



Cross country for Eventers

Your guide to getting started across country

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EVENTING**

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FRONT COVER: ADAM FANTHORPE



ADAM FANTHORPE

Welcome

15 seconds to go... your heart pounding, breathing more intense... ten seconds to go... your horse is excited, quivering with anticipation of the fun to come and shifts beneath you, forefeet dancing, five seconds to go... the Starter counts... 3, 2, 1 and his cheery 'good luck!' is the last thing you hear as you bound forwards to enjoy the adrenalin rush that is affiliated Eventing

A good way to start to 'get your eye in' and to get you thinking in a cross-country mind-set is to practice cross-country-type fences using show jumps in your field or arena at home. We show you a few of these exercises, with the help of 2009 Badminton and Burghley winner, Oliver Townend. We also have lots of hints and tips from British Eventing's Team Performance Manager, Yogi Breisner.

But there is no substitute for trying the real thing! It is essential to get out on a good cross country training ground to help build you and your horse's confidence over a variety of different types of fences that you may meet at an affiliated BE event. For details of venues see pages 20/21.

Why not call up a BE Accredited Coach to help you in your first few sessions at a cross country schooling ground? We have listed their contact details at the back of this booklet. Many run training sessions in the off-season (Nov-February), where you can go along with your horse and learn with a group of other like-minded riders who want to compete at a similar level to you. You can find current details of training clinics on our website www.britisheventing.com.

We have also put together a short DVD you may like to watch, called 'How to ride across country'; free to view on the safety pages of our website. 🐾

Getting started

BE80(T) and BE90 classes

Your first event is likely to be a BE80(T) or BE90 competition. If you are riding an experienced horse with BE points you will still be able to compete in a BE90 Open class, but will have to run non-competitively (HC) in BE80(T) classes.

BE80(T) classes are an educational step for young and inexperienced riders and horses, and offer a stepping-stone to BE90, BE100 and beyond.

Grading of horses

To ensure fair competition, horses are graded according to the number of British Eventing points won (if any) and are eligible for different classes depending on these points. Points are not awarded at BE80, BE90 or BE100 level. 🐾

No points	Grade 4
1 – 20 points	Grade 3
21 – 60 points	Grade 2
61+ points	Grade 1



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Phases	BE80(T)	BE90	BE100
Cross country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses may include uphill and downhill fences, small drops, banks, ditches, water, spreads and ascending fences. • Some combinations will have less demanding alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-25 jumping efforts • 1600-2800m course • 435mpm speed • Max height 0.80m • Max spread (top) 0.90m • Max spread (base) 1.25m • Open to Grade 4 horses and ponies without points that are either registered or have Day Tickets • There is no obligation to move out of BE80 • No points will be awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-25 jumping efforts • 1600-2800m course • 450mpm speed • Max height 0.90m • Max spread (top) 1.00m • Max spread (base) 1.50m • Open to Grade 4 horses and ponies without points that are either registered or have Day Tickets • There is no obligation to move out of BE90 • No points will be awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-25 jumping efforts • 1600-2800m course • 475mpm speed • Max height 1.00m • Max spread (top) 1.10m • Max spread (base) 1.80m • Open to Grade 4 horses and ponies without points that are either registered or have Day Tickets • There is no obligation to move out of BE100 • No points will be awarded



DAVID BURTON

“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WHATEVER YOU PRACTICE IN THE DRESSAGE WORK DOES NOT IMPINGE THE HORSE FROM GALLOPING CROSS COUNTRY OR JUMPING”

Developing a balanced position and seat

“So often at a novice or junior level you see horses pulling hard, a little out of control,” says BE Performance Manager, Yogi Breisner. “Or the other extreme is an uncomfortable picture of riders trying to get lazy or slow horses to go faster by bumping up and down on their backs. This style of riding can lead to problems later on when upgrading, so it is best to get some training now in the correct type of seat to adopt.

“The skill in Eventing is not how high you can jump or how much you can teach your horse in the dressage. The important factor is the link between what you are doing in the different disciplines; so it is important that whatever you practice in the dressage work does not impinge the horse from galloping cross country or jumping, and what you do in your fitting and jumping work does not prevent the horse executing a good, obedient dressage test.

