→ Dressage Basics ←

GAITS

There are multiple different speeds within dressage.
WALK
TROT
CANTER
EXTENDED CANTER

Each gait is one key click up from the last.
So the walk is one click, trot is two, canter is three, and so on.

LINE UPS

When you are lined up for dressage it is based on your speed.
Four things affect your speed
This list is how you should prioritize these things:

Player level
Horse happiness
Your horses level
Your outfit and horseshoe stat

Player level matters because the higher the level, the faster you go, naturally.
Your horse's happiness will increase your speed drastically (a level 7 and happy horse is faster than a level 12 and sad horse.)
Your horse also goes faster the higher the level it gets, but the speed increase is less than the impact of the player level or happiness.
The stat of your outfit minimally changes your speed

This is more important for your commander to understand, but just know that where you are in line doesn't determine your worth or how 'good' you are at dressage.

MAXED & HAPPY HORSES

Just like described above, having a maxed and happy horse is important to maximize your speed.

You can vet your horse, pay for stable care, or just log on routinely and care for your horse.

You may have noticed, that when your horse is happy it's speed increases a ton.
A sad horse is the worst horse to do dressage on.
In TRR we always say to use whatever horse is maxed and happy, even if it's not the club or team horse.

STRAIGHTNESS

To stay the straightest on the lines while doing dressage, you want to follow the designated path, as opposed to following the person in front of you.

If the person in front of you is veering and off target, just continue to do what you know is right, hitting every single dot head-on.

Once you are headed straight, there should be minimal reasons to tap your keys, and if you need to, you can gently tap back to where you need to be.
Another method to stay straight is locking your camera on the point you are headed.
If you are headed down the long wall, you can lock your camera at one of the torches.

When you veer away from your designated path, you cause others and yourself confusion, so trying to stay as close to your path as possible is important.

COMMANDING PHRASES

The commanding phrase we use in TRR is
'MOVE SET, MOVE SET, PRE, AND GO'

MOVE SET	When the commander is explaining a move you are soon to be doing. Fill this in with a move name.
PRE	When the commander states this, it acts as saying prepare. You can prepare to click your key.
AND	And is the phrase stated between PRE and GO, if your lagging you can go on AND.
GO	Go on go. When you hear the G in go coming through your speaker you do you the move.

Using this phrase is the best way to communicate moves and timing.

Learning and understanding this phrase is the best way to interact with the arena and your commander.

ADJUSTMENT PHRASES

RESET	Reset when a move is done incorrectly. Your commander will say reset and run back to X point.
HOLD	Hold is refering to waiting before going onto the next portion of a routine or move.
AND GO	On multi-go moves, your commander will say 'AND GO' for the next part of your move.
GO AHEAD	Go ahead is used when refering to marks or points of timing.

PAUSES AND BREAKS

In between moves and steps of moves, there will be pauses and breaks.

During these times it is important to stay on task and be an active rider.

RIDING ACTIVELY

The term riding actively refers to how well you can interact with the game around you.

Here are a few tips to ride actively.

GAPS & ALIGNMENT

Riding actively is adjusting yourself. Past a certain point, it is not your commander's job to remind you to adjust your gaps and alignments. Being an active rider means constantly moving your camera, adjusting yourself, gait hopping, wiggling, and answering questions in chat.

ANTICIPATION

Anticipation is thinking about yourself in relation to others within the dressage line. Thinking "Well, if I am a little far ahead, and the person in front of me is a little far behind, then when they canter up, I'll be in the right place."
This type of anticipation is really important to come to your full dressage potential.
Learning how to do this can take a lot of time, but we just recommend learning to observe the game around you better.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a huge way to be an active rider.
Using the symbols listed in etiquette along with asking questions is how you are going to comprehend dressage.
Also, communicate if you need to go AFK, will be late to, or miss a practice. Your commanders put so much time into making lesson plans, etc, that it is only respectful to give them updates on your attendance as it will affect the lesson.

ARENA

Being spatially aware in the arena is constantly analyzing where you are with the dots, meter points, or lines.
For example, when counting up 1 - 5 on the short wall of the arena, count as you hit the dot, as opposed to a last-minute scramble.

These tips will take a ton of time to fully put into action, so no worries if you make mistakes, or get confused.

We recommend learning and practicing these in smaller lines or semi-private lessons where there is less to think about.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Understanding dressage is no easy task.
Just because it is pixel horses doesn't mean it is simple, or minor in requirements.

The term 'individual learning' is a phrase TRR likes to say a lot.

Dressage is for you, your enjoyment, and your individual learning.
Finding what makes dressage enjoyable for you is the most important thing, after all, this is still a game.
So reclaim your dressage learning!

ENJOYING DRESSAGE

Ask yourself, what makes YOU enjoy dressage?
Is it your supportive club?
Is it the commanders who teach you?
Is it learning new skills?
Figure out what you love and why so you can know what to look for in the future, and learn from your past experiences.

PROGRESSING

Progressing is different for everyone for some, it is understanding elite moves, for some it is commanding, and for some, it is owning a club.
Never compare yourself to others progress.


Set-Up

ENTERING THE ARENA

Upon entering the arena you always want to turn on your dots. Your dots are what make dressage possible!
They serve as a guide for virtually everything in dressage.

Once you hover your mouse over the rake, you should see a star, and then you can click, which will transform your arena.

