

ARABIAN HORSE TYPE

A Guide For Judging

First Impressions – An Overview

Historical Perspective

“The Arabian should present the appearance of short coupling and great weight carrying capacity for his height, hold his head and tail high, with alert bearing and arched neck, and show action with stability.” *W.R. Brown*

“Throughout the whole frame of the [Arabian], it is the extreme natural appearance of the horse, the absence of any one predominant or conventional point artificially produced, and the beautiful balance of power symmetry displayed in his form, the just organization of sensorial and structural functions, which cause him to be so beautiful, so perfect an animal.” *R.D. Upton*

“The build of the Arabian is perfect. It is essentially that of utility. He is not large here and small there. There is a balance and harmony throughout his frame not seen in other horses. He is the quintessence of all good qualities in a compact form” *Homer Davenport*



Summary Perspective

The Arabian horse should be instantly recognizable as such by bodily proportions and carriage as well as by its beautiful head. The Arabian Horse should not look like a Saddlebred, Thoroughbred Quarter Horse, or a Morgan, nor should it look like a cross between the Arabian and any other breed.

The Arabian horse carries itself with a natural pride and elegance, immediately impressing the observer with its alert attitude and awareness of its surroundings, which it seems to view with a regal air. It should be neither nervous, nor flighty, nor should it display bad temper.

Except in degree of beauty of the head, the superior development and placement of sensory organs, and overall elegance, the Arabian horse is not a horse of extremes. There should be a marked degree of balance and symmetry between all parts of the Arabian horse, with each part flowing smoothly into the next with gently rounded outlines.

The accompanying drawing of the ideal Arabian clearly shows the shoulder area, midsection and hindquarters each comprise 1/3 of the total body length, contributing to the overall impression of balance, without exaggerated length or shortness in any area. Its body is very SLIGHTLY longer than its height. The size of the Arabian horse is moderate.

Introduction:

Horses of recognizable Arabian type have been depicted in artworks dating back thousands of years. We know from archaeological records that the Arabian horse, as a prototype if not an actual breed, inhabited Mesopotamia (modern Syria and Iraq), Arabia and the area encompassing the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea from ancient times. Horses of marked Arabian type were introduced into Egypt as early as 1750 BC. Through the centuries, this recognizable type has been maintained as evidenced by an abundance of artwork by both master and amateur artist.

Thousands of years of natural selection through survival of the fittest, combined with human selection for intelligence, courageous but kindly disposition, utilitarian beauty and function did not change Arabian horse type. Utilitarian beauty includes the size and location of the eyes, large forehead, large nostrils and windpipe with substantial width between deep jaws, well-sprung ribs, short back and strong loins, fine bone with pronounced tendons and overall balance. An alert, friendly, trusting disposition with notable intelligence are Arabian hallmarks not to be overlooked.

Breeders and exhibitors of Arabian horses have an obligation to ensure that future generations of Arabian horses will continue to exhibit **ARABIAN TYPE**.

Judges of Arabian halter classes are charged with a special responsibility of placing horses (both males and females) which exhibit Arabian type to a marked degree. It is not sufficient for a winning halter horse to be only an excellent horse, it must be first and foremost a superlative example of **ARABIAN TYPE**.

This booklet is prepared for the purpose of illustrating the various attributes of Arabian horse type, beyond the brief description that is found in the American Horse Shows Association Rule Book which is accepted as the standard of the breed. In preparing this booklet extensive use has been made of quotations from acknowledged authorities writing

in the English language. These authors paint the word pictures so necessary in describing Arabian type. Each of these authors had knowledge the Arabian horse in its native land at a time when the Arabian horse was in actual use by the Bedouin tribes, and most of these authors were also involved in Arabian breeding programs. W.R Brown, who wrote the first Arabian Type and Conformation Standard in 1918 while President of the Arabian Horse Club of America (Registry), has been quoted extensively.

The Head of the Arabian Horse:



First Impressions – An Overview

Historical Perspective:

“It has a triangular shape diminishing rapidly to a small and fine muzzle giving the appearance more nearly that of a gazelle or deer. The face slightly dished below the eyes. The cheekbones sharply cut. The eyes set far apart somewhat on the side of the head, more nearly in the middle of the head, with plenty of brain capacity above them. The upper half of the head is larger in proportion to the whole size of the horse than seen elsewhere. The head is very beautiful – not only pleasing to the eye in its graceful outline, but beautiful from its grand development of the sensorial organs. And the delicacy of such parts as are more subservient.” *W.R. Brown*

“The head tapers very much from the eyes to the muzzle, and the lower jaw does so equally or even in a greater degree to the under lip. The head is very beautiful, it is not particularly short in its whole length, in proportion to the size or height of the horse, but it is large above the eyes and small and short from the eyes to the muzzle. When the animal is excited the head of this description appears to be made up of forehead, eyes and nostrils.” *R.D. Upton*

“There should be great distance from eye to eye, though not from ear to ear, the cheekbone should be deep and lean, and the jawbone clearly marked.” *Lady Anne Blunt, 1881*



Summary Perspective:

The head should be very dry with details well marked giving a sculptured look free of coarseness or meatiness. The judge should require that the handler lower the horse's head for proper evaluation in both profile and frontal view.



The Standard: Comparatively small head, profile of the head straight or preferably slightly concave below the eyes.

Historical Perspective:

“The face slightly dished below the eyes where the profile is concave. The hollowness should be at the point of union of the bones of the forehead, and not across the nasal canal.” *W.R. Brown*

“The frontal and parietal bones, or walls of the skull above, are large, bold, well-developed, and often prominent, the nasal bones, on the other hand, are fine and subservient to the frontal, and of a delicate and graceful outline” *R.D. Upton*

“There should be a slight prominence between the eyes with a corresponding depression beneath them, giving a delicate upturn to the muzzle.” *W. Blunt*

Summary Perspective:

The head of the Arabian horse is the hallmark of the breed. As compared to other breeds, the head appears small and is very refined. The desired shortness of the head **MUST** be in the area below the eyes.

According to standard, a straight profile is acceptable, but the head which is slightly concave or “dished” below the eyes is preferred. Any suggestion of a “Roman” nose, or convex lower face is totally outside the standard.

There are variations in the shape of Arabian heads which meet the description of “slightly concave below the eyes.” The forehead may be prominent or relatively flat, but it must be broad as well as deep.

The Standard: Small muzzle

Historical Perspective:

“The point of the face does not terminate in the nostril, as in European breeds, but in the tip of the lip. The muzzle can be held in the cup of the hand.” *W.R. Brown*

“The muzzle is particularly fine, the lips long and thin (not fleshy), the upper lip well cut and chiseled, the lower lip small well firmed, compressed and terse.” *R.D. Upton*

Summary Perspective:

When viewed from the front, the width of the muzzle is considerably less than the width between the tearbones or the eyes. In profile, the tapered muzzle, together with the deep jaws gives the desired wedge shapes to the head.

The Standard: Comparatively short distance between eye and muzzle

Historical Perspective:

“The center of the eye more nearly divided the length of the head into two equal parts that is observable in other horses, from the top of the head to the center of the eye will often measure as much as from the center of the eye to the upper edge of the nostril.” *R.D Upton*

“The position of the eye is more nearly in the center of the head (measured from top to bottom), and more to the side than in other breeds.” *W.R. Brown*

“The head is short from the eye to the muzzle and broad and well developed above.”

H. Davenport

Summary Perspective:

The desired placement of the eyes provides for a large brain case above the eyes. High-set eyes are a major fault.



The Standard: Deep jaws, wide between the branches

Historical Perspective:

“..Depth of the jowl. This is very marked, as is also the width between the cheekbones, where the English horse is often defective, to the cost of his windpipe.” *Wilfred Blunt*

“The cheekbones (jaws) spread wide apart at the throat, enabling the muzzle to be drawn in without compressing the windpipe and the animal to breathe without distress when running. The width between the jawbones is sufficient to insert the clenched fist, and gives a wide opening for the windpipe, so necessary if the wind is not to be cut off when the horse has arched his neck in the canter.” *W.R. Brown*

“The throat is particularly large and well developed. This feature is not often noticed, though it is indicative not only of good wind, but of prolonged exertion without distress, owing to the great width between the jaws.” *H Davenport*

Summary Perspective:

Narrowness between the branches of the jaw should be considered a major type and conformation fault.

The Standard: Large nostrils, extended when in action



Historical Perspective:

“The nostrils long, thin delicately curled, running upward and projecting outward. When the animal is excited or in action, the nostrils are capable of great dilation and seen in profile project beyond the outline of the muzzle, giving a bold square, sharp and vigorous expression.”

W.R. Brown

“The nostrils, which are peculiarly long, not round, runs upwards towards the face, and is also set up outwards from the nose like the mouth of a pouch or a sack which has been tied.” *R.D. Upton*

“The nostrils set higher than with other horses and on a plane with the face in repose, but capable of great expansion when excited.” *Wilfred Blunt*

Summary Perspective:

The nostrils are longer and larger than in other breeds. Small or round nostrils are a major type fault.

The Standard: Large, round expressive, dark eyes, set well apart, (glass eyes shall be penalized in breeding classes).

Historical Perspective:

“The eyes are large, expressive, full and slightly protruding, standing somewhat on the side of the head in an oblique manner, and so capable of a large field of vision, especially towards the rear. The glance of the mare is quiet and expressively gentle; that of the stallion, fiery and arrogant without being cruel or malign.” *W.R. Brown.*

“There should be great distance from eye to eye.” *Lady Anne Blunt*

“The orbits of the eye are large and prominent, the eye full, large and lustrous.” *R.D. Upton*

“The eye is peculiarly soft and intelligent with a sparkle characteristic of the breed. Yet, when it lights up with excitement it does not have the strained, wild look and pained, staring expression often seen in European horses.” *H Davenport*

Summary Perspective:

The slightly oblique setting of the eyes at the “corners” of the head is quite different from that seen in most horses of other breeds. The eyes should express an alert intelligent and kindly attitude.

The Standard: Small ears (smaller in stallions than mares) thin and well-shaped, tips curved slightly inwards

Historical Perspective:

“The ears are fine and beautifully shaped.” *W. Blunt*

“The ears, smaller in stallions and of good size in mares, pointed, set evenly together in an upright position and of great flexibility. The ears are delicately made, pointed inward so that their tips almost touch, and with the outline of the inner side much curved, even to appear notched halfway down light slender, alert and mobile.” *W.R. Brown*

Summary Perspective

The ears are not set as wide apart as the eyes, but neither should their base be as close as in the Saddlebred. In keeping with the Arabian’s alert attitude, the ears are active and announce the focus of its attention.

The Standard: Long arched neck, set on high and running well back into moderately high withers.



Historical Perspective:

“Extremely well muscled throughout – not flabby or thin, nor short or meaty, in proportion to the size of the horse. The neck makes a slight angle at the top of the crest, and from that point runs in a gentle curve to the head, the windpipe enters between the jaw in the same way. The windpipe hangs loose and free, is of unusual size and flexibility, and its line sharply defined. The throat is particularly well developed, loose and pliant when at rest of the head. The head sets into the neck at a slightly more oblique angle than in other breeds. The withers high, set well back and heavily muscled on both sides beyond the usual European standards.” *W.R. Brown*

“The mitbah is a term used to express the manner in which the head is set onto the neck, and especially refers to the form of the windpipe, and to the manner in which the throat enters or runs in between the jaws, where it should have a slight curve. This permits a graceful and easy carriage of the head. The neck is of moderate length, and of a graceful or gentle arch from the poll to the withers. It is neither a light, weak neck, nor a heavy neck, but it is a strong, light and muscular neck with the splenius muscle well developed. The withers are high and run well back, are well developed and not too narrow or thin.” *R.D. Upton*

“The neck must be proportionally long, and well muscled (but pliable). It should be neither short nor thin.” *Carl Raswan*

“The wither should be high, but not exaggerated, and the highest point of the croup should be nearly level with it.” *Wilfrid Blunt*



Summary Perspective:

The standard calls for the neck to be “set on high”, therefore, the neck attachment at the chest should be somewhat above the point of the shoulders, yet not so high as to make the neck too thin as seen in some Saddlebreds and Thoroughbreds. The neck of the stallion is more muscular and crested than that of the mare.

There is some variation in the degree to which different Arabians may elevate their neck and heads when moving freely. The styles of riding for the various tasks which Arabians may be called upon to perform require different degrees of natural elevation of the neck.

The height to which the head and neck are raised should not enter into the judging equation.



The Arabian must have a large trachea (windpipe). While the throatlatch should be clean, it must be sufficient in depth to accommodate the large windpipe and a strong muscular and vertebral attachment to the head. The angle of the head-neck attachment should be open and curved.

The Standard: Straight, sound, flat bone; large joints, strong and well defined; sloping pasterns of good length; round feet of proportionate size.

Historical Perspective:

“The hocks are larger, better let down and not so straight (sic. As the Thoroughbred). The hoofs are round and large and very strong.” *W. Blunt*

“The shank bone clean, flat and short with large tendons. The hocks clean, well let down, of almost abnormal size and strength, giving great leverage to the tendons at the gaskins. The fetlock exceptionally large and bold. The pasterns long, sloping, very elastic and strong.”

W.R. Brown

“The general development of the fetlock joint, pasterns and feet, all of which are preeminently good pasterns are long and elastic, all of the above named points are larger and stronger and of greater development than in other horses.” *R.D. Upton*

Summary Perspective:

The large hocks and fetlock, the size, shape and slope of the pastern are part of Arabian type, and must be judged accordingly.

The joints are sufficiently large, the forearm and gaskin sufficiently broad and muscular, the cannon bone fine but with the tendons large, well defined and strong, then the legs will not give the impression of either coarseness or weedy frailty.

The Standard: Natural high tail carriage. Viewed from the rear, the tail should be carried straight.

Historical Perspective:

“The tail is set on higher, but not, as I have heard some people say, on a level with the croup. It should rise at an angle of about 45 degrees from the point of insertion, curving however, sharply downwards.” *Wilfred Blunt*

“The buttocks high, and the tail set on at a high point. The head and tail should balance his outline when in motion. The tail set on high, arched and carried gaily in the air at the first motion of the horse.” *W.R. Brown*

“The tail set high and carried in an arch.” *H Davenport*

“The tail should be attached high (level or almost level with the croup) and issue forth gracefully in an elevated curve from the hindquarters, and not appear like a broomstick set below the croup into the buttocks – nor should the tail dangle from a goose-rump between the hocks.”

Carl Raswan

Summary Perspective:

When the Arabian is moving, the tail should be raised in a gentle curve or arch of varying elevation, or it may be carried as an unfurled flag. Foals and youngsters are especially apt to “flag” their tails. Adult horses may also carry their tail in this fashion when extremely excited.

