

# The Role of the Leader

Before you start, check your pony is wearing the correct tack.

Check your own dress for safety.

**Lead the pony from the shoulder**, one hand near the lead rein coupling, other hand holding the rein correctly looped into the hand, **NOT** wound around it.

**Never be in front of the pony eyes**, always encourage the pony to walk forward.

## Warm-up:

- Lead the pony around the arena so as he can loosen up without the rider.
- Practice transitions halt > walk > halt > walk > trot.
- Accustom the pony to your voice commands.
- To any new equipment being used for that session.

## Preparation before mounting:

- Check girth.
- Check saddle cloth has not slipped on to withers risking giving the pony a sore back through too much pressure.
- Check reins are correctly fastened on the headcollar if the instructor requires.
- Reins are not too long, if so ask to change.
- Check stirrups are even and at correct length for your rider if possible.
- Cross stirrups over in front of saddle until called forward to mounting block.

## Mounting

- Bring pony to the block when called, swapping sides to lead on off side in

good time before arriving at the mounting block.

- Try to halt close and parallel to the block.
- Stand in front of animal, holding firmly but not too tightly onto the headcollar rope, and in a position to be able to see your rider mount.

## Dismounting

- Stand in front of animal, as for mounting, check both feet are out of stirrups before your rider dismounts.

## Leading

- The leader is entirely responsible for the horse/pony and must be alert at all times
- Stay at or as near to the shoulder as possible.
- Listen carefully to the instructions from the Instructor.
- Be prepared to halt the pony quickly if the side helper asks you to.
- Make turns and transitions as smooth as possible.
- Keep rhythm of walk even but active.
- Trot should be slow and steady.
- Keep distance between horses - can a pony slip in between you and the one in front? This is a safe distance. Be aware in case the pony in front slips or suddenly stops.
- Always keep hold of the lead rein during adjustments.

**Never, Never Pull Or Drag The Pony**  
*(The Instinct is for the animal to put the brakes on.)*  
**Think of encouraging the pony forward.**