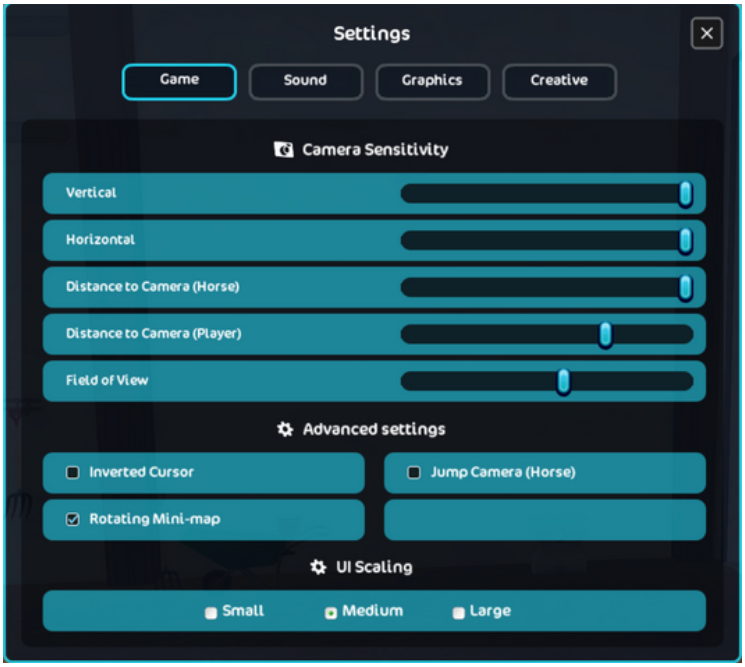
Turning on the dots will eventually become a habit, and you will begin to realize how important they are.

SCREEN SET-UP

There are specific ways to optimize your screen for dressage below are the steps.

The extended camera gives you a wider view of the arena. Just this minor detail can completely affect you as a rider. The enhanced control, and flexibility it gives you will take your dressage up a notch.

The camera is your greatest tool. You should be moving, or adjusting your camera every 3 - 5 seconds to check your gap, timing, and alignments.



HOW TO ADJUST
1.) Open your main menu
2.) From here, go to <<settings>>
3.) From here, go to the <<game>> tab
4.) Adjust accordingly

KEYBOARDS

MACBOOK OR LAPTOP

When using a Macbook or laptop, the easiest way to navigate through SSO is the arrow keys. Using a trackpad can make rotating your camera quite hard, however, it is easier to use a trackpad paired with arrow keys Here is a diagram as to where your fingers should be rested.

RIGHT HAND

- Pointer finger on the left arrow
- Middle finger switches between up and down
- Ring finger on the right arrow

LEFT HAND

- Pointer, middle, and ring fingers on the space bar/ trackpad

PC OR DESKTOP

When using a PC or desktop, the easiest way to navigate through SSO is the WASD keys. The WASD keys paired with a mouse are what will give the best resulting dressage. Below is a diagram as to where your fingers should be rested.

RIGHT HAND

- On mouse

LEFT HAND

- Ring finger on the right, A
- Middle finger switches between W and S
- Pointer finger on the left, D

It is recommended to play on a PC with the WASD keys and a mouse.

That, however, does not mean it is required for a good gameplay experience.

The only way of playing we will tell you to specifically avoid is playing on SSO mobile. SSO mobile lacks control, in many ways such as camera movement, chatting while moving, proper corners and turning, as well as managing lag and delays.

BASE RECOMMENDED MAC SPECS

MacBook Air
M1 (2021 and forward) Chip or newer
Minimum 8 GB of RAM

If you are to invest in an external monitor and mouse with your Mac...
Do not get an Apple mouse (poor wrist support)
Any 2k or 4k monitor will work (recommended 27 inches)
A simple external keyboard of any kind
Gaming mouse of any sort

BASE RECOMMENDED PC OR WINDOWS SPECS

Intel i5 processor
Minimum 16 GB of RAM
Simple external gaming keyboard
Gaming mouse of anykind

The reason the computers above are recommended is to prevent lag and make sure your computer has enough power to handle a game like Star Stable Online.
As SSO begins to phase out the operating systems that can run the game, you must keep in mind what is, and isn't capable of handling its systems.

→ Etiquette & Expectations ←

RESPECTING YOUR COMMANDERS AND PEERS

Commanders work extremely hard to provide clear and engaging lessons, so showing them the utmost respect should just be a basic expectation.

Staying on mute during active points in the lesson is super important. Unless you are asking a question, or have been asked to speak, you should always be muted. Talking over, or correcting your commanders is rude and disruptive.

Keeping side conversations to a minimum is also an important way to show your commander that you are paying attention. If something funny is mentioned, of course, you can laugh, or comment, but make sure you keep typing specifically to a minimum.

If you are playing music, or some quiet podcast in the background, make sure that you can still clearly hear the instructions.
Also wearing headphones helps if you aren't completely alone.

Making sure the environment is safe for everyone. Mistakes and mess-ups are more than okay. You don't learn without making mistakes, so when people mess up, be kind, and just politely continue trot forward, or finish the move (If they go the wrong way for a wave, focus on yourself)

Focus on yourself. Dressage is for your own personal learning. During odd/ even moves try to only focus on your assigned part, the commander rides out of line for a reason; the reason being so they can manage the line.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR COMMANDER

Being able to effectively communicate with your commander is how you convey your understanding of moves, concepts, and ideas is crucial to your success.
COMMON COMMUNICATION PHRASES

Y = Yes
N = No
R = Repeat
/ = Understood
. = Confused/ need clarification

You may be wondering why the symbols are abbreviations/ shortenings.
This is because typing during dressage is highly discoursed for a number of reasons; the following

- Typing can make you veer
- It can distract you from the content being taught
- Can make you lose control of your keys
- Ruin your timing

Keeping the communication to symbols and short letters is the most effective way to ride, and to understand your riders in line.