“A horse galloping in balance on a line in good rhythm is going to take less out of itself, run less risk of injury, be able to jump better and more economically and

therefore save time. It will also give him an outlet for built-in inhibitions and tension which, together with the development of his natural balance and rhythm, will be of great benefit in the dressage work.” 🐾

The jumping seat – rider in perfect balance



FIONA SCOTT-MAXWELL



The previously highly excitable Midnight Dazzler finished the 2009 Badminton cross country with time in hand, fuel in the tank and enough left to show jump clear the next day. Not bad for a 19 year old!

Let us help you take your first steps Cross Country - MORE SAFELY -

Cross country is the essence of eventing. But it can be both exhilarating and frustrating - not to mention dangerous. You need your horse to be confident but also to be able to make split second judgments in front of fences. The ability to shorten and lengthen strides is crucial. Yet these key features can be very hard to train into many horses. Even experienced horses like Harry Meade's Midnight Dazzler can improve in all these characteristics when fed a diet that helps them concentrate better in both competition and schooling. The benefits can be huge in all three phases. And Midnight Dazzler's recent results confirm that even an old horse can learn when the supplementation is right.

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Email advice@EquiFeast.com or visit www.EquiFeast.com

Joe Meyer NZ Olympian



Sarah Cheetham
Grand Prix dressage



Jessica Hewitt
U 11 Nat. SJ Champ.
2008 & 2009!



Harry Meade
4* Eventer



Tips for a secure seat



The two-point seat

KIT HOUGHTON

“DON'T BE TOO STRONG OR TOO LIGHT; THE HORSE SHOULD LIKE IT, FEEL IT, AND RESPOND TO IT”

The jockey or two-point seat

To achieve a balanced seat and position it is important that the horse is galloping true and using itself in the right way, and that the horse and rider feel comfortable together when galloping. This can be achieved by taking a leaf out of the race riders' book and, while galloping in training and doing fittening work, adopting a touch of the jockey's position. We are not looking for the jockey's position in a finish, but more the sort of position a jockey would have while cantering a horse down to the start of a race – maintaining the horse's stride well below racing pace where the rider is keeping his leg at the girth (under no circumstances behind it), the seat is well out of the saddle, the rider's back has length, and the line between the horse's mouth and the rider's

elbow is straight; in other words, the elbow to the hand is an extension of the rein.

Control

Controlling a horse while galloping requires a rapport through the reins. Don't be too strong or too light; the horse should like it, feel it, and respond to it. It is like feeling a fish on the line. The rider must create a sense of balance – while balancing the horse through the reins, the rider balances on top of the horse at the same time. Don't push your horse constantly with your seat or leg, but encourage him to draw into the contact as described above. You know you will have it right when you feel as if the horse can go on forever.

As the cross country is as influential as the dressage and show jumping, technique should be practiced to the same extent.



ADAM FANTHORPE

By starting to practice this slowly and gradually building up the speed, you will develop a sense of what is the right cross-country speed. 🐾

Training exercises at home

You can practice an awful lot in your field or arena at home before you go out on a cross-country course. Techniques like turns after a fence, jumping fences on a curving line, pace of approach to a fence and acceleration after landing can be practiced using a few show jumps.

In the following pages we show you how you can practice jumping a skinny fence and a corner by building your own fences. This way you will increase you and your horse's confidence before you go out on a cross-country schooling ground to practice for real.

The important thing is to establish a good rhythm and pace that you are comfortable to jump from in a cross-country style. So take a bit of time to canter around your arena or field first in your warm up, both sitting down and standing up in your stirrups (for more on the three point or jockey seat, see Yogi's tips for a secure seat on page 7). Think about your cross-country seat and practice it along the long sides of your arena first, sitting deeper into the seat and collecting on the short side, then increasing pace again along the long side, thus testing your control and brakes. 🐾

“ESTABLISH A GOOD RHYTHM AND PACE THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE TO JUMP FROM IN A CROSS-COUNTRY STYLE”



Establish a good pace

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Townend's tips for warming up



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Warm up over simple things, no matter what your level. A simple thing like a cross pole is ideal to get you and your horse thinking forward. Make sure you aim for the centre; start off how you mean to go on – accuracy at this stage, even though you are just warming up,

is a discipline that is really important to stick to, especially as you begin to move up the levels.

Then once you have mastered a single fence on both reins, try the same fence but take it at angles or a curving line. The trick is to increase the angle more and perfect it, as well as increasing both your confidences.

