

## EXERCISES

Exercises are fun; they also help to improve your balance, make you supple and teach you to control your hands and legs. With someone holding your pony, and the reins knotted on his neck (see picture on Page 31), try these:

### Body Bending, Forward

Lean forward and wrap your arms round the pony's neck. Try to keep your feet still — don't let them go back as you lean forward.

### Toe-touching

Left hand to left toe, right hand to right toe, both hands to both toes. Remember to keep your feet still!

### Airplane Exercise

Both arms out to the side at shoulder height; twist your body to the left and look back along your left arm, over the pony's tail, then do the same to the right. Keep arms level all the time, and legs steady.

Do all these first with stirrups, then with the stirrups crossed in front of the saddle, on the pony's shoulders.

### Leg-swinging

Swing your legs, one forward and the other back, from below the knee — let your toes hang down, so that the leg will be loose and relaxed. Good for a rest, and for stiff knees.

### Ankle-turning

Turn both feet up, in, down, out several times. Quite hard work, but very good for suppling your ankles, and so making it easier to keep your heels down.

Try both these last two while keeping your hands in riding position, as if you were holding the reins. See how still you can keep your hands. Do these last two with stirrups crossed.

Now an exercise for the daredevils — **Round The World**. Swing your right leg over the pony's neck, sit sideways; then left leg over his rump, facing the tail, right leg over again, then left leg over his neck and you're 'round the world'. Do it both ways — fun to see how quick you can be. When you can do it easily 'with hands', try it with your arms folded. Have someone hold your pony at first.

As you improve, try some of these exercises (but not 'Round The World' yet!) at the walk. Remember to knot your reins. This keeps them tidy and makes it easier to guide your pony with one hand.