HOW TO CHAT

In general, you shouldn't be typing during dressage, however, when you need to communicate with your commander you should be typing by hitting the RETURN KEY.
The return key is the shortcut to open the chat window, so instead of moving your cursor to the other side of the screen, you can simply just hit the return key and then type in your symbol or letter.
Being able to effectively communicate with your commander is how you convey your understanding of moves, concepts, and ideas is crucial to your success.
Your commander should always have the chat window open.
Say Chat for Teams
Club chat for clubs

QUESTIONS

Say you have already typed a . in the chat, and now you have to ask your question. Depending on the complexity of the question you will step out of line and type your question (or unmute, case dependent). Once your commander has read your question they will respond and you can hop back into the line.
You can also always ask your commander to demonstrate the move or concept.

ARENA EXPECTATIONS

Despite your rank, you should always show up on the proper horse (maxed and happy) with the club/ team outfit
Just because you are the owner doesn't give you a pass to break your own rules/expectations.

Always show up 5 minutes early.

When you enter the arena, you should always turn on your dots.
From here you should go line up with your horse's butt against the by B letter on the long side.

Your commander will then count you off into line by level and happiness.

While waiting for the rest of your line to be put together, keep talking to a minimum.

DEFAULTS

The default direction of our method is left. If a direction isn't called, you need to go left.
This rule applies to odd and evens as well...
ODDS LEFT
EVENS RIGHT
If the commander makes a mistake, you can always default to the said directions.

Another default is participating actively in your lessons and clubs/teams.
Dressage is for you, and your personal growth, so if you don't enjoy it, don't do it.
It is unfair to those who want to ride actively, compete, and learn if you aren't being a respectful and polite member.


Screen Delay

WHAT IS IT

Screen delay has, and will most likely always, affect dressage.

Screen delay is the reason that in a championship you may look ahead when in reality, you are in 3rd place.

It is also the reason you see yourself so far ahead, and others so far behind in dressage.

Due to SSO's game servers being over 10 years old, there is quite a high level of lag and delay compared to other games of this nature. When SSO eventually updates the servers, there will be no need for the methods of gaps and alignment as things will look as they are.

It is almost like two different worlds between a commander and rider screen.

HOW IT AFFECTS DRESSAGE

Arena timing is talking about alignment within partner, or multiline moves.

WHAT AFFECTS ARENA TIMING
Go Timing
Veering
Corners
Alignment
TIMING EXAMPLES
GOOD TIMING : Partners or multiple lines meet at points in the arena at the same time on the commander's screen.
BAD TIMING : Partners or multiple lines meet at points in the arena late on the commander's screen.

Go timing is the timing in which the go is called from the commander, to when the riders start and finish the move
WHAT AFFECTS GO TIMING
Go Callings (approximately 1.5 seconds of delay)
TIMING EXAMPLES
GOOD TIMING : The commander calls moves slightly too early to counteract the delay in go-timing
BAD TIMING : The commander calls moves on time, or late, which causes riders to look out of time, or be in the wrong areas.

The faster the rider is moving, the farther the delay from them to another horse or player. Each gait has a set different delay
WHAT AFFECTS SPEED
How fast you are going
What activity you are preforming
TIMING EXAMPLES
GOOD MANAGEMENT : Rider knows there is a 1 horse delay at trot, so they keep up there gap or alignemnt to stay in sync
BAD MANAGEMENT: Rider is confused about the set gap for the trot, so they continue with what looks good on their screen.

When a rider halts, screen delay causes them to appear as still moving for 2.5 seconds after they halt on their screens.

WHAT AFFECTS HALTING

Proximity to other riders

Walking to avoid crashing

TIMING EXAMPLES

GOOD TIMING : The rider walks on pre, and halts Nose to Tail when the second rider in front of them halts.

BAD TIMING : RIder continues to trot, and crashes into leader, the spacial awareness of the moving pieces for a halt not there.

When a ride pivots, or makes a sharp turn, they will see themself finished prior to others

WHAT AFFECTS PIVOTING

Where in the arena

How close they are to the commander

TIMING EXAMPLES

GOOD TIMING : Rider finishes pivot that stands strait until the delay ends

BAD TIMING : The rider continues to turn, which overshoots them into doing an improper pivot.

Because of delays, the typical arena markings (circle meter points, or quadrants) will be seen at different points by the rider and commander

WHAT AFFECTS ARENA MARKINGS

The delay in hitting the dots in time or out of time

Veering

TIMING EXAMPLES

GOOD TIMING : The commander warns riders of where they need to turn/ hit before they come near it. Plan and prepare. Riders pass point early on their screen, and commanders see the movement as in time.

BAD TIMING : The commander warns riders of where they need to turn/ hit before they are coming at it. The instructor lacks a plan causing the riders to hit the point late or out of time.

GAIT DELAYS

WALKING DELAY

At the walk, there is about a half-horse delay. We use the Nose to Tail gap to maintain spacing. On your screen, you will appear about half a horse ahead of everyone else.

TROT DELAY

At the trot, there is about a one-horse delay. We use the Back of Saddle gap to maintain spacing. On your screen, you will appear about a horse-length ahead of everyone else.

CANTER DELAY

At the canter, there is about a two-horse delay. We use the halfway inside gap to maintain spacing. On your screen, you will appear about two horse lengths ahead of everyone else.

Understanding the delays and differences within dressage can help us truly unlock your full potential.

You may have memorized a dictionary, but that doesn't mean you are elite

Truly understanding the arena, gaps, timing, and most importantly screen delay will bring you to that full potential.

IN COUNT AND IN TIME

The phrases 'in count and 'in time' are phrases TRR likes to use to describe how you appear on the commander's screen.

In count refers to how you follow the commander's calling. When the commander uses our commanding method, it is quite a rhythmic saying. Do you follow appropriately, stay in good timing, and in beat with the other riders? Take a dodge for example, do you do the second curl over 'in time' and 'in count' with the rest of the line? Does it look neat and smooth, and properly follow the commanders structure and callings?

SCREEN DELAY IN FUNCTIONS

Screen delay is talked about so much, but we never talk about it actively counteracting it in the functions of dressage.

