

# Try a Simple Beginner Trot Pole Jumping Lesson for Students or Horses

## Preparation

Using trot poles for beginning jumping can work well for students or for a green horse. The beginning student should be mounted on a seasoned horse that knows how to manage trot poles with a jump. The green horse should be ridden by a rider who is experienced with trot poles and jumping.

See [Trot Poles – Teaching the Lesson Horse](#), for my post on training your horse over trot poles

See [Beginner Trot Poles – Lesson Plan](#) for teaching the rider.

This lesson assumes your rider and horse are confident trotting 5 poles on the center line in 2 point.

## Step 1

The first step is the set up. You'll need 5 poles, 2 standards with cups (wing standards or plain) and 4 markers, either cones, barrels, block or buckets.

You will set up your five trot poles on the center line. The length of your arena of your arena will determine whether you set up exactly at X or whether you will need to leave more room after the poles. You want enough room for a good approach (at least 5 trotting strides after the turn into the poles) and more room after pole 5, in case the horse canters. Use markers to guide the rider's turn at each end.

## Pole Placement

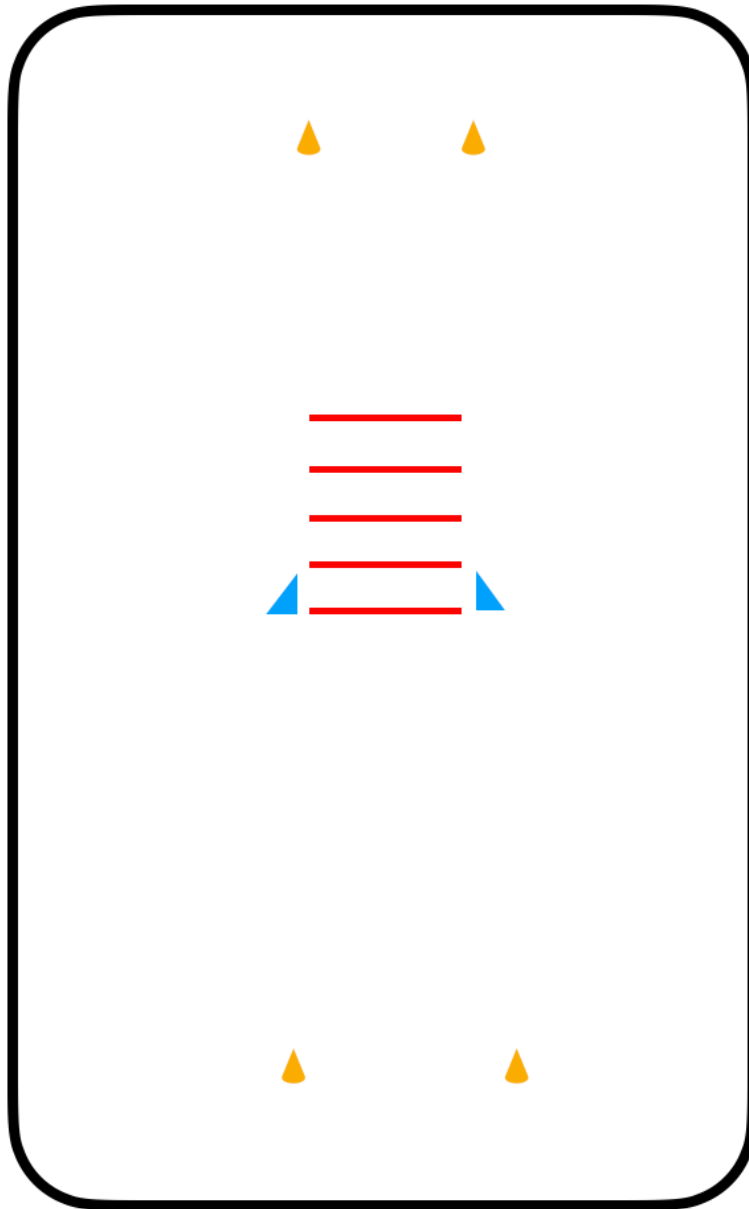
Depending on the stride of the student's horse or pony, an average/approximate distance to place between poles would be as follows:


3 feet between poles for small ponies  
4 feet between poles for large ponies  
4'6" for average horses  
4'10" for large striding horses.

