

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF  
**A HORSE'S WARMUP**

By Chris Adderson



How To Evaluate Flowing And  
Stuck Movement With Purpose,  
Strategy, Power And EASE  
In Your Horse's Warm Up

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**Wouldn't it feel amazing to create an ultimate horse-rider team where both horse and rider give willingly and consistently causing a never-ending cascade of exciting progress?**

...to see your horse enjoying his/her work with you every ride (even waiting at the gate for you to come and ride)?

... to talk to your horse in an authentic, integrous way that feels true (and not an "obedience" session) to you?

...to finally know how to tap into harmony and communion in a pas de duex dance that's waiting for you?

Now, would you be intrigued to hear how you could create all this with a simple 10-minute (or less) process?

**Hi, I'm Chris Adderson.**

I'm a world known equine clinician who developed a truly innovative program which puts the pieces of the puzzle together on how to develop a truly effective horse-rider team.



And now, I want to share with you one part of how it's done, using a technique called...

### **The Strategic Warmup**

... which is a simple, 3-step process to purposely connect from your spine to your horse's spine and warm up with poise and assurance.



**First, let me tell you, my story.**

It was 1997. I had just purchased the horse of my dreams, an Andalusian gelding, Me Llamó Conquistador.

He soon after got an injury as a youngster, which started my journey of building a broken horse into a stunning athlete.

Though I was very successful, having developed a high-level classical dressage horse who was a willing and forever giving partner using the strategy I want to share with you here, that success didn't come immediately.

We struggled mightily for many years as we tried to overcome a horse who was injured, lame, and then not very athletic at best.

We didn't achieve success until we took the many pieces of the dressage-in-partnership puzzle and drew them together into a process to then ride together effortlessly, and beautifully perform very difficult movements with ease.

If you've ever struggled with a horse, then you probably know how disheartening it can be to see others succeed while you're still struggling.

It doesn't have to be this way though!

Below I'm going to share with you secrets of effectively riding with confidence, poise and ease I wished we knew when my new horse and I got started in 1997.

Now let me tell you about what every rider gets wrong by recounting a true story of a riding lesson that forever changed the way I looked at riding.

## **Have you ever been taught a lesson, *like this...*?**

Picture this...

Many years ago, my Morgan mare and I went for a riding lesson with a couple of coaches who worked together. They had different specialties so I thought they would be able to help my anxious and nervous horse and I out.

I was hopeful. Trusting. Optimistic.

The first coach led me through a warmup which consisted of doing what I was told to do, one thing after another.

First walk, then trot, then canter.

I was obedient, but inside I'm thinking, "My poor horse!".

My horse was constantly chomping on the bit, rushing, falling around. She was nervous and anxious, and it just got worse and worse throughout the ride.

The second half of my lesson was with her partner coach, "We're going to sculpt you in the saddle"

She physically put my legs where they were 'supposed' to be on the saddle, then she moved my back to where she wanted it, then my arms and my hands put into the place that looked good...and I was to hold that and ride.

Again, my horse was telling me that she was uncomfortable, she started to spin in circles.

We hauled out of there as quick as we could, even though we were invited to watch another lesson.

Here are a few takeaways from this experience:

1. **No one likes to have an obedience session, including horses.** Pushy and aggressive (and especially awkward) techniques and approaches turn riders and horses off
2. **There's no 'cookie cutter' rider or horse position** that is effective. Our actual needs were never addressed, not even enquired about. Nor was my horse and I treated like an individual pair.
3. **Those coaches didn't create ANY curiosity or desire.** There was nothing about that warmup that made me, or my horse want to ask more questions about what was next, and we both had no desire to learn more.

## And yet, this is EXACTLY how most riders and horses take lessons.

They engage with others ulterior motives, self-serving ways, and don't get their, or their horse's wants, needs, pains, or desires considered.

So how do you effectively warmup your horse?

