

Equibalace Part 2: Magnets

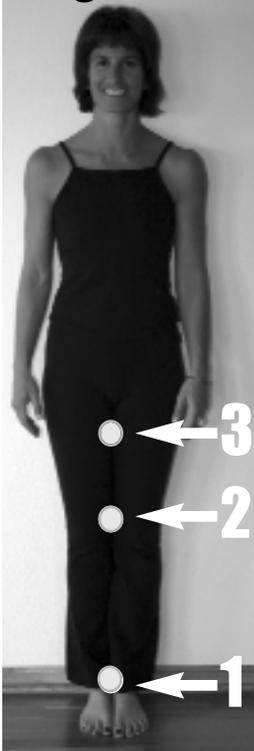
with Julie Leiken

Do you have trouble keeping your horse straight between your legs? Does he feel like he falls one way or the other all the time? When you ride with an instructor are they constantly trying to fix your leg position?

The following exercises can help you identify your strengths and weaknesses in your inner legs. Then you can strengthen your weaknesses and ride your horse more balanced.

The second of our seven Ron Fletcher Pilates Cues™ is “Magnets”. You have three sets of magnets. The first set is between your ankle bones, the second is above your knees and the third is way up high in your inner thigh.

Magnets



As a ride these magnets are very important because having a feeling of attraction between these magnets when you are on your horse will help your leg fall into place so that it sits correctly on your horse. When you ride you do not want to feel as if you are squeezing your legs just that there is an attraction between your magnets.

Many riders tend to turn their legs out so that their heels are facing their horse rather than having their feet in parallel to their horses sides. This will keep you from having a solid connection to your horse. If one leg is turned out while the other is placed correctly, this usually shows an imbalance in strength.

Your magnets are on the insides of your legs. We tend in riding and in everyday life to want to use the muscles on the outside of our legs. So as you work through these exercises you want to feel the inside of your leg pulling in, not the outside of your leg pushing in.

Learning to find and strengthen your magnets is going to help you stand correctly over your foot centers and to have your bones come up from your foot in a straight line into the hip. That will help if you have any hip problems or if you're bow legged.

As with the last series, remember to execute these movements with a feeling as if you were pushing or pulling your body through a thick liquid like molasses. This will help you get the most benefit out of the exercises.

First we're going to find our magnets. Stand with your legs pulled together. Feel the difference between just standing and then standing while thinking about the magnets attracting and pulling toward each other. Practice turning your magnets on, and off while standing still.

When the magnets are turned on you should feel it at the base of your glutes and the back of the leg not at the front of sides of the legs. That's what will help you feel if your magnets are really turned on or if your just pressing in with the outside of your legs.

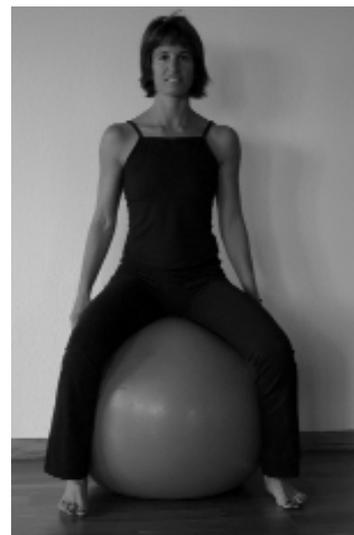
Looking Back to Foot Centers

Last issue (EH#20) we had exercises to strengthen your foot and ankle, if you take what you have learned about magnets and add that in to those exercise you will find that it will make them much more difficult, but that it will help you to track up properly. Meaning your knee comes out directly over your foot centers

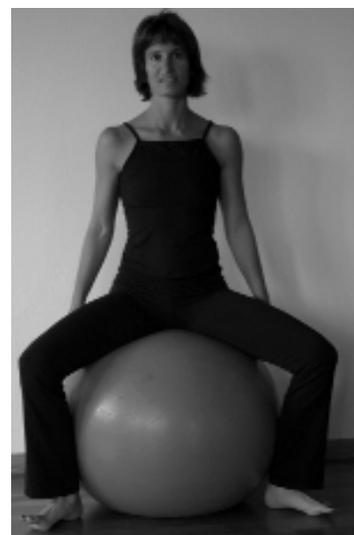
When you stand in parallel position, with your feet together, look in a mirror, and look at your ankles, knees and inner thighs, and see if your legs come down in a straight line. Does your weight come down onto the outside of your foot? Are you knock kneed, or bowlegged, that will tell you a lot about your position on a horse, and

then when you start thinking about the magnets, it can help you to change the leg and move your bone into alignment with your muscles.

