

**Group Riding – Fun Patterns to Help Everyone’s  
Horsemanship – Part 2**

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Over the past month, I hope you have had opportunity to form your “Group Riding” troop and time to practice the two patterns we discussed in the January issue of NW Horse Source. Here in eastern Oregon we played with three riders, in a column of three’s, working the Flank Turn and Come About to the great cowboy music from the movie *The Magnificent Seven!* With Nancy – a 60+ year old, less experienced rider – in the middle, we were able to effortlessly accomplish the patterns, with huge smiles on everyone’s face. In the end, we all commented on how the group riding patterns built upon the basics, and allowed us to accomplish them with less concentrated thinking, and simple tasks became more habitual. Plus...It was REALLY fun! We realized that these patterns are deceptively simple, but to accomplish them perfectly with rhythm, timing, balance, and feel for one another was not easy.

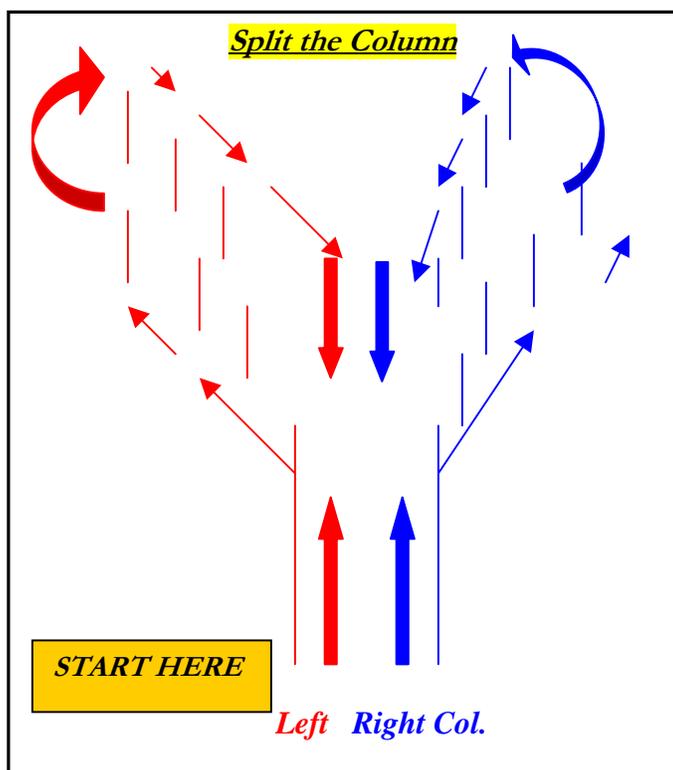
This month I would like to introduce several more patterns to add to your dance card. Here are a few reminders that will aid in the success for you individually and as a team player:

- A little warm-up is important for both horse and rider before you begin your group riding. Consider selecting a specific ground work exercise for everyone to practice, to prepare the minds of both horse and humans.

**Group Riding Patterns & Maneuvers – Part II**

Split the Column      Serpentine  
Outside around In      Flank Turn to Chase the Tail

**Let’s Do Some Riding!**



(Note: A number of ground work exercises can be found in past NW Horse Source articles.

[www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles](http://www.tnthorsemanship.com/articles) OR  
[www.nwhorsesource.com](http://www.nwhorsesource.com) )

- Once on board, do a few exercises to supple both human and horse. Some nice stretches, flex, and supplying drills warm-up the muscles, and prepare the mind for the first and critical step in our “Horseman’s Protocol”... ***Becoming Present!***

- Establish your human leader, and review the patterns and commands you will be using so that everyone is on the same page. If you are introducing a new pattern, it may be very helpful to walk it through first on your “two-leg” horse, focusing on the components or skills needed for a specific pattern. Clarify the timing – Is this an exercise that we do all at the *same time*, upon command, or one that we do at a *specific place*?

- Remind everyone of:

- 1) The safety aspects of rating and spacing
- 2) That mistakes - once made - are history
- 3) That over-all we are here to have FUN, while furthering our partnership with our horse!

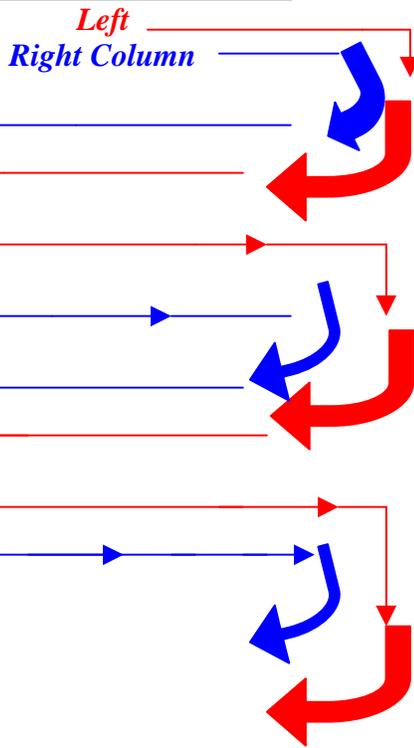
**Riding your two-leg horse is a great way to get warmed-up, and learn the patterns without suffering your horse!**



