

**“My horse is extremely sensitive. He’s started falling in on circles and turns. I used to enjoy jumping but I can’t get him straight to a fence. Help!”**

This is a common problem. It’s very likely you’re being too light with your reins and your legs because he’s so sensitive. You think you’re being kind to him but actually what you need to do is take charge. That doesn’t mean you have to pull or kick, it just means you need to take up a consistent contact and keep your legs against his sides.

A sensitive horse is more worried when you take your legs *off*. He’ll be waiting for them to come back on again. Keep the top of your calf muscles on your horse’s side at all times – they don’t need to be clamped on just there so he knows where you are.

If your rein contact is uneven you allow your horse’s weight to fall onto one shoulder. It’s most common for riders to have more weight on their inside rein because they’re asking their horse to bend or turn to the inside. If your inside rein is stronger your horse will fall to the inside. Imagine you were falling to the right – you’d want someone to get hold of your left arm to stop you falling over – right? That’s exactly what your outside rein does. Maintain the contact in both reins and you’ll keep his weight on both front legs.

Go back to walk and trot and ride circles, serpentines and figures of eight so you can concentrate on keeping your contact the same in both hands as you move your horse around the school. Remember your legs push his body behind his shoulders. Keep them against his sides and he’ll be able to relax and move forward.

When you reintroduce canter don't tighten up because you're anticipating a problem. Focus on keeping your contact even in both reins and keep your legs on. Sensitive horses need consistency. The work you've done in walk and trot will pay off in canter because they'll realise you're doing the same thing in a different pace.

When you're schooling over a fence put it at X facing E/B. That way you can work on a 20m circle on either rein. Start in trot and build up to canter. Remember schooling over fences is about your approach and landing NOT about proving how high you can jump! Keep the fence small and focus on the shape of the circle.

For more details on falling in, falling out and straightness check out these posts on the schoolyourhorse blog -

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2012/02/18/dont-fall-out-get-even/>

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2011/01/15/keep-in-touch/>

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2012/01/14/riding-the-straight-curve/>

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2011/12/10/get-your-horse-connected/>

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/shop/syh-books/get-started-2/>

<http://www.schoolyourhorse.com/2011/05/28/it-works-both-ways/>

If you have a question about any aspect of schooling your horse get in touch at [lorraine@schoolyourhorse.com](mailto:lorraine@schoolyourhorse.com) Please add H&Pi to the subject line and let me know if you'd rather keep your question private.