



Walk Test 1: Shallow loops, serpentine, halt transitions

1.	A	Enter at walk and proceed down the centre line.	Straightness of rider			
			Rhythm and tempo			
2.	C	Track left	Synchronisation (x2)			
			Aids			
3.	HEK	Shallow loop, 5m	Accuracy			
			Straightness of rider			
4.	A	Halt, immobility 3-5 seconds	Walk-halt transition			
5.	A	3 loop serpentine	Position (x2)			
			Accuracy			
			Contact			
6.	HG	Half 10m circle left	Accuracy			
	GC	Walk down centreline	Aids			
	C	Turn Right	Straightness of rider			
7.	MBF	Shallow loop, 5m	Rhythm and tempo			
			Aids			
8.	A	Halt, immobility 3-5 seconds	Halt-walk transition			
			Position (x2)			
9.	A	3 loop serpentine	Synchronisation(x2)			
			Aids			
			Rhythm and tempo			
10.	MXK	Change the rein. Show a few steps of stretching forward and down on a long rein.	Rhythm and tempo			
			Relaxation of horse			
			Stretching down			
11.	A	Proceed down the centreline.	Rhythm and tempo			
	X	Halt, immobility, salute	Straightness of rider			
			Walk-halt transition			
Total						Maximum 87



Walk test: Shallow loops, Serpentine, Halt transitions

This simple test is designed to assess riding of turns, circles and changes of bend, and transitions between halt and walk.

The tempo of the walk should be fairly slow, at a speed which the horse can maintain naturally. This enables the horse to move lightly and in balance. The horse need not be tracking up – whether or not they are depends on the conformation and level of training. The horse should respond quickly to invisible aids.

The movements should be accurately ridden, showing good synchronisation between horse and rider.

In walk, the rider's hips should move alternately in time with the movement of the horse's back, which moves in two halves. This movement is very slight and should not be obvious to an onlooker. If the hips do not move independently, but thrust forward and back simultaneously, this blocks the horse and prevents his back from swinging. It also causes excessive movement in the rider, which can cause the legs, hands and upper body to move about too much. The horse's belly swings left and right as he walks. The rider's legs should also swing in time with the belly (inwards and outwards not forward and back). Again, this movement is subtle and should not be obvious to an onlooker. The legs should mostly be passively synchronised with the horse's movement. If the legs are needed to correct bend, aid with turning or create forward movement, they are used alternately – so when the belly swings away from one leg, the leg aid is applied on that side, continuing the inward movement. The aid is released as the belly swings back toward the leg. In this way, the aid is never applied as a constant pressure or a series of niggling pushes, which would be working against the movement of the horse. When viewed from the back or front, the rider's body should remain upright in the middle of the horse at all times, and should never lean to one side or the other.

In Sentient Riding, we turn the horse mainly using weight aids – by advancing the inside hip. The shoulders should point in the direction you are travelling. If you turn your shoulders excessively towards the inside of the turn or circle, this will throw your weight to the outside, usually cause the horse to fall out, or offer shoulder-in instead of turning.

The serpentine should be ridden as a series of turns, with the horse crossing the arena parallel to the short sides. The horse should travel straight for a few strides, then change bend. The shallow loop should show a change of bend at the start and finish of the exercise.

In Sentient Riding, we ask the horse to halt using seat aids. The hips are moving alternately with the two halves of the horse's back in walk. Gradually reduce this movement to slow the walk, then bring both hips together by squeezing the glutes momentarily to stop the movement. To walk on, the legs are used together, without moving them backward or upward. The correct way to use the leg is by lowering weight into the outside of the foot (little toe) which has the effect of lightly tensing the upper calf. This aid is released as soon as the horse moves forward, and the legs pick up the swing of the belly. All leg aids are applied this way, so should appear invisible to an onlooker.