



www.wpdadressage.org

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Happy New Year! Your WPDA has a lot planned for 2015. I hope you can find the time to attend and volunteer at one of our sponsored events. Our first educational event is an unmounted Safety Clinic with the North Strabane Large Animal Rescue Team as well as area veterinarians speaking on nutrition, chiropractics, and acupuncture. The date will be March 15 at a location to be determined shortly.

Judge and author Janet Foy will be teaching a Through the Levels Clinic at Rockin' V Stables in McDonald on May 30-31. We will be looking for demo riders from Young Horse through FEI Levels. Be looking for an application to ride or audit this amazing clinician soon.

We're finalizing the details for Adult Clinic which is also at Rockin' V Stables. The dates are Sept 11-13. Kate Fleming Kuhn is confirmed again for this year. The second instructor is in the works.

As most of you have heard we have a new venue for our recognized shows in 2015. Rest assured that we searched every possible venue in western PA and Ohio but found nothing that could accommodate our needs and price range. We settled on Quentin Riding Club, a lovely facility near Lebanon, PA just a couple minutes off the PA Turnpike. I urge you to attend this show, not only to support your club, but to experience their hospitality. They have been bending over backwards to accommodate us in every way they can! They are planning an All-You-Can-Eat Prime Rib Buffet dinner in their clubhouse on Friday night, conveniently located at the show grounds. They have a bar (stocked with IC Light, of course!) and real plates and silverware. Take a minute and check out their website at www.quentinridingclubpa.com. We will be needing a lot of volunteers - even more than usual - so please try to plan an hour (or more) of your time while at the show.

To help defray some costs the WPDA has partnered with Southern States S.H.O.W. program. We can earn \$.25 per proof of purchase on Southern States, Legends, and Triple Crown feeds. Start saving those proofs now! Ask your friends too! You may send any proofs to me: Lynne Kuehner 421 A Pineview Drive Elizabeth, PA 15037.

Is there something you'd like to see happen in 2015? Come to a meeting or contact a Board Member with your questions, comments, or concerns. We're here to help!

Yoga for the Horse

Gymnastic Training for all Horses

Article Written By: Kristin Hermann

Yoga for the horse, or the gymnastic training of the horse, is very similar to yoga for a rider. The muscles are stretched and flexed to develop suppleness, length and a wider range of motion. Tense muscles are more likely to become injured and a supple muscle less so. That is why football players do ballet and yoga, and runners stretch, to keep the muscles from only shortening and tightening but rather to lengthen and create relaxation in the muscles.

Horses, however, primarily get stretched and flexed with a rider on their back, so they have to work twice as hard. The horse's top line needs to develop elastically with a rider mounted on the back muscles. Certainly, a talented horse person can long line or work the horse in hand to improve the top line without a rider,

but this requires tremendous skill on the part of the handler. If anyone thinks riding a horse requires coordinated skill, try long lining!



The rider is allowing the horse to stretch longitudinally down and out. This releases the spine, opens up the gaits and releases any tension in the top line. Part of this training process is the horse learning how to stay balanced on the hind quarters while stretching and not falling on the forehead.

Just like yoga stretches the rider in both directions, back to front and side to side, for the horse it is the same. When a trainer gymnastically exercises a horse, all the muscles are stretched and asked to both abduct and deduct (or get longer and shorter). A healthy muscle is one that can both flex or shorten, and stretch or lengthen. For the horse, this is -

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called longitudinal suppleness or back to front stretching and bending the horse from the side to side is called lateral suppleness. Stretching the horse both longitudinally and laterally, I call four way stretch!

With four-way stretching, a horse can stretch down with its head and neck to lengthen the top line muscles to come up under the weight of the rider and stretch from side to side to strengthen and supple the core and hindquarters.

Stretching in all directions from the front to back and side to side with the horse is the same for a person doing yoga. Of course, when the rider stretches they most often do it vertically and the horse does it horizontally with its horizontal spine. Asking a horse to move vertically is not a common request from the average rider! A vertical horse is referred to as rearing!

Being able to bend the horse both forward and back and side to side will develop a supple horse that will aid in its performance for any discipline. Training a horse is, as we know a process. Horses do not just bend equally to the right and/or to the left or stretch forward and back equally. Most horses have a harder time bending to the left, because the average horse is bent right. Ironically, with the average horse being bent right, the average rider is right handed. Therefore, most riders that are right handed more easily bend the horse to the right and, as a result, the typical horse and rider struggle when tracking left and trying to get a left bend.

