

Unlocking the Secrets of Dressage and Equitation: Master the Principles for Equestrian Excellence

Are you an aspiring equestrian seeking to elevate your riding skills to new heights? Look no further than the fascinating world of dressage and equitation. With their rich history and captivating blend of art and athleticism, these disciplines have enthralled horse enthusiasts for centuries.

The Essence of Dressage: Harmonious Partnership Between Horse and Rider

At its core, dressage is about achieving unity and harmony between the horse and rider. Derived from the French word "dresser" meaning "to train," dressage emphasizes the supple responsiveness of the horse and the subtle communication between the rider's aids and the horse's movements. This discipline is often referred to as "horse ballet" due to the graceful and choreographed nature of the rider-horse partnership.

Key principles of dressage include relaxation, balance, suppleness, contact, impulsion, and collection. Accomplishing these principles requires extensive training, coordination, and understanding.

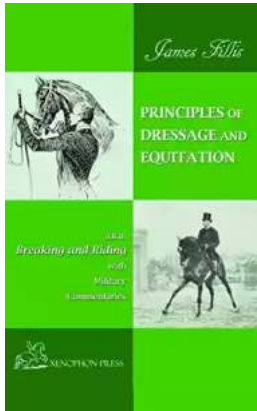
PRINCIPLES OF DRESSAGE AND EQUITATION: also known as "BREAKING AND RIDING' with military commentaries, The Definitive Edition

by Carolyn Meyer(Kindle Edition)

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Relaxation and Suppleness: The Foundation

Utilizing relaxation as the cornerstone, dressage focuses on achieving a supple and flexible horse. This allows the horse to move freely, comfortably, and with fluidity. Promoting relaxation in the horse's mind and body is vital for optimal performance.

Through various exercises like stretching, bending, and lateral movements, dressage riders cultivate suppleness in their horses. Suppleness enables the horse to move energetically and effortlessly in response to the rider's aids, nurturing the development of a harmonious partnership.

Balance and Contact: The Connection

Balance plays a pivotal role in dressage, as it ensures the horse remains steady and maneuverable. Achieving balance involves distributing the horse's weight evenly over its four legs. A well-balanced horse responds willingly to the rider's subtle cues and aids.

Contact refers to the connection between the horse's mouth and the rider's hands through the reins. In dressage, an elastic and steady contact allows the rider to

communicate with the horse effectively. With correct contact, the rider provides guidance and support while allowing the horse to remain relaxed and supple.

Impulsion and Collection: The Power and Finesse

Impulsion is the expression of energy and forward thrust, which manifests through engagement and increased steps of the hind legs. A horse with impulsion moves with power, energy, and lightness while maintaining a balanced frame.

Collection takes impulsion to the next level, refining the horse's movements through increased engagement of the hind legs and lightening the forehand. This results in increased strength and agility, allowing the horse to perform complex, precise, and elegant movements.

Equitation: The Art of Effective Horseback Riding

Equitation, often referred to as horsemanship, focuses on the rider's form, position, and technique. While dressage highlights the partnership between horse and rider, equitation emphasizes the rider's influence on the horse's performance.

Mastering equitation requires the rider to possess a stable and effective position, clear aids, and intuitive feel. Riders strive to maintain a correct alignment of their body, legs, and hands. This alignment enables them to communicate subtly and efficiently with the horse, making their aids both effective and invisible.

Achieving Harmony and Balance: The Ideal Position

The rider's position plays a crucial role in maintaining balance and harmony with the horse. A stable position involves aligning the ears, shoulders, hips, and heels in vertical harmony. This optimal alignment allows the rider to absorb the horse's movement, remain secure in the saddle, and communicate clearly.

Furthermore, the rider's hands should be soft, following the horse's mouth, and providing a light and steady connection without restrictive pulling or excessive finesse. The legs act as subtle aids, reinforcing the impulsion and lateral movements without gripping or nagging.

Effective Aids and Feel: The Language of Communication

Riders are trained to develop precise and unobtrusive aids, allowing them to communicate their intentions effectively to the horse. Riders use their seat, legs, and hands in a coordinated manner, ensuring the horse understands their cues and responds willingly.

