

## **Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced Rider Criteria**

The **PRE-BEGINNER** rider is someone who is interested and curious, but totally inexperienced with horses and needs to learn about them from the ground up. She is learning how to lead horses, groom them, and relate to their size and movement from the ground. The pre-beginner rider has no knowledge about horse training and care. She may be timid or fearless.

The **BEGINNER** rider is entering the awareness-development stage. She might have spent a total of 10 hours in the saddle, either by riding once in a while over a period of years or by taking an introductory group of lessons. She can control a quiet school horse at a walk and trot with turns and can stop the horse. The beginner rider slows down and walks if she feels she is losing her balance at the trot. She will remain a beginner until she has developed the balance and confidence to lope or canter the horse.

The **ADVANCED BEGINNER** can sit on a quiet, well-schooled horse without losing her balance when it is loping or cantering.

The **INTERMEDIATE** rider may show signs of competitiveness or seriousness about riding. When she works with a school horse, she can mount without assistance, walk, trot, canter, ride circles, serpentines, knows what diagonal or lead she is on, and can stop the horse from any gait.

The **ADVANCED INTERMEDIATE** rider can perform simple and flying lead changes, variations in the gaits, turn on the forehand, turn on the hindquarters, and lateral movements on a school horse. She has the interest to ride horses other than school horses and she is gaining the knowledge and is developing the skills to be able to train horses.

The **ADVANCED** rider is a horse trainer with a well-developed sense of balance and timing. She understands sophisticated concepts of horse movement and sound principles of training and can perform the advanced maneuvers in her style of riding. When she rides it is very difficult to see the aids she is giving her horse.