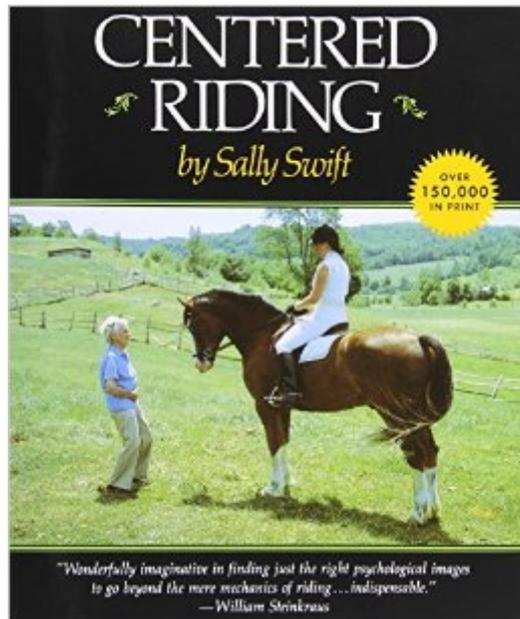


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# Centered Riding (A Trafalgar Square Farm Book)



## Synopsis

Widely known for her innovative teaching philosophy stressing body awareness, the value of "soft eyes," proper breathing, centering, and balance, Sally Swift has been a pioneering riding instructor for half a century. In book form for the first time, her methods enable horse and rider to achieve harmony, working together naturally, without pain. Unlike traditional teachers, Sally Swift does not believe in forced training techniques that cause stiff bodies and tense riding. Instead, through the use of vivid, unusual, and highly creative images that transcend mechanics ("Pretend you're a spruce tree; the roots grow down from your center as the trunk grows up"), plus a thorough knowledge of human and equine anatomy, this wise and inspiring teacher enables the conscientious equestrian to reassess habitual responses, in order to ride in natural positions, break through frustrating plateaus, and achieve ever-rising goals with comfort, vitality, and precision. Precise illustrations and photographs never before used in riding books explain anatomy and image work to give mind and body new and relaxed approaches to the inner process of riding. Centered Riding is for those with little experience all the way up to world class.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (172 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #55,584 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Pets & Animal Care > Horses > Riding](#) #44 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Horses > Equestrian](#)

## Customer Reviews

I'm getting back into riding after 30 years of an occasional trail ride, overweight and out of shape. My first few sessions were not so great, so the stable owner who is a centered riding certified instructor, gave me a few lessons on a longe line and bareback pad. What a difference! By studying the basics in Chapter 2, and focusing on how my body moves with the horse, I've become balanced

and confident after just 3 hours of lessons. I'm not normally a fan of programs that use imaging to achieve results, but Ms. Swift appears to have hit on a method that puts me back in the saddle so both the horse and I are comfortable.

I have read book after book hoping to improve my riding. Some were too basic (Riding Essentials and Riding (by Decker) are great for beginners), others too obscure. Since my first time studying this book, my riding has improved immensely and the horses have been grateful! Visualization is so much easier than running thru a laundry list of cues. When I find my calves flailing at the canter, I just think of rooting like a tree and they become still. Examples like this abound, and my instructor has been very impressed as well. A great buy, and possibly the only book you need if your goal is just great daily riding, not to compete.

I've read many of the reviews of "Centered Riding" and I would argue that it is a useful addition to any person's personal riding program if they want to achieve a better seat and better movement from their horses. I do not think that it is an adequate guide for learning how to ride or formulating a complete program, but it is not meant to be. Rather, it is a great addition to other resources including more detailed "how-to" books such as Jane Savoie's "Cross Training" series and one's own trainer. "Centered Riding" bridges the gap between the left-brain learning process, focused on a list of cues and movements, and the right-brain learning process, which provides the muscle memory and relaxation necessary for truly harmonious and graceful riding. I've found the book useful, but as some people have a more difficult time with visualization and much of the work must be personalized, it is best to read the book and find a trainer that can help you refine your seat and riding skills. It is immensely helpful to have someone tell you when something is "right" as part of becoming truly balanced may involve retraining your muscles, which is, at first, often uncomfortable. I have found centered riding has been a great tool to deepen my seat, relax tension, and become more aware of the horse's movement, which has drastically improved the movement of the horse in a short time and allowed me (a very type-A stressed person) to learn to relax and find a greater grace and joy in riding. I highly recommend everyone to check this concept out through the book, videos, or better yet, a trainer- it can make a big difference for a novice and refine those who are more advanced.

As an adult just starting to ride, this book helped me to visualize how to balance and explained some useful riding techniques. It also made me aware of how a rider's body really affects her horse!

Though sometimes difficult to do the exercises during a formal lesson, these techniques can be practiced and referred back to as I progress. Great pictures and instructor recommended.

Sally Swift proved to be an excellent teacher in her last book, and she maintains the title throughout the second edition. I find the illustrations and analogies to be excellent for my own use as well as teaching others. So many concepts are broken down and compared to every day events and mechanical workings that they are almost impossible to forget. Sally helps you understand the mechanics of your own body as well as your horse's and helps us understand why our instructors tell us to do the things they do.

I love her first book, and highly recommend both books to my students. This book has the same easy to understand format. Sally breaks down how our bodies function when we are riding. I really like the exercises that she uses on the ground. I frequently use the "monkey position" with my students. It really helps to explain use of the hip joint. I also find the "monkey position" helpful when introducing a student to the sitting trot. I cannot say enough awesome things about this book. I also do not fully agree with the first review. This book really shows a rider how their body affects the horse, regardless of your learning styles. The illustrations and pictures are very clear and easy to understand. They have helped many of my students to really gain perspective on how every little movement, or tense muscle affects the horse in some way. I feel that every rider should have a copy of both *Centered Riding*, and *Centered Riding 2 Further Exploration*. I hope that this review is helpful.

Sally Swift encourages you to visualize your riding by thinking of cartoons that range from legs looking like fire hoses to hands caressing birds. These pictures really help one's riding. I love this book, but its even better if you get the accompanying video and hear Sally's voice. A rider with back problems she overcame them by learning how to center and balance. This is a fine book for gaining a really solid seat. It covers the basics of English riding - walk, trot, canter, jumping - but also describes how to do half-halts, circles, turns, leg yielding and more advanced dressage movements. The book is a classic reference and if you only buy one riding book this might be it. It leads you from head knowledge to the feel of riding.

I am 17 and training my own unbalanced horse. By reading this book and learning to center my OWN riding, I was able to help him to become more balanced. I now have a better position and

something to visualize when I am riding if I feel myself becoming uncentered. This book was extremely helpful with my entire way of sitting. Many of her ideas can be transferred into other aspects of life too, dancing is one such example. I have found that all of her techniques too be helpful in jumping as well as dressage. Dakota is now happier when I get on, and keeps his attention on me for a longer period of time

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