Well, like I mentioned earlier, the best way to effectively warmup with your horse – without missing the point completely like those two coaches – is by using...

### The Strategic Warmup.

A warmup done in this way is purposeful, slow and strategic.

It's a 3-step process to warm up horses after a long break, horses in rehabilitation, elderly horses or young horses (any horse and rider can benefit!).

And as you might have guessed, there is a right way and a wrong way of doing it.

Much like my encounter with the 2 coaches, warmup can turn off minds and bodies.

But when done right, warmup can be your open door to dialogue on every level with your horse.

And you don't take this lightly, because...

## Our horses need us to learn this.

It's a courageous world out there.

And I see three types of reactions from riders to this approach:

## 1. "It's a waste of time and so simple"

These riders are used to spending 20 minutes or more on warming up, because that's what they've always done ...

Then they would go into their ride, with a horse, no better in mind and movement, than before they warmed up, so they're left thinking it's too simple.

I get it!

Before I put the pieces of the puzzle together, warming up my horse was a stab in the dark.

But the idea that results are too hard to achieve because it's simple, couldn't be further from the truth, as you'll soon see.

## 2. "How do I know my horse is warmed up enough?"

These are riders who are obedient learners who just do what they are told to do in previous lessons...

They work diligently, without focus on themselves and their own movement, or going genuinely deeper.

Like the first group, they may get frustrated and consider quitting completely.

Our last group, in contrast, has discovered that...

### 3. “Warming up strategically is a WIDE open door.”

These are riders who have their warmup clarified AND they can problem solve as problems arise from day to day, rather than being coach dependent.

These riders are producing massive, consistent results with their willing partner.

So, what is the missing puzzle piece this third group found that the second group lacks?

What are they doing right, and what are the other groups doing not so right?

Here's the key...

**The successful group knows how to powerfully move in a way that is clear, inviting, and offers receptive communication with their horse.**

The best way to do that?

**Yup, starting with The Strategic Warmup!**

**You simply can't beat a warmup done strategically for creating an instant dialogue and horse who is interested in their work with you.**



## The DO's and DON'Ts of a Horse Warmup

I know the idea of creating your own warmup can be overwhelming...

Because I've been there.

Luckily for you, though, I've put in my time, my research, and have put the puzzle pieces together of how to create an effective strategic warmup without fuss.

And now I want to share with you exactly what I've learned. But before we talk about what you should be doing, let's discuss what NOT to do when warming up your horse.

## THE TOP 4 DON'TS OF A HORSE'S WARMUP

You might be tempted, since you've seen it done like this before, to make a lengthy, all-encompassing warmup.

Don't do that.

That is tiring and wearing.

The key to effective warmup is...

### **Specificity!**

The more specific you are, for your unique horse...

The more you can be crystal clear on what to spend time on.

The more you can have a fresh, willing horse to work with.

The more your horse will be curious to find out what is next.

The more your horse will want to engage in a conversation with you.

*"So how do I avoid doing too much?"*

- 1. Don't drill your horse.**
- 2. Don't just go forward.**
- 3. Don't lose focus.**
- 4. Don't forget about you, the rider.**

## THE TOP 4 DO'S OF HORSE'S WARMUP

Effective warmup causes curiosity, encourages connection, cultivates conversation, and inspires consistency.

Let's go through each...

### 1. Cause CURIOSITY

When horses are curious, they are engaged and receptive to the warmup.

They will actually start to look forward to the warmup because they learn that it feels good.

### 2. Encourage CONNECTION

Your warmup with your horse is a chance to connect on a deeper level.

So, you are encouraging partnership and communion right from the very beginning of your session together.

### 3. Cultivate CONVERSATION

You've got your horse connecting with you now.

Your horse knows that you are listening and that it feels good, so they want more.

Your horse asks you questions like...

- "Can you help me with this part of my body today?"
- "Can we stay a bit longer in that area?"

Now you can lead your horse further along the warmup process.

