts and dismounts are, like the safety exercises, taught first on the ground, then on the barrel. Practice on the moving horse is usually reserved until a degree of competence and mechanical correctness is achieved on the barrel.

Form Exercises

Exercises to improve the vaulter's form, not only the quality and elevation in the performance, but also the mechanics of all exercises, are practiced on the ground and on the barrel. It is important to require straight legs and pointed toes in the early stages of training so that it becomes instinctive, not something added as the vaulter progresses. Good form improves lightness on the horse and stability and security of the vaulters.

Compulsory Exercises

Mechanical or technical correctness of the six compulsory exercises is developed on the barrel before being practiced on the moving horse, first at the walk, then at the other gaits.

Kür Work

Kür, or free-style, work is developed on the ground and on the barrel before being practiced on the horse at the walk. When perfected at the walk, the exercise(s) can then be performed at the trot or canter.

Incentive

There are many ways to encourage youngsters to work for accomplishment of set goals, especially during some of the less interesting or less exciting periods of their development.

Following are specifics of the exercises used in each phase of the lesson plan.

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A. Warm-Ups

Warm-up exercises regularly practiced on the ground, in advance of each vaulting session on the horse will insure properly stretched muscles, thus preventing undue strain to the vaulters and minimizing the possibility of injury. The following is a list of suitable warm-up exercises for each lesson:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Forward Roll | 9. Hurdlers Stretch |
| 2. Back roll | 10. Flag (static) |
| 3. Dive Roll | 11. Flag (swinging) |
| 4. Cartwheel | 12. Mill Over Vault |
| 5. Leapfrog | 13. Rotation Leg Lifts |
| 6. Donkey Kicks | 14. Push Ups |
| 7. Wheelbarrow | 15. Inverted Push Ups |
| 8. Splits Against Wall | |

For descriptions of the above exercises, see Appendix 3.

B. Safety

Safety is the byword of vaulting. Even though advanced competitive vaulting is a thrilling spectator sport, it is much safer than any other horse sport and safer than gymnastics. Vaulting has a very much lower incidence of injury than riding (even "flat riding"). There are two major reasons: the vaulter does not control the horse, so he cannot lose control; development of safety techniques is an integral part of every vaulting lesson from the very beginning.

There must be an experienced adult horse handler/longer who is experienced in the safety issues of longeing both the horse and the horse with rider.

The following exercises should be mastered on the ground and/or barrel before any work on the moving horse is attempted.

1. Forward Roll (see Appendix 3)
2. Back Roll (see Appendix 3)
3. Dive Roll (see Appendix 3)
4. Hop on toes with knees locked
5. Jump up and off to inside and outside
6. Walk backwards and jump up off croup
- 6a. Walk backwards and jump up off croup as illustrated ("like this, not this")
7. Jump up and sideways from reverse stand and twist 180 degrees in the air to land facing front
8. Pike Down
9. Simple dismount and push away

10. Push off to outside from seat on neck
11. Push off to outside from croup
12. Half-Flank with twist from reverse seat
13. Leapfrog off croup
14. Half-Flank off
15. Back Roll-off across horse
16. Flank-Off from inside seat

For descriptions of preceding exercises, see Appendix 4.

C. Mounts and Dismounts

It should be stressed to the younger or smaller vaulters that the ability to vault on unassisted is not a prerequisite to vaulting. Assistance should be available to aid getting on. Allowing a vaulter to crawl up the side of the horse hurts the horse and may eventually sour him. Success in the vault-on may very well not come until after the compulsories are mastered. However, vault-offs must be mastered from every position as a matter of safety.

Mounts

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. To basic seat | 5. To flag |
| 2. To inside seat | 6. To swan |
| 3. To outside seat | 7. To stand |
| 4. To free kneel | 8. Scissors on |

For descriptions of the above, see Appendix 5.

Dismounts: *It is important that letting go of the handles and pushing away from the barrel should be mastered, before dismounts from the horse are attempted.*

1. Simple dismount (see Appendix 4)
2. Half-flank
3. Flank-off from inside seat
4. Pike-down
5. Leapfrog off croup (see Appendix 4)
6. Extension from knees
7. Extension from flag
8. Arabesque off (Pike off)
9. Push off from neck
10. Push off from croup
11. Roll up and off
12. Round-off

For descriptions of the above, see Appendix 6.

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D. Form Exercises

Proper form is nearly as important as mechanical correctness in achieving success in mounts and dismounts. It is essential to the development of body use which is a prerequisite to correct mechanics in all exercises. It tightens the body and allows the exercise to be performed with the least amount of discomfort to both horse and vaulter. It makes all exercises possible and enables the vaulter to land lightly on the horse. Good form means straight legs, arched feet with pointed toes and stretched (not slack or clenched) arms and upper body. Good form should be insisted upon in all exercises and at all times. The following exercises are specifics for the development and improvement of good form. Ground work and barrel work should be employed.

