

# Break Out the Bowtie

Use this bow-shaped pattern to keep your horse engaged, soften his body, and elevate his shoulders.

Produced by Jennifer Paulson



This pattern exercise will help elevate your horse's shoulders in addition to making both you and your horse focus.

**Q** I'd like to improve my horse's body control and work on elevating his shoulders. He gets bored easily when drilling something over and over again—and so do I, to be honest. Do you have an exercise I can use to work on his body, but still keep it fun for us?

JANE HUFFMAN, Colorado

**A** Monotony can kill your fun in the saddle, not to mention make your horse resent the work. That's why I like to use patterns to keep myself and my horse engaged with the job at hand. Otherwise, we both just start going through the motions.

I like to use this bowtie pattern, pictured on page 74. It requires four cones and one barrel. You can use other types of markers, but be sure that they're safe and will stay in position. Place the markers 50 feet apart around the square, with the barrel in the middle. You can increase the degree of difficulty by reducing that distance by 10 feet, all the way down to 30 feet between the cones. Outfit your horse in the bit he responds best to, and ride with two hands to start for optimal guide and direct reining. If you're a beginner rider, start at a walk and progress to a working trot. If you're more advanced, begin at the

working trot and advance to a lope around the outside of the pattern and a trot around the barrel.

## Step-by-Step

**Step 1:** Start at Cone A, and ride to the right of the barrel that's centered within the four cones. Pick up your horse's left shoulder with your left hand by raising that hand higher than your right. Support your horse's right shoulder by keeping soft pressure on that rein in a lower position. Use your inside leg, placed near the cinch, and your outside leg, behind the cinch, to arc your horse's body around the barrel. Continue circling the barrel until you get a soft arc in