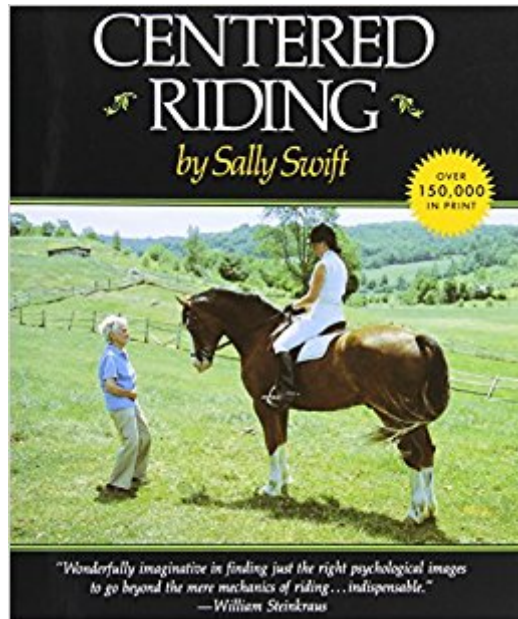




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# Centered Riding (A Trafalgar Square Farm Book)



## 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

Series: A Trafalgar Square Farm Book

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## Customer Reviews

“Even the best riders know what it's like to hit a learning plateau-- a time when, no matter how hard you work, you seem to get nowhere. Such interruptions in a rider's progress often stem from a false or imprecise understanding of what he or she is trying to do, or the lack of a key image that could put things together, working in synchrony. For the rider who needs either or both of these

(and who does not, from time to time?), Sally Swift's Centered Riding will prove indispensable. Wonderfully explicit in explaining and showing what should work how, Centered Riding is also wonderfully imaginative in finding just the right psychological images to help go beyond the mere mechanics. A work of truly remarkable originality and ingenuity, it cannot fail to help many riders attain their present goals, and then move ahead to set higher ones.

—William Steinkraus, Chairman, U.S. Equestrian Team, Inc., Olympic Gold Medalist, Show-jumping, 1968, Mexico City

—“A truly unique horsewoman, Sally Swift has tremendous compassion for and understanding of equine and human athletes. Through her own experience as a rider and from her years of helping so many riders throughout the country, she has honed and refined her techniques. The result is an exciting, accurate, and delightful text that will offer readers a new dimension to riding and the teaching of riding. Riders of all disciplines and at all levels will find her techniques fun and easy, and will discover themselves capable of astonishing and exhilarating breakthroughs in performance. Riding instructors will find the text to be an invaluable tool in communicating many of the concepts that lie at the heart of good riding. Centered Riding is a book that will be read and reread for years to come, providing timeless counsel for horsemen and -women who seek to improve and refine their riding skills and their ability to communicate these skills to others.”

—Tad Coffin, Olympic Individual and Team Gold Medalist, Three-Day Event, 1976, Montreal

Sally Swift lives in Brattleboro, Vermont. Born in 1913, she has been riding since she was eight years old.

The horseback riding is whole body experience. This book describes how you should FEEL when you ride which is very enlightening. Knowing technique is very important but not necessarily helpful if you do not anticipate how your body must feel while doing various riding exercises. It is simply unclear. You are unable to judge what's wrong despite of your being "technically" correct (or so it seems to you). This book fills this gap beautifully. It also teaches not only how to receive energy from the horse and enjoy it but also how the horse can benefit (mentally and physically) from a good rider. Only one example. I read a lot of descriptions of what is a good half-halt and how to do it. Only after reading this book I finally FELT it. I felt how my horse re-balanced himself under me in response to my re-balancing myself. My horse is very very bouncy. By end of today's lesson I could do sitting trot on him because he collected himself considerably. It was still a little choppy but now I can see that it is at least POSSIBLE. Our circles were super (comparing :-)). I highly recommend this book. As one reader mentioned, it is mine opinion (I can be wrong) that it is not for first-time riders or

vacation riders but for people who had ~10 lessons and are planning to continue riding.

Buy this book -- if you're just starting, you'll probably get 3x more out of every hour you spend on horseback! Even if you aren't, I'm sure it's worth the \$10 or so... your horse will probably thank you for it, too. I bought this just before I started riding lessons and devoured it. It's fun to read and extremely helpful. Coincidentally, on my third lesson or so, my instructor suggested that if I were to get just one riding book, I should buy this book called *Centered Riding* by Sally Swift... I told her I already had it, and we laughed.

Anyone that wants to ride well and really desires to stay out of their horses way will enjoy and benefit from the principles Sally teaches. Her methods also have a positive crossover effect on one's posture in everyday life. This DVD and/or book will benefit Western and English riders as a "Balanced Seat" is the universal prerequisite to good riding. I had borrowed the book years ago and recently bought the DVD for my library. Because I work alone and do not have access to many qualified trainers and clinics; books and DVDs are my teachers. The DVD is good for quick "see how". The sound and picture quality of the DVD was good. I do think however, the book provides much more insight and detail. If you are a "high achiever" into detail I would get the book first. As your balance improves your horse will thank you and as we all know "if your horse ain't happy...no one's happy!"

Being a novice rider who has been interested in zen methods and meditations for years, I would have bought this book even if it contained only this one piece of advice that I've seen in no other publication. The advice: Ask someone to check your posture while you're sitting on the horse, looking at you from behind because one side is usually stronger than the other and the stronger side tends to be shorter. This unevenness can be observed from the back because the line of the spine and the pant's seam do not come over the horse's backbone. The author then explains how to correct this problem, even though it feels wrong at first and it takes time to become comfortable with balanced riding. Sally Swift's use of visualization to practice correct breathing, maintain soft eyes, etc. is also quite useful to me, because it gives me a way to direct my attention to the discipline at hand and less to trying so hard to do it right. "*Centered Riding*" is a book that I was thrilled to find and it will be a valuable reference to me as I begin to learn to ride correctly on the sweet and gentle Standardbred gelding that I recently adopted from the Second Wind Adoption Program in West Union, West Virginia.

I wasn't sure that a book on riding would be able to deliver the information as clearly as might be necessary to actually be able to be applied while in the saddle. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the language and imagery provided was such that the information is actually more accessible and applicable than most that I have experienced in person!

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.

Gives you help through visualization. To complete your riding instruction with good hints for improving your overall riding experience

**BEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN FOR SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO LEARN TO RIDE CORRECTLY**

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