

Imtiaz Anees Kudzu Klinik

Imtiaz Anees, our “local” 3-Day Event Olympic rider graciously volunteered his training expertise for a Kudzu Klinik on September 10, 2006 at Foxberry Farm. During the lunch break, while we munched on food generously shared by folks attending from Bits and Bytes Farm, Imti held a most informative question and answer session. The following are highlights from that session.

To improve jumping, improve the quality of the horse’s canter:

Both ring work/flat work and hill work are important, hill work to strengthen horse’s hindquarters. Imti has no hills at his farm so he trailers his horses to a location where they can do hill work once a week.

Take-off – Does the rider or the horse decide when to take-off?

The rider tells the horse when to take off, but the horse has to see the distance also. This is learned through practice.

The rider has to make the horse “wait” for the jump (not rush ahead or take-off long) and the horse has to learn to wait.

Think of it as letting the jump come to you rather than you going to the jump.

With practice, your eye will tell you where to take-off.

Feel your horse’s canter bring you to the take-off spot.

Approach

Horse’s that rush the jump will generally stall or slow a little just before they start rushing. Don’t override the approach just because you know your horse tends to rush.

Some horses will approach jumps at “20 mph” when they need to be going at “40 mph” – the rider has to move the horse up and keep up the energy all the way to the jump. Some horses that start their approach at the correct speed of “40 mph” will speed up to “60 mph” – rider has to catch this early to keep horse at correct speed.

How often should you jump?

A green or low-level horse should be jumped 2 – 3 times a week, but when they reach an advanced level, jumping once a week is sufficient.

But learning to jump well is a long process. The conflict comes in that a horse & rider may need more practice to learn how to control the strides to get to the correct take-off spot. To avoid jumping the horse too often, they can practice with cantering ground poles or low cavaletti spread out in the arena in the pattern of a jump course.

What about lunging?

Lunging is good for both horse and rider, but never lunge over a jump. Free jumping/lane jumping can be used to train the horse’s eye for a distance.

The basis of a good seat is lunging. In Europe, lunging the rider is used much more than it is here. Use lunging to develop your seat and balance. You don’t have to be lunged by a trainer. A knowledgeable friend can help you.

What about rider fitness?

Rider fitness is extremely important. You can’t expect to get fit enough just from riding. You must cross-train to build your stamina and strength – running, swimming, aerobics. In his youth camps, Imti has the kids run 3 miles a day. Imti prefers swimming over running for his own cross-training.

Pilates is a great exercise system to develop your core strength.

What books do you recommend?

Jim Wofford’s Gymnastics

Cavaletti – Reiner Klimke

books by Nelson Pessoa

Betsy Steiner’s A Gymnastic Riding System using Mind, Body and Spirit (highly recommended)