These lengths according to horse size are a guide. Adjust them according to your horse's stride.

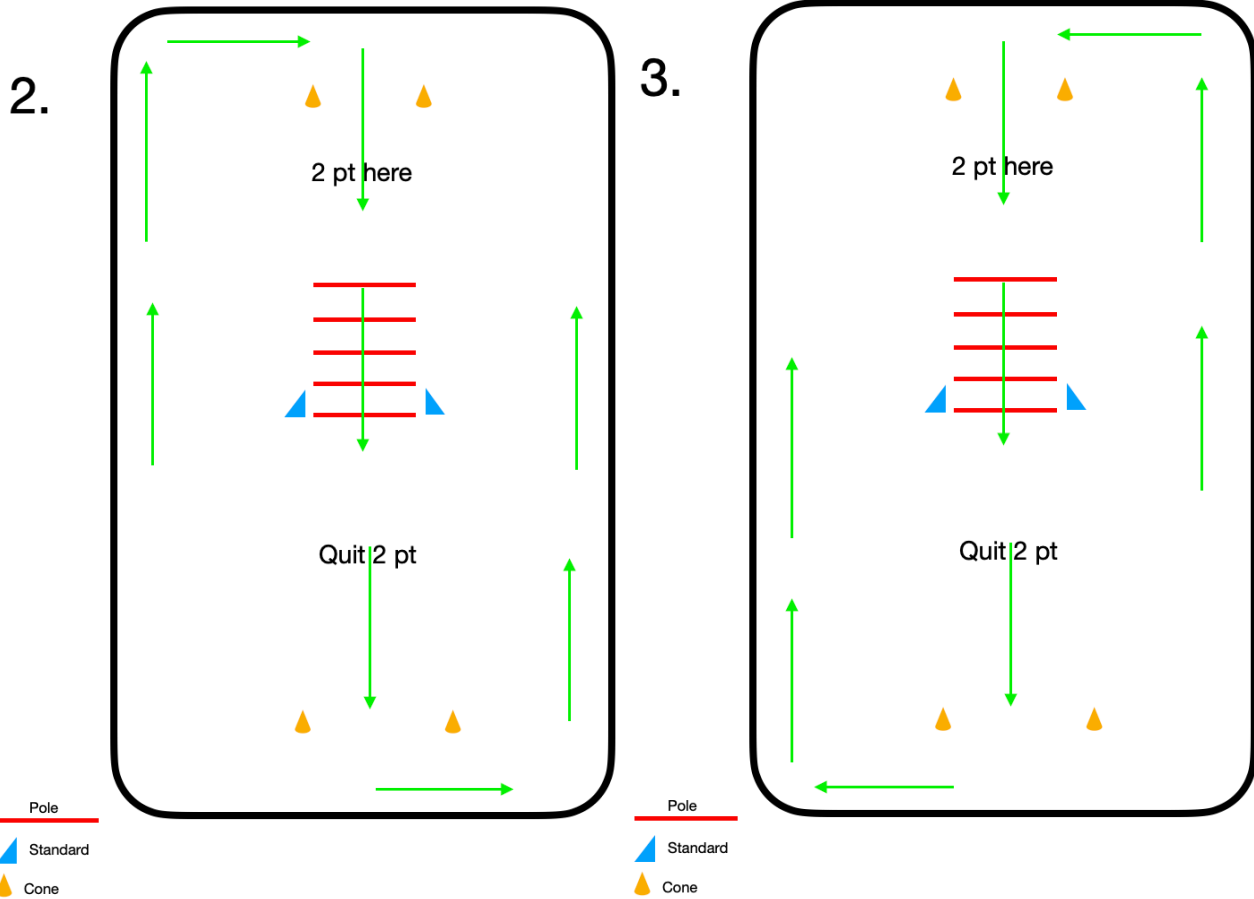
For a more thorough explanation of pole placement check out my blog post [Trot Poles - The Set Up For Riding Lessons](#)

1.

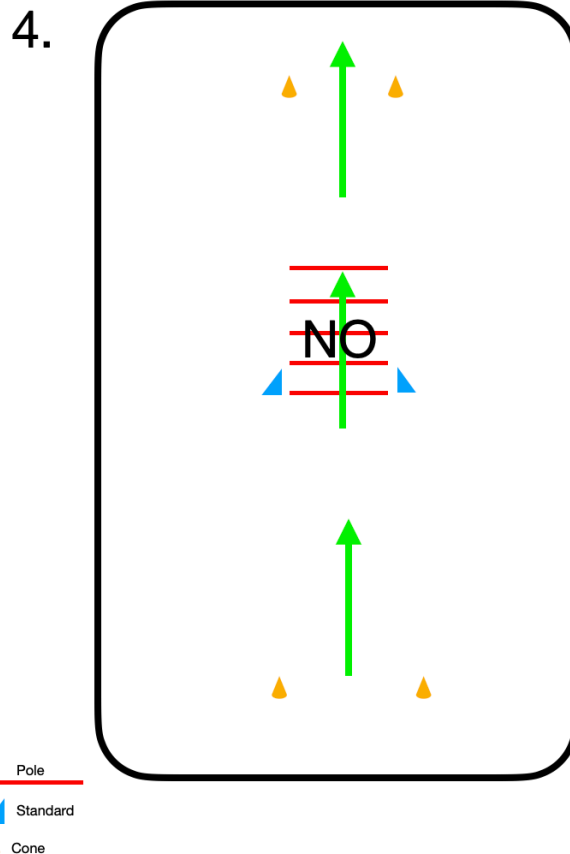


-  Pole
-  Standard
-  Cone

Illustrations #2 and #3 show the directions your rider will go. Have them concentrate on straight lines to the middle of the poles beginning and ending with good turns between the cone and the arena rail. This will keep horses from cutting turns after jumps. You can give the rider a focal point on the straight line. Alternate from right rein to left rein to keep the activity fresh.



It is unsafe to have the horse and rider approach the poles from the end with the wings as the horse will jump into the poles instead of jumping out. Illustration #4



## A Note About 2 Point

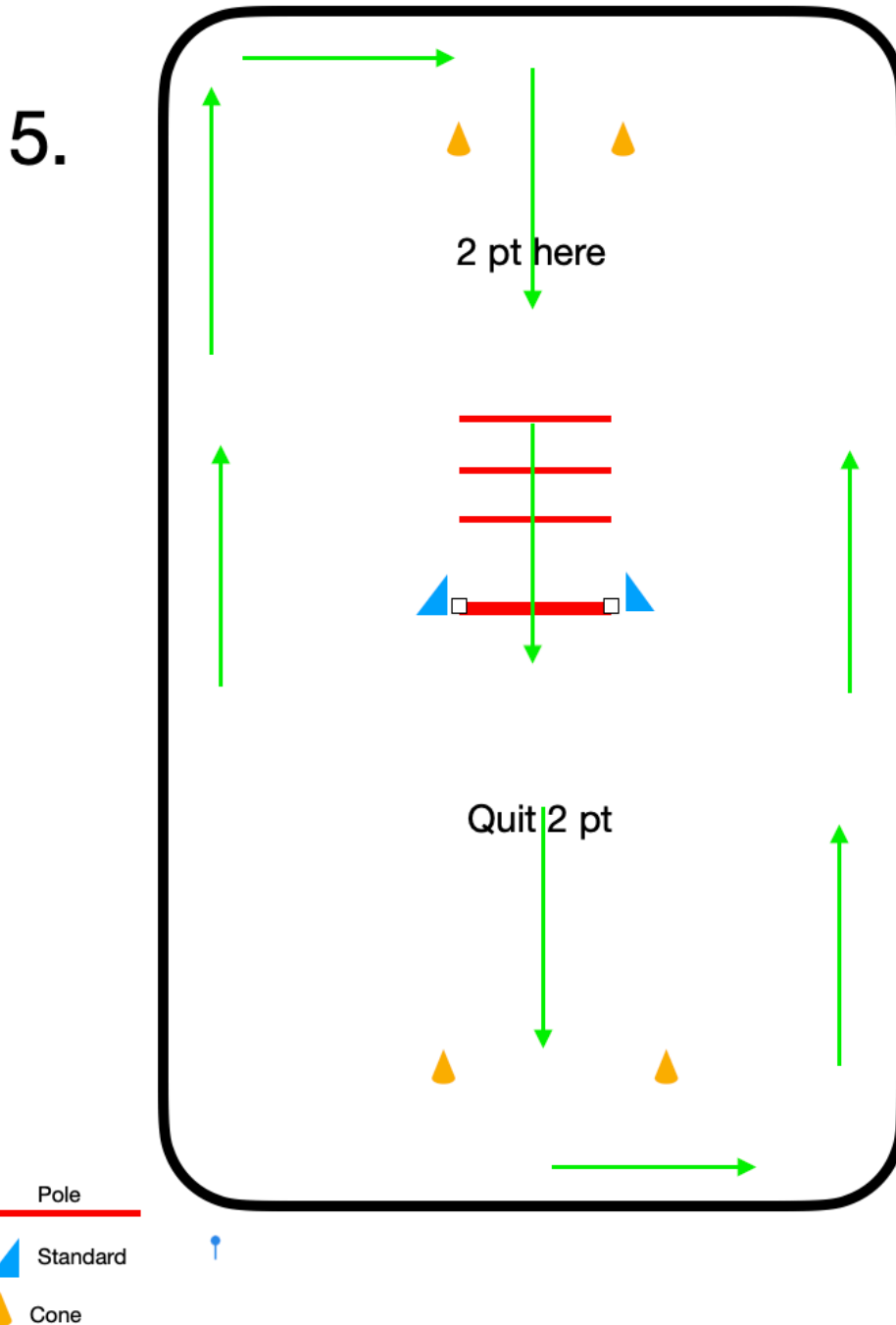
When riders are first learning, I teach them to pick up two point before the poles and hold it until after the poles. This helps steady the rider so they can feel the horse. I also have the rider hold a neck strap.

I do the same with a green horse. Holding a quiet two point allows the greenie to focus on their job and not be disturbed with the rider's balance change. When the rider is confirmed in two point and has developed a feel for the horse's movement through the poles and over small jump, I teach them to sink into the saddle over the poles. This creates a quiet rider, fewer refusals, and a more confident horse.

When the horse has a confident, unhurried rhythm over the poles and jump I begin to lower my weight into the seat the last few strides. This creates a horse who is less worried and gains confidence over fences.

## Step 2

When the horse and rider are trotting the poles comfortably, picking up 2 point the and quitting 2 point in the right spots, roll the 4th pole to the 5th pole. You will have a space that is double the size originally between the poles. This allows the horse the area he needs to jump.





## **Variety**

Once the horse and rider are confirmed landing at the trot, you can have them land at a canter. This will require more impulsion through the poles. Usually having the rider apply leg at the second or third pole will create enough impulsion but horses and riders will vary.

Alternate between landing at a trot and landing at a canter. This control will become important when the rider is ready for grids.

Raise the cross rail according to your rider or horse's ability.

Make the cross rail into a single rail with a ground pole.

## **A Note About Green Horses**

If a green horse is confident and confirmed over trot poles before starting jumping he will be miles ahead in developing a steady approach over fences. When you build his jumping experience with this lesson because it allows the horse to learn how to jump without rider interference. If your horse is hot and gets fast over the cross bar avoid grabbing his mouth and bringing him back to a trot or hurrying to slow him down. If he begins to anticipate a grab, he may begin to panic and try to get through the exercise faster.

Rushing fences is usually a result of fear on the horse's part. Run outs and refusals come from asking too much too soon, or too much at one time. It is well worth the time to put a solid foundation into a horse.