

# Knowing Ways Your Body Drives Your Brain

## Purpose:

This helps trainers identify patterns, hang-ups, & observations that may indicate a rider would benefit from mental performance coaching. It also provides shared language to connect technical training with mental skills support. This questionnaire aligns with a Kinetic Assessment framework—helping identify how a rider's thought patterns, responses, & motor preferences influence decision-making, confidence, and execution in the saddle.

You'll likely have a few riders in mind, & that's great!

**Tip-Grab a pen & paper & fill out from your phone according to your riders. When filling out- write initial of rider in mind as this aids in observing their needs at the end.**

## Section 1: Patterns

### 1. Consistency & Execution

- Rider performs well at home but underperforms at shows
- Inconsistent rounds without clear technical cause
- Executes skills correctly once, then struggles to repeat them
- Performance drops after a mistake

### 2. Attention & Focus

- Overthinks during rides
- Appears distracted or mentally “checked out”
- Difficulty staying present for an entire course/test
- Focus breaks down under pressure

### 3. Emotional Regulation

- Visible frustration or emotional shutdown
- Strong reactions to mistakes (self-criticism, tension, anger)
- Anxiety before lessons or competitions
- Confidence fluctuates ride to ride or within certain tasks (ditches, hills, rainy days. etc)

### 4. Body Awareness & Control

- Excess tension without obvious physical cause
- Struggles to feel timing, rhythm, or flow
- Freezes or braces in high-pressure moments
- Difficulty adapting body quickly to feedback

## Section 2: Response to coaching

### How does the rider typically respond to instruction?

- Needs repeated reminders for the same correction
- Understands instructions cognitively but struggles to execute
- Performs best when told what to do, not why
- Becomes overwhelmed by too much information
- Shuts down when corrections increase

### When challenged, the rider most often:

- Tries harder physically
- Gets quieter or guarded
- Rushes or forces the ride
- Avoids the task altogether

## Section 3: Pressure & Environment

### How the environment shapes our readiness:

- Performance changes with audience present
- Tension increases in competition
- Confidence depends on last ride/round/test
- Overreaction to noises/environment
- Need for constant reassurance

## Section 4: body-to-brain signaling observations:

- I feel the rider knows what to do but cannot access it consistently
- Physical training alone hasn't resolved the issue
- The rider's nervous system seems to drive performance more than skill level (they are "in their head")
- Rider's current state affects their horse's way of going
- Rider appears primarily reactive more than they do proactive
- Rider relies more on analyzing or forcing than feel, rhythm, automaticity
- Stress changes the rider's posture, breathing, or movement quality before it changes skill



## Kinetic Mapping Guide

**Most riders show more than one pattern.** Mental performance coaching helps organize these systems so training can stick.  
 Use this section to connect observations to kinetic performance drivers & see how mental performance coaching can help riders enter the ring self-connected & teachable.

### Pattern 1: Instruction based performer

If you checked:

- Needs repeated reminders for the same correction
- Understands instructions cognitively but struggles to execute
- Performs best when told what to do, not why
- Becomes overwhelmed by too much information
- Shuts down when corrections increase

**Likely Kinetic Category:** Top-Down Dominant Rider

**What's happening:** The rider's brain is trying to manage movement instead of allowing automatic motor programs.

Skill exists, access does not currently flow.

**Mental Performance Focus:**

Posture engagement, feel-based cues, motor pattern trust, reduced verbal load

### Pattern 2: Regulation need performer

If you checked:

- Visible frustration or emotional shutdown
- Strong reactions to mistakes (self-criticism, tension, anger)
- Anxiety before lessons or competitions
- Confidence fluctuates ride to ride or within certain tasks (ditches, hills, rainy days, etc.)
- Performance drops after a mistake

**Likely Kinetic Category:** Reactive Nervous System Rider

**What's happening:** Stress response hijacks timing, posture, and decision-making before the rider can adapt.

**Mental Performance Focus:** Nervous system regulation, recovery between efforts, emotional containment, pressure routines

### Pattern 3: Attention, Focus consistency performer

If you checked:

- Rider performs well at home but underperforms at shows
- Inconsistent rounds without clear technical cause
- Executes skills correctly once, then struggles to repeat them
- Overthinks during rides
- Appears distracted or mentally “checked out”
- Difficulty staying present for an entire course/test
- Focus breaks down under pressure

**Likely Kinetic Category:** Motor Planning / Adaptability

Gap

**What's happening:** The rider struggles to organize movement efficiently across changing contexts.

**Mental Performance Focus:** Motor planning, variability training, adaptable cues, body awareness

### Pattern 4: Sensory motor performer

If you checked:

- Excess tension without obvious physical cause
- Struggles to feel timing, rhythm, or flow
- Freezes or braces in high-pressure moments
- Difficulty adapting body quickly to feedback
- Stress changes the rider's posture, breathing, or movement quality before it changes skill

**Likely Kinetic Category:** Protective Control Pattern

**What's happening:** The body defaults to protection over performance, limiting flow and responsiveness.

**Mental Performance Focus:** Safety cues, graded exposure, self-connectivity, restoring movement options

### Pattern 5: Enviorment aware performer

If you checked:

- Performance changes with audience present
- Tension increases in competition
- Overreaction to noises/environment
- Stress changes the rider's posture, breathing, or movement quality before it changes skill
- Rider's current state affects their horse's way of going

**Likely Kinetic Category:** Externally Driven Regulator

**What's happening:** The rider's nervous system is highly responsive to external input, shifting internal organization.

**Mental Performance Focus:** Arousal control, attentional anchoring, pre-ride routines, internal reference points