

“I have a pony to try this weekend and I’m worried about my hands! I can’t seem to keep them still. Any tips for me before I’m on parade?”

If your hands are moving it's because one part of your arm is stiff. It could be that your reins are too long and so your elbows are stuck out to the side or you're rounding your wrists to maintain your contact. Make sure your elbows hang down just fractionally in front of your body and that there is a straight line forward through your wrists, hands and down your reins to the bit.

You may think you've kept the straight line through your arm but take a closer look at your thumb position. Look down at it when you're riding. It should be pointed directly forward (often slightly down) towards the bit. There's a strong chance it's actually pointed up towards your horse's ear. That puts a kink in your wrist and is a classic cause of stiff and wobbly hands. For more details check this out - <http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2012/02/25/thumbs-up-or-down/>

Tension in your shoulders will transmit straight down your arm to your hands. On the drive to the yard pull your shoulders up under your ears and hold them there until they burn! Then relax and drop them down and back. Hold that feeling. It's how they should feel when you're riding.

Your position in the saddle can make a real difference to your arm and hand position. Thinking shoulders back or sit up may do more harm than good. For some easy to follow ideas that you can even do in a chair at home check out this post - <http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2011/10/29/pull-up-to-ride-forward/> Practise before you get there and then when you're on board you'll know how to get in position before you walk on.

More rider problems stem from trying too hard than not trying hard enough. Bear that in mind every time you ride – especially if you're riding someone else's pony or you're at a show. Remember this is your hobby. You do it for fun – right?

Get in Touch

If you have any questions about riding or training your horse or pony don't hesitate to contact me on lorraine@schoolyourhorse.com or upload a video under “Show and Tell” on the forum

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/forum/?mingleforumaction=viewforum&f=17.0> It doesn't have to be a perfect film – prop your mobile on the ménage fence and hit play – you'd be amazed what can be seen from a few minutes of film. My advice is free so why not try me?

For some great things to do with your horse or pony why not check out my range of schooling guides? At just 99p they're affordable, instantly downloadable and they'll give you some great exercises to do with your pony or horse between lessons. Find them here - <http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/#!/shop/>