The first step to being able to work around screen delay is understanding not only how it affects dressage, but when.
Screen delay gets worse with many factors such as your location to SSO game servers, updates, the population where your practice is, and so on.
Understanding all of this will help with your understanding of delay.

There is no way to fully and truly master screen delay, as it is an ever-changing and growing problem but we can get very close by understanding these factors.

A great way to counteract screen delay would be to host practices on quiet servers at times when the arena won't be flooded.

Hosting a practice on a server like Night Star (NA) or Hazy Galaxy (NA) at 9:00 at night will pretty much guarantee worse screen delay, as opposed to a practice hosted at 7:00 on a server like Pumpkin Meadow (NA).

It's all a game of strategy.

If you want to learn more about screen delay you can always join us in The Riding Rendezvous server of weekly clinics about topic like screen delay, or gaps and alignment


lag

Lag and screen delay go hand in hand. Screen delay is solely the game servers, whereas lag is more of an individual problem. Full servers can lag, and lag can be a part of screen delay, but screen delay is not lag.

WHAT CAUSES AND AFFECTS LAG

- Wifi connection
- Internal computer power
- Heavy RAM usage
- Amount of computer storage
- Computer systems/ conversion layers

LAG PREVENTION TIPS

The main reason you may experience lag is the quality of your Wi-Fi connection.
Simply, a router sends out signals from an antenna. These radio waves can be blocked and get weaker the further you are from the router. Plugging directly into a router or switch with an ethernet cable will eliminate this problem.

The internal power of your computer can also affect your game speeds. Using a lower-end computer can substantially impact how sharp your game is.
The amount of graphic cores your computer has will affect how fast and at what quality your computer can process the game.

As your computer storage fills up, it begins to load the RAM with the tasks that internal storage should be handling, this can slow down your machines in moment processers.
A safe amount of free storage is anywhere from 70 - 100 GBs.
Most apps require a basic amount of storage to be free, so when you drop below what most 'heavy' applications consider safe, your computer will get super slow and very laggy.
The best way to keep your machine clean is to use programs like CleanMyMac or CleanMyPC which will on command delete any large unused or old files. We recommend running said programs every few weeks to keep your computer in top shape
RAM stands for Random Access Memory. This is a function that lets your computer store information and data in the immediate tense. Such as hitting the keys to affect your screen and how fast it turns with you in dressage. Using programs like CleanMyMac, and CleanMyPC will clear up your RAM as well, it will even alert you when you are on heavy RAM usage or have close to dangerous levels of storage left.

Depending on your operating system, SSO will struggle to run.
The safe option is to current on all updates, however, we know that computers cannot update past a certain point, at that point, it is crucial to follow the rest of these tips.
It is also important to keep in mind that if you are a Mac player on an M1 machine or newer, your computer will be working overtime to run the rosetta conversion layers. SSO Is programmed to run on machines using intel chips (what was in old Macs and is on PCs and Windows computers). Keeping extra tabs closed is a must to ensure your computer can process and handle SSO, especially in this circumstance

→ Gaps & Alignment ←

PURPOSE

Due to screen delay and lag, you must always keep a different spacing, or alignment, within your line. In practice or routine, a line is expected to maintain consistent gaps and alignment without an instructor reminding the team. This webpage is going to cover how and when to adjust or shift your gap or alignment.

Riders use gaps to maintain spacing throughout a line, routine, or pattern. With no gaps or alignment, the line would have uneven distances between the riders. A gap is the spacing between you, and the rider in front of you on your screen. Due to screen delay, you do not appear both in time and in proper positioning to your commander.

One Horse Gap (OH)
There is about a one-horse distance between you and the person in front of you. This gap is quite rare but is primarily used for circles, splits and merges, and waterfall moves.

Half Horse Gap (HH)
There is about a half-horse distance between you and the person in front of you. This gap is also quite uncommon but is primarily used for circles, splits and merges, and waterfall moves.

Nose to Tail Gap (NTT)
You are nose-to-tail with the person in front of you, although there should be no pixels touching. This gap is mostly used for walking and standing at a halt. This gap is super versatile and very important to know.

Back of Saddle Gap (BOS)
You should have the tip of your horse's nose touching the saddle of the person in front of you's saddle. This gap is used for trotting.

Halfway Inside Gap (HI)
You are halfway inside the person in front of you, you can see this by your horse legs coming through the stomach of the person in front of you. This is used for cantering.

Fully Inside (FI)
Your horse's head, legs, and stomach should be fully aligned inside of the person 'in front' of you. This gap is used for cantering, extended cantering, and galloping, along with other very specific moves.

PURPOSE

ONE HORSE
When you turn you camera you should see a substantial distance between yourself and the person in front of you.
HALF HORSE
When you turn your camera you should appear about 1 dot spacing behind the person in front of you.
NOSE TO TAIL
Your horse's nose should be just barely hitting the person in front of your tailbow.
BACK OF SADDLE
Your horse's nose should be 'sniffing' and touching its nose to the saddle of the person in front of you.
HALFWAY INSIDE
When you go to turn your camera you should see your horse legs coming out of the stomach of the person in from of you.
FULLY INSIDE
Your hair, skin, arms, and animations should be inside of each other, almost in sync.

ADJUSTMENTS

Over time, due to lag differences in speed, you may start to fall behind. This is known as a "falling gap," which is the distance that grows between you and the rider in front of you. If you don't keep up your spacing, you will lose time and alignment with the rider in front of you. Below is a video that demonstrates what a falling gap looks like.

Although in a perfect world, our gaps and alignments would maintain perfection, they do not, and thus it is crucial to pick the proper time and place to adjust our gaps and alignments.

WHEN TO ADJUST
During straightaway riding.
During gait shifting moves (extend the shifted gait to catch up, or to fall behind), or
After finishing a move.