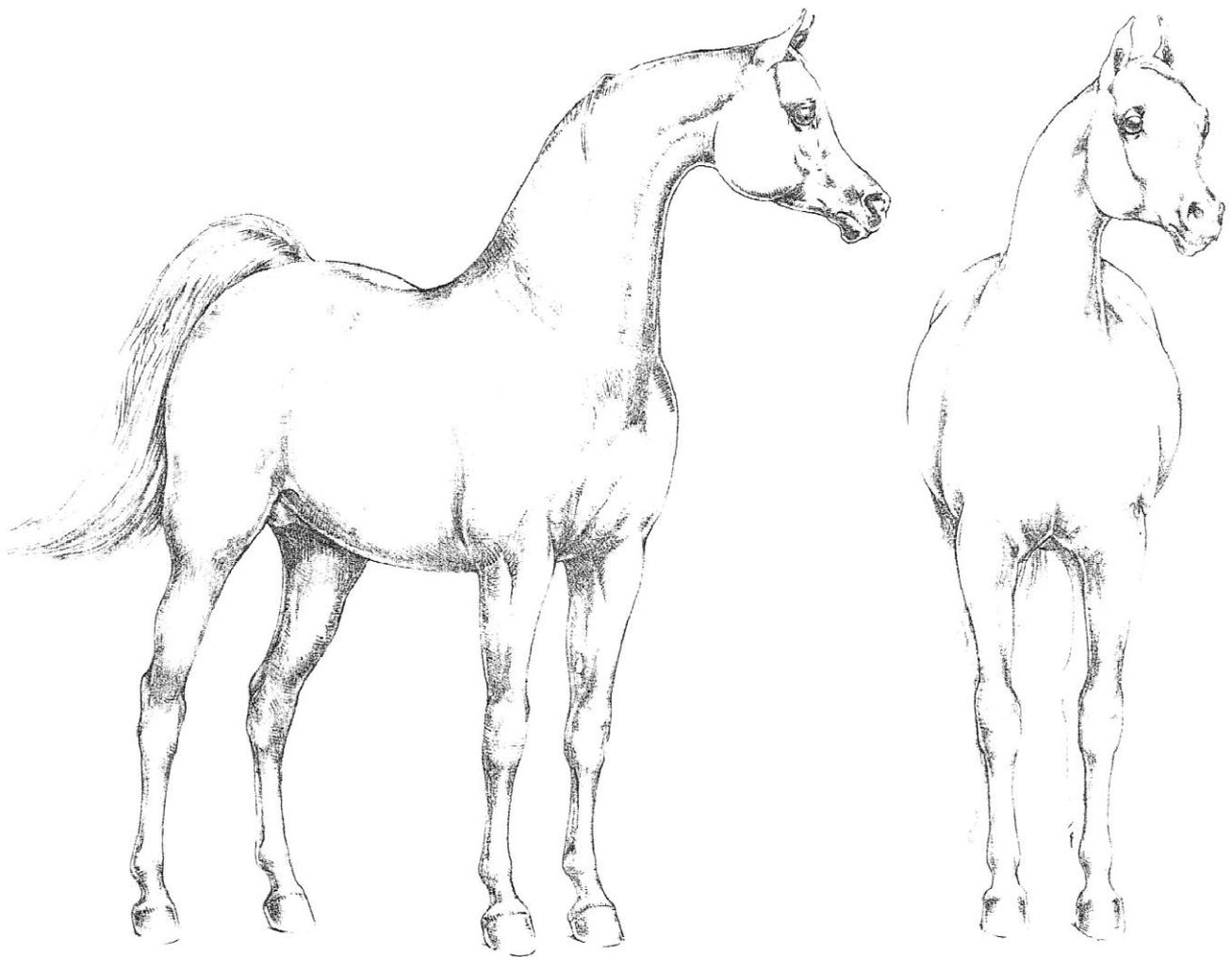
The practice of “gingering”, which artificially raises the tail, is prohibited! No horse that shows signs of gingering should be considered for award.

The Standard: Long sloping shoulder well laid over with muscle.

Historical Perspective:

“Shoulders long, deep, broad at the base and powerful, but light at the points.” *W.R. Brown*

“The shoulder should be well sloped, but without the exaggeration of the English hunter’s. It should have, however, the freest possible action.” *Wilfrid Blunt*



The Standard: Ribs well sprung.

Historical Perspective:

“Looking from the front or rear, the ribs will be seen to bow out and protrude beyond the quarters. The ribs run to a great depth beneath the chest and give room for great heart and lung capacity. The ribs hold their size and are close coupled to the point of the hip bones.” *W.R. Brown*

“ The barrel rounder. (Sic. than in Thoroughbreds).” *Wilfrid Blunt*

Summary Perspective:

The well sprung ribs of the Arabian are a point of type, rather than basic conformation. This should not be overlooked.

The Standard: Hips strong and round; well-muscled thigh and gaskin.

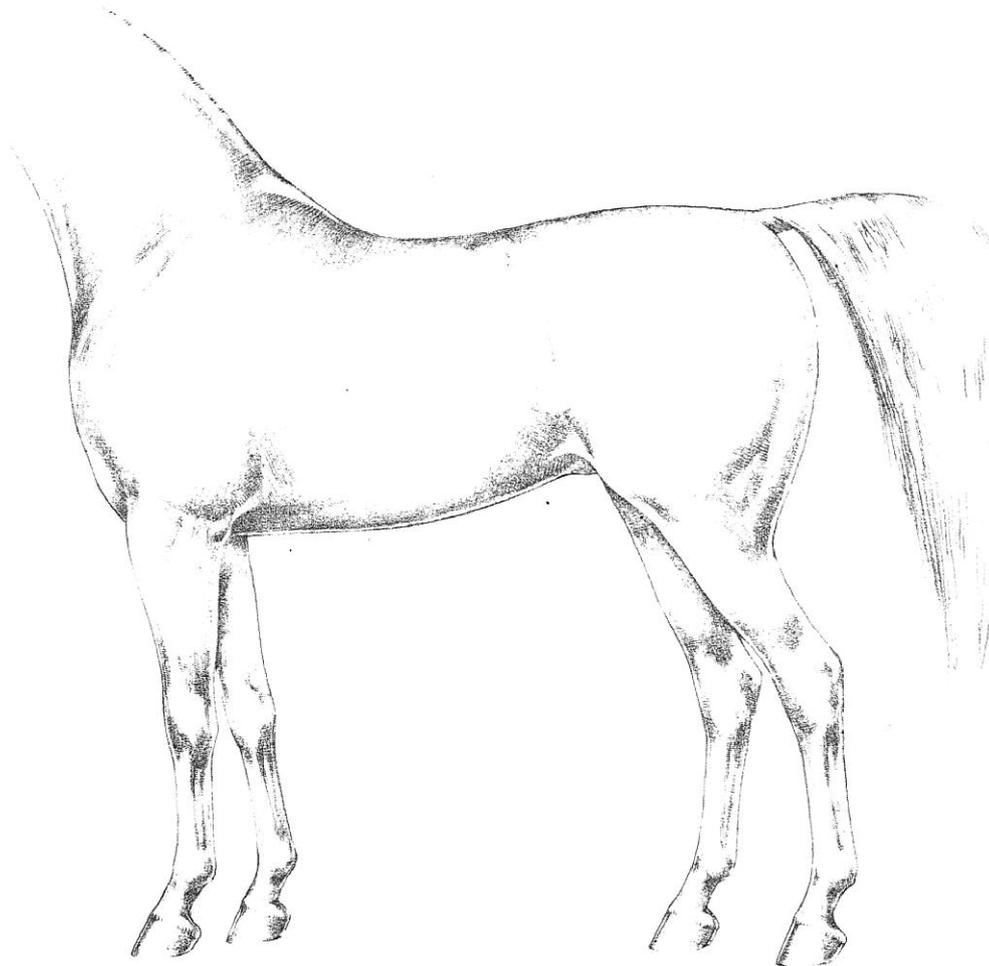
Historical Perspective:

“The quarters are wide, long and strong, hips and thighs long and well muscled, the gaskins swelling and hard.” *W.R. Brown*

“There is also a width of haunch noticeable indeed.” *R.D. Upton*

Summary Perspective:

Propulsion comes from the hindquarters, which should be well muscled, though not coarsely so. Muscling of the gaskins should be pronounced, without approaching that expected in the Quarter Horse.



The Standard: Short back; loins broad and strong; croup comparatively horizontal.

Historical Perspective:

“The back should be short, well muscled, no razor-back but with deep ‘seam’ with muscles on both sides of the backbone. Loins: the coupling of the ribs and the hipbone has to be very close allowing for two or three fingers – not more.” *Carl Raswan*

“ ..The loins broad. The Arabian should present the appearance of short coupling and great weight, carrying capacity for his height, the pelvis is long and nearly level from the croup to the tail.” *W.R. Brown*

“The back is shorter than in our Thoroughbreds. The Arab wither is high, with more of a saddleback than the English Thoroughbred commonly shows the effect of a higher croup and better ribbing up. The highest point of the croup should be nearly level with it (Sic. withers) should have a short back, with just sufficient space between the wither and the rise of the loins for a short saddle.” *Wilfrid Blunt.*

Summary Perspective:

The standard calls for a COMPARATIVELY horizontal croup, not a level croup. It should be judged accordingly. The more nearly horizontal croup is to be preferred over that which is markedly sloped. An upward tilting croup is not desirable.

The Standard: Height from 14.1 to 15.1 hands, with an occasional individual over or under.

Historical Perspective:

“The best height for an Arab stallion is from 14.2 to 15 hands, rather less than more, 14.2½ being perhaps perfection.” *Wilfrid Blunt*

Summary Perspective:

A horse of extreme size should be subject to as much penalty as one that the judge may feel is too small. A Horse of 16 hands is as much over the standard for height as the horse of 13.2 hands is under standard. Preference should be given to those animals that fall within the 14.1 to 15.1 standard.

The Standard: Stallions especially should have an abundance of natural vitality, animation, spirit, suppleness and balance.

Historical Perspective:

“Beauty, speed, endurance, intelligence, conformation, disposition, way of going – all of these and more are part and parcel of the composite something which we rate as a superior Arabian horse. The Arabian is famous for his tractability. The importance of disposition can never be overemphasized.” *Dan Gainey*

Summary Perspective:

The Arabian's vitality, animation and spirit does not, under circumstances, include a bad or vicious temper. Striking, biting or kicking is not acceptable behavior.

The Standard: Fine coat of varying colors of bay, chestnut, grey or black. Dark skin, except under white markings.

Historical Perspective:

"The coat of the Arabian is straight, fine and silky. The hair about the ears, eyes, nostrils, lips, legs and belly is thin, and the skin black wherever seen. Mane and tail long and very fine in texture." *W.R. Brown*

Summary Perspective:

A fine hair coat and a lack of hair around the muzzle and eyes are points of breed type, and are especially noticeable in the well-shed-out horse.

Today's owners and exhibitors of Arabian horses are apt to believe that the Arabian breed is much improved over the Arabian horse of the desert of 50 to 100 years ago. Feeding and veterinary practices are vastly improved, allowing a greater percentage of horses to reach their genetic potential. The training and conditioning methods used today were unknown to authorities of the past, which have been quoted in the booklet. Yet when we read their descriptions of the Arabian horse we realize that:

"Nature, when she made the Arab, made no mistake, and man has not yet been able to spoil him." *Homer Davenport*

It is the responsibility of breeders and exhibitors, as well as the judges, to assure that the statement above is as valid today as it was in 1909, and it will remain so into the future.

The Arabian horse has been classified as a distinct sub-species having characteristics differentiating it from other breeds. These differences appear in the skeleton, conformation and intelligence, and identify him wherever found. To be exact, he is a highly specialised desert product and close descendant of the primitive stock of Arabia. Historically, the Arabian has figured as the horse of beauty and romance. Bred and reared in close contact with man from the earliest records, and existing in mutual inter-dependence, he developed the keen brain of the primitive animal by such close human association and his intelligence has been celebrated in a thousand anecdotes. He is gentle, affectionate and familiar to the point of being troublesome.

The Arabian is also celebrated for his soundness of limb and ability to withstand hardships. It is sufficient reason to show that the life and welfare of his Arab owner, who constantly engaged in the 'Ghazu', a form of quick mounted foray upon his neighbours, was often dependent upon these qualities in his horse. It is also the natural result of a good original stock maintained in its purity by intensive and selective breeding in a favourable environment.

Imported to England, the Arabian became the progenitor of English Thoroughbred; in Russia his blood contributed largely to make the Orloff trotter; in France to make the Percheron; in America to make the Morgan and, through the English Thoroughbred, to make the Hackney, the Standardbred and the American Saddle Horse. He has won

practically all the long distance and endurance races of the world. He possesses all the qualities of the desirable horse and, while excellence in individual accomplishments such as running, trotting or action under saddle may enable certain breeds to excel the parent stock in their speciality, no other blood has the power of transmitting so many of these qualities to its offspring. His blood is prepotent to a remarkable degree, dominating all the breeds to which it is introduced and contributes to them beauty, courage, endurance and tractability.

General Conformation & Type

The appearance and beauty of the Arabian is in the eye of the beholder. To quote a past President, Mr Daniel C Gainey '*The Arabian horse is grace, speed, endurance, conformation and intelligence. More - he is love, sympathy, courage, beauty, friendship, loyalty. How fortunate to own an Arabian, especially if one is wise enough to truly appreciate the relationship*'.

Appearance

The formation of the Arab is so perfect, there is nothing spare, no waste; his form is one essentially of utility; the space for the seat of the rider is sufficient, and at once fixes his true position; the weight is therefore carried on that part most adapted for it. The rest of his frame is taken up with the powers of progression. Nature, the unerring artist has not made a mistake, and man with his improvements has not had the opportunity of spoiling him.

Skeleton

The skeleton is characterised by a relative shortness of skull, a slenderness of the lower jaw, larger size of brain case and often fewer vertebrae in the back and tail. The chestnuts of the hind legs are very small or absent and are of small size on the forelimbs. The ergots are small and often indistinguishable.

Head & Neck

The Arabian's head is a thing of real beauty, the upper half being larger in proportion to the whole size of the horse, especially in the depth across the jowls.

The head has a triangular shape that diminishes rapidly to a small and fine muzzle, so small that it can usually be enclosed in the palm of the hand. The lips are fine and thin. The nostrils are long, thin, delicately curled, running upward, and projecting outward. In action, or when the horse is excited, the nostrils may become greatly dilated.

The large, lustrous eyes are set far apart and when the horse is aroused, are full of fire. They are set more nearly in the middle of the head, with plenty of brain capacity above them.

It is interesting to note that the distance from the top of the head to the top of the eyes is often within one inch of the distance from the lower eyelid to the top of the nostril. Added brain capacity is frequently given by a slight enlargement over the forehead and extending to just below the eyes. The protrusion is called the 'Jibbah' by the Arabs, and greatly prized by them.

The jawbones are spread wide apart at the throat, often between five and six inches, enabling the muzzle to be drawn in without compressing the windpipe; this permits the animal to breathe easily when running.

The ears, smaller in stallions and of good size in mares, are pointed and set evenly together in an upright position.

Generally speaking, the head should be lean, well chiselled, and showing the presence of intelligence, courage and nobility. The neck is long and arched, set on high, and runs well back in the withers.

Fore Quarters

The withers should be prominent and set well back over a long, sloping shoulder. The forearm should be broad at the elbow, long and muscular, extending into a square deep-set knee. The cannon bone should be short, flat, clean and of good size showing strong, heavy tendons.

The fetlock joint should be bold and clean, extending into a long, sloping, elastic and strong pastern. The hoof should be relatively large, round, wide and low at the heel. Legs should be set parallel when viewed from the front, straight from the side and point square ahead.

Looking from the front or rear, the ribs appear to spring beyond the fore and hindquarters giving room for greater heart and lung capacity.

Hind Quarters

The croup should be equal with the height of the withers and comparatively horizontal, with the tail set on high. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Arabian horse is its natural high tail carriage.

The thigh and gaskin should be long, smooth and well muscled with the hocks large and well defined, giving great leverage to the tendons at the gaskins. The rear cannon bone, like the fore cannon, should be short, flat and clean with large tendons. The fetlock joint should be relatively large and extending to a long sloping pastern.

As with the forefeet, the hoof should be large, round, wide and low at the heel. The legs should set squarely under the hindquarters and when viewed from the rear they should be parallel, with the hooves set squarely ahead.

Height and Weight

In height the Arabian horse is usually 14.1hh to 15.1hh at the withers, although certain individual horses exceed this height.

Colour

In colour, Arabians are bay, black, chestnut, grey and roan. White is normally associated with order grey horses. One never sees duns, piebalds or palominos, but chestnut speckling is fairly common on older grey horses and is referred to as 'flea bitten'.

The more common white head markings are: stars, strips, snips and blazes; coronets, pasterns, fetlocks, socks or stockings are seen on the legs. Normally, all true white markings arise only from underlying pink skin.

Action of the Arabian

The Arabian is known for a well co-ordinated free, easy stride with stylish, natural, balanced action. The front limbs should move with unrestricted shoulder and knee action giving a longer, truer stride. Natural drive and impulsion from the hocks and stifle balance the proud co-ordinated action of the horse. The gaits should be true and not mixed with pacing and shuffling.

It must be remembered that the conformation of a horse dictates the action of that horse.

Observing Action

Mastering the art of analysing a horse's action is not difficult if the correct techniques of observing are followed. The secret is in limiting the scope of observation, i.e., observe one thing at a time. For example, as the horse walks or trots in a straight line towards you, observe the right knee only for a few strides, then the right fetlock joint, then the right foot. Do all three move straightforward or do they deviate? After the total picture of the right front leg is clear, observe the left front leg, next one hind leg, then the other, following the same step by step procedure. It may be necessary to have a horse walked and trotted out several times before an accurate analysis can be completed.

Front leg action is best observed as the horse moves toward the observer. Hind leg action is best observed as the horse moves away from the observer. Length of stride, ability to move and lightness of foot can best be analysed as the horse walks or trots briskly by the observer at some distance thus giving a good side view of the horse in motion.

Beware and recheck the playful horse that refuses to walk in a straight line or on a loose lead. A spirited horse in his play will often distort true action as well as mask and conceal poor action.

