

The Double Pattern Exercise

Set up two barrel patterns back to back. The purpose of this exercise is to require proper body position and quality movement from your horse as you circle the barrels in any variation you choose. You may circle barrels more than once, go all right, all left, mix it up, do a figure eight, transition in speed, etc. When you feel as though your horse is maintaining quality movement and body positioning, head toward your 1st barrel just as you would when making a run. If your horse recognizes "THE Pattern" and reverts to using his body incorrectly, correct his positioning immediately and continue on until you achieve quality movement again. The goal is to "sneak" the barrel pattern into the exercise, so that your horse learns to use his body properly and understand that what you're doing around the barrels applies to the actual pattern. As your horse progresses, add more speed and make it more obvious that you're doing the actual pattern. This helps "close the gap" between slow and fast work and helps reestablish more efficient ways of moving in the horse that has developed bad habits on the pattern.

A standard pattern measures 90 feet between the 1st and 2nd barrel and 105 feet from the 1st and 2nd to the 3rd barrel. Feel free to vary the size of the patterns for this exercise based on your personal preferences or arena size.

Keeping the 1st and 2nd barrels of each pattern closer together creates the opportunity for dynamic figure eights.