WHEN NOT TO ADJUST
During any move set being called.
Belts.
Merges and Splits.
Corners, or
On any sort of curl-over or curving move (a faster gait will change your trajectory).

GAP CORRECTING METHODS

With the knowlegde of gaps, and gait specific delays, we need to counteract this 'falling' by continuing to adjust our gaps. Here are our 3 adjusting methods.

Quater Strides

(Catching-Up Method)

The term quarter strides can be applied to truly any gait. As the main gait in dressage is a trot, the next gait up is a canter, but this works at the walk to trot, or canter up to an extended canter as well.
For this method, you will hit your gait increasing key (either up arrow or W key) and then immediately come back to your prior speed by hitting your speed decrease key (either down arrow or S key). This extremely fast up-and-down motion can be seen as about a quarter of a canter stride (hence the name), or a small hop from gait to gait.

Gait Jumping

(Slowing Down Method)

The term gait hopping refers to slowly tapping your gait speed keys (W & S, or up and down arrows) up and down to create a hopping-type move. Within TRR, we would prefer riders gait hop as opposed to wiggling. This method can be seen as a reverse of quarter strides and will slow you down, by dropping gaits, rather than speed you up by increasing your gait.

Wiggling

(Slowing Down Method)

The term wiggling refers to gently tapping your directional keys (A & D, or left and right arrows) back and forth to slow yourself down. Within TRR, we would prefer riders walk as opposed wiggling. Wiggling, if done incorrectly, can push riders off their assigned line, or encourage veering. This is a more advanced method, as it takes a much for skillful hand and understanding of the arena. Wiggling is however a great method for minor adjustments. We recommend wiggling to those intermediate+.
The reason you would use the adjusting methods above, as opposed to endless cantering or continual walking is to provide more control to the riders. Any gap can be so quickly misadjusted, so keeping in mind all the fundamentals of screen delay and lag will benefit you greatly.

THE GAP CHECKLIST

You should be constantly asking yourself these questions. Although it won't feel habitual at first, you will eventually gain comfort with this checklist, and how to check off the boxes.

Am I following the alignment judging guide?
Do I know where I am in the arena?
Have I asked my commander for feedback?
Am I adjusting during my open windows?
Am I confident with what I am being told to do?
Am I communicating with my line?

Feel free to refer back to this list if you are ever in a mid-practice break and are looking to check in with yourself.

ALIGNMENTS

In the same way, you use gaps to counteract screen delay, you also use alignments. An alignment is a way of aligning with others within your line during specific moves or arena shapes. A gap is a spacing kept by each individual, whereas an alignment is needed for an entire line.

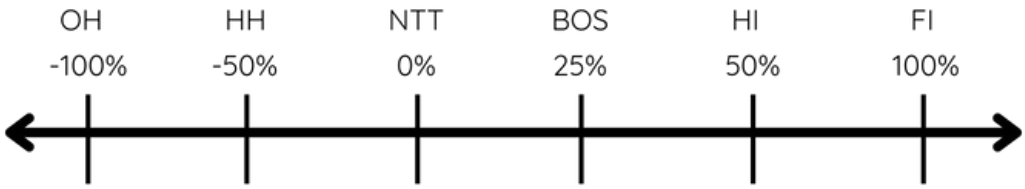
GAP AND ALIGNMENT MATH

Think of a gap or alignment as a percentage of your closeness to others around you.

Adding or subtracting from that percentage will move you into a different position, and when you add back that amount it will put you back to the prior number.

When you split you are cutting your gap in half.

Say you are trotting in a BOS gap (about 25% in closeness to the other horses) and you split into half-horse gaps, (-50%) it is important you maintain that 25 percent so when you remerge you fall back into a proper BOS gap (25%).



MERGING/ SPLITTING ALIGNMENT

Just like stated above, when you split you will keep the gap you are left with after a split, so when you remerge, you fall back into the same gaps.

Trotting in BOS gaps you split into multiple lines at the wall, you would keep a half-horse gap.
Whether you need to wiggle or utilize quarter strides to manage your alignment, that is on an individual basis, but for the most part, you should be able to work from what you have.

If you have good gaps in one line, you should have good gaps the more, and further you split.
Just make sure to keep track of your alignment.

COMB ALIGNMENT

You sit about one horse ahead of your lead.

How far ahead you sit depends on the gait you are going, following the same pattern as regular line work. Half horse at the walk, one horse at the trot, two horse at the canter.

This will make you look next to all the people in line on the commander's screen due to screen delay.

you have good gaps, when you enter the comb you should fall into the right alignment during the comb. If you have good comb alignment, when you collapse back into line, you should have good gaps.

TIER ALIGNMENT

You fall into comb alignment with the person next to you.

You will be about one horse ahead of the person next to you, and very close up to the person in front of you.

This will make it look like you are in a 'double comb'.

A tier typically takes place along the outsides of the dark on the mid or center.

WATERFALLS

You fall into the windows of the around you.

This is by keeping up the gap designated per gait (NTT, BOS, HI) with the person across from you.

It will leave you looking staggered and in between the windows of the two people opposite you.

This is called windows, just like you see in dance; ballet specifically.

When you emerge you should fall back into line perfectly, just like with a regular split.

FRONT SLANT ALIGNMENT

A slant is a 45 degree turn. On your screen, you want to look directly next to the person 'infont' of you (in the regular line). This will cause you to look one horse behind on the commanders screen, giving that effect of a slant.