Once you are happy, try an off-set double. You need to practice two approaches here. Firstly, master taking the straight line through, then work on a curving line or dog-leg. Typically you will meet these out on the cross-country course, usually in BE90 and BE100, where you might find a double of logs or roll top fences.

The important thing is to keep everything simple, fair and flowing for your horse – it is not your aim to 'catch them out'. Let

them go forward in a rhythm and enjoy it. If you keep it simple it is always easy to correct them the next time around in an unhurried and unfussy style. 🐾



Jump in the centre of the cross pole

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Practice jumping curving lines at home



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0114 266 6200
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Jumping a skinny

Guide them into the skinny by using 'v' poles to focus their attention



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ADAM FANTHORPE

“IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRACTICE THESE TYPES OF FENCES AT HOME FIRST BEFORE YOUR FIRST EVENT”

When jumping a skinny, focus your eye and your horse's attention to the centre of the object – in this case a barrel – by placing two poles either side as guide rails. Start off by placing the barrel or filler on its side first rather than its end to offer your horse an easier jump, then increase the difficulty by making it smaller. The guide rails will help avoid a run-out.

Come in at a slow, controlled, bouncy pace. You can even trot into it to start with while it's small.

Keep an even and equal rein contact and keep your leg close to the horse's side. As you and your horse become more confident, your straightness will improve. That is why it is essential to practice these types of fences at home first before heading off to your first event. 🐾

Jumping a corner

Using your poles and barrels or jump wings, make a small corner with the angle, only slight at first. Jump it at the narrow end and treat it a bit like jumping an oxer.

The same as with a skinny, use a guide pole so that the horse is not tempted to run out.

Jump near the edge of the corner, then as you get more confident, move down towards the middle.

Once you feel happy placing your horse wherever you want him along the length of the corner, you can increase the angle of the poles to make it wider.

Do the exercise from both directions as horses can run out more easily on one rein more than the other! Or, like you may have a weaker side on which you do not drive the horse as positively, they may do too. Be aware of your, or your horse's, weakness at this early stage, so you can improve your performance at home rather than having a disappointing run-out on the cross-country course. 🐾

When jumping a corner, pick a place to jump it and focus on it during your approach. You may also find it useful to change your whip into the hand facing the outside, or pointed end, of the corner



Increase the angle of the corner by moving the jump poles as you become more confident

ADAM FANTHORPE



K. RANDALL

Townend's tips when out on the XC schooling course



K RANDALL



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Warm up in canter, practicing your jumping position and two point seat. Increase and decrease your pace in the canter. Keep it basic!

Keep as good, steady and regular a rhythm as possible. You can always quicken up once you gain more confidence.

To start, jump a few fences several times from different approaches, like a log, so it can be jumped easily, maintaining your canter rhythm and stride.

Always move forward to a fence out of a balanced canter. So think forward rather than rush.

Be positive with your hand and leg when you are approaching a combination such as a rail-ditch-rail or double of fences and guide your horse through the elements positively.

You can always sit back in the saddle the last few strides in front of the fence to reinforce the message that your horse must go forward to the fence.

Don't be afraid of jumping around in a slower rhythm in which you feel comfortable. That way you will take as few a number of pulls before a fence, which can unsettle your horse and disturb your rhythm.

Try and save time at fences rather than inbetween fences. You can do this by settling into a rhythm you are happy with so you don't have to do too much setting up for the fence.

Always go cross country in a breastplate, martingale or neck strap so you have some extra security if you need it.

“SETTING THE RIGHT PACE IS THE KEY TO A COMFORTABLE RIDE”

Water

Walk into it at first and stand in the water, let your horse play by splashing or putting his nose in it, so he knows it is OK. Then walk through it a few times from different approaches, so he knows there is no issue and becomes relaxed. 🐾

Yogi's tips for across country riding

The purpose of schooling cross-country is to build confidence in horse and rider and get used to the different types of fences you will encounter when competing. You will also experience different types of terrain and going. When out on a cross-country schooling ground, try the following:

🐾 Practice you and your horse's ability to 'change gear' in order to approach different types of fences at the correct pace. Remember that it is you, the rider, who is responsible for the correct gear and line.

🐾 Learn to judge the correct pace by using a stopwatch. Measure out a distance, and then time yourself cantering along that line. Your coach can help you with this.