1. Flag - static (stretch and h-o-l-d!) (see Appendix 3)
2. Flag - swinging (see Appendix 3)
3. Mill over vaulter (see Appendix 3)
4. Leapfrog (see Appendix 3)
5. Cartwheel (see Appendix 3)
6. Mount swings
7. Rotations
8. Tailor seat (with/without split) and
Reverse tailor seat (with/without split)
9. Arabesque
10. Needle
11. Flag changes

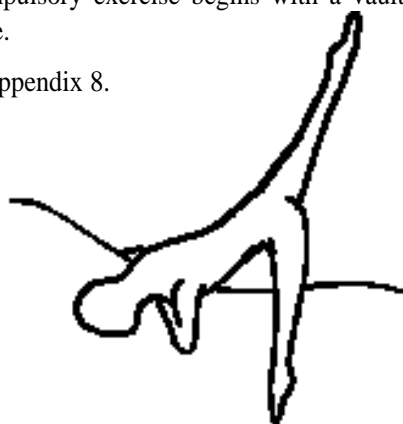
For descriptions of the above exercises, see Appendix 7.

Because the toes are tightly pointed downward in vaulting, the leg is strong and quiet and in close contact with the horse and therefore the required form benefits the vaulter as a rider.

E. Compulsory Exercises

There are six (6) compulsory (required) exercises which are performed in every type of vaulting competition for teams and seven (7) compulsory exercises for individuals and in all medal examinations. Each compulsory exercise begins with a vault into the basic seat astride.

Descriptions follow in Appendix 8.



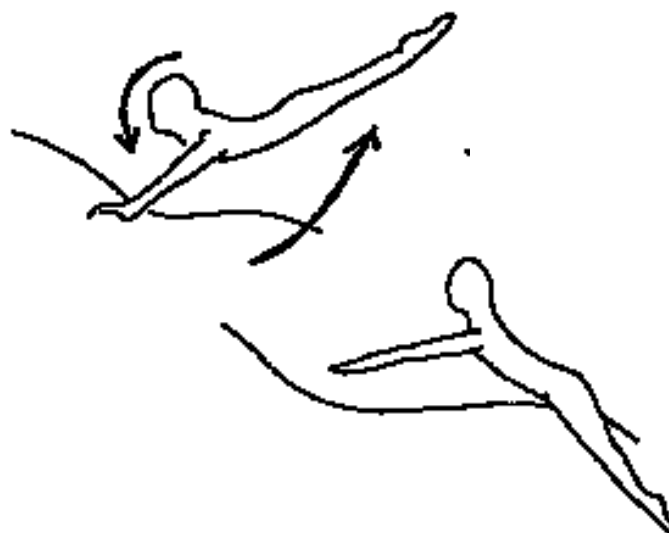
Vault-on

Each has its appropriate vault-off:

Simple Dismount

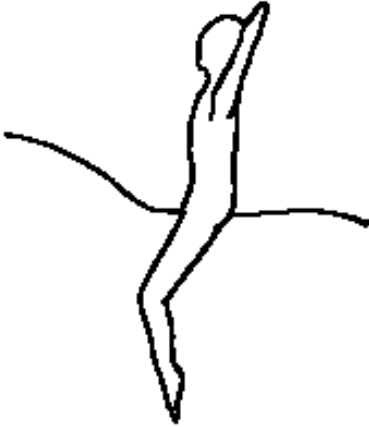


Half-F flank to Inside



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1. Basic Seat - a static exercise demonstrating balance and suppleness of the back and hips. (Simple vault-off)



2. Flag - a static exercise demonstrating balance and suppleness. (Simple vault-off)



3. Mill - a dynamic four-part exercise demonstrating suppleness and rhythm. (Simple vault-off)

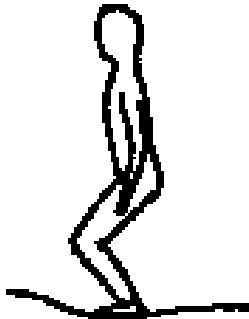
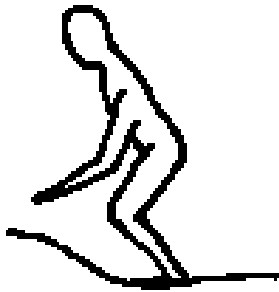