BACK SLANT ALIGNMENT

A back slant is a 135-degree turn, flipping the line order into a reverse. On your screen, you want to look directly next to the person 'in font' of you (in the regular reversed line). This will cause you to look one horse behind on the commanders screen, giving that affect, just on a of a slant

UNSPOKEN ALIGNMENTS

SPLITTING/ MERGING
WATERFALL
TIER
COMB
SLANTS


Timing

GAITSHIFTING

Understanding screen delay is the key to learning and understanding dressage. As previously mentioned, this delay plagues dressage, hence our method to gaps, alignment and timing, and now gait shifting.
Gaitshifting is the timing and management of how and when to change your gait for moves and arena shapes
Understanding how to position yourself for gait-shifting moves is a skill that you need to learn, despite the many go's a commander may call, they cannot be sure that you will fully understand and fall into the right count and time.

GAIT TRANSITION TIMING

When doing moves such as Bee Curl or Triple Curl, there are multiple gaits within the same move, but there are not multiple go's.

You always transition to your next gait once you are completely straight.
In the past, you have had to transition on the slant lines before ending your curl due to SSO gait changing delay, but as of recently, you can gait shift at the appropriate time.
If you are to go on the improper count for our gait change, the line will be out of sync in the gait category.
Riders may start the curl off altogether but will finish at different times due to some transitioning late vs early.

DIRECTION TRANSITION TIMING

You always should be transitioning to the next part of a move going a different direction a full two steps after you are completely straight (count two beats of walk, trot, or canter steps).
You can shift your camera down and count '1, 2'...
Using two steps gives the neatest results throughout your transition
The change in direction (if done incorrectly) can put your line out of sync and count, so using the two-step best method is the best way to maintain our line.

COMBINED TIMING : GAITSHIFTING AND DIRECTION CHANGING TIMING

When combining the two you get a beautiful and interesting result.
You should change your gait and THEN your direction.
You would transition to the next gait once you are straight, and to the next direction after two steps.
Think of it like stacking the two, one after another.

COMBINED TIMING : GAITSHIFTING AND DIRECTION CHANGING TIMING

At meet timing is most relevant in partner moves and revolves.
As opposed to your commander calling a go for the line, and risking ruing the previous timing and alignment, you must manage your own 'at meet timing'.
At meet timing should be done when you come saddle to saddle with your 'partner'.

Curl Overs & Betting

CURL OVERS

You will notice that the different speeds at which you travel will affect the trajectory of your curl-over.
This is because the slower you are going, the less time it will take to turn.
This theory would also apply to other moves done at different gaits.
Below are the specific spacings per each gait for curl-overs.

WALK

At the walk, you should end up about a quarter of the way between 2 dotted lines

TROT

At the trot, you should end up halfway between 2 dot lines

CANTER

At the canter, you should end up on the line next to your original axis. The canter curl-over will put you fully to the next dot line.

BELTING

A belt is just a curl over at a wall point. It acts like a U-turn that reverses your direction and keeps you on a similar axis. A belt follows the same gait spacings as above just against a wall.
A belt would be used or called at the end of a dye, cut, comb, or slant.
You can think of a move like a waterfall as belting in odd/even line assignments

Keeping in mind these trajectory changes is super important when you plan to do any sort of curving. This can even be seen in curls.
A canter curl, always takes longer, and is larger than a walk curl


Corners

CORNERS : HOW TO

In our method, there is only one recognized method for corners. This is called an L corner.

An L corner is where you approach the corner and hit your key until you are straight, causing a 90-degree L-like shape.

Although there are many other methods for corners, we believe that L corners at the neatest-looking.

The timing of when to hit your key changes per gait. As per previous pages, gait delay will affect your timing at the corners.

WALK CORNERS

For a walk corner, you are going to transition once your front hooves hit the 'beginning; of the dot, where the light begins to spill off the main center of the dot.

TROT CORNERS

For a trot corner, you are going to transition once you are about two hoofbeats from the 'beginning' of the dot. This can also be measured by your horse's nose hitting the 'beginning' of the dot, which is about two hoofbeats away.

CANTER CORNER

For a canter corner, you are going to transition once you are a little less than halfway between your corner dot, and the dot of the letter before turning your corner.

CORNERS WITHIN THE ARENA

Corners do not necessarily need to be at each end of the arena. You may use our system for corner or turn timing at any dot ior meter point in the arena. This method simply works for and L turn within the arena from dot to dot.

Ignoring, Swaps, & Global

=Using the ignore and global store features can be an awesome way to enhance your routines.
Because of the screen delay, lag, and navigating your screen, timing ignores is extremely difficult.
Below are our tips and tricks for ignoring and global store

WHY AND WHEN

The ignore and global store features are mostly seen in routines.
The usage for global stores is typically enterances and exist so you fade out. You may have seen but when you press the hot key K it opens the global store and you slowly disappear.
This is supposed to be so you can browse the store in 'peace' but this is a great advantage to dressage.
The ignore feature is typically used to ignore players that may be annoying, or disrupting your SSO experience.
If done strategically it can help you trade places within routines.
For example, if you are trotting inline, and you ignore your commander, you can then move to another part of the arena for a separate shape.

HOW TO IGNORE

STEP 1
Press the HOT KEY F and then switch to the ignore tab. You can then move this window to the top right-hand corner of your screen.
STEP 2
Your commander can put a '.' in chat that you will then click to ignore from the drop-down menu.
STEP 3
When you ignore another player it takes about 7 seconds for them to disappear. If you point your camera at them. It will make them disappear faster.
STEP 4
When you ignore you must go into the global store for the full 7 seconds until they disappear.
STEP 5
Exit the global store after 7 seconds and get into the position you need to be in.
STEP 6
Unignore your commander and reenter the global store until the go is called for your next move.
STEP 7
On go Exit the global store with the HOT KEY K and continue to your next movement.

SCREEN SET-UP

You will move your ignore window to the top right-hand corner of your screen.

When you are ready to unignore you have quick access to the window whilst it is out of the way and won't disrupt your dressage.

It is also important to note that you will have to strategically move your mouse across the screen to get there, but it is definitely doable.