**Split the Column**

- Column of two’s departs down centerline
- At “X” or center of the school, Right Column leg yields to the right, and Left Column leg yields to the left
- Command for leaders to begin leg yield is “Prepare to Split the Column”
- The Company (additional pairs of horse & riders) begin to leg yield when they reach “X”
- On the command, “Split the Column”, the leaders ride towards each other, and then down centerline
- The Company accomplishes the “Split the Column” at the SPOT where the leaders did their turn towards one another
- The effect is similar to a bowling ball splitting the pins out into a “V” and then drawing them back to the centerline
- Be careful NOT to hit knees as you come back down centerline
- Key Skills Accomplished: Straightness, balanced leg yield with shoulders leading, timing, focus, socializing & bravery as horses ride past on another

### Serpentine Column of Two's



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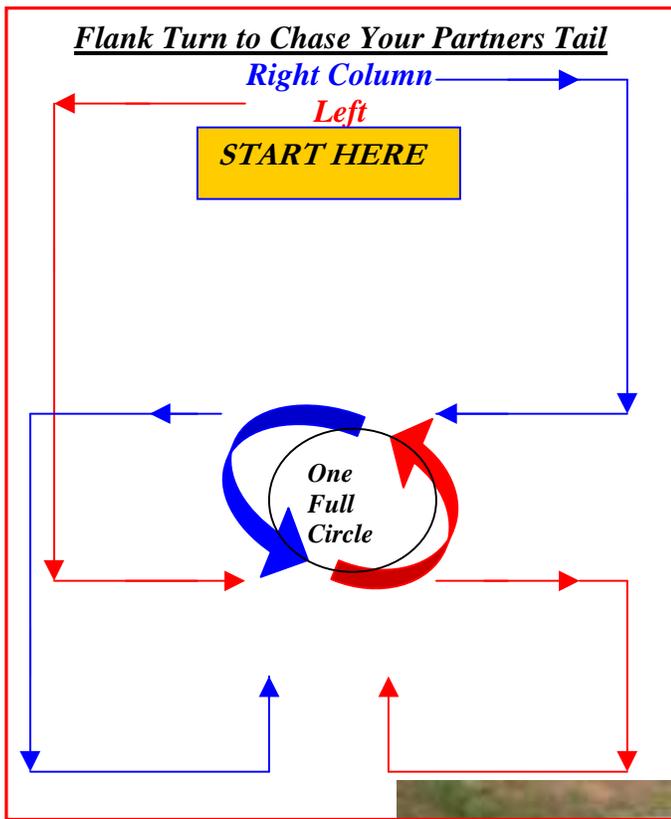
- Start at the top of the school, Column of Two's tracking right (You will know that you are tracking to the right, when your right hand is closest to the center of the arena or school)
- As you approach the corner, the Left Column speeds up on the outside of the eventual turn, & the Right Column slows or rates back
- Serpentine's are a series of 1/2 turns, where the partners switch off being on the outside of the 1/2 circle to being on the inside of the circle
- The number of serpentine's you can accomplish will depend upon the size of the school and number in the Company (Horse & Riders Pairs)
- Key Skills Accomplished: Rating and Waiting; Straightness – Don't allow your horse's shoulders to drop in towards your partner; Positioning – When you are on the outside, think of riding ahead until your knee is at your partner's horse's eye, then accomplish a balanced 1/2 circle turn

### Outside Around In



### Outside Around In

- Begin at the top of the school, column of two's, tracking right
- With the command "Prepare Outside Around In", the Left Column, or Outside Column, rides forward on the track until the Left rider's knee is at the Right or Inside horse's eye; The Right Column may rate their horses back slightly, while the Left Column may speed up a bit
- At the command "Outside Around In" the Left Column riders ALL ride a circle around their Right Column partners, being vigilante NOT to drop their horse's shoulder inward; The Right Column rider rates their horse to nearly a stand still, shifting the balance to the horse's hindquarters, and eventually accomplishing a turn-on-the-haunches
- One complete circle for the outside horse, and one 360 turn-on-the-haunches for the inside horse, and depart on the track to the right – column of two's
- Key Skills: Great for rating; Positioning is very important – In this example both horses are shaped to the right, & should look like the outside zucchini (horse) is pushing the inside zucchini and the pairs must be in position, on the straight line, before the final command; Timing – This is accomplished at the SAME Time on command



**Flank Turn to Chase Your Partners Tail**

- Start by dividing the Column of Two's
- On the command – “Prepare Flank Turn to Chase the Tail”, the Company (ALL riders) will see in their minds eye a ¼ turn towards the center of the school
- With the command to GO, ALL riders do a Flank Turn, riding towards centerline, as if they going to pass their partner on their left side
- When the Company reaches centerline, the Left Column chases the Right Columns tail one complete circle, both riders accomplishing a balanced turn-on-center
- The entire Company departs away from centerline in the original direction of travel they were headed, as if the chase the tail did not happen
- When the Left Column hits the wall they track right, & when the Right Column hits the wall they track left
- At centerline the partners join up for another ¼ turn down the centerline
- **Key Skills: Timing; The Balanced Turn on Center should see all eight feet reaching equally, with the outside front foot arching towards the tail of the partner horse, and the inside hind foot balancing under the horse's body**

Turn-on-Center or Chasing Your Partner's Tail is lots of fun, with the outside front foot of your horse arching towards the tail of partner's horse, and the inside hind foot driving underneath.



The ultimate goal is to have FUN with your horse, build your mutual trust and bravery, and keep a smile on the face of both human and horse!