Action viewed from in Front

Straight or true action can be observed and determined only if a horse is travelling in a straight line directly toward or straight away from the observer. In a horse with correct action, the imaginary straight parallel lines (See Figure 15) should remain straight and parallel as the horse moves toward or away from the observer at a walk or trot. In other words, the knee, fetlock joint and foot should move straight forward directly under the point of the shoulder. Any deviation from the above is considered faulty action and the greater the deviation the greater the fault.

Action viewed from Behind

On a horse with correct action, the imaginary parallel lines dripping from the points of the buttocks through the hock and fetlock (See Fig 23) should remain approximately straight and parallel when viewed as the horse walks or trots away from the observer. The fetlock joint and the foot should be carried straightforward.

The hock on many horses swings or arcs slightly inward on its flight forward. The horse is said to travel with close hocks. The stifle swings out slightly to avoid interference from the abdominal wall and the hock swings inward proportionately.

Faulty action of the Forelegs

Winging – The fore foot swings inward (toward the opposite leg) in its flight forward.

Paddling – The fore foot swings outward in its flight forward

Interfering – At a walk or trot, the left fore hoof strikes the right fore limb somewhere between the coronary band and the knee. The right fore may interfere with the left fore. Generally, interference marks are observed on the inside of the fetlock joint. The same condition may also occur in the hind legs.

Faulty action of the Hind legs

Travelling wide or spraddling out – At the walk or trot, the distance between the hocks is far greater than the imaginary lines of the hind legs (See Fig 27)

Over-reaching – Action wherein the toe of a hind foot strikes the heel of a front foot. Wounds or scars on the fore heel are usually caused by over-reaching.

EVALUATING AN ARABIAN HORSE

The following pages are intended as a guide or aid for anyone in selecting an Arabian horse. Obviously a horse, to improve the breed, must be free of conformation or structural defects that may be hereditary and which may contribute to faulty action, unsoundness, unsightliness or lack of true Arabian symmetry and beauty.

However, the breeder should keep in mind that as far as we know the perfect horse has not yet been foaled. Even the best ones can be faulted by a critic. There are thousands of good Arabian horses that possess none of the conformation defects described in this booklet to any noticeable degree or consequence.

Inheritable Defects

The following is a list of conformation and structural defects that are generally considered to be hereditary in nature. All are objectionable and should be avoided in any sound-breeding programme.

Head

1. Parrot mouth (upper jaw over bites lower jaw) Fig 3
2. Monkey mouth (lower jaw under bites upper jaw)
3. Lop ears
4. Small deep-set eyes (pig eyes)
5. Off colour eyes (walled eyed)

Body

1. Straight Shoulder Fig 6
2. Lower withers (mutton withers) Fig 4
3. Low back Fig 4
4. High croup Fig 4
5. Short croup
6. Croup too sloping
7. Short thick neck
8. Ewe neck Fig 1
9. Hernias
10. Wry tail (tail carried to the side)
11. Cryptorchid or Monorchid (testicles not descended)

Fore Limbs

1. Toes out (splay footed) Fig 16
2. Toes in (pigeon toed) Fig 17
3. Knock-kneed Fig 18
4. Bow legs Fig 19
5. Base narrow Fig 20
6. Base wide Fig 21
7. Bench knees Fig 22
8. Pastern too short & straight Fig 32C & 18
9. Weak pasterns Fig 34
10. Over in the knee (buck knee) Fig 8

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| 11. Back in the knee (calf knee) | Fig 9 |
| 12. Standing under | Fig 11 |
| 13. Standing over | Fig 12 |
| 14. Cut out under knees | Fig 13 |
| 15. Tied in at the knee | Fig 14 |

Hind Limbs

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Sickle-hock | Fig 29 |
| 2. Off the hocks (hocks too far back) | Fig 30 |
| 3. Hocks too straight | Fig 31 |
| 4. Base wide (standing wide) | Fig 27 |
| 5. Bow legs and toes in | Fig 25 |
| 6. Base narrow (standing close) | Fig 26 |
| 7. Cow hocked | Fig 24 |
| 8. Weak pasterns | Fig 31/34 |
| 9. Pastern too short & straight | Fig 32C |

Poor neck. Upside-down neck.
Forelegs set too far back.
Straight shoulder

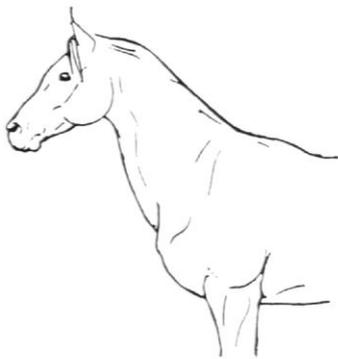


Fig 1

Good head

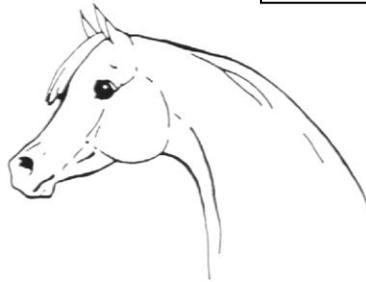


Fig 2

Poor head. Lop ears. Elk-nosed.
Small nostril. Short mouth.
Brooding underlip. Shallow jaw

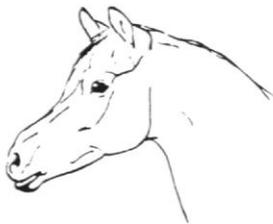


Fig 3

Croup too high. Low 'mutton' withers

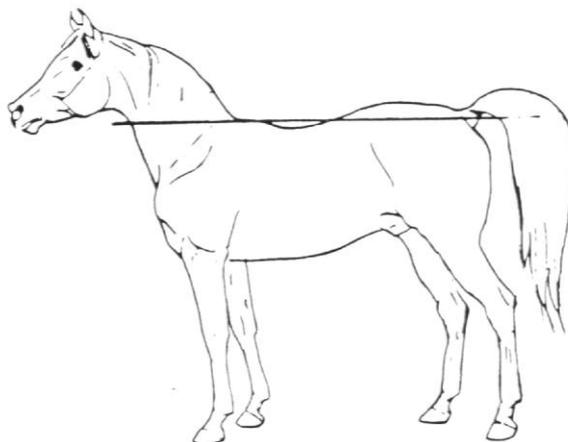


Fig 4

Examining the Fore Limbs

One should be able to drop an imaginary perpendicular line from the shoulder to the centre of the knee joint, centre of the fetlock joint and centre of the hoof (See Fig 15) In other words, if one were to measure the distance between the centres of the hooves or the centres of the fetlock joints or the centres of the knee joints, each measurement would be the same.

For maximum balance and strength in a horse, these imaginary centre lines must run parallel with one another and perpendicular to the ground. The distance between the lines will vary depending on the width of chest in the horse. The most important criteria are that these imaginary centre lines be straight and parallel regardless of the distance between them. Any deviation from parallel straight lines is faulty conformation and conducive to faulty action, blemishes and unsoundness.

Extreme width (See Fig 21) is undesirable because such horses usually do not have well co-ordinated, smooth, and free action that is comfortable for riding. Extreme narrowness (See Fig 20) is also undesirable because these horses are inclined to interfere or knock one leg against the other. Also, a narrow chest is sometimes associated with a narrow-bodied horse lacking in stamina and stability in action.

The following figures illustrate some undesirable conformation defects. On some horses these defects will be slight, on others quite exaggerated. The further the defects deviate from correct conformation, the more serious the fault. Many of these faults are conducive to faulty action (i.e., interfering), joint and tendon stress and damage with the resultant tissue thickening and abnormal bony growth to compensate for the structural weakness in the leg.

FRONT LIMBS VIEWED FROM THE SIDE

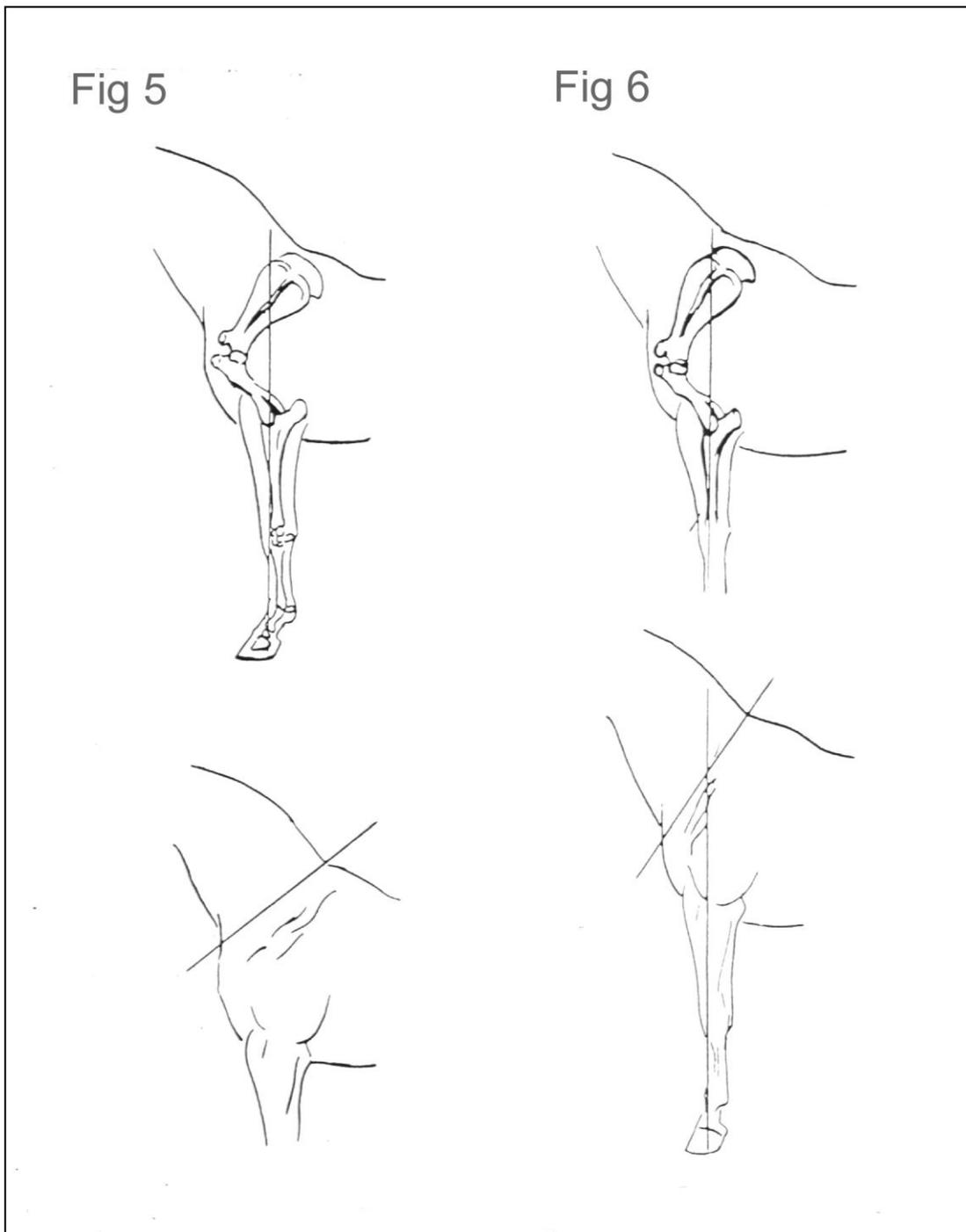


Figure 5. A desirable slope of shoulder. The shoulder blade or scapula should slope back to such an extent that the leg may swing forward easily and freely like a pendulum from the shoulder joint.

Figure 6. Straight or perpendicular shoulder. This is an undesirable conformation. It is associated with a short choppy uncomfortable stride due to the inability of the horse to extend or reach forward in action.

FRONT LIMBS, VIEWED FROM THE SIDE



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

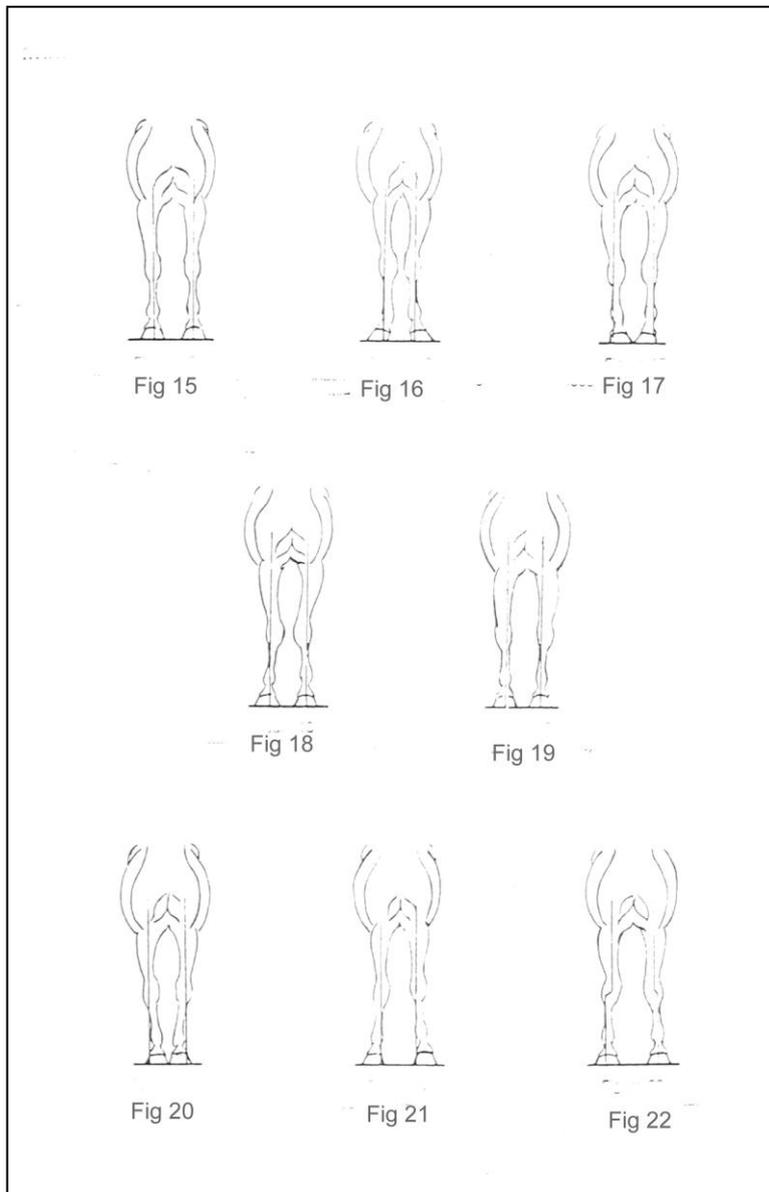


Fig 13



Fig 14

- Fig 7 - Correct conformation
- Fig 8 - Over in the knee (buck knee)
- Fig 9 - Back in the knee (calf knee)
- Fig 10 - Pastern too straight
- Fig 11 - Standing under
- Fig 12 - Standing over
- Fig 13 - Cut out under knees, bone & tendons too small under knees
- Fig 14 - Ties in at the knees.



