

Written by Mary Kehoe  
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**Reader: How can I augment my education in between lessons? I don't have a big budget for lessons, but I want to keep learning so I can make the most of the lessons I do get. Do you have any favorite books, DVDs or online sources you recommend?**

**Mary:** With some commitment of time on your part, there are many ways to supplement your non-riding time between training sessions. They are fantastic leaning experiences that enhance your in-the-saddle time:



- **Auditing Clinics:** Often, auditing training clinics is free or very reasonably priced. You can find out about clinics by getting connected. The California Dressage Society has regional training clinics for Adult Amateur riders every year. I'm often very surprised how few riders take advantage of auditing these clinics. They are consistently taught by some of the best instructors we have in the region. Additionally, CDS Chapters and local training barns also frequently invite clinicians to conduct training sessions. Contact your local chapters to find who arranges these activities as well as to get listings of the local trainers. Reach out via e-mail and/or Facebook to express your interest in attending.

- **Auditing USDF L-program:** If you compete, this is a must! The information provided in this program for those participants interested in becoming judges is extremely eye-opening and invaluable for every dressage rider. As an auditor, however, you are privy to the same information! You will gain tremendous insight about how your scores are derived and why certain comments are given. Understanding that the judges are on your side can completely change your mindset upon entering at A. The link to the calendar is here (be sure to check surrounding regions as well):

[www.usdf.org/calendar/programs-events.asp?regionpass=7&Typepass=L](http://www.usdf.org/calendar/programs-events.asp?regionpass=7&Typepass=L)

- **Scribing:** Again a must if you compete, and even if you don't, it is still highly educational. Contact your local show management or chapter and volunteer for this position. If you are new

to scribing, just let show management and the judge know in advance, and you will be guided on the process. You can read up about scribing here:

[www.gmhainc.org/assets/files/Volunteer%20Info/usdf\\_guide\\_for\\_scribes.pdf](http://www.gmhainc.org/assets/files/Volunteer%20Info/usdf_guide_for_scribes.pdf)

- **Directives:** Study the “directives” on the tests. It’s easy to read through a test pattern and simply go from movement to movement. However, take the time to look at the next column over to the right and the Directive will explain exactly what is being judged in every single movement in the test. Also take time to read the “purpose” of each test level at the top of the test sheet, as well as the detail in the overall Collective Marks section. These can be very eye-opening if you haven’t paid attention to these before.
  
- **Video Taping:** Have your show rides and/or lessons video taped (trade the favor with a friend!). With your competition rides, sit down with the video and test sheet in front of you. As you watch the movements on the screen, read through the score and comment from the judge. Can you understand what the judge saw as reflected in the scores and comments? If not, share the video with your trainer and ask them to explain what the judge saw. Having your lessons or clinic rides video taped, particularly if the videographer can sit near the trainer so that the audio from them is recorded, is extremely valuable. Reliving those “light-bulb” moments for even just a few minutes every day, particularly before you head to the barn, will really cement them into your subconscious.

## August 2015 - Question Corral with Mary Kehoe

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