

The Eyes Have It!

Each time I ride I need to remind myself of how my eyes impact my position and my horse's performance. For years I can remember the various trainers that I would work with would tell me to look up, focus on where I was going and not look down to find my diagonals or leads. They encouraged me to think about my head being attached to a string like a puppet and to stretch my frame up so that I wouldn't collapse in my mid section. My geldings were tolerant and put up with my poor habits but my little red-headed mare is far too sensitive for that. Each time I drop my eyes I put my body weight in front of her withers and encourage her to back off rather than move forward. She moves with the freedom that she is naturally built to have when I focus and look up. In addition to looking up I also have to remember to have soft eyes and look where I want to go. This helps to move her that direction rather than me trying to pull her around (you don't pull around a red-headed mare). Needless to say, our equine partners do tell us when we need to make changes to our position to allow them to move properly. Take the time while you're walking or warming up to focus on your body position to support your equine partner. They'll appreciate the harmony that a good position offers.



Dr. Ashley White at the March ODS Meeting discussing the influence of Chinese and Western veterinary medicines.