

Training for Courage

by Paul Dufresne

Illustrations by Karen Clouston

CREATIVE PINWHEEL/BARREL PATTERNS

Some folks feel it is more difficult to get motivated to practice and train their horses when it's cold out, so I have decided to make some suggestions that could be done indoor or outdoor. Many of these suggested patterns can be done outside in winter as long as you ride according to the conditions.

The photo and diagrams are just ideas - you can manipulate things to suit yourself and your horse. I have provided descriptions and alternative options you could throw in there. You can easily go on such a course for hours, with all the variations and transitions in stop, back, walk, trot, canter and all the various lateral movements.

The arena is large here so I can set up courses like these and still train on the outside of the arena, developing various movements, then mix in running patterns of the pinwheels. Going around obstacles naturally creates opportunities to bend and supple a horse. Make sure they stay balanced (not falling in) when going around the obstacles by elevating the inside rein and engaging the hindquarter. The barrels themselves (the more the better) tend to help horses to be more upright as you change from bend to bend continuously. They figure this out for themselves in many cases. The cool thing about these pinwheels is that riding the patterns causes the horse and rider to do more of the right things just trying to navigate it.

Suggested variations of movements:

* Stop, start, back-up, walk, trot, canter, bends in both directions in all movements and transitions from one gait to another.

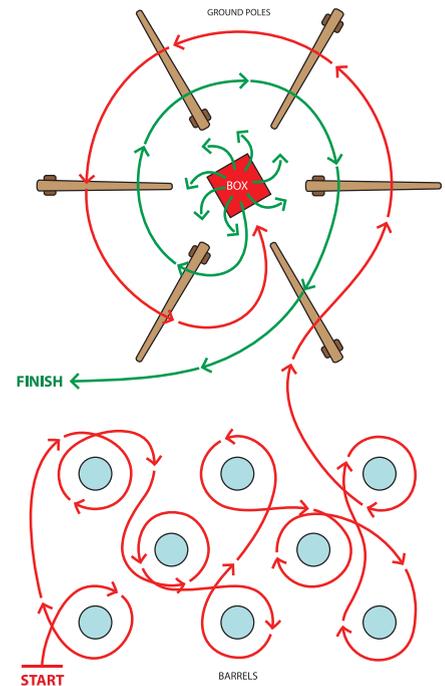
* Lateral movements: shoulder-in, haunches in/out, leg yields, half-pass, 1/4 - 1/2 pirouettes at the ends of the ground poles or renvers/travers, side-pass over ground poles.

* Turns on fore and hind, roll-overs and reaches, roll-back, roll-ins or outs, partial spins at end of ground poles, on the box or around the barrels.

* Back through barrels, or rails, figure eights, repeated circles or just one circle. This is great preparation for Working Equitation or Extreme trail classes as well. I will have a Pinwheel demo video posted soon at trainingforcourage.com.

Paul Dufresne is a writer, performer, trainer and clinician in Pritchard, BC, who educates in Natural Horsemanship, Classical Arts, Liberty and Circensic Dressage. He teaches people to understand horses and, more importantly, how to tap into their relaxation reflexes in ways seldom seen in North America. In doing so, he is able to guide people in creative experiences where the human learns to be an effective, safe leader. The horse learns to be more emotionally secure and will respectfully follow while developing athleticism in a mutually courageous manner by having a deeper understanding of how they affect each other. Visit his website at www.trainingforcourage.com.

PINWHEEL A



-Circle each barrel once or more until lined up for the next one on course. Bend around barrels or ask for one step of roll-over of hind (cross on hind) or reach on fore (cross on fore)

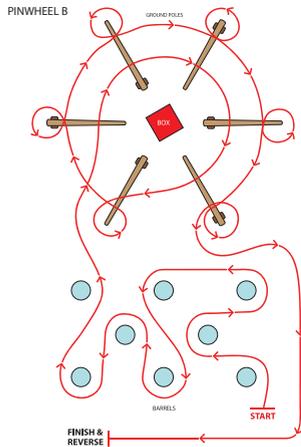
-Go over outside of rails ask horse to soften between rails, leave them alone as they balance over rail with you looking forward, their job to watch for the rails

-Once you have done the full circle, if you have a box or raised prop in the middle, step up front end on it then ask for one step of hindquarter over. Later ask for more, increasing one step at a time. Try to keep the fore as quiet as possible until you can do a 360 on the fore.

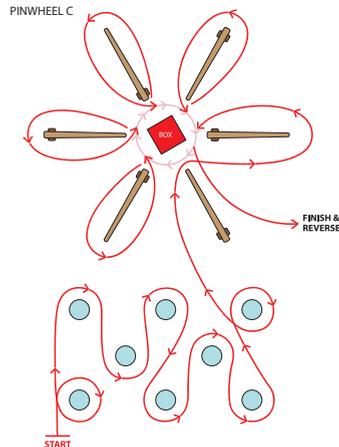
-dismount box and circle the other way over the inside of the rails softening the horse between rails.

-Repeat going the other way.

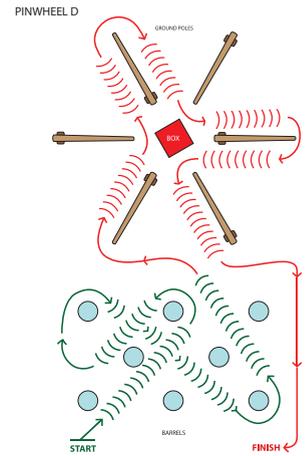
Training for Courage, cont'd



- Walk, trot, canter, or combination canter with walk lead changes, then ying leads.
- Serpentine barrels with either bend or roll-over & reach on fore one step or two.
- Go over inside in a circle then circle over ends of ground poles. You could roll over one step on hind as you circle the ends or do one step over on fore.
- *You could mount box between small and big rail circles



- Walk, trot, canter or mixed variations.
- Serpentine and circle around barrels.
- Figure eight around one rail and box, then move to next rail and do the same.
- You could do 1 or 2 steps of turn on the haunches at the outside end of each rail and one or two steps of crossing the haunches over at the inside end of each rail.
- Reverse pattern.
- *Could also do some or all of the barrels in a rein-back.



- Walk, trot, canter or mixed variations/transitions.
- Shoulder-in or haunches out thru barrels, bend around barrels, change direction of lateral movement after each half circle around end barrel.
- Bend around the end of rails and carry the bend into a leg yeild. Change bend at the end of the next rail and carry leg yeild on new bend to the next end of rail.
- Reverse pattern.
- * Could perform one yeild on each side, go over cavletti circle and then go to the next set of rails. Yield on each side and then over cavalletti rails until yeilds have been done at all the rails.