An intuitive feel is indispensable in equitation. This refers to the rider's ability to "sense" the horse's movements and respond accordingly. Developing a strong connection and understanding between rider and horse fosters trust, subtlety, and unity.

The Art of Mastery: Honing Dressage and Equitation Skills

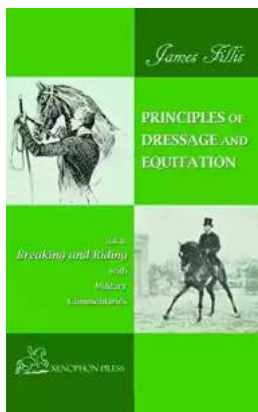
Mastering the principles of dressage and equitation is no small feat. It requires dedication, patience, a growth mindset, and professional guidance. Whether you're a novice rider or a seasoned competitor, honing your skills in these disciplines will undoubtedly elevate your equestrian journey.

Consider seeking the guidance of experienced trainers and instructors who can help tailor a training plan to your specific needs. Regular lessons, clinics, and practice sessions are crucial for progression and refinement.

Remember, the journey in dressage and equitation is as important as the destination. Embrace every training session, competition, and setback as an

opportunity to grow, learn, and deepen your understanding of the intricate dance between horse and rider.

Unlock the secrets of dressage and equitation, and embark on a journey that will reward you with not just technical proficiency but also a deep bond with your equine partner. Prepare to witness the remarkable synergy that arises when artistry, athleticism, and empathy converge in the world of equestrianism.



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James Fillis' masterwork, *Breaking and Riding* has been a touchstone of commonsense training for over a century. Xenophon Press has returned to the original French language manuscript entitled *Principe de dressage et d'equitation* and re-translated some of M.H.Hayes' translation of this work's references to 'breaking.'

Fillis' used the term "dressage" two ways:

1. basic training and taming of the horse;

2. sophisticated advanced training.

At the turn of the century (19-20th), "dressage" was not in use in the English language. Hence, the term was omitted from M.H.Hayes first English language edition and 'breaking' substituted. Xenophon Press' edition of this classic is fully footnoted and closely follows the original French edition. Complete military commentaries and robust footnotes make this the authoritative edition.

We are proud to finally offer this great work in an appropriately accurate and complete edition.

James Fillis (1834–1913) was English-born and became a revered French riding master. He was taught by Francois Caron, a direct student of Francois Baucher, and then studied with Victor Franconi, owner, and director of the Cirque Olympique de Franconi. Fillis was hired to train horses for the French Army during the Franco-Prussian War, and therefore his name is inscribed at Samur on the roll of *Écuyeres Célèbres*.

While performing with the Ciniselli Circus in St. Petersburg, Russia - he drew the attention of Grand Duke Nicholas, and became *Ecuyer en chef* at the Russian Cavalry School.

"In this book, I do not presume to discuss scientific subjects. I am simply a horseman who has been among horses for sixty years, who knows them, loves them, and is capable of reasoning about them. The fundamental principle of the studies which I submit to the public is that it is necessary for a horse to be correctly balanced and light in forward movements and propulsion, in order that the rider may obtain the most powerful effects with the least exertion. My method of equitation consists in the distribution of weight by the height of the neck bent at the poll and not at the withers; propulsion by means of the hocks being brought

under the body; and lightness by the loosening of the lower jaw. When we know this, we know everything, and we know nothing. We know everything because these principles are of universal application; we know nothing because they have to be applied practically. Practice cannot be taught in a book, but I will try to set forth principles. Probably, I would not have had the boldness to do this, had not one of my pupils entreated me to write this book; because he had been greatly struck with the aptness of the explanation which I gave him respecting the details of the training lessons. In judging this work, I trust that my readers will give it the attention it deserves, as the result of sixty years' serious study and hard practical work. I crave the indulgence of the public and the impartiality of my reviewers."

JAMES FILLIS



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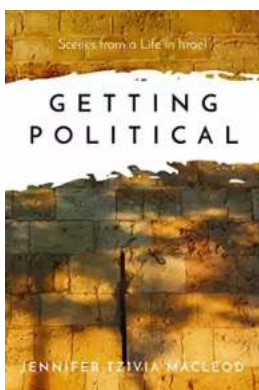
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