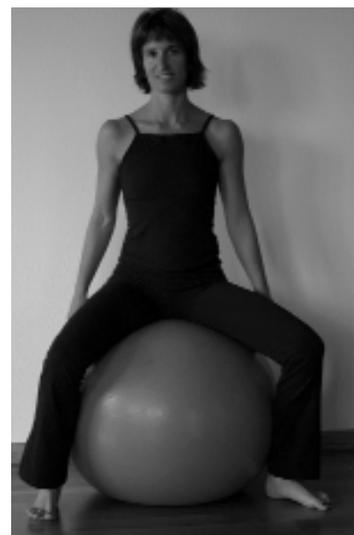
When you work these exercise think about the magnets and how they track up. If there was a pole that ran down the center of your body, the magnets are going to be attracted towards it, whether your legs are touching or if you have one leg out in front, that attraction back to the pole will still be there. You don't get to shift your weight from side to side every time you move your leg forward or back. As you move one leg and keep the other still, remember that both are working, attracting towards the magnets.



Magnets in alignment and turned on.



Turned out on both sides, heels on horse, magnets off.



Right side in alignment, left side turned out.

For More Info: www.ronfletcher.com
or www.julieleiken.com



Sliding to Find Magnets



(A.) Feeling all of your foot centers, **(B.)** step your left foot out into a second position. As you step reach both arms out to your sides. Then, dragging the foot centers along the floor you'll pull your magnets **(C.)** (and your arms) in and together. **(D.)** Repeat, stepping to the left. Do this several times to find what it feels like to pull your magnets in rather than push from the outside. Don't forget to push your arms down as if you were pressing them down through molasses.

Sliding In A Plié



Repeat the first exercise in a plié (knees bent) position. It can be a easier to fee your magnets in this position, and it is similar to your position on your horse.

When you step out to the side have your foot centers directly underneath your knee, and make sure your back is straight. You can do this up against a wall to make sure you're not sticking your butt out. When you pull in really try and keep feeling your foot centers as you drag the foot in. The motion should start at the third (top) magnet. That third magnet is going to lead every exercise.

Finding Magnets While Seated



Sit on the floor with your feet sit-bone width apart. You can sit with your back up against a wall to help you sit up very straight. **(A.)** Place a soft ball between your second magnets. Squeeze the magnets together, then release. Squeeze and release. **(B.)** Move the ball to between your first two magnets. Squeeze and release. Repeat.

Finding Magnets in Table Top

Next, lie on your back in "Table Top" (have a 90 degree angle between your hips and your knees and your knees to your ankles.) **(A.)** Place the ball between your second two magnets squeeze and release. Repeat. **(B.)** Next place the ball between your first two magnets, squeeze and release then extend your legs to the ceiling then pull them back into table top using your magnets. After you've worked both magnets equally, you can work these and the previous exercises again using one side at time. Simply holding on your right side magnets and turning on the left side, then switching and doing the same on the left side. Think about your horse falling out to one side of the other, an you are going to sue your magnets on that side to bring him back to center.



Reaching Leg

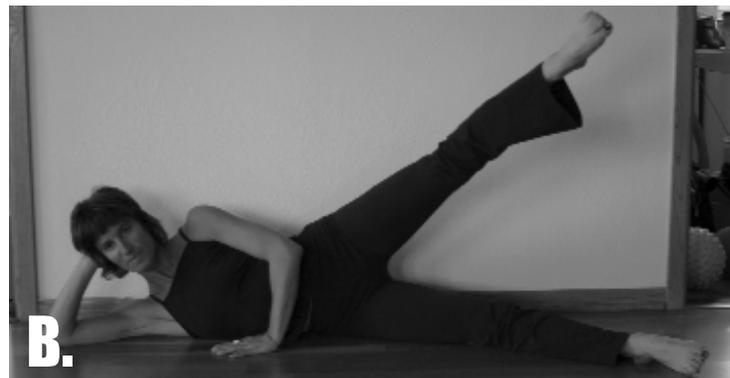


(A.) Laying on your back, legs extended to the ceiling, magnets are turned on, try to find a 90 degree angle to the ceiling. Your toes are pointed, legs are extended as if you can reach your tailbone down to the ground and your legs up to the sky. **(B.)** Take the right leg to start, and lower it



to the ground while trying to reach it out as long as you can. As you pull it back up and together, Think of the magnets pulling together to move the leg. Alternate legs. Try to keep the leg reaching in a perfectly straight line up and down, magnets turned on the whole way.

Leg Lift



(A.) Lie on your side, place your back up against a wall, hand underneath your head. Line up your pelvis and your back so that it's not tipped forward. Bring your legs out from the wall at a 45 degree angle. **(B.)** Lift the top leg. **(C.)** Then pull the leg back down toward the bottom leg. Do this first without thinking about magnets, and you will find that you are pressing down from the outside of your leg. Then take your attention to your magnets and feel yourself pulling your leg up again as if you were having to pull it through molasses. It should be an effort to lift and lower you leg. When you bring it back down imagine that those balls are between your leg and you're having to squeeze them together. So that it comes from the magnet.