

Snippet 4: See the Bend from the Top

The view from the top of the horse's shoulders and neck on the left is correct. This picture shows very subtle details which you need to train your eye to see when you are riding your own horse. Braiding helps bring the details into sharper focus, but it is not necessary. You can see these things if you simply believe that you can.

Look first to where the drawing of the shoulders fades away at the bottom. It is easy to imagine the rider's inside leg in the girth groove or "hinge" so that the bend of the entire spine originates there. Refer to the Snippet 3 on bending.

Next, look at the outside shoulder of the horse on the left. It is reaching around the inside shoulder because it travels farther on the circle line. It should be easy to imagine that the outside legs are carrying a little more weight than the inside legs. Notice too that the braids of the mane stay an equal distance away from the outer edge of the drawing all the way to the ears.

On the right the braids are closer from just in front of the base of the neck all the way to the ears on the outer line. Particularly note the 6th braid back from the ears on the right horse. That braid is almost twisted by the nuchal ligament under it in an effort to "make the turn". On the left at the poll, the flexion is a little more pronounced laterally. Thus, the ears both appear to be coming around the curve equally and are more nearly matching in where they point.

Look too, at the "tubular neck" shown on the left. This is the bulge of the muscle on the inside of the neck. It should bulge evenly as shown on the left from the poll area down into the base of the neck. The base of the neck is where the entire neck "plugs" into the front of the trunk of the horse. The base of the neck is a major point of connection. It must be kept in the middle of the shoulders by the rider's knees and thighs which mold or shape it back into alignment. The rider uses the aids only on the bulging side to do this. The aids on the opposite side momentarily are silent.