4. Flank - a dynamic two-part exercise demonstrating elevation and control. (Half-Flank off to outside)

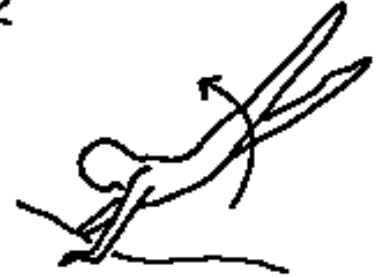
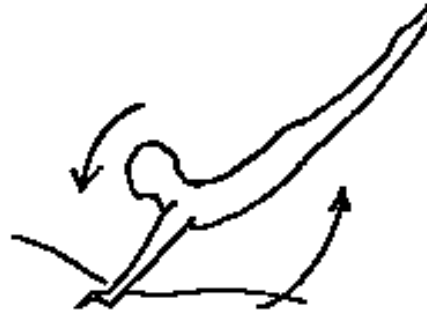


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5. Stand - a static exercise demonstrating balance. (Half-Flank off to inside)



6. Scissors - a dynamic two-part exercise demonstrating elevation and control. (Half-Flank off to inside)



For further description of the above exercises, see Appendix 8.

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F. Kür

Kür, or freestyle work, is adaptable to every level of vaulting, right from the very beginning. Kür routines are done to music suitable to the horse's gait and the vaulter's routine. Kür exercises may be performed by individuals or by two or three vaulters at the same time. New exercises are constantly being "invented" by vaulters; an interesting program can be put together even by beginners. Appendix 9 contains only a few of the hundreds of possible exercises. Combinations of singles or singles with doubles can be put together ad infinitum to give still greater variety. Even more exercises are developed by simply reversing one or several elements of an existing exercise (such as basic seat, kneel, flag, or stand).

Even the simplest exercises can be put together in an innovative sequence to add interest; and the transitions from one exercise to another are all-important to the interest and excitement of the finished program. Variations to some exercises are legion, such as those for jump-through; jump-through to stand on neck, to seat on neck, to reverse stand, to reverse seat, to ground, to ground with somersault, in reverse, in sequence - forward-reverse-forward-reverse, to shoulder of front seated base, etc.

Arm movements in the Kür should interpret the music chosen.

Many exercises, especially in the interesting mounts and dismounts, are not listed in Appendix 9 - Kür Exercises, because they are already shown in Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Kür Exercises

SINGLES

Static

1. Kneel
2. Prince
3. Candle
4. Tailor
5. Tailor with split
6. Reverse Half Flag on neck
7. Reverse Full Flag on neck
8. Arabesque
9. Arabesque in loop
10. Reverse Arabesque in loop
11. Reverse Half Flag on back
12. Reverse Full Flag on back
13. Shoulder Stand
14. Reverse Shoulder Stand

Dynamic

15. Rotations
16. Roll-up to reverse seat on neck
17. Reverse scissors from basic seat
18. Roll-up with scissors
19. Roll-up to reverse sideseat
20. Roll-up to flag
21. Roll-up to reverse shoulder
22. Roll down from reverse flag on neck
23. Flag-to-Flag

DOUBLES

Static

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Double basic seat | 11. Shoulder flag |
| 2. Basic seat and kneel | 12. Cross flags |
| 3. Arabesque | 13. Shoulder Arabesque |
| 4. Double needle | 14. Supported handstand |
| 5. Shoulder sit | 15. Reverse supported handstand |
| 6. Double half flag | 16. Double reverse flag |
| 7. Kneel and stand | 17. Reverse flag on flag |
| 8. Flag and Arabesque | 18. Handstand and stand |
| 9. Hippodrome stand | 19. Stand on shoulders |
| 10. Wheelbarrow | |

Dynamic

20. Jump-through

TRIPLES

Static

1. Triple basic seat
2. Triple cross
3. Hippodrome stand and stand
4. Wheelbarrow on shoulders
5. Flag on two
6. Kneel on two
7. Shoulder sit and seat
8. Deadman
9. Flying handstand
10. Double supported reverse handstand

Dynamic

11. Jump-through over two

For descriptions of the above exercises, see Appendix 9.

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G. Incentive

In order to encourage diligence in the less exciting but essential aspects of practice, the "ultimatum system" works well. When the vaulting session is limited to the ground and/or barrel, vaulters can "graduate" from one item to the next.

1. Mounts and dismounts may be worked on after the warm-up exercises and safety exercises have been practiced satisfactorily.
2. Progress from one compulsory exercise to the next can be predicated upon a satisfactory mastery of the mechanics of the previous exercise.

When a horse is available, vaulters can "graduate" from the ground and barrel work (all or part) to working on the horse.

(This should be earned.) A mini-awards system can be instituted even before the vaulters are ready to try for a national medal. This is especially valuable for very young children.

1. An award for mastering the basic safety exercises
2. An award for mastering the basic mechanics of each compulsory exercise
3. An award for mastering the basic mechanics of all six (6) compulsory exercises

Ideals for awards, incentives and games can be found in Appendix 10.