



Centered Riding Inc.

Mind, Body and Horse

The Basics of Centered Riding

Centered Riding is an innovative way of expressing the classical principles of riding, using body awareness, centering, and imagery. Centered Riding encompasses all seats and styles of riding. It teaches a language that allows clearer communication between horse, rider, and instructor. Centered Riding was developed by Sally Swift, author of the best-selling book and videotapes, and is now taught by Centered Riding Instructors around the world.

Centered Riding is based on a knowledge of human and horse anatomy, balance, movement, and on understanding how the mind affects the body and how both affect the horse. It uses centering and grounding techniques from the oriental martial arts, along with body awareness, mental imagery and sports psychology. Through increasing body awareness, inhibiting old patterns, and replacing them with a more balanced, free, and coordinated use of self, both horse and rider can move more freely and comfortably, and develop their best performance.

The *Four Basics* of Centered Riding, as expressed by Sally Swift, are:

Soft Eyes - Encourage visual and physical awareness, better peripheral vision, and improved “feel.”

Breathing - Using the diaphragm and breathing correctly for better posture, relaxation, and energy.

Balance or Building Blocks - Aligns the riders body for improved balance, straightness, and ease of movement.

Centering - Using the center of balance, movement and control, located deep in the body, gives quiet strength, harmony and power, as in the oriental martial arts.

These fundamentals, along with *clear intent* for effective control, direction and use of aids, and *grounding* for stability and balance, promote freedom of movement, confidence and harmony between horse and rider, and can help in solving many problems.