



Lungeing Over Poles

My preference is for a 20m circle. Ideally the circle is on a gentle incline. The downhill run encourages engagement of the core muscles. The uphill increases the hind end engagement. The series of poles are best placed at the bottom of the incline so the horse has to adjust itself coming into the poles. The higher pole and later cavalettis is usually on the uphill side.

Firstly get your horse used to lungeing at a trot without poles. Controlling the horse with just a normal headstall is usually adequate but a cavesson nose band can be used for greater control (beware too much pressure on the facial bones). Many horses take a few days to a week to settle but once they have lungeing can become an invaluable aid to exercising and warming up horses. Use the headstall to raise or lower the head carriage to about neutral position and if necessary to encourage the horse to keep its head from bending out of the circle.

Lungeing at a trot should be gradually increased from 1-2 minutes each way, eventually to 2 lots of 5 minutes each way. I like to introduce poles at 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock and 7 o'clock for a start. Once used to these I add one at 12:30 about 1.2m from the 12 o'clock position. Gradually we add more poles 1.2m apart up to about 6 poles on a quarter circle. The pole at the 7 o'clock position we make a bit higher than the others, eventually building it up to a cavaletti size. We start with the poles on the quarter circle on the ground and gradually lift them, one end at a time, until by about 3 months they are at the height of 2 bricks. Progression is based on how easily the horse is managing the poles. (Distance between poles should be at a full trot stride stretch – adjust for the individual. 1.2m is a good average distance for a 16hh horse)