

In this feature... > Fine-tune your skills with five jumps or less > Get creative with combinations > Learn to keep a quality canter

Gimme five

Even without a vast range of showjumps, you can still put your skills to the test at home. All you have to do is get creative, says eventer Ros Canter

Professional riders are usually fortunate enough to have a range of different fences and fillers to use in training. But what happens when you don't own enough wings or poles to replicate the demands of a full course at home?

Okay, perhaps you can't produce an immaculate course of 11 obstacles with a smaller jump collection, but you can construct frequently asked showjumping questions and hone the forward-planning skills required to put them all together with five fences or fewer. It just takes a little creativity.

Focus from the get go

Having a canter round and popping over a single fence is a lot of fun and certainly has its place, but will it prepare you and your horse for a competition? Not really. So, design your training around what you'll encounter in the ring. At any showjumping level, you'll find...

- combinations
- related distances
- changes of direction
- time saving angles

Knowing what to expect will ready you for these more complex questions.

The pressure's off at home to a degree, but use your training sessions to ensure you're riding precisely and effectively. Developing clear, accurate aids that elicit exactly the response you want from your horse will make your job a hundred times easier when every stride counts.

To do this, I always refer back to my position principles at the start of every session of maintaining a contact with longer reins, an upright body and a strong awareness of where I'm looking – always ahead to the next question. ➔

Our model



Izilot DHI (Isaac) is a 16.1hh six-year-old, Dutch-bred gelding owned by Ros, and Nick and Alex Moody. In 2018, he secured second place in the Burghley Young Event Horse final and third in the five-year-old Young Horse Championship at Osberton.

Our expert



Ros Canter has made a name for herself on the eventing scene. As well as her team and individual eventing golds at the 2018 World Equestrian Games in Tryon, she's also racked up several top-five completions at CCIS* in recent years.

