

Horsemanship Levels explained from the viewpoint of OCHS:

Beginner = No real experience on or around horses. Little to no knowledge about tack, handling, or riding a horse. But want to learn and experience the wonderful world of horses!

Intermediate Beginner = Has been on or around horses several times. Could brush their own horse and saddle up with little guidance. Some knowledge of tack, handling, and riding a horse. Could steer and stay balanced at a walk. Just started riding a trot at this stage.

Advanced Beginner = Knows some tack terms and can tack up the horse up fairly well. Knows how to catch, lead, and tie a horse. Knows how to easily maneuver the horse at a walk, around obstacles. Knows how to trot and has some basic steering control, and is more balanced than unbalanced overall.

Beginner Intermediate = Knows how to safely handle the horse from the ground. Can tack the horse up. Has a good seat position, knows how to turn hindquarters and shoulders, knows direct and neck reining, can cue quietly into the trot and post the trot. Is starting to sit the trot without popping out of the saddle. Can cue for the canter / lope and ride a few strides in control.

Intermediate = Can perform basic ground work training by using lunging or a round pen. Can groom, tack, and warm up horse. Has fluid posting and sitting trot. Can cue for canter / lope in both directions. Can sidepass at a walk, pivot on shoulders and hindquarters, can open gates from horseback, can half pass at a walk and trot. Can start asking for collection.

Advanced intermediate = Can do ground work and keep the horses attention. During ground work; they can move the horse around obstacles at a walk, trot and canter. Can help the horse overcome fear of tarps, bags, etc. Can ride at the walk, trot, and canter / lope fluidly without become unbalanced. Can collect at a walk / trot. Starting collection into the canter. Can fluidly sidepass at a walk both directions over objects, fluidly half pass at a walk and trot, starting half pass at canter, pivot easily on shoulders and hindquarters. Has speed control at walk, trot, and canter.

Beginner Advanced = Does the above with quiet hands, solid seat, and correct, soft, cueing. Advancing movements and showing at in an event. Learning to use spurs and whips correctly. Understands horse behavior. Can cue flying lead changes at the canter. Can do transitions from halt to canter, or canter to halt. Can keep horse collected through transitions. Starting advanced maneuvers.

Intermediate Advanced = Does the above plus trains horses that haven't previously been trained. Can manage multiple horses in training. Has experience showing. Can cue alternating flying lead changes, has a start in many advanced maneuvers such as: spins, rollbacks, halfpass, sidepass, canter pirouette, piaffe, passage, and trick training.

Advanced = Knows the above, as well as instructs and shows professionally. Has trained multiple horses in varied events. Breeds and trains show specific. Can perform advanced maneuvers, as long as the horse is trained in those advanced maneuvers. Can ride almost any horse and make it look like the horse and rider have been riding fluidly for years.

The Avid Horseman or Woman = Constantly stays up to date with well-known and top trainers, continues learning from the horses themselves, and continues to pursue better horsemanship practices no matter what level their horsemanship falls under.

There are many skills that are unlisted. This is just a guideline to help OCHS understand where you are at currently so we can best help you advance your skills. When your skills advanced, your dreams become a reality. We would love to help you achieve your dreams.

Sincerely,

Kate Thomas with OCHS