HORSE SWAPS

Swapping horses mid-routine is a super creative way to mix things up for only a small number of riders

Changing horses requires you to follow an in-depth and intense process.
Make sure to follow the ignore steps 1 - 5 above then you can call for a pickup to your home stable.

To start, you need to make sure your home stable is super close to the trailer to cut our running time.
We recommend Tailtop Village for your home stable during routine work.
There is only about a 5-second run from the trailer to the stable.

You are going to want to have the horse you are swapping to already tacked up and at the very front of your stable ready to be mounted. If you need to change over leg wraps or a saddle, remove it from your first horse while running, and change it to the second horse while running back to the trailer.

When you get back to the arena make sure to unignore then go back into the global store, then continue to the rest of your routine.

This whole process should take about 1 minute if done properly.


Hating

Although halting may seem to be straightforward there are a lot of small details that work themselves into a neat and clean halt.

TYPES OF BASIC HALTS

There are 3 primary types of halts.
(STANDARD) HALT SET

A standard halt set is called where all riders walk on 'pre', and when the 'go' is called the lead halts, then the second in line, third in line, and so forth, walking up to a Nose to Tail gap.

IMMEDIATE HALT SET

An immediate halt set is called where everyone will rapidly tap their keys until they stop completely. When you pick up your gaits from your immediate halt set you should fall back into the gaps you had prior to halting.

X SET

X set is just like it sounds. All riders will hit x on the go and do a sliding stop or a rear. This is the best way to do a completely instant halt.

NOSE TO TAIL LAT

Nose-to-tail flat is when you walk, and then stagger side to side of your commander.
This results in the entire line standing side by side.

The alignment for this is boots brushing. None of your characters or horses should be touching others.
About one horse facing forward, or a character should be able to fit in between you and the other riders.

SLANTED HALTS

Just like discussed on other pages, during movement, you need to counteract screen delay with gaps and alignment. However, when there is no movement, there is no delay.

As it looks on your screen, is how it will look on other people's screens.

You should halt, again, with one horse spacing between you, but take into account you do not want to be next to each other.

Your horse's front hooves should be hitting the back hooves of the person in front of you.

All of these concepts can be applied to any sort of halts found within our dictionary!

You can think of halting the same way as any other move, it takes time and calculation, and just because there is no movement for the move, you must still account for the screen delay and timing.

TRR hosts tons of open lessons on concepts like this so feel free to join us then, as well as utilize our live website chat feature.


Circles

STARTING A CIRCLE

Circles and moves on circles are some of the hardest things to master in dressage.
Not only learning, but understanding circles takes so much time and energy.
Starting a circle

Entering a circle begins with everyone, or certain individuals following a lead to a designated point in the arena, following the curve onto a circle.

There are a few commonly used points such as the...

- CENTER LINES
- MID LINES
- DYE LINES

There are so many other ways to enter circles, but these are just some main ones

METER POINTS

4 circles are commonly used.

5 meter (1 dot away from X)
10 meter (2 dots away from X)
15 meter (3 dots away from X)
20 meter (4 dots away from X)

These points can be used to help you make sure you stay on the proper sized circle.

4 other circles are less commonly used.

2.5 meter (.5 dot away from X)
7.5 meter (1.5 dots away from X)
12.5 meter (2.5 dots away from X)
17.5 meter (3.5 dots away from X)

These are some much more exact measurements, and calculating where to hit can be done by using the dark dots.

CURVING

'perfect' circle is when your curve from dot to dot is round. A lot of people will either slant from dot to dot, or they will hit the square meter points then turn.

CIRCLE ALIGNMENT

Circle alignment is very tricky and using both your camera and your understanding of gaits and adjustments is important.

EVEN CIRCLE ALIGNMENT

When there is an even number of people in a circle, you want to look like you are moving in pairs

The delay here is different as you are curved. The way you would counteract this is by being slightly ahead.

The best, place to check your alignment is at every dot. When your back hooves are leaving the dot, your partner's front hooves should be just about to touch the dot.
Make sure you check your alignment every single time you hit a dot, and on larger circles, you can use the larger dark points and pebbles to check your alignment (make sure it is a marker you can see from far away, like on a 20 meter).

ODD CIRCLE ALIGNMENT

When there is an odd number of people in a circle, you want to look like you are in between the triangle the two other members of the circle are making. We always recommended learning with even numbers as odd-numbered circles are much harder.

The best, place to check your alignment is at every dot. When you hit the dot, the two others around you should make a triangle with you.

Keeping this alignment is much harder so checking your alignment more frequently is important. Checking it every 3 - 5 seconds is ideal.

GAP ADJUSTMENTS

On a circle, you NEVER wiggle.
Although that may seem like the best way to adjust because because you don't change gaits, it is highly ineffective.

When you wiggle you deform the shape you are in. If you're in a straightaway and need a minor adjustment it is a lovely tool, but on a circle, the shape is the number 1 most important thing.

So you will just be gait hopping, or using quarter strides.

Make sure to adjust in the moments before the dot, you should be almost straight when you hit the dots, and you will accelerate less on a curve.

CIRCLES OFF X

You will notice that all circles follow a pattern:
- X & 4 DOTS -

This pattern can be replicated at any point in the arena.
You need to 'create' and X point, and then decide your 4 dots.
The 8 meter point can also be translated to any point in the arena.

These X and meter points can be translated anywhere in the arena.

When learning how to stay on track you can angle your camera at your X point as an anchor or have your commander of a traffic cone stay there as a guide.

Here are some examples of a 5, 10, and 15-meter circles.

You can always count out the meter points in dots.


Pinwheels

A pinwheel is like a circle + comb alignment; it is a multispoke circle with a curved comb alignment. It is considered to be one of, if not the most, difficult dressage move.

