

July 2021 - English Riding Seat Positions

Written by courtesy of American Quarter Horse Association
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Each type of English riding seat has a different purpose. It is especially important to know the distinction between them when working your horse over fences. There can be some confusion that needs clarification in some of the different types of seats, especially when riding toward fences. In all of these seats, you want to focus on not allowing your shoulders to get out in front of you and keeping your lower leg beneath you, and not allowing it to go forward or backward.

Full Seat

First, it's important to understand a full seat. Basically, this is your default sitting position. It is defined as having three points of contact with your horse: your bottom and each knee.

A full seat provides you the opportunity to use your body as an aid in multiple ways. You will be able to send your horse forward or collect with a full seat. The seat has a huge influence in how your horse relates to what you are asking the horse to do.



Two-Point

Although the full seat is handy in many situations, you cannot sit on your horse's back over fences. In these situations, you would go into a two-point position.

A two-point means you have two points of contact with your horse: your knees. In this position, you will sit still, with your bottom lifted completely out of the saddle. You can still use your

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hands, voice and legs as natural aids.

This position allows your horse the freedom to round over the fences as he jumps and use his body in the most athletic way possible. You can rest your hands on your horse's neck for balance as you are strengthening your core and legs.

Half Seat or Light Seat

Depending on your location and discipline, this next position may be called either a half seat or a light seat ... the terms can be used interchangeably.

A half seat or light seat is in between a full seat and two-point in terms of contact with your horse. Your clothing may be touching the saddle, but your bottom and pelvis bones should not be making contact with your saddle. You may need to use this position to keep your horse coming underneath himself, to regulate his stride, or increase impulsion, as you are approaching a fence.

Before trying any of these seats over fences, you should practice them at each gait.