

In this feature... ➤ Break down a course with cavaletti

➤ Achieve the perfect position ➤ Create an adjustable horse

Horses for courses

Successful course riding requires a horse and rider combination that's forward-thinking, adjustable and quick to react. Eventing world champion Ros Canter shows you the key with cavaletti

Our expert



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

Our model



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

If you're watching high-level jumping, the rounds that really stand out are the ones that look smooth and effortless, as if the rider's simply sitting back and enjoying the show. However, looks can be deceiving. What appears to be breezing around on auto-pilot is more than likely the end result of a meticulous training process that covers all the skills needed to succeed. This helps horse and rider work together as a partnership to perfect the adaptability, precision and planning skills required to tackle a course.

Cavaletti are a hugely beneficial part of my schooling. Using small, inviting obstacles to simulate the constituent parts of a course prepares me and my horses for the real thing – without the pressure of the competition ring. Incorporating these exercises into your own training will help you achieve an adjustable, quick-thinking horse who's on your aids, and will teach you to use your position effectively and plan ahead to get the results you want.



Position principles

I'm a big believer in riding with longer reins and low hands because it forces you to maintain an upright seat. This will engage your core and keep your eyes where they should be – up and looking to your next obstacle. British Eventing performance coach, Chris Bartle, always says to imagine you're jumping 1.60m, which keeps your body and eyeline upright. These principles make up the building blocks of smooth and effortless-looking riding.