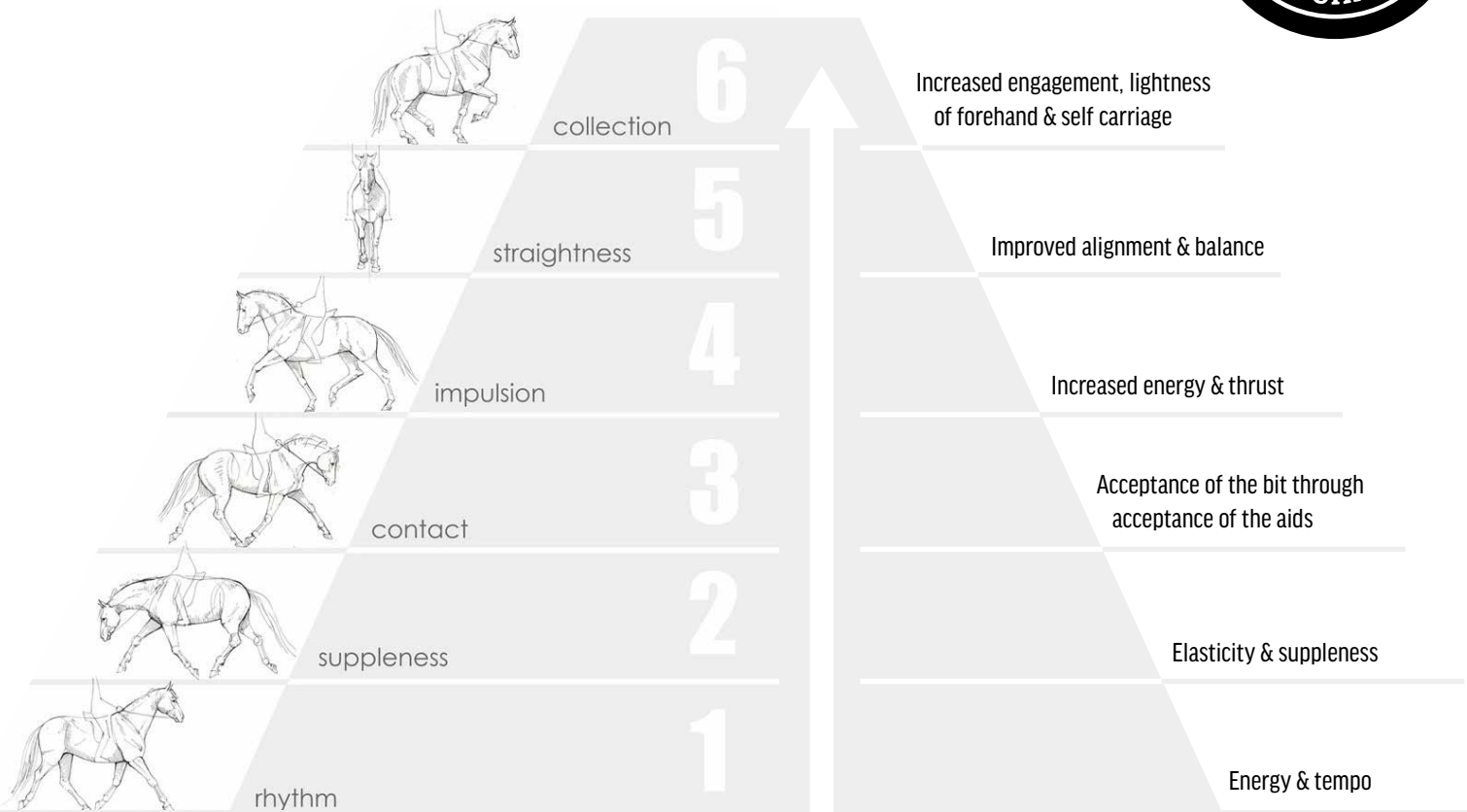


the dressage TRAINING SCALE



“**Dressage**” originates from a French word that simply means, “**training.**” The foundations of dressage begin with simple gymnastic and suppling exercises, mental and physical relaxation, and communication. Through these movements, our horses become stronger and gain rhythm, balance, and flexibility.

The training scale (or training pyramid) is a carefully curated process designed to help horses learn and develop their bodies in the most effective and harmonious way possible.

No matter your discipline, the basics of dressage (or training) can aid a young horse and rider to improve balance, flexibility, responsiveness, and the ability to perform correctly in all three gaits.

Western Pleasure: Improve cadence, impulsion, and purity of gaits without increasing quickness or speed.

Hunters/ Jumpers: Gain balance, flexibility and straightness to fences.

Reining Horses: Aid in shifting weight to the haunches to improve required movements, increased sensitivity to leg, increased strength of the hindquarter.

Working Cow/ Roping Horses: Decrease weight and impact on the forehand, increased power, impulsion, and speed.

Barrel Racing: Gain balance and flexibility, increased responsiveness to leg and rein aids, increased speed through improved impulsion and weight shift to the hindquarter.

Gymkhana: Increased balance and alignment in tight turns.

the competition LEVELS OF DRESSAGE



- Intro Level:** The three tests of Introductory Level are designed to introduce the horse and/or rider to the sport of dressage. Tests at this level include walk, trot and canter on large circles and straight lines.
- Training Level:** The three tests of Training Level confirm that the horse is supple and moves freely forward in a clear and steady rhythm, accepting contact with the bit. These tests include walk, trot and canter work on large circles and shallow serpentines. They also contain movements that require the rider to lengthen their reins, allowing the horse to stretch his neck downward.
- First Level:** The three tests of First Level include walk, trot and canter on smaller circles, half-circles, and figure eights. They also contain leg yielding, lengthened strides in the trot and canter, and lead changes through trot to demonstrate the horse's balance and responsiveness in a more uphill frame.
- Second Level:** The three tests of Second Level introduce collected trot and collected canter work. The horse and rider must also demonstrate their ability to perform the shoulder-in, travers, renvers, rein-back, simple lead changes turn on the haunches. The horse at this level should be consistently uphill and demonstrating some degree of self-carriage.
- Third Level:** The three tests of Third Level introduce fully extended gaits, half pass in trot and canter and single flying lead changes.
- Fourth Level:** The three tests of Fourth level see the addition of the walking half pirouette, working canter pirouette and multiple flying lead changes every fourth stride. By the time horse and rider reach fourth level, they should exhibit a high level of impulsion, suppleness, throughness, lightness and be on the bit.

Prix St. Georges: The only test of the Prix St. Georges level requires the horse to be a minimum of 7 years old in order to develop the strength and balance required for the level of collection and complexity at this level. The test introduces multiple flying lead changes every third stride and consists of small figures, collection, extension, half pass, and pirouettes.

Intermediate: The four tests of the Intermediate level are designed to coach the horse into the most complex movements of dressage, which include passage, piaffe, full pirouettes, "zig zag" half passes in canter with flying lead changes, one-tempis (flying change every stride) and two-tempis (flying change every second stride). The lowest Intermediate test requires the horse to be a minimum of 7 years of age, and the remaining three Intermediate tests require the horse to be 8 years of age.

Grand Prix: The two tests of the Grand Prix level, at which the horse is required to be 8 years of age, signify the highest degree of dressage training in the world. Horses at this level are expected to execute every movement with the utmost self-carriage, relaxation, elevation, and suppleness. Not every horse has the athletic capability to reach this level, but those that do are being judged on their expression, rhythm, softness, and harmony.

The National Levels Of Dressage governed by the United States
Dressage Federation (USDF) and United States Equestrian Federation (USEF)

The International Levels Of Dressage
governed by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI)