



# ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

The lesson plans developed by the Coach Beyond the Arena team are intentionally structured with **4 progressive levels of variation**, allowing coaches to adapt each exercise to the stage of development, experience, and readiness of the athletes they are working with.

A strong understanding of **appropriate skill development**, combined with the ability to provide the right level of challenge and a supportive learning environment, is essential to ensuring athletes can learn safely while developing skills in a progressive, engaging, and effective manner.

This athlete development matrix is designed to support coaches in **selecting and presenting challenges that align with an athlete's current abilities**, thereby promoting efficient learning, confidence, and long-term skill acquisition.

The following page details the **Recommended Practice Conditions** (where, and how skills should be introduced and practiced to allow students the best opportunity to learn). You'll also find charts outlining the appropriate technical skills being developed - on the flat, over fences and as an Equestrian athlete.



## Coach Beyond the Arena - Athlete Development Matrix

**Level 1**

**Level 2**

**Level 3**

**Level 4**

### Recommended Practice Conditions

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Primary Focus</b>	Learning the basic movement pattern with increased	Executing the skill correctly under increasing variability	Enhancing precision under competition-like conditions	Mastery, creativity, and maintenance
<b>Surrounding Environment</b>	Stable & Predictable. Free of Distraction	Increased variability and distractions in environment without pattern or movement deterioration	Similar to competition conditions	All environments
<b>Decision Making</b>	Simple decisions - maximum of 2 options	More complex choices (3-4 options); increased frequency of decisions	Complex decisions with many options and high frequency	Complex decisions with many options and high frequency
<b>Speed of Execution</b>	At horse and riders own pace	Increased, varied, approaching competitive demands	Similar to competitive demands	Same as competitive demands
<b>Importance of being precise and consistent</b>	Moderately important	Important and actively sought	High degree of precision & consistency sought	Perfection is consistently sought
<b># of Repetitions or opportunity to execute the movements</b>	High	High	As many as possible	As many as possible
<b>Risk factor and consequence of error</b>	Low risk learning conditions	Less than or similar to regular competition	Similar to competition conditions	Similar to competition conditions

## Flatwork Skills

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Halt	★	☆	☆	☆
Rein back		★	☆	☆
Medium Walk	★	☆	☆	☆
Free Walk		★	☆	☆
Working Trot	★	☆	☆	☆
Working Canter		★	☆	☆
Lengthen Trot		★	☆	☆
Lengthen Canter			★	☆
20m circle	★	☆	☆	☆
15m circle		★	☆	☆
10m circle			★	☆
Figure of 8	★	☆	☆	☆
Centre Lines	★	☆	☆	☆
Corrections of canter leads		★	☆	☆
Turn on the haunches			★	☆
Simple change of lead		★	☆	☆
Speed play at canter			★	☆
Riding without stirrups		★	☆	☆

★	<i>Skill is being Acquired</i>
☆	<i>Skill is being Consolidated</i>
☆	<i>Skill is being Refined</i>
☆	<i>Skill is being Maintained</i>



## Flatwork Skills - Continued

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Flying changes			★	★
Counter canter				★
Leg Yielding		★	★	★
Shoulder In			★	★
Rhythm	★	★	★	★
Suppleness		★	★	★
Contact		★	★	★
Impulsion		★	★	★
Straightness		★	★	★
Collection				★

★	<i>Skill is being Acquired</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Consolidated</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Refined</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Maintained</i>



## Over Fences Skills

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Learn and ride a course of jumps		★	★	★
Cross Rails		★	★	★
Verticals		★	★	★
Oxers			★	★
Planks			★	★
Combinations			★	★
Liverpool				★
Triple bar				★
Wall				★
Skinny			★	★
Banks				★
Riding a Course of XC Jumps		★	★	★
Jumping in and out of changing light		★	★	★
Riding through Water		★	★	★
Brush Fences			★	★

★	<i>Skill is being Acquired</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Consolidated</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Refined</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Maintained</i>



## Over Fences Skills - Continued

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Bank Up		★	★	★
Drop fence		★	★	★
Ditch			★	★
Corner Jumps			★	★
Angled Fences			★	★
Bounce			★	★
Riding a roll back turn			★	★
Formulate and ride a Jump Off			★	★
Optimum Speed up to 300m/min		★	★	★
Optimum Speed up to 350m/min			★	★
Optimum Speed up to 400m/min				★

★	<i>Skill is being Acquired</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Consolidated</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Refined</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Maintained</i>



## Equestrian Skills

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Balance	★	★	★	★
Rhythm	★	★	★	★
Coordination	★	★	★	★
"Feel"		★	★	★
Finesse			★	★
Timing/Reflex	★	★	★	★
Eye Control	★	★	★	★
Spatial Awareness	★	★	★	★
Aids knowledge		★	★	★
Fitness		★	★	★
Suppleness	★	★	★	★

★	<i>Skill is being Acquired</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Consolidated</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Refined</i>
★	<i>Skill is being Maintained</i>

