

tips from THE TOP

World champion eventer Ros Canter shares some of her fave jumping exercises



Our expert
Event rider Ros Canter won individual and team gold medals at the World Equestrian Games in 2018.

You don't need to school over big fences to improve your jumping, and even top riders keep things really simple when training their horses. Ros Canter's one of the best riders in the world, and she often uses low, easy fences called cavaletti to help her horses develop important skills for jumping, such as rhythm, balance and suppleness. It's something you can do with your fave pony, too!

CLEVER CAVALETTI

Cavaletti are essentially raised poles. The benefit of them is that they're inviting for your pony, and jumping them should put less stress and strain on his muscles and joints than working over bigger fences. You can buy ready made cavaletti or special stands for poles. If your yard doesn't have these, use small blocks to lift the poles a few inches off the ground.



WEB EXTRA

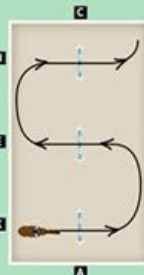
Watch Ros riding through the exercise at bit.ly/ROS_CHANGES

EXERCISE 1: SUPER SERPENTINE

This exercise asks you to ride a three-loop serpentine over cavaletti, and it's a brilliant way to practise loads of the skills you need for jumping a course of fences. It'll help teach you to land and rebalance your pony before changing direction and getting straight for your next fence. It's great for his suppleness, too!

SET IT UP

Place three cavaletti along the centre line – one at X, one between K and F and another between H and M. The poles should face the long sides.



HOW TO RIDE IT

1. Start by riding large on the left rein, and encourage your

pony to move forward in an active trot.

2. Approach the first cavaletti at A. To make sure you stay straight, aim for the middle of the pole and keep your eyes up.
3. On landing, look up to the next fence, and open your left rein slightly to guide your pony around the turn. Nudging him at the girth with your inside leg will encourage him to bend.
4. Ride over the second cavaletti. This time when you land open your right rein and place your right leg against the girth. You'll also need to change your diagonal by sitting for two beats of the trot.
5. Ride over the third cavaletti to finish your serpentine.
6. Have a go in the other direction, remembering to use the opposite aids as you'll be starting on the right rein.

TOP TIP

You can try this exercise with poles on the ground first, then raise them to cavaletti when you're feeling more confident.



Ask for a lead change over the middle cavaletti

Up the challenge

If you're aching the exercise in trot, try it in canter! Remember, though, that you'll need to change canter lead in the middle. This isn't as tricky as it sounds and you can use the centre cavaletti to help you. As your pony takes off over it, look up to where you want to go and slightly open your new inside rein. It'll help to put a tiny bit more weight in your inside stirrup, too. If he doesn't change leg straightaway, don't worry – keep practising and he'll soon work out what you want.

