

## Explanation of Skill Levels

**Skill Level 1** A level one rider can ride at the walk, hold the reins, and maintain a basic position with assistance. This rider can assist with grooming the horse.

**Skill Level 2** A level two rider lengthen and shorten reins, walk and halt the horse using correct aids. They can perform balancing exercises, make large circles and simple changes of direction. At level two the rider is beginning to perform different positions, such as 2-point and posting with assistance. Rider can lead horse with assistance.

**Skill Level 3** A level three rider has developed the ability to trot and maintain balance seated or in 2-point with support. This rider can ride independently at the walk with a spotter. Rider can name parts of their saddle and tack.

**Skill Level 4** A level four rider is developing the ability to post at the trot in rhythm with the horse. Rider is independent at the walk while posting and can groom without assistance. This rider can perform school figures at the walk.

Levels 1-4 ride in the **Novice Groups** and require the assistance of leadwalkers.

**Skill Level 5** A level five rider is developing independence at the trot. It is important to for a Level Five rider to understand “ring etiquette” (including spacing in a group) as well as the ability to perform school figures at the trot, transitions, and half halts. Rider can tack their horse. This rider will begin to learn how to warm up their horse at the walk and trot.

**Skill Level 6** A level six rider is able to increase and decrease speed at the trot. This is an important step in preparing to canter. Rider is developing soft hands and riding with light contact. Rider can perform lateral movements (leg yields, spirals) at walk, and trot without stirrups on the lunge line. This rider can bridle their horse.

**Skill Level 7** A level seven rider is cantering on the lunge line with confidence and the ability to maintain a correct position. Rider can trot independently without stirrups, and begin to canter on lunge without stirrups. This rider should know their tack, and be able to adjust their stirrups and girth on their own. Knowledge of appropriate warm up of horse at the walk and trot is expected.

Levels 5-7 ride in intermediate level groups.

**Skill Level 8** A level eight rider is cantering off of the lunge line with control and confidence, and performing 20m circles. This rider can canter independently without stirrups. This rider should be able to walk, trot, canter on any horse in the program.

**Skill Level 9** A level nine rider is developing and understanding of influencing the horse’s way of going. This rider is working on polishing skills in their area of interest (jumping, dressage, western pleasure, etc).

Levels 8-9 ride in the advanced level groups.