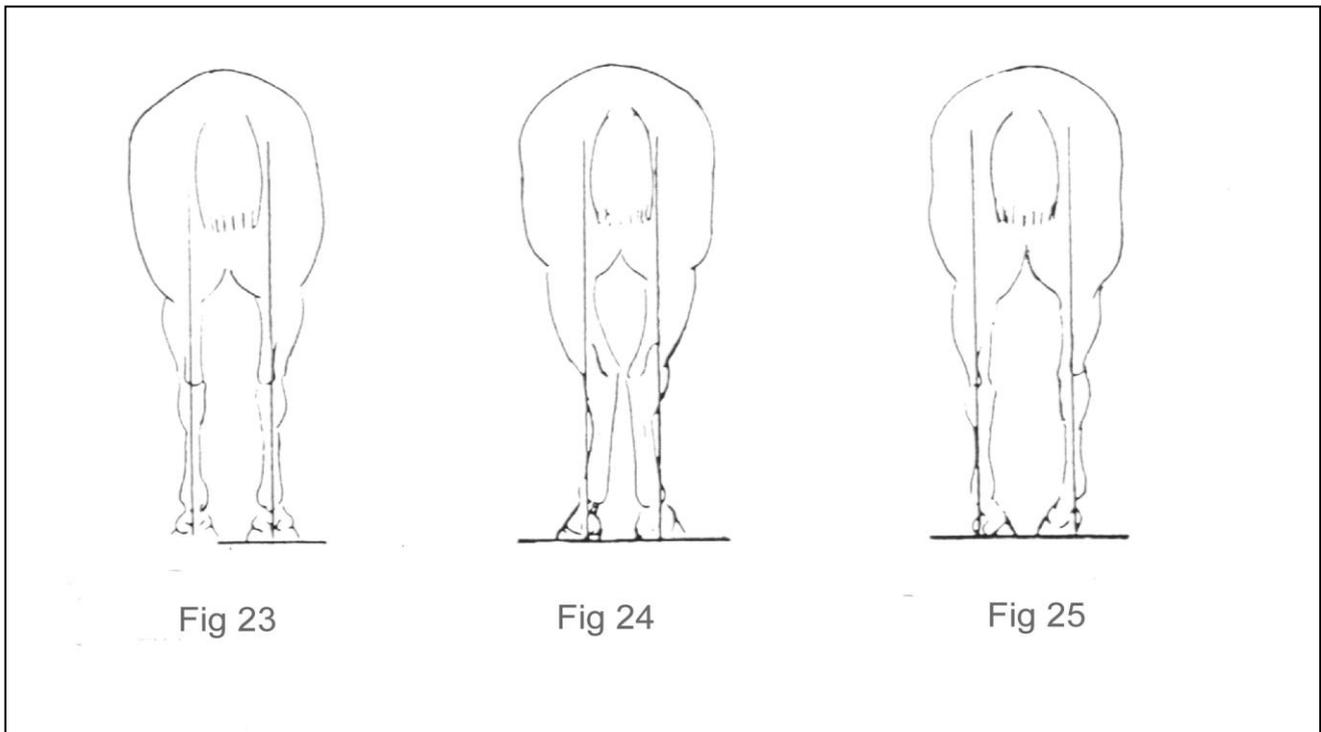
- Fig 15 - Correct conformation. A perpendicular line drawn from the point of the shoulder to the ground divides the leg & foot into 2 equal halves
- Fig 16 - Toes out (splay foot or toe wide) Narrow Chest
- Fig 17 - Toes in (pigeon toe)
- Fig 18 - Knock-kneed (knee narrow)
- Fig 19 - Bow legs (Bow-kneed)
- Fig 20 - Base narrow (feet to close together)
- Fig 21 - Base wide (feet too far apart)
- Fig 22 - Bench knees (off-set knees) Cannon bone is not directly under forearm

EXAMINING THE HIND LIMBS

One should be able to drop an imaginary perpendicular line from the point of the buttocks, passing through the centre of hock, cannon, fetlock joint and hoof (See Fig 23/28) As with the front legs. the measured distance between the centre of the hooves, the centre of the fetlock joints or the centre of the hocks should be equal to the width of the points of the buttocks.

Any deviation from these imaginary lines denotes undesirable conformation and structure. These deviations usually predispose the horse to blemished and unsoundness, such as curb, stifled, thoroughpins, etc. Thus, selection should be made against faults.

HIND LIMBS, VIEWED FROM THE REAR



- Fig 23 - A perpendicular line dropped from the point of the buttock should pass through the centre of the hock, cannon bone, fetlock joint and hoof. Any deviation from this alignment is undesirable. Marked deviations result in faults that contribute to unsoundness and faulty action (See Fig 28)
- Fig 24 - Cow-hocked. Note that the hock joints are much closer together than are the fetlock joints
- Fig 25 - Bow legs and toes in.

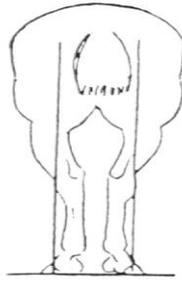


Fig 26

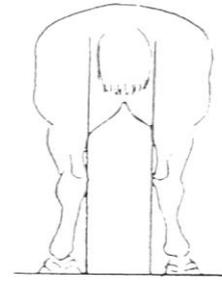


Fig 27

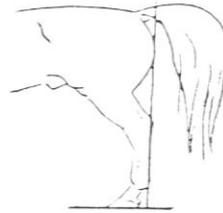


Fig 28



Fig 29

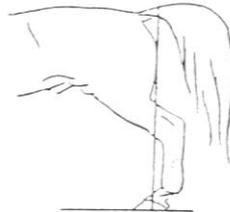


Fig 30



Fig 31

- Fig 26 - Base narrow (standing close; close hocks & fetlock joints) This fault is less objectionable and should not be confused with cow-hocks. Note that the cannon bones are perpendicular and parallel and that the distance between the centre of the hock joints and the distance between the centres of the fetlock joints are approximately the same. Such horses usually toe out somewhat with both hind hooves
- Fig 27 - Base wide. Wide at the hocks and feet. These horses carry their hind legs too wide and cause a wadding motion in action.

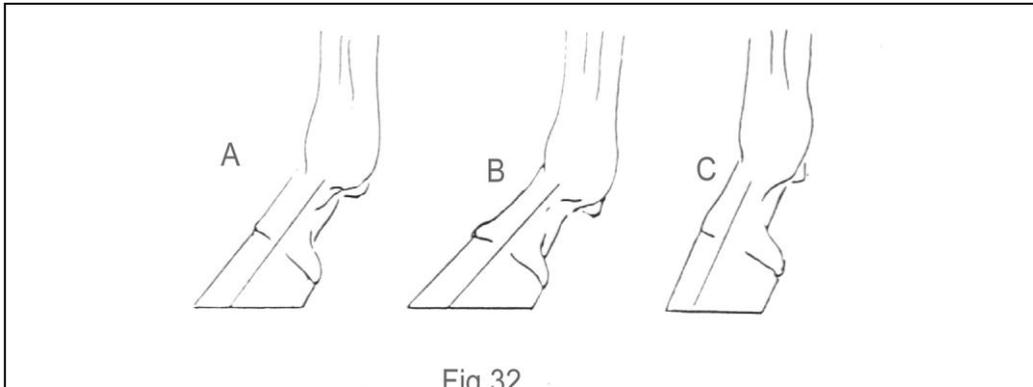
HIND LIMBS VIEWED FROM THE SIDE

A perpendicular line dropped from the point of the buttocks should touch the posterior point of the fetlock joint. (See Fig 23)

- Fig 28 - Correct conformation
- Fig 29 - Sickle hock and standing under
- Fig 30 - Hock too far back, referred to as 'standing off hocks'
- Fig 31 - Hocks too straight, weak pasterns

Examining the feet

Compared to other breeds, the Arabian has a rather large foot for his size. Unusually small 'pony feet' are hereditary and very objectionable because such feet seldom stay sound under sustained hard use. Very low, flat heels, also contracted feet or contracted heels, are objectionable for the same reason. Figure 32/33 & 34 illustrate normal as well as objectionable angles sometimes seen in hooves and pasterns.



SIDE VIEW OF FOOT AND PASTERNAxis

- A Normal (average) front hoof and pastern axis approximately 53 degrees (hind nearer 55 degrees)
- B Hoof and pastern axis less than average (less than 53 degrees in front or less than 55 degrees behind).
- C Hoof and pastern axis greater than average (Greater than 54 degrees or greater than 56 degrees behind)

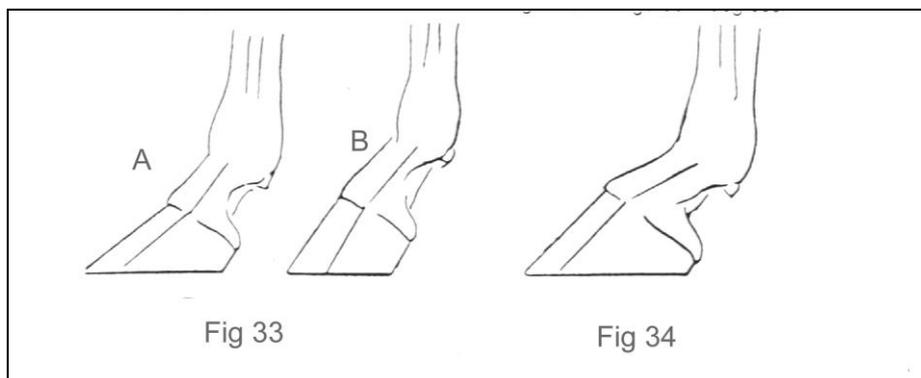


Fig 33

- A Broken hoof axis with toe too long and heel too low.
- B Broken hoof axis with toe too short and heel too high.

Fig 34

Coon foot, weak pastern. The foot axis is steeper than the pastern axis. This is most objectionable because of the frequency of injury to the fetlock joint. The injury may be caused by stress, but is usually caused by the fetlock joint striking the ground because it is let down too low. A weakness may be the result of an injury but is generally considered to be hereditary in origin.

Navicular Disease

A calcification of the suspensory ligament of the navicular bone which restricts the freedom of movement of the pastern bone and joints. It is usually caused by concussion and structural defect, short, straight pasterns.

Laminitis or Founder

Initially, the condition involves inflammation of the sensitive laminae in one or more hooves. The inflammation is accompanied by circulatory congestion caused by venous stagnation within the hoof. Severe pain results from the circulatory congestion. The metabolic and physiological causes for Laminitis is not truly known in all cases; however, the mechanical causes are quite variable – but labelled as:

1. Grain founder (ingestion of large quantities of grain)
2. Water founder (ingestion of large quantities of cold water by an overheated horse)
3. Grass founder (obese horses ingesting large amounts of legume hay and/or lush pastures)
4. Road founder (concussion to hooves from work on hard surfaces)
5. Post parturient founder (retained placenta or uterine infection resulting from foaling).

A horse suffering from Laminitis may have long heels, curved up toes and concentric rings on the hoof surface.

Splints

One or more enlargements on the inside (occasionally on the outside) of the cannon-splint bone area usually on the fore legs. The enlargement(s) is caused by calcification between the splint and cannon bones due to trauma.

Bowed Tendons

The flexor tendon or hock on the cannon is enlarged immediately below the knee and/or above the fetlock. The general factors causing bowed tendons are severe strain to the tendon and the tendon's sheath and/or actual tearing of the tendon fibres.

Windpuff or Windgalls

A firm, fluid swelling occurring around a joint capsule, tendon sheath or bursa. Windpuffs are commonly found on the knees, cannons and fetlocks as a result of trauma.

Enlarged knee or Popped knee

An enlargement of the knee joint that may have been caused by chip fractures, increased joint fluid and arthritic modification.

Capped Elbow

As viewed from the side, the point of the elbow is enlarged, usually caused by the horse lying on the hooves or shoes on the front limbs.

Stifled

A dislocation of the stifle joint resulting in a restriction of the joint and a dragging of the limb.

Thoroughpins

As the hocks are viewed from the side and rear, an enlargement is observed in the hollow area of the outside of the hock. Upon palpation, it is noted that this enlargement is fluid filled and can be pushed from the outside of the joint to the inside and back again. Strain on the flexor tendon causes an escape of synovial fluid into the hollow area.

Capped Hock

A viewed from the side and rear, a firm enlargement on the point of the hock. The enlargement is an inflammation of the bursa. Trauma such as kicking a trailer gate or kicking a stall wall are usual causes.

Curb

As viewed from the side, a hard enlargement on the rear surface of the cannon immediately below the point of the hock. Structural defects (cow-hocks and sickle-hocks) stress the area causing injury to the ligament.

Spavins

Bog Spavin – Viewing the hock joint from the front, there will be a distension of the joint capsule (an enlargement) on the inside front portion of the joint. Three possible causes have been attributed to bog spavins; structural defects (toe straight hind limb), trauma and rickets. It is important to remember that no bone calcification occurs – only distension of joint fluid.

Bone Spavin (Jack or High Spavin) Viewing the hock joint from the front or rear – there will be a bony enlargement on the outside lower portion of the joint. Structural defects (cow-hocks and sickle-hocks) predispose the joint to bone Spavin. The bony growth originates from strain or over exertion of the joint.

Occult Spavin or Blind Spavin – Observation of the hock joint generally reveals nothing. Being difficult to diagnose, it is assumed that blind spavins are caused by trauma. Calcification forms on the adjacent bone surface in the hock, which prevents the normal movement on the joint.

OTHERS

Umbilical Hernia – A protrusion of the intestines through the abdominal wall in the area of the navel. Hernias of this type are commonly seen in young foals.

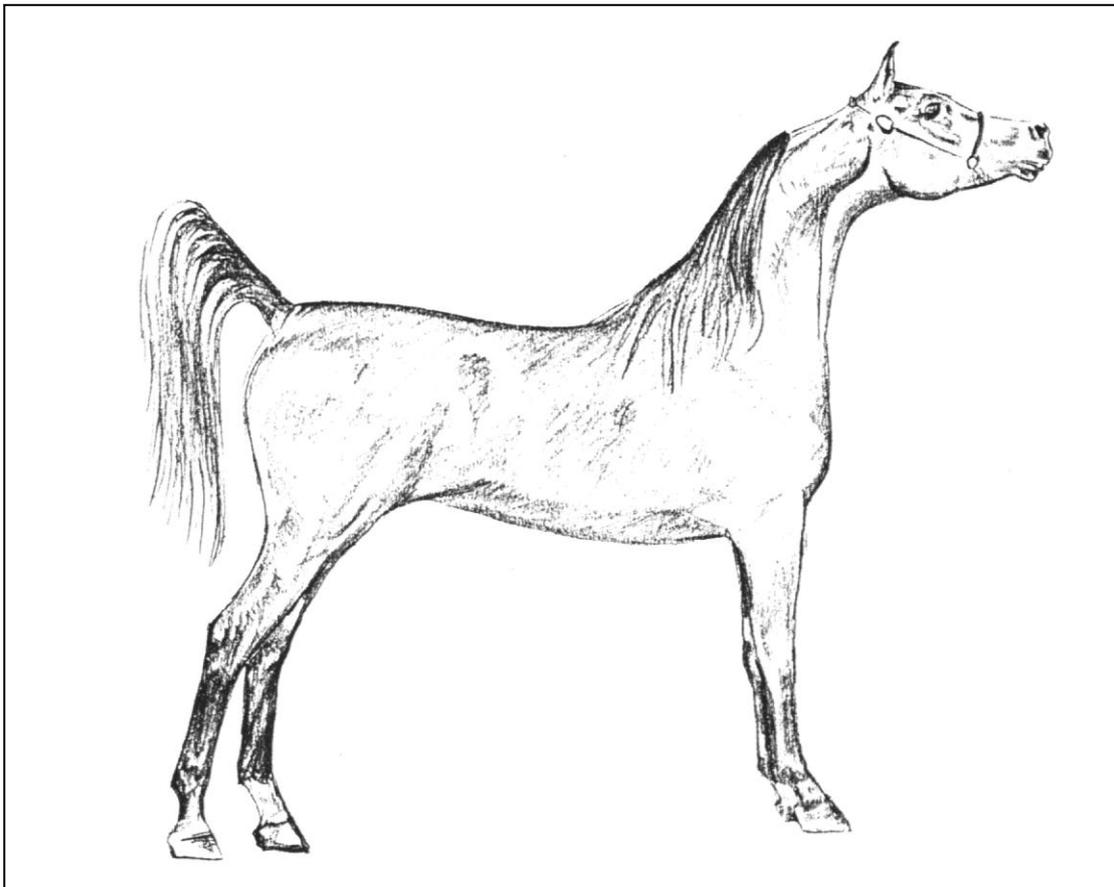
Pulmonary Emphysema (Heaves) - A chronic respiratory disease, which affects circulation, stamina and general condition. It is characterised by heavy laboured breathing.

ARABIAN CONFORMATION

Arabian conformation is good conformation on a horse that has Arabian type.

What is Arabian type? Arabian type are those characteristics which distinguish a horse as an Arabian horse. Five key elements distinguish type. These elements are found in the head, neck, back, croup and tail.

1. **The head:** Comparatively small profile; straight or preferably slightly concave below the eyes. Comparatively short distance between eye and muzzle. Deep jowl; small muzzle, large nostrils. Forehead is broad, eyes large and prominent. Ears are short and fine.
2. **The neck:** Long, arched, set on high and running well back into the withers. Throat is fine and clean.
3. **The back:** Comparatively horizontal, strong and flat.
4. **The croup:** Comparatively horizontal, strong and flat.
5. **The tail:** Naturally high tail carriage. Carried gaily and straight.



These qualities identify type in the Arabian horse. If the horse has these qualities and 'correct' conformation, we have our ideal standard.

Conformation should relate form to function. A horse needs eyes to see, nostrils to breathe, jaw and teeth to eat, adequate lean neck and clean throat for blood, air and food to pass through. A neck to use as a balance arm, a body to house lungs, stomach and the machinery to operate the legs. Strong, correct legs are needed to propel the horse as he lives.

Correct conformation has been an ancient subject of controversy and remains so to this day. Some horses that are considered beauties of conformation are non-functional. They do not relate to either the potential physical abilities or ultimate soundness of the horse. They are, in sum, quite subjective, socially generated preferences – like long tails over short ones or slightly concaved heads over Roman noses.

When we apply the popular word 'correct' to conformation, it should make direct reference to two factors: conformation that is appropriate to the performance uses of the horse; and, conformation that avoids certain defects likely to render the horse unsound during use.

Conformation that avoids certain defects to render the horse unsound in use are the most important. If the horse is unsound, it will be unable to perform any use for the owner, regardless of how much it looks like an Arabian horse.

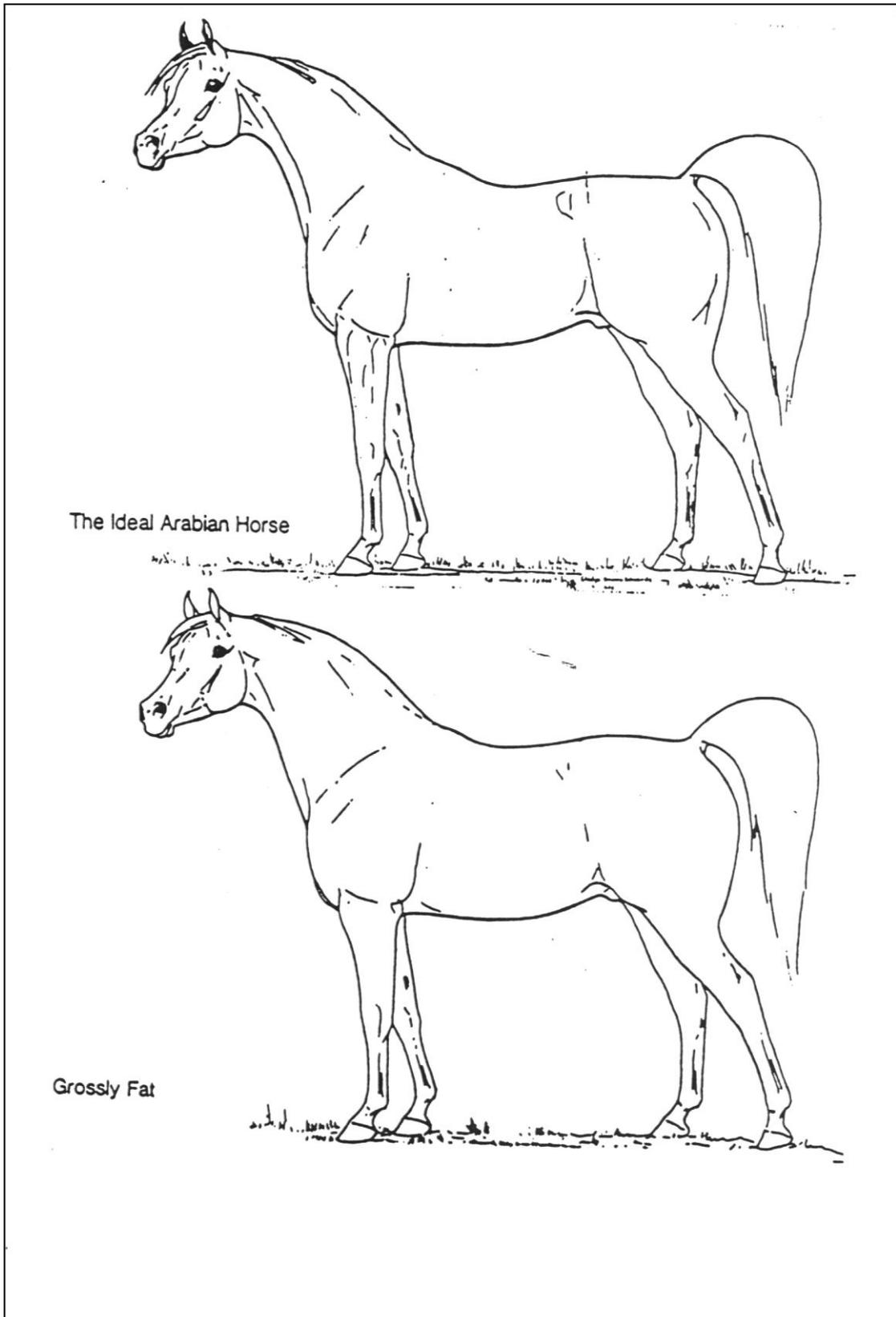
Conformation faults can be listed by priority. Forelegs bear 60 – 65% of the weight of the horse. Furthermore, approximately 75% of all lameness occurs in the fore legs. Therefore, the fore legs are very important. If the fore legs are badly conformed they are more susceptible to stress, strain and concussion. Angle and length in relationship of shoulder to arm determine stride. A longer stride is desirable because fewer steps are needed to cover ground and it is easier to ride.

The stress line should come at the heel and not the centre of the hoof. The angle of the shoulder and pasterns will determine this stress line. Horses which are conformed so that the stress line comes out in the middle of the foot are more susceptible to navicular.

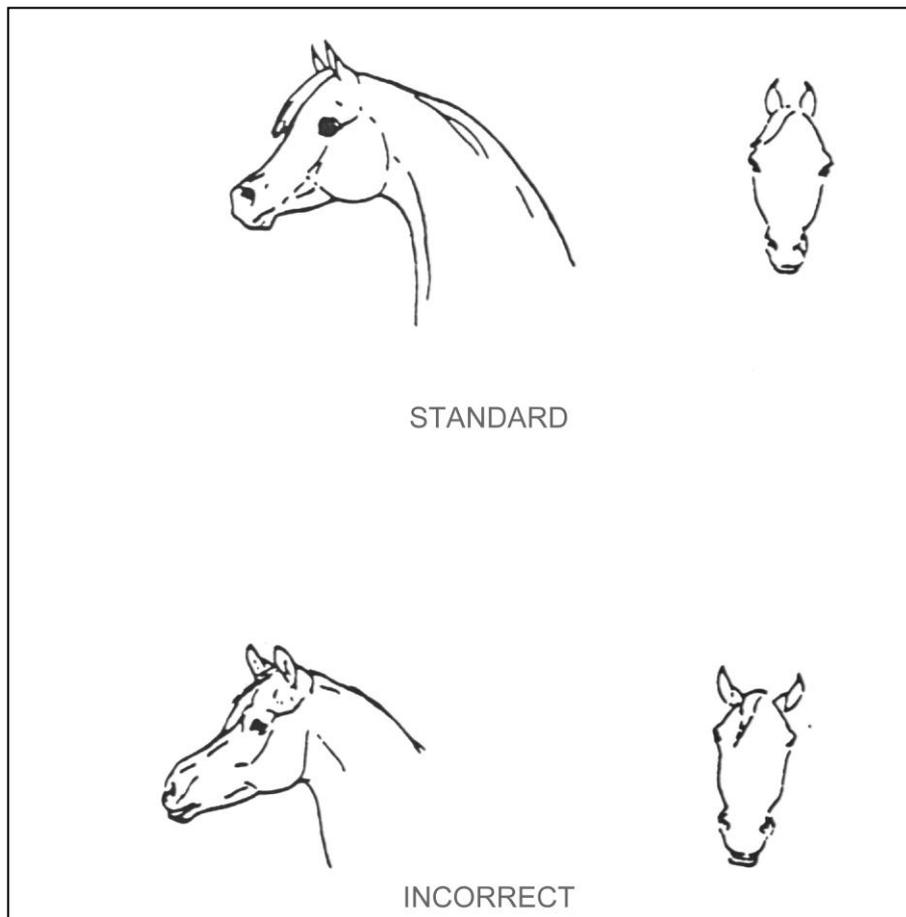
The front limb is vital to the horse's function. Flat bone is a description of bone and ligaments and is necessary for strong limbs. The hoof should be adequate to support the horse's body weight.

The fore leg faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- ❖ Calf Knees
- ❖ Club feet
- ❖ Bench Knees
- ❖ Knock Knees
- ❖ Toes Out
- ❖ Base Narrow
- ❖ Base Wide
- ❖ Toe In
- ❖ Buck Knees



Comparison between Ideal Arabian and a grossly fat horse



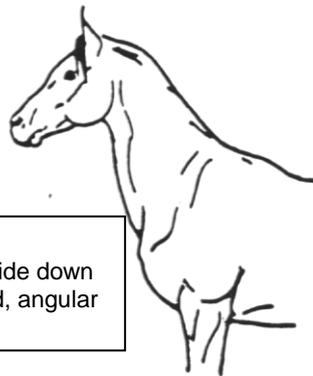
Big lop ears; light deep-set pig eyes; white haws; rise over nose; small nostril
short mouth; brooding underlip (pendulous lip); convex underjaw



Standard

Neck – “Curved like a branch” long, set on high & running well back into the withers. The setting of the neck onto the head requires the top of the neck to be powerful, the muscles wide behind the ears, the throat clean and loose. A stallion should have a fine stallion crest, which he will curve like a swan when excited. The mare’s neck should be long and light, and also arched.

Throatlatch – set in a curved arch.



Incorrect

Neck – Short, thick, upside down

Throatlatch – undefined, angular

The rear leg faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- ❖ Post Legged
- ❖ Bow Legged
- ❖ Stands Wide
- ❖ Camped Out
- ❖ Stands Under (Sickle hocks)
- ❖ Stands Close
- ❖ Cow Hocked

The neck faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- ❖ Low Set
- ❖ Ewe Shaped
- ❖ Poor Hinge
- ❖ Thick
- ❖ Short

The body faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- ❖ High Croup
- ❖ Flat Withers
- ❖ Long Coupling
- ❖ Low in the Back
- ❖ Shallow Body

Muscle seldom breaks down. Bone, tendon or ligaments are more likely to break down. A straight leg will, with few exceptions, outlast a crooked leg.

Part of judging conformation is observing the horse in action. Features to consider when observing the horse in action are as follows:

- ❖ Length of stride
- ❖ Trueness
- ❖ Spring
- ❖ Regularity
- ❖ Power
- ❖ Height

Consideration must also be given to the substance and quality of the horse. Substance and quality can be found in the following:

- ❖ Smooth Muscles
- ❖ Clean well defined bone
- ❖ Fine textured hair coat
- ❖ Masculinity in Stallions
- ❖ Femininity in Mares
- ❖ Refinement

The rules state that for Purebred Arabians 'Emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance:

- ❖ Type
- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Suitability as a breeding animal
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Manners
- ❖ Presence.

When Colt/Stallion and Geldings are judged together, the above class specifications will be used except that Geldings shall not be judged on suitability as a breeding animal. In Gelding Halter classes, emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance:

- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Type
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Manners
- ❖ Presence.

Transmissible weakness shall be considered a serious breeding fault in breeding stock. **Colts and Stallions two years old and over must have both testicles descended.**

For Part Arabians/Anglo Arabians the rules state: Classes will be judged on:

- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Arabian Type

The Part Arabian or Anglo Arabian may show characteristics of any other breed. The foregoing first named three qualities shall take precedence in adjudication of halter classes over breed classes.

Half-Arabian and Anglo-Arabian halter classes may be divided at the discretion of competition management into Stock/Hunter or Saddle Pleasure type. Each of the conformation types has been developed with specific goals and standards in mind. In no case should anyone type be considered by breeders or owners as a handy place to put less than ideal individuals of another type. Conformation type is determined by the breeding and conformation characteristics, including way of moving, displayed by the horse.

Stock type horses display the conformation qualities necessary for western events. Hunter type horses display the conformation qualities necessary for all hunter seat events. Horses of this type carry their heads and necks lower than the Saddle/Pleasure type horse. It is shown in a more relaxed fashion and stance. When in motion, the horse has a forward frame. The Stock/Hunter type should be a horse of substance, exhibiting ground-covering motion without excessive elevation.

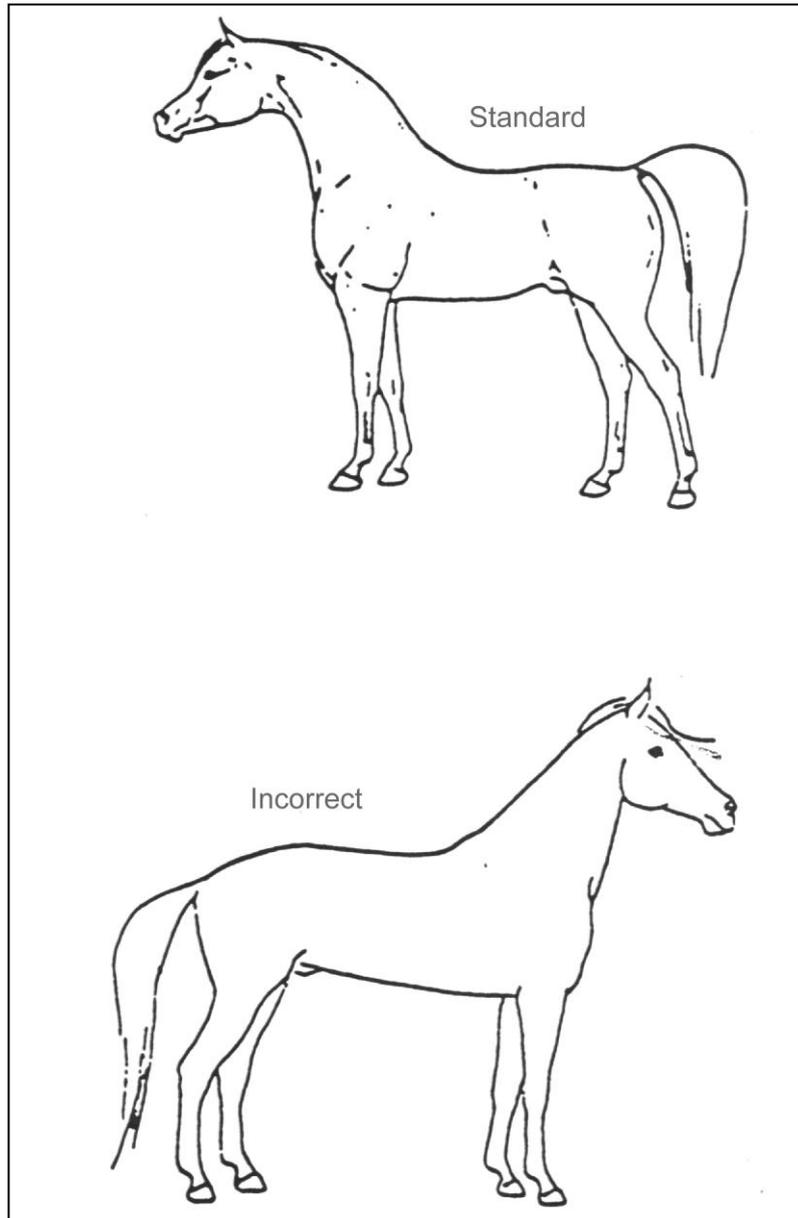
Saddle type horses display the conformation qualities necessary for Saddle Seat English events. Pleasure type horses should display the conformation qualities necessary for any pleasure type event except western pleasure and hunter events. Horses of this type carry a high set-on neck of sufficient length and set onto the head in such a way as to allow the horse to sit up in the bridle properly, and should exhibit a free flowing and animated trot. The Saddle/Pleasure type should be a refined horse that is more animated than a Stock/Hunter type.

Learn to identify conformation faults. You should have a priority in your mind as to the seriousness of each fault as it relates to the serviceable life of the Arabian horse.

Base your judging on sound conformation and type. When you have the knowledge to judge a class of Arabian horses, it is easy to place the horses in the class.

Avoid favouritism to horses or handlers. You are not to judge the handler or the handler's showmanship or popularity. The winningest handlers do not necessarily always have the best Arabian horse in the ring. The halter horse, which won last week, may not be the best horse in the class you are judging this week. Your job is to find the best Arabians in the class and award the prizes to those horses.