You are in a dialogue with your horse.

You remain trustworthy.

Your relationship grows.

## 4. Inspire **CONSISTENCY**

You remain consistent with your warmup, no surprises.

Horses don't like surprises.

And by remaining consistent, you show commitment to your horse.

Commitment builds trust.

You'll start to be respected by your horse.

Ultimately, you'll become a partner.

So let's get started!

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## 3 Steps To The Horse Strategic Warmup

So, you're ready to warmup your horse with strategy, purpose, power and ease...

Okay, first you'll want to start with observing and feeling into the feeling of your horse's walk, by putting your hands on your horse.

### 1. COMING THROUGH WALK



**Purpose:** To increase awareness as a rider for where your horse is today and begin the evaluation process.



**Why:** Promote connection and focus mentally and physically.



**How:** Walk in straight lines with two hands in contact with the horse's body. The easiest is with one hand on the noseband of the halter and the other hand at the back of the cheek. Guide your horse into the walk.

Look and feel for these:

- Straightness – can you both walk in a straight line or is there drifting happening? Where is the drift to and away from?
- Position of the ribcage – which side of the horse is the ribcage swung towards and away from?
- Closing joints – are there any closing joints that you can observe or feel?
- Striding limbs – are there any shorter striding limbs that you can observe or feel?



**Stuck:** rushing, slow lethargic walk, always drifting in one direction, heavy in your hands.



**Flowing:** feels easy under your hands, clear straight lines, focus on rider.

Now you have a metric to start with for comparison and contrast.

Next, you will want to evaluate the spine more specifically, identifying the stuck points, and then formulate a resolution.

This will...

## 2. PROVIDE CONTEXT AND AMPLIFY YOUR COMMUNICATION

### The Poll

- \* **Purpose:** Isolate and separate the very unique movement of these joints which are critical to have soft for any pure, quality movement to follow.  
(Release the wing of the atlas, masseter, and paritodaucularis, atlanto-occipital joint)
- ? **Why:** Evaluate mobility and tension.
- ◆ **How:** Place one hand on your horse's cheek and the other hand on the nose or noseband. Slowly bring the hand on the halter towards you and the hand on the cheek goes away from you at the same time.
- **Stuck:** Bracing, bulging of neck muscles, horse unable to move, backing up or tossing head to get your hands off.
- 😊 **Flowing:** Lowering of head and soft flexion.

### Thoracic 1

- \* **Purpose:** To mobilize the shoulder girdle allowing the horse to take a step and release rather than brace (deltoideus, triceps brachii, supraspinatus, infraspinatus, trapezius, cervicothoracic joint). This will release the base of the neck and lift the base of the sternum.
- ? **Why:** This allows space for the shoulders to connect to the rest of the body.
- ◆ **How:** Place one hand on the halter and the other hand on the shoulder (deltoideus). Slowly bring the hand on the halter towards you and the hand on the shoulder goes away from you at the same time.
- **Stuck:** Horse may really lean on you, race off quickly, or stand there and brace.
- 😊 **Flowing:** Your arms and the horse's body between your hands will make the shape of a circle and will feel light and soft. Horse will show signs of softness.

## Thoracic 2

- \* **Purpose:** To provide a separation between the shoulder and the barrel and provide the first awareness to the bend (trapezius, latissimus dorsi, external intercostals, serratus ventralis thoracis, external abdominal oblique).
- ? **Why:** To facilitate the bend of the horse and the release of the shoulder. Provide openness for easier breathing.
- ◆ **How:** Align your forearm vertically just behind the shoulder in the fleshy area there. Remember to keep the connection to the horse's head or other secondary location, and to your feet and back also. This can be quite a stretch for small people! Apply pressure through the elbow area of your forearm, and then a slow release. This can also be done during movement.
- **Stuck:** No movement away from your arm, leaning into your elbow, bracing, backing up, escaping away.
- 😊 **Flowing:** You'll feel the whole body soften around your arm and horse will release the poll and neck and show general signs of softening.

