



Rider Progression

At Murton Equestrian Centre we like to see rider progress and develop their abilities. Our Lessons are structured to develop skills and knowledge. Instructors regularly (and not always in an obvious manner) review the development of the riders to see if they are ready to progress to the next level. However, we will never allow riders to progress too quickly, to allow that would put the rider and other on the lesson at risk of an accident.

Everyone progresses at a different rate; young children tend to take longer to gain the skills necessary to be in control of the pony. Small children may also struggle due to their size.

If you are concerned about the progression of your child, please refer to the progression chart below.

Horse riding is a risk sport. We do our best to keep riders safe by providing lessons on well behaved ponies, at a level appropriate to the rider's ability.

Although there is some overlap between the levels, it is unsafe to allow children off the lead rein until they can completely control the pony while in a balanced position in walk and trot.

1hr group lesson will run with a minimum of 4 riders, 1-2 riders will receive a shared private for 30 mins and 3 riders will receive a shared private for 45mins.

Rider Progression Guidance

Walks (30 minutes)

Riders are lead at a walk. This is usually outside around bridleways and fields (weather dependent) or in the arena. Basic instruction is given to the rider to ensure their safety. Perfect introduction to riding or try out. Open to all ages and no experience is necessary.

Pony Petting – 3/4hr group session with up to 6 children

Children and Parents are encouraged to get hands on with the ponies, brushing, feeding, pampering, and riding. Great introduction to ponies and riding for 2-6yrs.

Lead rein Lesson – 1/2hr group lesson with up to 6 riders

At this level all riders have a parent to lead them. Instruction will be given on mounting whether receiving a leg up or using a mounting block and dismounting. Riders will be shown how to hold and alter the length of their reins. They will learn the basics on the position of the rider and how to use basic aids to control their horses. Riders will be able to stop and steer their horses through basic school exercises e.g., riding circles and changes of reins. Moving onto the trot riders will establish balance and rhythm in both sitting and rising trot. We include games and exercises that make learning to ride fun as well as improving posture, balance, suppleness, and confidence. As well as the riding, riders will begin to learn simple equestrian terms including parts of the bridle and saddle and colours of horses. Leaders should become side walkers as the rider gets independence.

Once the rider can:

- **Have a correct position not causing the pony undue strain/discomfort.**
- **Hold reins correctly and sympathetically, understanding that pulling the reins to balance will be uncomfortable for the horse.**
- **Steer independently and understand the importance of keeping safe distances from other ponies.**
- **Be able to show a good rhythmical and balanced rising trot, independent of hands.**
- **Have good listening skills and ability to concentrate for the whole lesson.**

They can move up to the....

Walk trot Lesson - 1/2hr Group lesson with up to 3 riders.

At this level all riders are working independently without a leader. With assistance they will prepare their horse for mounting including checking their girths and stirrups. Once on board the rider will learn how to alter their own stirrups. When on the move the riders should be able to walk and trot in balance with their horse and work towards controlling their horses through simple school movements e.g., figures of eight.

Once the rider can do all the above plus

- **Have a balanced position on a pony.**
- **Hold reins at an appropriate length to always keep control whilst riding school movements.**
- **Can control pony in walk/trot, whilst remaining balanced and safe**
- **Be able to walk and trot in balanced position maintaining rhythm and forwardness whilst riding school movements.**
- **Ride in a small group and make sure pony is a safe distance from others.**
- **Understand about Trot diagonals and be able to check without reminders.**

The rider can then move up to a

Loose 1/2hr group with up to 3 riders

In this lesson the rider will do the above and learn to ask for canter and work to improve their seat in the canter. The riders will work as a ride and be able to check distances within the ride, they will learn how to carry and change their whip and check and change their diagonals. At the end of the lesson riders will learn how to control their horses while dismounting.

Once the rider can do all the above plus

- **Be able to independently ask for canter and be confident in canter whilst in a balanced and secure position without using the reins to support self.**
- **Riders should be able to prepare horse for mounting and run stirrups up at end of the lesson.**
- **Riders should be confident riding in front/middle/rear of ride and always have an awareness of safe distances.**
- **Ride a wider range of school movements (circles, serpentines, changes of rein)**

The rider can then move up to a

Novice Lesson - 1 hour class lesson with up to 8 riders

Riders will prepare the horse for mounting by checking their girths and stirrups and once on-board attempt to alter their own stirrups. The main aim of these lessons is to further the rider's independence within a larger group of 8 riders and expand the rider's range of horses. Riders will continue to learn different school movements and develop a more secure seat. Riders will begin working without stirrups in walk with some trot and focus on improving their canter work. At the lesson riders will be able to return their horses to tie ups, run stirrups up and loosen girth.

Once the rider can do all the above plus:

- **Ride a wider range of ponies and horses effectively.**
- **Be able to maintain a secure and balanced position in walk and trot without stirrups.**
- **Be able to ride over poles and in-between cones correctly.**
- **Be able to ride simple circles in canter whilst in a balance.**
- **Be able to prepare horse for mounting and mount with minimal assistance.**
- **Dismount independently, run stirrups up/loosen girth and return pony to tie up point.**
- **Ride more complex school movements at a slow pace.**

They can move up to...

Intermediate - 1 hour class lesson with up to 8 riders

Moving onto the higher class lessons the riders will continue to expand their range of horses and learn to develop an independent seat. They will work towards more complex school movements and exercises including working without stirrups in walk and trot and canter. Riders will develop jump work and their forward position.

Once the rider can do all the above plus:

- **Work in walk, trot, and canter in an independent seat without using reins for balance.**
- **Be balanced and comfortable in forward position and over poles.**
- **Be able to control the horses and ponies in open order and drill rides.**
- **Be able to walk/trot/canter with no stirrups.**
- **Ride a wider range of ponies and horses effectively.**
- **Work towards more complex school movements at a faster pace.**
- **Prepare horse for mounting mount, dismount independently.**
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Then they can move up to...

Senior - 1 hour class lesson with up to 8 riders

Riders at this level should be able to tack up their own horses although the instructor will check tack before mounting. The riders should be able to control a wide range of horses and have an established seat in all paces. They will have the ability to ride in a forward seat and be able to maintain rhythm and balance in all paces. Riders will ride more complex school movements and exercises including working over poles and fences confidently. Riders will work towards lateral work including leg yielding and turn on the forehand.

Private lessons

Private lessons are available at any stage of riding, some children and adults prefer to learn this way. The instructor can tailor the lesson to fit your needs and can work on any weak areas or anything you would like to learn.