SYMMETRY & BALANCE

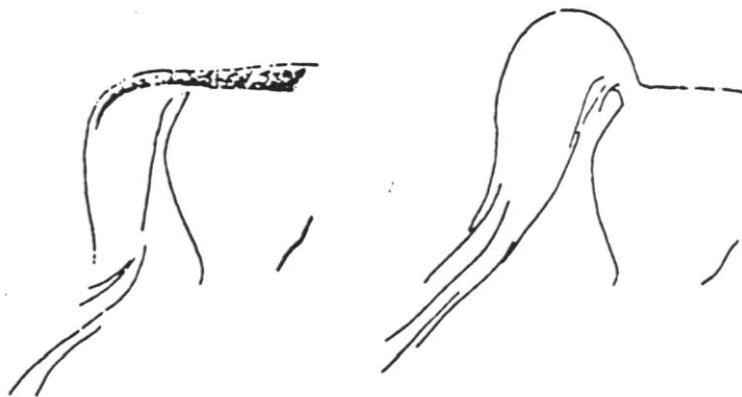


Head disproportionate; hindquarters light. Compare stiff angular shape (neck, hindquarters, tail set) with flowing rounded outline in illustration above

CONFORMATION CHART

| CONFORMATION FAULTS | MAJOR | MINOR |
|---------------------|--|--|
| FOOT / HOOF FAULTS | Club Foot Dished Foot Contracted Narrow Feet – Mule Footed Founder – Laminitis | Broken Axis of Pastern and Hoof Feet out of Balance |
| NECK FAULTS | Poor Hinge Thick Throat Excessive Heavy Neck Ewe Shaped Low Set | Straight Neck (No shape) Short Excessive Crest |
| BODY FAULTS | High Croup Long Coupling – Long Back Straight Shoulders Flat Withers – Mutton Withers Sway Back – Low in the Back Rafter Hips Short Croup Short Hip Shallow Body Steep Sloping Hip | |
| HEAD FAULTS | Overshot Jaw – Parrot Mouth Undershot Jaw – Monkey Mouth Convex Head – Roman Nose Small Eye Glass/Blue Eyes (Purebred Classes Only) Coarse Muzzle Coarse, Meaty Features Lop Ears | Narrow Eye Set Excessive Length of Head Large Coarse Ears Wide Set Ears – Sheep Eared Excessively Close Set Ears |
| FORE LEG FAULTS | Calf Knees – Sheep Knees – Back at Knee Club Feet Off Set Knees – Bench Knees Bow Legs – Bandy Legged Knock Knees – Knee Narrow Straight or Short Pasterns Coon Footed – Excessive Sloped Pasterns Tied in Knees – Tied in Tendons Splay Footed – Toes Out Long Cannons – High Knees Stands Wide – Base Wide Stands Close – Base Narrow | Pigeon Toed – Toes In Buck Kneed – Knees Sprung |
| REAR LEG FAULTS | Post Legged Camped Out Long Cannons – High Hocks Bow Legged - Bandy Hocked Straight or Short Pasterns Coon Footed Stands Close – Base Narrow Stands Wide - Base Wide | Stands Under – Slightly Sickle Hocked Toe Out Cow Hocked |
| TAIL FAULTS | No tail Carriage Wry Tail | Low Set Tail |
| MOVEMENT FAULTS | Irregular Strides – Lameness Stubby Movements Choppy Stride Short-Strided Wings In | Lack Co-ordination Paddles Out |

| CONFORMATION FAULTS | MAJOR | MINOR |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| BLEMISHES AND UNSOUNDNESS | Lameness or Soreness Splints Caused from Faulty Conformation Ring or Side Bone Epiphysitis Jack Spavin Bowed Tendons Cataract / Cloudy Eye Ossolets Curb | Hernia Bog Spavin Capped Hock Capped Elbow Thoroughpin Wind Puffs – Joint Capsule Hygromas Splints with no Faulty Conformation Scars from Injuries |



STANDARD TAIL CARRIAGE

Left, natural setting. **Right**, elevated carriage when excited or in action, carried high, sometimes over the back.



INCORRECT TAIL CARRIAGE

Left, too high at natural stance. Indicates "gingering" Centre, too far forward or too low. Right, carried to one side. Particularly objectionable.

Feet



Toe crack – a split in the front part of the hoof wall. May be partial, complete high or low.

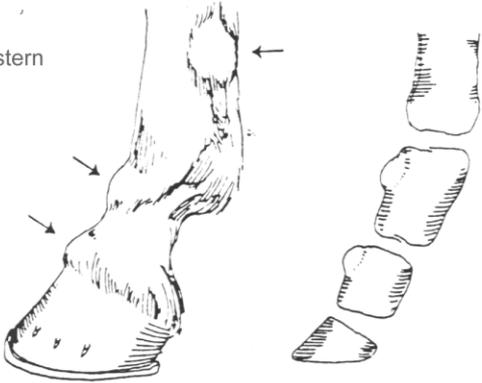
Quarter crack – a split in the quarter area of the hoof wall which runs toward the heel.

Seedy toe – separation of the wall of the hoof near the toe



Side bones – Ossification of the lateral cartilages resulting from injuries that cause calcium to accumulate and harden.

Pastern

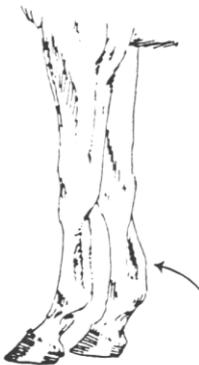


Ring bone – A bony enlargement surrounding the bones of the pastern

Cannon



Splint – a bony enlargement in the groove formed by the splint and cannon bone. It may be high, low, forward or back.



Bowed tendon – an extension backward of the flexor tendons, caused by tearing or stretching.



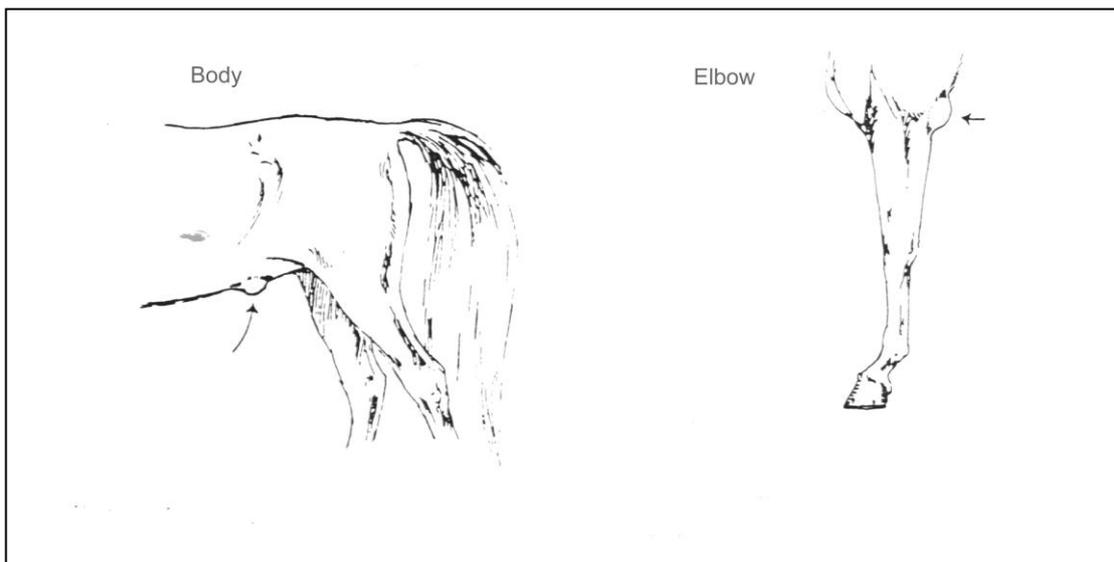
Curb – enlargement below the point of the hock. This fullness is due to an enlargement of the ligament, tendon sheath or skin.

Unsoundness of the Knee



Over in the knee – a bending forward of the knee, caused by injured tendons, foot trouble or hard work at too early an age.

Calf-kneed – standing with the knees too far back. Directly opposite to over in the knee.

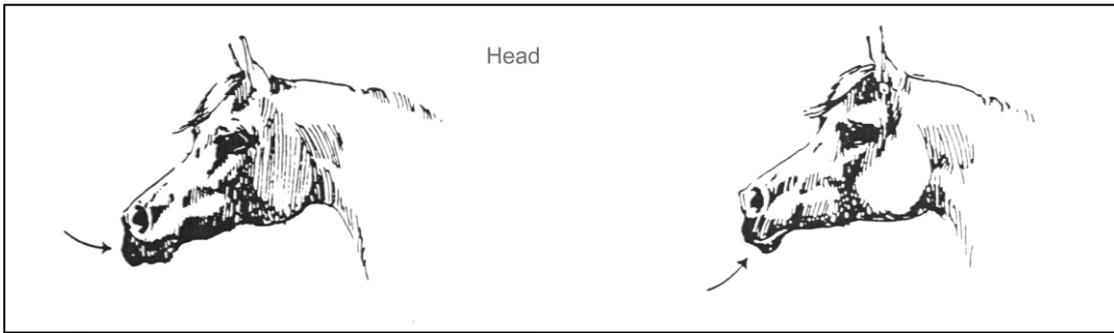


Hernia (rupture) - a protrusion of a loop of tissue through an abnormal opening

Capped elbow – an enlargement at the point of the elbow.

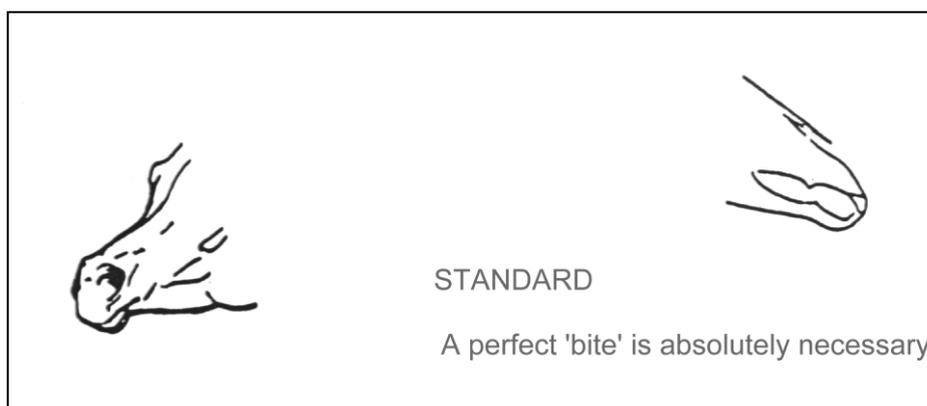
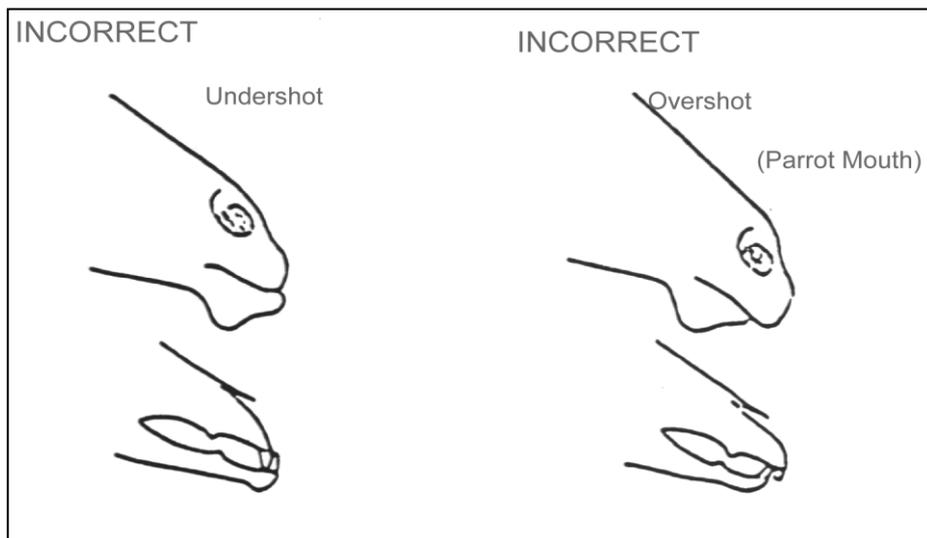
Shoe Boil – a running sore at the elbow usually caused by an injury from the heel of the shoe or injury from contact with the floor.

Unsoundness of the Head



Parrot Mouth – (overshot jaw) lower jaw is shorter than the upper jaw and the teeth do not make contact

Undershot Jaw – upper jaw is shorter than the lower jaw and the teeth do not make contact.



FINDING THE WINNER IN HALTER CLASSES

Judging Criteria

All in-hand classes will be conducted as Breeding and Gelding In-Hand classes. In the event the show offers in-hand classes as Breeding and Gelding In-Hand classes, the following rules apply.

Horses shall enter the arena in-hand at a relaxed walk (a four-beat, flat-footed gait), guiding in a counter-clockwise direction. Each horse shall clear the gate at a walk before striking the trot. Failure to completely clear the gate at a walk shall required the horse to re-enter at the proper walk. The horse shall then strike a trot until reaching its designated position in line, as directed by the ringmaster judge(s).

Horse shall then be asked to walk counter-clockwise and/or clockwise at the discretion of the judge(s), in a relaxed manner on a loose lead with the handler at the side of their horse, whips down. The lead line must maintain a clearly discernible drape, i.e., the handler must not place their hand on the chain or close enough to in any way restrict natural head and neck motion. Also, the handler may not unnecessarily impede the forward motion of the horse while at the walk.

All horses to walk on the rail [or area designated by the judge(s)] at each direction past each (and all) judge(s).

Handlers are expected to keep a reasonable clearance between horses and judges should modify the alignment of horses to achieve that clearance. Further judging will not commence until the Call Judge approves the placement and spacing of all horses.

Following the cessation of the walk, horses shall be presented to the judge(s) individually in accordance with the order of go. Horses shall be led individually to the judge(s) at the walk and presented for judging. In order to satisfy a proper presentation to the judge, horses should stand correctly, bearing weight on all four feet (not stretched, in a quiet and deliberate manner). Following valuation by the judge(s) horses shall walk and trot away from the judge(s) at the judge(s) direction and resume their place in the line.

The horses "on deck" and the two next horses shall be the only horses allowed to prepare of those horses in the line, this to include controlled shanking for the purpose only of positioning the horse for presentation on the judge(s). Any further shanking shall be limited to that reactive to an unruly horse in order to regain control of that horse.

There can be NO contact of the whip to the horse. ANY contact shall result in elimination by the judge(s).

Horses that appear to be intimidated by their handlers will be penalized. This may include, but is not limited to, crouching, cowering, quivering, withdrawing and bucking their knees. Judge(s) may excuse any entry deemed in violation of any of these restrictions.

Final comparative judging requested by the judge(s) shall be entirely at their discretion, however, under all the aforementioned guidelines.

In Purebred Arabian Colt/Stallion, Filly/Mare Breeding classes the emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance:

- ❖ Type
- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Suitability as a breeding animal
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Manners
- ❖ Presence.

When Colt/Stallion and Geldings are judged together, the above class specifications will be used except that Geldings shall not be judged on suitability as a breeding animal.

Gelding Halter classes. Emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance:

- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Type
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Manners
- ❖ Presence.

The Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabian Breeding/Halter classes will be judged on :

- ❖ Conformation
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Substance
- ❖ Arabian Type

These horses may show characteristics of any other breed.

Transmissible weaknesses to be counted strongly against breeding stock. Judges of breeding classes owe a duty to the future of the Arabian horses and must guard against rewarding horses with transmissible weaknesses.

Colts and stallions two years old and over must have both testicles descended.

The rules also state that breeding/halter horses are not to be stretched. A horse is to be considered not stretched if all four feet are on the ground and at least one front and one rear cannon bone is perpendicular to the ground.

Excessive use of the whip or actions that may disturb other entries shall be severely penalized. Judges **must** excuse from the ring any horse shown at halter that possesses a whip mark (Welt) on any portion of the horse.

Additional causes for mandatory elimination from the arena re removal of eyelashes, changing the natural color of the mane and/or tail or balding the area around the eyes or proximal to the muzzle and nostrils. A judge may penalize an entry with excessive amounts of oil, grease or other substance so as to cause an unnatural appearance. These rules **MUST** be observed and enforced by any judge in the breeding/halter classes.

In Purebred Arabian Halter classes emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance for stallions and mares: Type, Conformation, Suitability as a breeding animal, Quality Movement, Substance, Manners and Presence. Geldings are judged on the same class specifications with the exception that the geldings are not adjudicated on the specification of suitability as a breeding animal.

The Part Arabian / Anglo Arabian Breeding/Halter classes will be judged on Conformation, Quality, Substance and Arabian Type in that order. These horses may show characteristics of any other breed.