Keen trainers are aware of the horses longitudinal and lateral weakness and throughout the process of training they work the horse's body so it develops equally in all directions. The horse, however, will forever be dominantly bent in its natural direction, as would a right handed person that was taught to write with the left hand.

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The same horse that was releasing and stretching the top line is now stepping under and caring its rider with a full stride from behind. Both flexing and stretching the top line is the best gymnastic exercise for all horses.



Training the horse to bend equally to the right and to the left is as good for the horse, as it is for the rider! This horse is bending from tail to poll, the whole spine bending around the rider's inside leg. Also called lateral bending, or side to side.

Yoga for the horse is merely a frequent workout of bending and flexing the muscles. Horses and riders that do yoga to supple, strengthen, and lengthen the muscles in all directions will more easily accomplish the goals of harmonious riding. The practice of yoga for both horse and human trains the muscles to work by stretching and flexing. The goal is to be able to work the body equally in all directions, but it is a process of training that brings about the goal. I am sure we all wish we could snap our fingers and be able to touch our toes or have our horse jump as well off the left lead as it does to the right!

A rider that practices yoga or dressage, the gymnastic training of the horse, will be more aware of the horse's imbalances and its way of going as well as her own. She will start to train both herself and the horse to stretch longitudinally and laterally instead of making excuses for why a horse doesn't do this or that. However, the fact that all horses and all humans are born with a dominate side does not help with the training process... it just makes it more challenging! Learn how to bend yourself and your horse equally to the right and to the left, in addition to stretching the spine both forward and back. For the rider doing yoga, learn to sustain a posture and breath to allow the stretch and, for the horse, train those gymnastic movements that make our horse more flexible. The word yoga simple means union or to unite, is this not the partnership we seek with our horse?

●● **It's Time to Renew Your Membership!** ●●

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

The board has voted to have our membership expire on November 30th of each year. This is the same expiration date as the USDF.



*Upcoming
Opportunities*

Debbie Rodriguez will return to Uphill, March 21-22 to help get us ready for the new competition year. Saturday will be in symposium format with riders demonstrating the new tests movements with Debbie's insights from a judge's perspective. Sunday will consist of private sessions. We are accepting applications for riders at all levels. Please contact Lisa Hall (lisa.uphilldressage@googlemail.com) for applications.

Uphill Dressage will also be hosting **Jeremy Steinberg** October 24-25. Jeremy is the former USEF Dressage Youth Coach through 2013 and a very popular clinician throughout the US and abroad. Please check out his website www.steinbergdressage.com for more information on him as a trainer and a rider. We will be posting more details in the following months.

The American Hanoverian Society (AHS) announces an exciting educational opportunity for the membership and for all warmblood sporthorse breeders:

The AHS University Breeder's Seminar 2015.

The AHS University: Breed Seminar 2015 will be held March 26 – 29, 2015 in Maryland. The four-day seminar will be guided by visiting international breed expert, Dr. Ludwig Christmann of the Hanoverian Verband (HV).

The Seminar consists of three days of classroom lectures and hands-on, team-taught application of assessment theory at Hilltop Farm in Coloma, MD. In addition, there will be one travel day during which the participants and Dr. Christmann will travel to an equine reproduction clinic, featuring veterinary lectures, and visits to two Maryland warmblood breeding farms. This event will also include a Gala Evening reception, featuring presentations of Hanoverian stallions in-hand and under saddle, hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.

WPDA NewsBits Advertising

Classified Ads (30 word Maximum)

Members: **FREE!**

Non-Members: **\$5.00/month**

Business Card Ad

Members: **\$10.00/month**

Non-Members: **\$15.00/month**

Quarter Page Ad

Members: **\$15.00**

Non-Members: **\$20.00**

Half Page Ad

Members: **\$25.00**

Non-Members: **\$30.00**

Full Page Ad

Members: **\$40.00**

Non-Members: **\$50.00**

Buy three months or more of any size ad and take 10% off the purchase price. If NewsBits publishes a two month edition your ad will count for one month.

Date: _____ Number of issues to be placed: _____

Amount endorsed: _____ Ad Size: _____ Title of ad: _____

Name/ Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Send all advertising for the NewsBits to **Kristin Hermann**
(blythedale@comcast.net), with WPDA AD in the subject line.
If you have any questions, please call **(724)-206-9902**.



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