🐾 Perfect your position. You should be out of the saddle in a three point seat between fences and then change to come closer to the saddle, or sitting down in the saddle, when approaching a fence, three or four strides out. The lower leg should be at the girth with the stirrup leather hanging straight down and the stirrup on the widest part of the foot. The

rider should be positioned in the middle of the horse and never in front of the horse's movement. On the approach, imagine having 2/3 of the horse in front of you and in certain situations, such as water or drops, allow the reins to slip through your hands and the lower leg to go forward. After the fence, go with the horse and move him forward away from the fence.

Looking at the fence as a whole, and looking beyond the fence, will assist you in choosing the correct line through and then away from that fence to the next obstacle. 🐾



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What can I wear for cross country?



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Cross country

- Protective headwear with cover
- X-C colours
- White, buff or fawn breeches
- Plain black or brown boots, leather gaiters with matching boots (not half chaps)
- Body protector

General

Protective headwear (hats)

Must be tagged by the secretary on arrival.

A hat equivalent to one of the following standards is compulsory for show jumping and cross country (including warm-up):

British All PAS 015, BSEN1384 (provided they are Kitemarked or SEI)

European EN1384 (provided they are Kitemarked or SEI)

American All SEI ASTM 95, ASTM F1163 and SNELL E2001

Australian & New Zealand All AS/NZS 3838 1998

Whips	Jewellery	Hair
No longer than 75cm in length	No facial jewellery should be worn while riding (at any stage)	In the interests of safety long hair should be secured appropriately

Spurs

Spurs are only compulsory in Advanced and all FEI 2*, 3* and 4* dressage tests.

Spurs capable of wounding a horse are forbidden. Excessive use of spurs is forbidden. Spurs must be of smooth metal. If there is a shank it must not be more than 3.5cm long, must point only towards the rear and the end of a shank must be blunt. If the shank is curved, the spurs must be worn only with the shank directed downwards. Metal or plastic spurs with round hard plastic or metal knobs are allowed ("Impuls" spur). "Dummy spurs" with no shank are allowed. Spurs that have a smooth rotating rubber or plastic ball on the shank are permitted.

Rowels are not permitted for the cross country phase.

Different approaches to fences

In principle, there are four types of approaches to practice:

🐾 Sloping fences with a good ground line, for example a steeplechase fence or ascending spread. These types of fences can be jumped out of the horse's galloping stride and rhythm and should not require too much setting up or gear change.

🐾 Single fences with an upright front, for example an oxer or gate. These require a certain amount of precision so you need to set up and approach at a steadier, more controlled canter.

🐾 Steps up and flat ascending spreads, for example, a triple bar. Here you need to be able to change down a gear, create a rounder bouncier stride so as to approach the obstacle on a slightly accelerating stride.

🐾 Problem fences, for example bounces, drops, combinations, water. Here you need to change down a couple of gears to go slow enough for the horse to see what is there, figure out what to do and then do it, but still create enough forward impulsion so that your horse will take on the obstacle. Look for third gear in a short bouncy stride, taking you into the fence.



DAVID BURTON

Steeplechase fence



Upright fence

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FIONA SCOTT MAXWELL

Steps up



DAVID BURTON

Water fence



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XC schooling grounds

A note on cross-country schooling

Go to as many cross-country schooling venues as possible before entering your first event – that way you will come across a great variety of fences.

Always choose a venue that offers a variety of fences in different heights and also ask them if they have been designed and built by a BE Accredited Course Designer and Builder. That way they will be built to a certain standard, plus they will be similar types of fences to what you will see on a BE course. Many schooling venues that run BE events will use some portable fences on their schooling grounds which they may move around to different locations, so as to preserve the better going.

Please Note: *Please find opposite a list of cross-Country schooling grounds. Although many of the venues listed will organise BE affiliated events which are run to BE Rules and Guidelines, a listing here does not mean the schooling ground has been approved by BE and therefore BE takes no responsibility or liability for its use.*

Before you go schooling, have a look at our Cross-Country Riding DVD, which is free to view on our safety pages via the BE homepage at www.britisheventing.com.