Transmissible weaknesses to be counted strongly against breeding stock. Judges of breeding classes owe a duty to the future of the Arabian horses and must guard against rewarding horses with transmissible weaknesses.

Colts and Stallions two years old and over must have both testicles descended.

The rules also state that halter horses are not to be stretched. Excessive use of the whip or actions that may disturb other entries shall be severely penalised. Judges must excuse from the ring any horse shown at halter that possesses a whip mark (welt) on any portion of the horse. Additional causes for mandatory elimination from the arena are removal of eyelashes, changing the natural colour of the mane and/or tail or balding the area around the eyes or proximal to the muzzle and nostrils. A judge may penalise an entry with excessive amounts of oil, grease or other substance so as to cause an unnatural appearance. These rules MUST be observed and enforced by any judge in the halter classes.

DEFINITIONS

Type: The look of the horse that identifies it as an Arabian horse.

Conformation: The structure of the horse that makes it a sound, long lasting, correct, individual animal.

Suitability as a Breeding Animal: (Stallions and Mares only) A combination of all the specifications regarding the appearance of the breeding animal. The horse's appropriateness for reproducing desirable athletic offspring.

Quality: An element that we all recognise in all things desirable. The degree of excellence, condition, carriage, athleticism, balance front to rear and strength to perform effortlessly and with finesse. A horse pleasing to the eye.

Movement: This relates to how the horse covers the ground with lightness, balance and cadence. The legs should move straightforward gracefully and freely so the strides appear to be effortless.

Substance: The perception of strength and power to do any required task for an extended amount of time with minimal effort.

Manners: The conduct or behaviour with which the horse performs, obedience and responsiveness to the handler, safety being of utmost importance, the willingness to be controlled. Acceptance of the surroundings and other horses in the arena.

Presence: The dignified air, the 'special look' the 'look at me' attitude, the special spirit that gets your attention. The bloom shine, depth of conditioning and muscle, athleticism and finesse that sets an individual apart from the others.

THE PROCESS OF FINDING THE WINNER

Class routine may vary, but whatever your routine, make certain you consider the following: Position yourself so you can observe the horse standing from some distance (7 – 8 meter). Make a close inspection of the horse. And finally observe the horse's action at the walk and trot from front, rear and/or side to appraise the horse's movement. As a capable judge, you must develop a technique that is useful in making comparisons. You must know what is important and what is less important.

Horses enter the arena and are led around the arena to a position on the rail. This is your first impression of the class. Observe the horses as they enter the arena. Do they all appear to be serviceably sound? What is the depth and calibre of the class? How many entries are there? Don't allow yourself to be 'dazzled' by an experienced showman. Usually during this time you are not writing anything down, except maybe the back numbers of the exhibitors. The judging officially begins when all the entries have entered the arena and the gate is closed.

The required walk will allow you to evaluate the horse in a relaxed manner. You can also get an overall view of quality of the entire class as the horses walk the arena. Routinely the horses are then positioned head to tail around the perimeter of the arena

You can make your written or mental notes as you observe each horse. Develop the habit of observing each horse with the same routine or pattern of looking at each entry. One of the biggest criticisms of judges heard repeatedly is that '*The judge did not look at my horse*'.

The side view from a distance is your first real hard look at an individual entry. From this view you can quickly assess the animal from head to tail. You are looking for 'balance' among other things. Balance is how all the parts of the horse fit together. Look for the size or length of the head in relationship to the overall size of the horse's body. Look at the head/neck connection, neck/shoulder connection, slope of the shoulder, length/shape of the back, length and shape of the croup/hip, the set of the tail. Look at the relationship of the length of the horse's body to the length of the legs. Check the front and rear leg angles and look at the overall condition and fitness of the animal.

Have the horse walk to you in a straight line. Observe foot flight, look at the horse from his ears to the hoof from the front view as the horse approaches you. Observe how the forelegs enter the body. Are the knees pointing straight towards you or do they deviate from our ideal? Does the hoof swing in or paddle out? Does the hoof leave the ground from the middle of the toe or from the inside or the outside of the hoof? How a horse moves will usually be an indication of how a horse will stand.

The handler will stand the horse up for the judge's individual inspection. It bears repeating here that a judge must have a pattern of observation and use it consistently to give each exhibitor a fair evaluation.

Stand directly in front of the horse for your frontal view. Look at the horse from the tips of his ears to the ground as he stands there. Starting with the ears; are the ears large, small, well shaped, long, short, blunt, foxy shaped, on top of the horse's head or on the side,

close together or far apart and lop eared? Let your eye follow down the horse's head from the frontal view. Where are the eyes located in the vertical plane between ears and nostril? Are the eyes low set or high set? Are the eyes large, small, round or almond shaped, wide apart or close together? Is the head clean cut, and well-defined (dry), or is it meaty with little definition. Does this horse appear to have a normal tooth alignment without any obvious overbite or underbite? Is there symmetry in the head, are both sides equal in shape and size?

As you complete your assessment of the head, let your eye follow down to the front neck/chest connection, are the shoulder bones wide or narrow? Is there sufficient width, but not excessive width between the forelegs? How do the forelegs connect to the body? Do they connect straight into the body or at an angle with a base wide or base narrow posture? Let your eye follow on down the leg to observe the plumb line of the bones through the knee to the hoof. Look for knock-knees, bow legs, insufficient size of knees, and off set cannons (bench knees), toed in or toed out posture. If splints are present on the leg look for the cause of the splints. Does the leg deviate from the vertical plumb line from the body to hoof to create a weakness that caused the splint(s)? Or is there no evidence that alignment deviation caused the splints. The cause of the splint(s) is more important than the splint.

As you near the ground with your eyes, look at the pastern/fetlock connection for windpuffs or swelling. Can you detect any ringbone or sidebone? Look for symmetry in the size and shape of each hoof. A horizontal coronet band and vertical centre line will indicate balance in the hoof.

After completing your inspection of the horse from the front view, move to the side of the horse. For our discussion here we will have to go to the off side of the horse first, but in reality you may choose to go to the near side first. Look at the horse from front to rear. Observe the head in a side profile from ears, to eyes to nostril. What shape is the head? Is it wedge shaped with the 'teacup muzzle' or is the jaw as deep as the nostril in the side view like a 'mailbox'? Does the head appear to be long or short? Are the branches of the jaw wide or narrow? What does the head/neck connection look like? Does the horse have a clean and long throatlatch or is the throatlatch short and thick which will make it difficult for the horse to flex the poll in a graceful manner and still be able to breathe comfortably?

Look next at the length and shape of the neck. Is the neck longer on the crest side than the underside or does it appear to be long on the underside and short on the crest side (ewe-necked)? Does the neck blend into the withers and chest area? This will depend on the slope of the shoulder. Is the neck set on high or set on low into the chest? Well-laid back shoulders usually provide for a high set neck and a short back.

In the side view observe where the front legs exit the body in relationship to the point of the shoulder and withers of the horse. Do the legs exit too far to the rear (stands under himself usually associated with a straight shoulder)? Using a visual plumb line look to see if the horse's knees are behind the vertical (calf-knees) or in front of the vertical (buck-knees). Look for tied tendons (the front of the cannon bone and tendon side profile should be parallel lines between the knee and the fetlock). Are the pasterns long or short, sloping or vertical? Is the horse coon-footed with excessive slope to the pastern?

Check the angle of the hoof in the side view. Do the feet match in that they are the same length, and angle in the toe and heel? Both front feet should match and both hind feet should match. Is the face of the hoof straight, convex or dished? Are the hoofs smooth or ridged? Are those growth rings or founder rings on the hoof? As a judge you need to be

able to tell the difference. The growth rings will be parallel and the founder rings will be closer together at the heel and wider at the toe. Is there any indication of a "club foot"? A 'Club Foot' is distinguished by any hoof with more than a 60-degree angle.

As you move to the rear of the horse, observe the shape and length of the back and how it ties into the withers. Is the back straight, swayed, short, long, wide, narrow or roached? Look at the depth of the heart girth in relationship to the depth of the flank. The top line of the back and the bottom line of the belly should be relatively parallel to each other with the top line short and the underline long.

Take an oblique view of the rear legs as you approach the rear. From this oblique rear view you can look for bone and bog spavins in the hock area, and get your initial impression of the angle of the rear cannon bone and hoof. From this angle you can also check stallions for both testicles.

As you continue to the rear look at the hip and loin connection. Are the hip bone and last rib close together and strong or is that area far apart and weak looking? Is the horse wide and strong across the loin or narrow and weak across the loin? Is the tip of the hip higher or lower than the withers? A high hip is undesirable because that may cause a horse to be heavy on the forehand, which predisposes that horse to more weight being carried on the forelegs. Horses which are higher in the hip than the withers may give the impression of being sway backed. What makes the horse appear higher in the rear than the front? Is the hind leg too long, to look in balance, is the horse post legged in the rear leg?

Look at the angle of the croup from the highest point of the hip to the dock of the tail. What angle is the croup? Is it relatively horizontal or steep, long or short? Where does the tail sit on the rear of the horse? Is it high or low set? Continue down the rear leg of the horse looking at the stifle angle and hock angle. Is there too much angle to the hock (sickle hocked) or is the hock and lower leg too far behind the point of the buttock (camped out)? Look to see if the hind leg is too straight (post legged) Look for hard or soft swellings (capped hocks, curbs, thoroughpins, spavins and windpuffs).

Step completely straight behind the horse and look from the horse's ears, neck, withers, back, loin and hip to see if the horse is the same on both sides. Then focus on the hip from top to bottom. Is the hip pointed (rafter-hipped) or broad, flat and strong? Follow down the hind leg. Is there sufficient muscle mass in the gaskin and loin area inside and outside of the leg? Do the hocks have sufficient size so as to be strong or are the hocks small and undefined which indicates a weakness? Do the hocks face directly to the rear or is there a deviation? Are the hocks closer together than the fetlocks (cow-hocks) or wider at the hock than the fetlock (bow-legged)? At the lower rear leg look for deviations from the vertical plumb line in the fetlock, pastern and hoof such as toe out or toe in.

As you step around to the near side of the horse take a look at the front legs at an oblique angle. Look at the knees, you can see off set knees, splints, toe in and toe out. Check the symmetry of the front hoof's heels (they should both be the same angle and height and the location of the frog (it should be in the middle of the hoof). Continue around to the front of the horse, re-affirming what you saw on the opposite side of the horse.

At the front of the horse look closely at the eyes of the horse to check for vision problems. If you are going to check the teeth of the horse up close for an overbite or an underbite, now would be the time to do that by asking the handler to open the horse's mouth.

Routinely now the handler is asked to trot the horse away from the judge and trot down the rail and reline up at the end of the rotating line.

As the horse steps off in the trot you are in a position to observe the flight path of the front and rear legs. You can focus on the bottom side of the foot and show (if they have on a shoe) to see if the horse breaks over the middle of the toe. You can see if the legs are carried in a straight line or if there is inward or outward deviation. Does the horse promptly pick up his feet or drag his toes in the dirt? Does he carry a natural tail straight and not off one side or the other (wry tail)?

As the horse turns and the judge sees the horse in side view at the trot does the horse trot soundly? Is there rhythm and cadence to his stride? Does he trot freely or is the motion laboured? Is there some athleticism in his movement?

Before concluding the class all horses are asked to walk quietly on the rail. While this is being executed the judge is looking for freedom of movement. Does the horse overstep his front footprint with the hind foot? Does the horse walk with freedom and in a relaxed manner? Check the angles of the shoulder and hip, neck and body carriage look again for balance. This is when the judge can see the REAL horse un-posed and natural.

Have the horses halt and stood up for a final comparison. At this time the judge may have the finalist lined up head to tail in a new line down the centre of the arena, usually in the judge's order of preference, for a final inspection. Usually one more entry than placings is kept for final comparison. You may excuse the balance of the horses on the rail. Make sure you are not excusing a contender for a prize by double checking the horses.

From this final line-up the judge may compare first place to second place, second place to third place and so on through the last placing with extra horse standing in the last (reserve) position. This 'reserve' horse is there in case one of the ribbon winners is disqualified for some reason.

In conclusion, mark you card. Check your numbers for accuracy and turn in your card to the ring assistant or the announcer. Be sure the announcer reads the correct numbers in the correct placings.

CONFORMATION

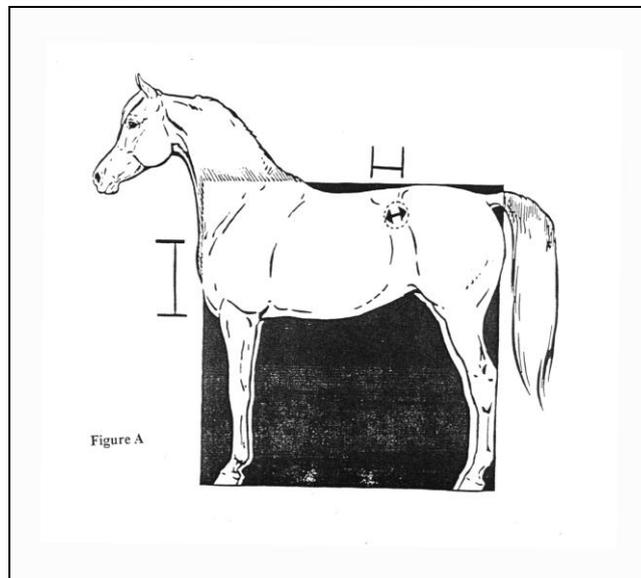
Ideals, theory and Observation

Excerpts and drawings from an article by Rich Rudish & Dick Beck, Circa 1975

This information is not designed or written to appear as the ultimate word on horse conformation by the most authoritative specialists in the field. Rather it is as the title indicates it is a compilation of acquired ideals and theory mixed with considerable practical observation. Not a little of the information has been gleaned from knowledgeable horsemen who had the ability and patience to explain why a horse works better when he is conformed in a particular manner.

It is also important to remember that this work is designed as a guide or reference to be helpful in appraising an individual horse for *relative* merit. The perfect horse has not been born yet, and there have been numerous horses, handicapped by poor conformation which went on to win the race or beat the competition with only heart.

Figure A: *Illustrates what we would like to call the ideal.*

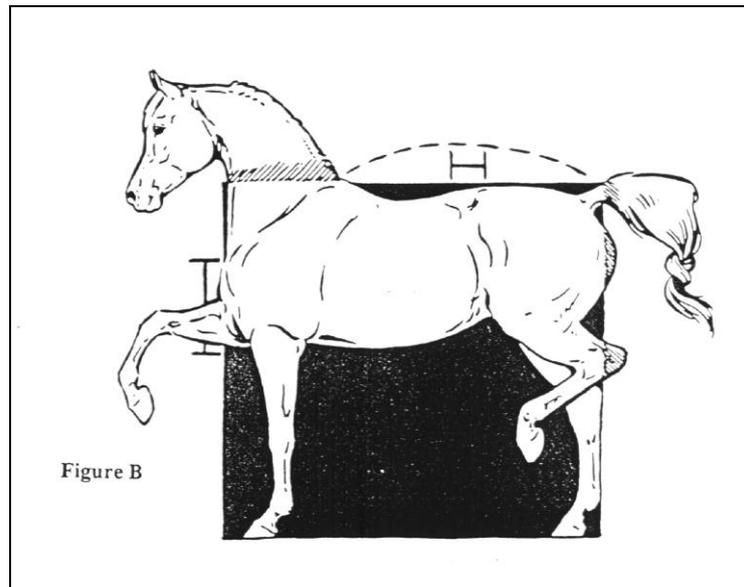


He is 'on the square', well balanced and capable of most any chore requiring athletic ability. His body, trunk and legs fall into a square with a level top line, (top of withers to top of croup – not just croup as so many believe), correct hind leg (a line, dropped perpendicular to the ground from the point of buttocks, touches the back of the hock, rear cannon and fetlock), the feet are squarely under the body ('a leg at each corner'), and a sound front leg which fits well into the shoulder. He has a well-laid-back shoulder and is deep in the heart (indicated by the mark from bottom of the sternum to the point where the bottom of the neck enters the chest). The mark above his back and the arrow at the loin show that he is strong in the loin and 'closed coupled' (the proximity of the last rib and point of the hip). In general, he follows the Rulebook ideals for conformation and type. The square may also be divided into three almost equal parts vertically; the point of the shoulder to the back of the withers, from girth to hip, and from hip to the point of buttock.

