

THE TOTAL CONTACT RIDING METHOD

This riding method is based on balance and on the right use of the stirrups, in line with the Caprilli school. Its primary goal is to allow riders and their horses to cooperate.

A person who rides with balance and who wants his horse to cooperate must essentially respect its mouth and its back.

In my experience as a riding Instructor, I have often observed that the traditional English saddle does not help riders in learning the fundamental elements of this sport. Indeed it limits their sensitivity, preventing them from feeling unmistakably and clearly what happens underneath.

By observing top riders, I have been convinced that their riding expertise does improve, grow and become more sophisticated *notwithstanding* the saddle.

To be more explicit, I think that today riders practice competitive and non competitive equestrian sports having tied a chair on the back of their horse: the saddle.

Unfortunately, riders often weigh directly on their horse's back. In this comfortable sitting position, talking about balance is somewhat far-fetched.

Beginners and experienced riders manage this situation differently.

Beginners end up sitting on the cantle because they think they can better control their horse and they feel stronger and more comfortable in this position. In a worse scenario, they adopt this seat because they imitate more experienced riders

More experienced riders end up sitting on the cantle on purpose, in the best case, in order to push their horse forward.

In any case, both riders and horses lose balance and sensitivity.

Very often, in approaching fences to jump, riders choose a predetermined position (now I adopt this position...) instead of keeping a balanced seat, because the saddle allows them to do so.

This attitude comes from by previous negative experiences, in an attempt to improve what happened and to be together with their horse in mid-air.

Therefore, is not easy for the Instructor to correct this habit.

The result: the rider remains in front or behind the movement, the horses refuses and so on and so forth.

When approaching jumps, more experienced riders cannot feel the back of their horse as they would feel it if they were directly in contact with their horse's back without the saddle.

In addition the presence of the saddle does not allow them to become aware of their balance in this very important and particular moment for their horse.

Instead, with the TOTAL CONTACT riding method, riders sit directly on their horse's back. The whole inner part of their thighs is in direct contact with their horse.

They are perfectly able to use their weight by adequately using the stirrups. Very shortly their sensitivity dramatically improves and so does their horse's, that begins to better understand the meaning of the aids used by the riders.

This wonderful synergy leads the horse to cooperate without strain or violence.

Riders will be pleasantly surprised to see that their horse complies without any coercion and without its previous reluctance.