## Lumbar Sacral

- \* **Purpose:** To loosen and warm up slowly, as well as create awareness to the sacroiliac joint and the attachment of the tail (gluteals, biceps femoris, semitendinosus, gluteal fascia, lumbodorsal fascia, lumbosacral joint).
- ? **Why:** To free the hindquarters, swing the hips and allow an open pathway for the connection to carry on through to the rest of the body.
- ◆ **How:** Place each hand on either side of the tail on the bony area. Add a slight amount of weight to one hand and then the other alternately making sure both hands stay in contact with your horse. You can also use the dock of the tail and the point of the hip.
- **Stuck:** no movement, stiff, horse walks forward.
- 😊 **Flowing:** hips swing freely and equally laterally and from side to side.

### 3. COMING THROUGH WALK ASSISTED

- \* **Purpose:** To slowly move and provide input, at a walk, amplifying movement at the Poll. This continues the movement of the synovial fluid and warms up further the whole body in a slow, methodical and softening way.
- ? **Why:** Awareness has already been established in Step 2, so now this is a continuation of the warming up with movement and softening through the whole body.  
Evaluation, visually and with feeling, can be done again noticing any changes after Step 2 and then your observations can be applied to your ride.
- ◆ **How:** Walk in straight lines with two hands in contact with the horse's body. The easiest is with one hand on the noseband of the halter and the other hand at the back of the cheek. Guide your horse into the walk.

#### COMPARE

AND

CONTRAST :

- Straightness – can you both walk in a straight line or is there drifting happening? Where is the drift to and away from? You will notice that your horse is more able to move in a straighter line.
  - Position of the ribcage – which side of the horse is the ribcage swung towards and away from? There will be less of a difference between the two sides now.
  - Closing joints – are there any closing joints that you can observe or feel? Remembering from Step 1, what joints are freer flowing?
  - Striding limbs – are there any shorter striding limbs that you can observe or feel? Is there more evenness now?
- **Stuck:** rushing, slow lethargic walk, always drifting in one direction, heavy in your hands.
  - 😊 **Flowing:** feels easy under your hands, clear straight lines, focus on rider.



Now, if you found this guide helpful and would like to learn more...

Then you'll definitively want to...

## Speak With Us

I'd like to invite you to have a one-on-one session with one of our Team Specialists to create a personalized plan to help you create your ultimate dream horse.

Now, before we go any further, you need to know...

**There is absolutely NOTHING for sale during this one-on-one session.**

Yep, even if you ask nice, we won't sell you anything.

Period.

Our singular objective is to share the roadmap to harmony with your horse, and beyond— the exact same strategy our top students have used, which only becomes more effective and MORE relevant as time goes on.

By the time you're done, you're going to understand EXACTLY how you can connect with your horse on every level and how to gain consideration from your horse so you have communion and will be seen as your horse's partner.

Then you'll discover how to turn that ultimate partnership and willing horse, into consistent results without needing to turn your warmup and ride into an obedience session, sculpt your body or frame your horse's body into a 'cookie cutter' position, feel like you just can't manage all of the instructions coming your way, or be coach dependent, ever again.

Here's my challenge to you:

Take me up on this invitation and [book your session now](#).

If you're ready for a change, let's make things happen.

Come to your session prepared to share your...

1. Specific goals and passions, which will define your personalized strategy for creating growth
2. Biggest takeaway from this report
3. Current level of experience riding and training your horse
4. Level of commitment to your vision and passion for learning riding skills and tools as well as self-improvement.

This is an important part of our program, because riders step up and take action, they commit to a path, and they see it through.

I promise you this...

If you fully commit to gaining the right knowledge, at the right time, and skillfully applying it, this process will be LIFE CHANGING for you and your horse.

[Book your session now.](#)

**Make it Happen,**



*C. Adderssen*