WHY IS IT HARD

A pinwheel is difficult because of the insane amount of precision the alignment takes.

Not only are you thinking about your perfect circle curve, but you're also thinking about comb alignment and screen delay.
All of that put together makes a pinwheel so difficult.

TYPES OF PINWHEELS

4 Spoke Pinwheel
Delayed Pinwheel
2 Spoke Pinwheel
Slant Aligned Pinwheel
Clock/ collapsing Pinwheel
Center Anchored Pinwheel

ANCHORS

As briefly described above, the alignment of a pinwheel is like a stacked curved comb alignment. You are comb-aligned with the person next to you.

STANDARD ALIGNMENT

The anchor (walking) is aligned with the person on the other side of the circle.
The second person (trotting) is one horse ahead of the anchor.
The third person (cantering) is one horse ahead of the second person, and two horses head the anchor
(If you add a third person) The fourth person (extended cantering) is one horse ahead of the third person, and 3 horses ahead of the anchor.
This whole pattern can be repeated in any direction.

SLANT ALIGNED PINWHEEL

For a slant-aligned pinwheel, you follow the standard alignment but add an extra half a horse.
The alignments listed above make you look directly beside each other, adding a half horse onto each alignment will cause a forward slant.

DELAYED PINWHEEL

For a delayed pinwheel, you follow the standard alignment but subtract an extra half a horse. The alignments listed above make you look directly beside each other, subtracting a half horse of each alignment you took a look behind and delayed.

CLOCK/ COLLAPSING PINWHEEL

For a collapsing pinwheel, you begin with a regular pinwheel and then slowly have your designed spoke move up one more gait tab, and move onto the circle spacers.
So slowly, your second line will fall into the gaps of the first line, when you reach saddle to saddle with the second spoke, you can fall into comb alignment


The Arena

ARENA BASICS

X is the brightest dot and has a small dark dot in the middle.
This is the dead center of the arena and is super important to understanding the rest of the arena as a whole.
The main arena letters are:
A, C, B, & E
These letters are on the midline and centerline.
K, F, H, & M
Are the letters on the dye lines.
V, R, P, & S
Are secondary letters.

Two dark lines go through both middles of the arenas, these are known as the midline and centerline.

Although they both go through the middle of the arena, they have separate names to differentiate the two.
These lines are used for markers and cuts.

The lines are the main lines that run across the arena horizontally.
Known as the:

1/8 line (trot line)
1/4 line
1/2 line
3/4 line (wide tier)

These lines work on both sides of the arena and are like using the arena letters, just on the short sides.

DYE LINES

When you dye, you cut across the arena diagonally.

When you do so you always want to make sure you do a legal dye.

LEGAL vs. ILLEGAL
Whenever you do a dye, it should make a Z shape across the arena and reverse your direction.

Within TRR we like to say that you should be going to a corner, and then from a corner. This means there are never any tight or angular turns, and that everything follows a nice and linear path.

An illegal dye takes very weird and sharp turns where ou go into the dye the 'wrong way' and then end in a sharp turn.

ARENA LINES (VERTICAL)

When in the arena, you will notice a dotted pattern.
These dots signify the different numbers of lines within the arena.
You can always do your cuts, combs, and other functions based on just the arena letters, but the meter line systems will bring a more in-depth understanding of your dressage.

You will notice there are two sets of each line. The lines are labeled 1 through 5 and can refer to parts of the arena in more detail. If you are trotting towards B/E, you are below B/E; if you are trotting away from B/E, you are above B/E.
The term for calling this would be like so 'cut above B1' or 'Cut below E5'.
These will be most handy for routine work and more complex shapes and cuts.
You will not need numbered lines on the short sides of the arena as you have the secondary arena lines.

SLANT LINES

The 45-degree lines cut diagonally across the arena.

These can go left, right, back, or forward.

There are specific tips for slants and recognition, listed on another page, but for the most part, slants are quite simple, except when you are at slant math.

Always remember that a slant + a slant equals straight.

ARENA QUADRANTS

The arena is broken into 'quadrants'.

These breaks are like pizza slices and help divide the arena.

When building a routine, you want to make sure you have moves and shapes in every single part of the arena, for the most unique and interesting routine.

All quadrants are divided between dye or mid lines.

BASIC ARENA PATTERN

The lines going down the arena hit through the bright dots.
The bright dots are the main lines we use going through the arena, but it is also important to recognize the spacing in between.
The spacings can be hard to see from above, but on the ground are super visible.
You will see the whole arena is a pattern of pebbles, dots and spacings.
You will see that there are 2 pebble lines in between each dotted line.

Those pebble lines represent the 1/4th between dots.

And the tiny dark dots going down the middle between the two dotted lines represent the middle, so 1/2.

These spacers are not exacts, but rather important markers to understand.

Feel free to watch our comprehensive course on the arena.

There are so many tips and tricks when it comes to visualizing the arena.

These are just some of the basics.

Coming up with your own tips, tricks, and sayings is what will help you the most in the long run.

You can also take a look at our resources page to print some flash cards, or even build your own dressage binder.

At the end of the day, this si for your own personal growth, so make it fun, and enjoyable in anyway you see fit

METER POINTS

Each dotted line is 1 meter away from itself, anything in between can be represented as a fraction, percent, or decimal of the meter.

Take the pebble tracks for example.
That would be .25 meters.
1 meter is about 3 feet, so you can think of them as being only somewhat distanced apart.

This can be applied to any point in the arena, except circles, which take on the size they would naturally be (in real riding, the circle sizes stated are about proportional to the SSO arena.

Learning the arena meters, pebble tracks, and lines will most definitely take some time, but why not start now?

TRR hosts weekly open lessons, and anyone is more than encouraged to come.

Star Stable dressage is on of those things where there is no one way to do things, and that's what the minimalistic method tries to highlight.