



# 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: Environment 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