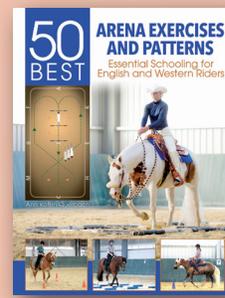


# Zigzag Ground Poles

With this exercise, you can check whether your horse is on the aids. You can use this exercise to train your eye for the most suitable course and practice riding tight turns as well as riding straight and centered over obstacles. You are practicing riding an even serpentine at walk and trot (in combination with voltes).



## 50 Best Arena Exercises and Patterns

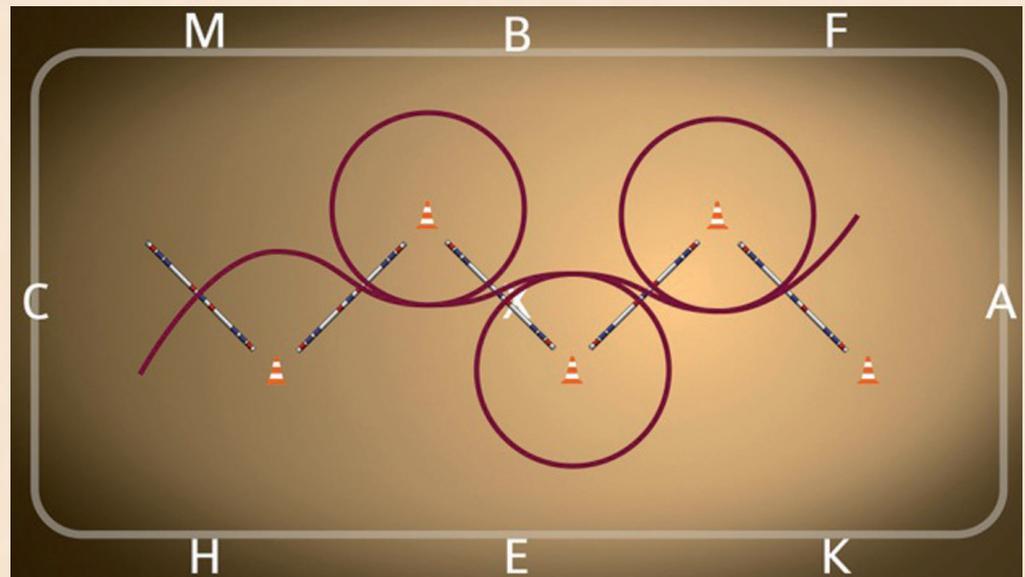
by ANN KATRIN QUERBACH

### What Do I Need?

4–6 ground poles.

### Setting Up

Position the ground poles in a zigzag pattern along the centerline. The poles should be at 90-degree angles to one another.



### How Does This Exercise Work?

- (1) In this exercise, you'll ride a serpentine on the centerline for the length of the arena. Use the ground poles to orient yourself; ride straight and centered over them.
- (2) Under no circumstances should you ever work the turns using only your rein aids. Shift your weight as appropriate and drive forward at the same time. Through every loop, position the horse in the direction of travel and through every change of direction, ride a couple of straight steps at the walk/trot.

**Tip:** Should your horse ever resist flexing in the desired direction, build in a volte, riding the circle until you have achieved the desired positioning.

### What Is the Horse Learning?

Bending and flexing through tight turns with regular changes of direction. To react quickly and with flexibility to the rider's aids. Enhanced concentration. Straightness in between the changes of direction.

### What Is the Rider Learning?

To look ahead in the turn. Straight and centered riding over obstacles. Bending and positioning/repositioning the horse. How to ride serpentes.

# Zigzag Ground Poles: Variation

## What Do I Need?

4–6 ground poles of equal length, 4–6 cones.

## Setting Up

Position the ground poles in a zigzag pattern on the centerline. In each corner formed by the ground poles, place a cone (see diagram p. 72).

## How Does This Exercise Work?

- (1) Begin by riding a serpentine up the centerline. Ride straight and centered over the poles.
- (2) Next, add in a volte around the cones. Ride a circle! Half of the volte is defined by the poles. Ride the second half of the circle in accordance with the first—make it even and round. Position the horse in the direction of the turn with the help of your weight aids. Drive the horse forward throughout the exercise in order to make sure he continues to work with his hindquarters.
- (3) As you change direction, ride a couple of straight steps at the walk/trot.

## What Is the Horse Learning?

Bending, flexion, and repositioning. Straightness and to track up strongly from behind.

## What Is the Rider Learning?

To divide the volte and train the gaze accordingly. Refinement of the aids. Bending and positioning. To ride both straight lines and serpentines.

## What to Do if...?

My horse is barging through his shoulder.

- Stay consistent with your aids. Double-check that your outside rein is not hanging. Position your outside leg in a guarding position on the horse's side and send him forward.

**Tip:** If you find you need to set a further boundary on the horse's outside body, you can use a short crop on the horse's outside shoulder.

We don't make it over the middle of the poles.

- Check your aids: Did you already have your goal in sight as you rode the prior turn? Are you looking sufficiently ahead? Are you distributing your weight as appropriate during the turns? Is either rein hanging? Or, are you holding too hard on both reins? Where are your legs positioned?

During the change of direction over the poles, my horse begins to get crooked.

- The changes of direction are too sudden for the horse—remember that you must include a step or two of straight walk or trot before you ask the horse for flexion in the new direction. Weight both seat bones evenly and maintain an even contact on both reins. Drive the horse forward sufficiently so that he tracks up with his hind legs.

The loops of my serpentine are uneven.

- Look ahead and give clear aids. Make this exercise a regular part of your daily schooling.

**Tip:** Position the ground poles close to a boundary (the arena wall or fence) and/or position more poles or cones as guides to the sections of the exercise.