1 Aswanley
Aberdeenshire
AB54 4XJ
01466 700262
www.aswanley.com
BE90 – Novice on day
following BE event only

2 Keysoe
Bedfordshire
MK44 2JP
01234 708400
www.keysoe.com
BE80, BE90, BE100, Novice

3 Hill House Cross Country,
Carlton
North Bedfordshire
01234 720320
www.hillhousecrosscountry.com
BE80, BE90, BE100, BE Novice

4 MK Eventing Centre
Buckinghamshire
01908 511329
www.mkec.co.uk
BE80 to Novice and 2 water
complexes

5 Kelsall Hill
Cheshire
07989351177/07809689972
www.kelsallhill.co.uk
BE90 BE100 Novice

6 Somerford Park Farm
Cheshire
01260 299888
www.somerfordpark.co.uk
BE80 – Advanced

7 Catton Estate
Derbyshire/Staffordshire
01283 716311
www.catton-hall.com
BE90 – Intermediate

8 Bicton Arena
Budleigh Salterton
Devon
01395 441162
www.bicton-arena.co.uk
BE 80 – BE Novice

9 Southcott Cross
Country Course
Devon, Southcott Farm
Winkleigh, EX19 8LF.
01837 83564
www.southcottxc.co.uk

10 Brightling Park
East Sussex
01424 838241/07787 843277
www.brightlingpark.com
BE90 – BE100 – Novice –
Intermediate

11 Ampney Down Farm,
Gloucestershire
07737 256816
www.ampneydown
equestrian.co.uk
BE90, BE100 plus

12 Tweseldown racecourse
Hampshire
01252 850628/07887 728603
www.tweseldown.co.uk
BE80 to Intermediate

13 Sapey Cross Country
Course
**Herefordshire/
Worcestershire Border**
01886 853231
www.sapeycrosscountry.co.uk
BE80 – Novice

14 Scotsburn House
Invergordon
Highland
02868 842 300
BE 80, 90 & 100 up to Novice

15 Brooksby Melton College
Leicestershire
01664 424280
equestrian-centre@
brooksbymelton.ac.uk
BE 80 – 100

16 Hoods XC Schooling
Lincoln, LN2 2NB
01522 750602
www.hoods-xc.com
BE90 to Novice

17 Burgie Cross Country
Schooling
Morayshire
01343 850231
www.burgie.org
BE80 – Novice

18 Washbrook Farm
Aston-le-Walls
Northants
01327 262256/07860 602445/
07721 001770
www.aston-le-walls.co.uk
BE80 (or smaller) to Advanced

19 Crown Farm,
Ascot Under Wychwood
Oxfordshire
01993 832083
www.crownfarm.co.uk
BE80 to Novice

20 Grange Farm XC
Oxfordshire OX15 5EX
01295 780206
www.swalcliffegrance.com
BE80 BE90 BE100 Novice

21 Hillocks Farm,
Cleobury Mortimer
Shropshire/Worcestershire
Borders
01299 270710/07970 278839
www.hillocksfarm.org.uk
BE80 – Intermediate with
3 water complexes

22 Llanymynech,
Lower House Farm
Shropshire / Mid Wales
01691 831523
www.radfords-
equestrian.co.uk
BE80 BE90 BE100 Novice

23 Pontispool Equestrian
Sports Centre
Somerset
01823 461196
www.pontispool.com
BE80 – Intermediate

24 Eland Lodge Equestrian
Staffordshire
01283 575856
www.elandlodge.com
BE80 to BE Novice

25 Poplar Park,
IP12 3NA
Suffolk
01394 411023
www.poplarpark.com
BE80 to Intermediate

26 Heath Farm
Surrey
01483 418271/07768 740969
Munsteadhorsetrials.com
40cm to BE100





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BE Accredited Coaches

See below for our list of current BE Accredited Coaches, who have been carefully selected to help you get the best out of the sport from BE80(T) to Advanced. They have a wealth of knowledge and expertise, with many of them riding at an international level themselves. They can help with anything from planning your training sessions, to helping you plot your seasonal campaign, getting your horse fit, as well as specific training in dressage, show jumping and cross country. Also, many BE Accredited Coaches hold schooling clinics up and down the country, see our website, www.britisheventing.com, for more details and look up coaching and training in 'About us'.

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Mrs Susan Hill
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07789 170742

Mrs Dawn Hollinshead
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07855 987971
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Mrs Nicola du Plessis
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Mr Frans Koemans
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