The horse has good length of neck, is clean in the throat latch, has well set ears, and a good eye, a flaring nostril and a fairly level croup with good length of hip. Our ideal by the way does not have a 'table top' croup. To digress: though a good tail set and a highly carried tail are to be sought after, and the 'apple rumped' horse is not desirable, in relation to the croup too level a pelvis often causes problems. Particularly in the mare, where the openings of the digestive and reproductive tracts are in close proximity, one can see that a

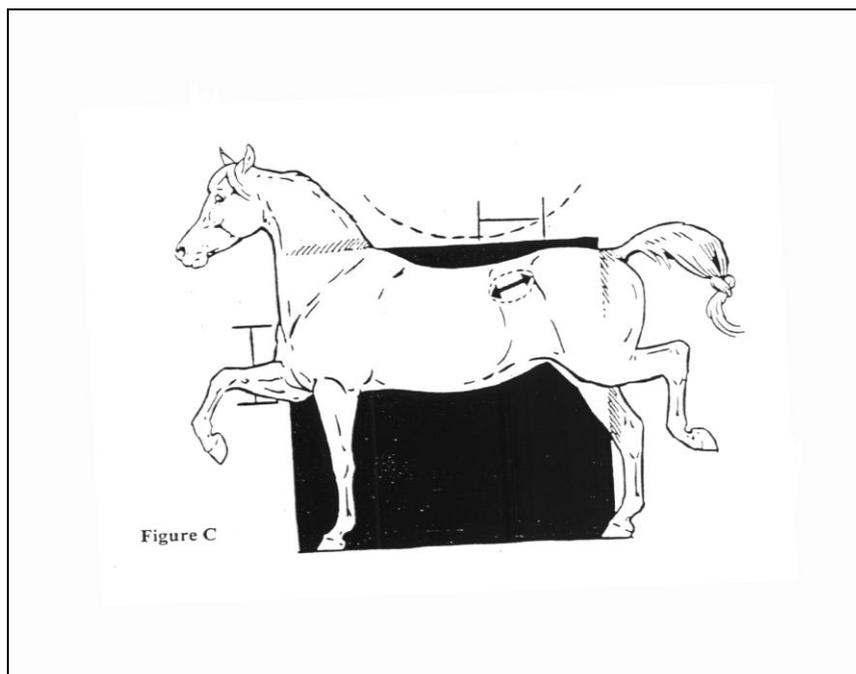
very level croup throws the anus in such a position (directly above) that the exterior reproductive organs are contaminated with faecal material.

Our ideal horse is again illustrated in **Figure B**.



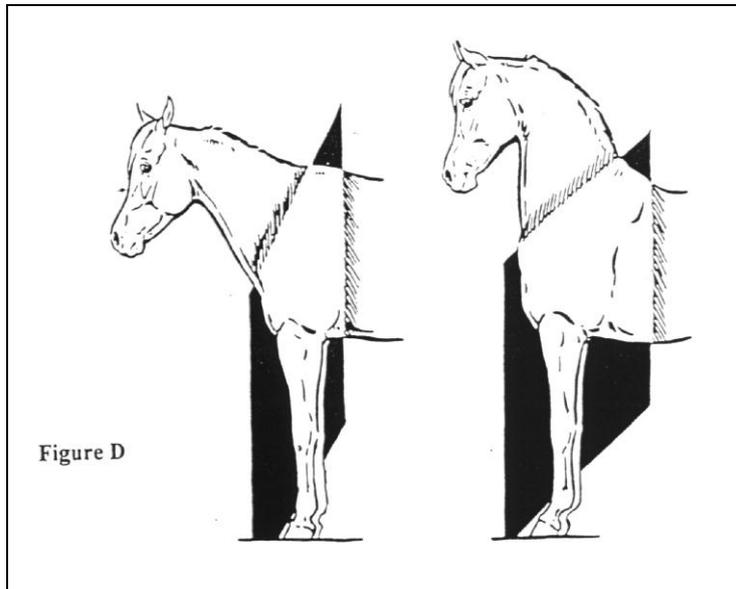
He is obviously pleased with himself and shows us that since he has such a good shoulder and hip, and is close coupled, he can properly elevate both his fore and hind legs as well as rounding out or bending his frame (back) slightly as indicated by the dotted line. (Please note: his mane is not blowing in the breeze and he is not covering ground. He is merely lifting his legs and we wish to discourage anyone from thinking we are making comments on Park action. With proper collection, our horse is elevating his legs and bowing his back so that not only can he trot, but he can jump well, gather himself for a quick start or well balanced sliding stop, scramble over Cougar Rock on the Tevis Cup Ride or even execute a *Piaffe* or *Passage*.

Figure C is a full brother of our Ideal and looks very worried.



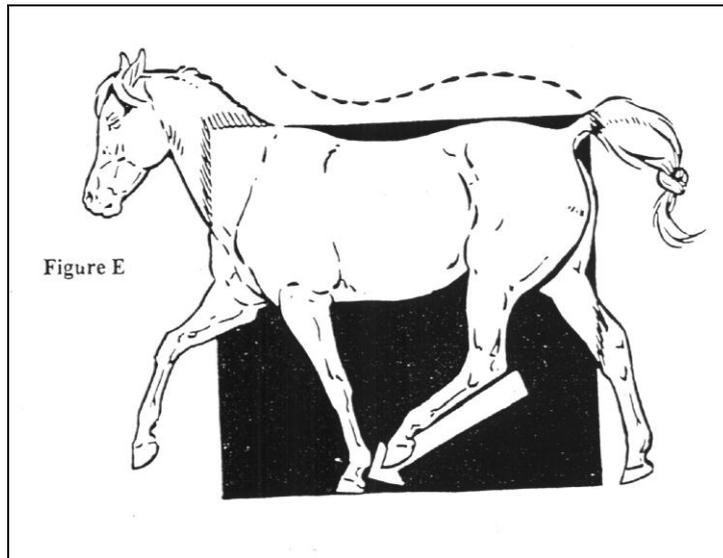
He has a very similar front end – quite correct. But he is ‘off the square’ mainly because he has a bad coupling and long back. This makes it extremely difficult for him to round his frame (notice the dotted line) and gather himself. He stands a strong chance of developing a sore back. He has the good hip of his brother, our Ideal in Figure A, but the weak coupling makes it hard for him to work with his hocks well under him. He has difficulty gaining forward motion because of the ill-placed hocks, and he also has a bad time turning and bending. You can see that just the one serious fault – the long back – has limited this horse’s use and athletic ability. A gelding that has been used hard for ten or twelve years with this particular fault might be a safe risk, but would you want to choose a broodmare with it? Unless she was a mutation and you could prove it, she would not be the best bet. Conformation is a heritable trait. That means that this fault is a bred in characteristic. That’s why knowledge of conformation is essential to a breeder – not just the endurance rider.

In Figure D our horse on the left has been drawn with a short straight neck which ties-in too low, a steep shoulder and too-straight, short pasterns to match. His whole front shock absorption system is sadly lacking. He would jolt along, 'heavy on the forehand', with each concussion apt to foster calcification of the joints, splints and a darned rough ride for a passenger.



Comparatively, our Ideal on the right in Figure D has good slope of shoulder which allows for use of the long well set neck to elevate his forehand and move with a light, well-balanced manner. The pasterns have length and angle enough to flex and gives a very comfortable ride.

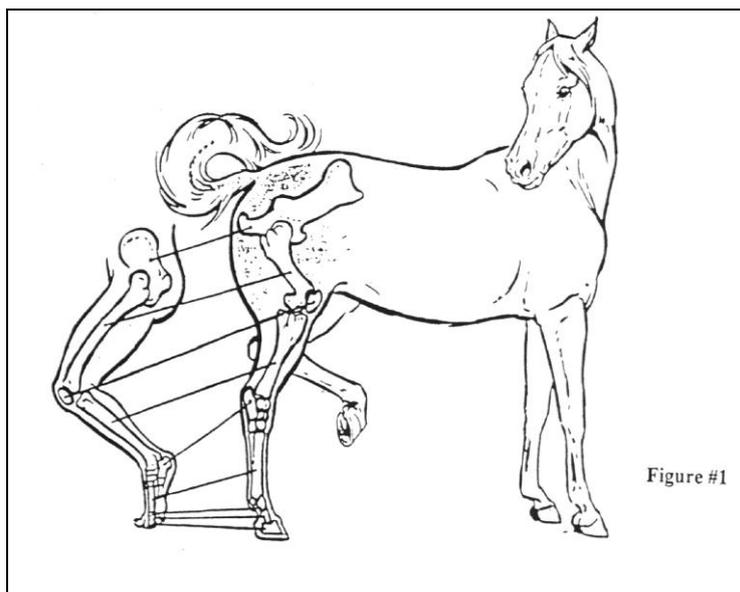
Figure E shows our horse on the left from Figure D when he tries to move ‘on the square’.



He ends up with a short back and good hindquarters, but when he tries to engage those hindquarters he interferes with the poor, heavy forehand which has a shorter stride. Hence, the forefeet don't get out of the way and forging and scalping occur. Ouch!

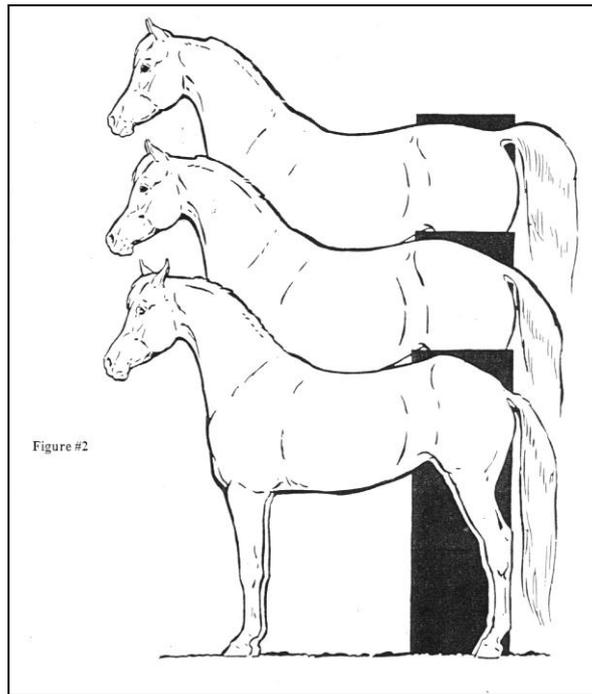
The reason man domesticated the horse, after eating him for a while, was basically to use him as a beast of burden. To accomplish this task the horse had to be able to move forward to carry the burden – cargo or rider or both. Since the horse's forward movement and impulsion originate with the hind, let's take a look at a break down of the parts of the horse and what they should look like. The proper conformation – correct bone, joints, and angulation of bones – makes the horse mechanically efficient and effective.

Figure #1 is a comparison of the human leg to the hind leg of our horse.



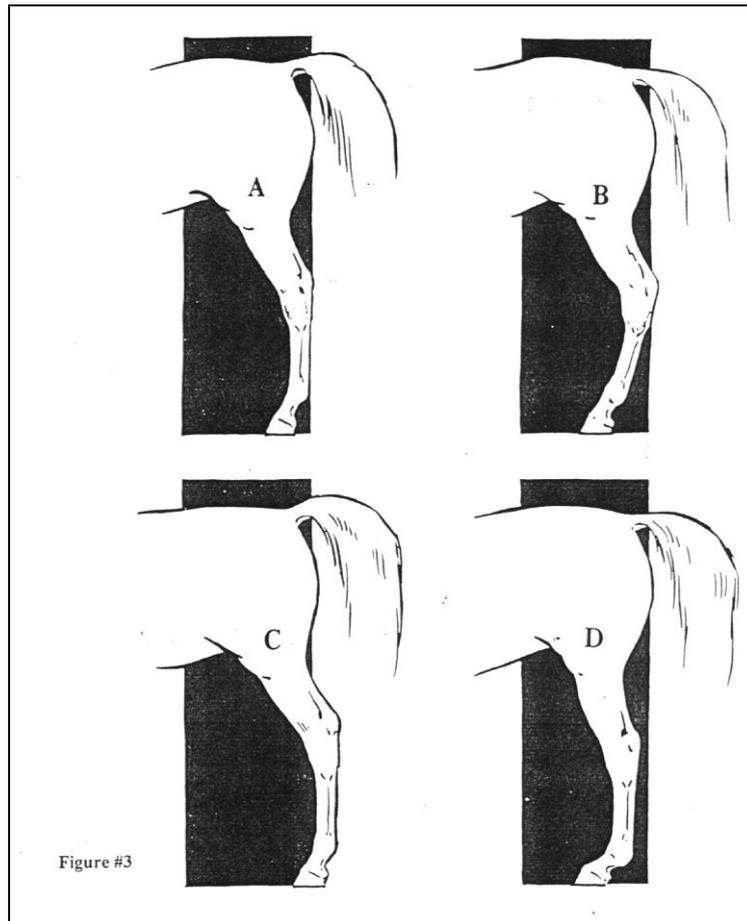
As you can see, the hip of the horse is the upper leg of man, the stifle is the kneecap, the hock is the ankle and the hoof is comparable to the toe.

Of the three horses illustrated in **Figure #2**, the top horse is our friend who was 'on the square'. He and his two comrades show the three basic variations in croup angle. Our ideal horse has a long pelvis, well-muscled hindquarters, a relatively long, level croup and a nice tail carriage.



The middle horse in **Figure #2** has most of the same attributes but with a somewhat steeper croup angle. And, although he may not have the sweeping stride that our top friend of the level croup does, he is nonetheless efficient. He can perform with agility and thrust from the hocks, but may deviate from the ideal in a halter class due to the croup. The bottom horse has a croup that is even steeper, but he has a considerably shorter pelvis. He is longer and rougher in the coupling and over the loins. When allowed to become over-fat, this type of hind end gives the appearance of what is often referred to as 'apple rumped'.

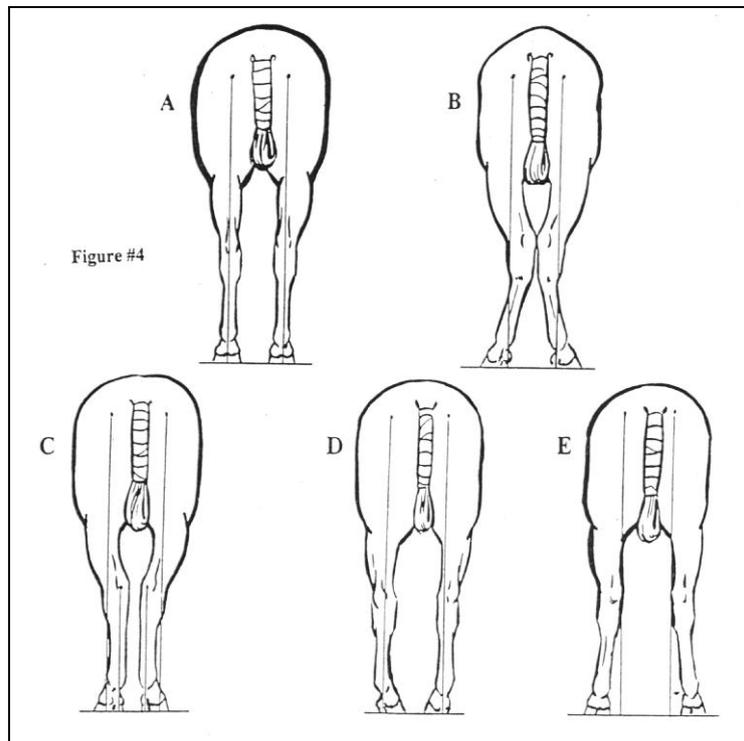
Figure #3 shows several variations of the hindleg, as viewed from the side.



- ❖ 'A' is our ideal whose leg lines up from point o buttocks to back of hock and fetlock.
- ❖ 'B' is sickle-hocked. The hock is out behind the point of the butt and the foot is too far under (camped under) The cannon is not perpendicular to the ground and complications arise because the cannon does not fit properly into the hock joint. Unsoundness which may occur here are bog spavins and curb. Again, leg conformation is a heritable transmissible trait. Choose accordingly.
- ❖ 'C' is 'camped out'. This means as you can see, that when the cannon bone is perpendicular to the ground, the hock and fetlock are out behind the line from the point of the butt. This horse is more uncomfortable when asked to engage his hindquarter and work in a collected manner.
- ❖ 'D' is 'post legged' which simply means he is too straight in the leg. From the pelvis to the pastern there is not sufficient angulation. He is probably not very comfortable to ride because his shock absorbing system is inefficient. He is prone to stifle problems and is also 'coon footed' as well as being 'soft' in the pastern.

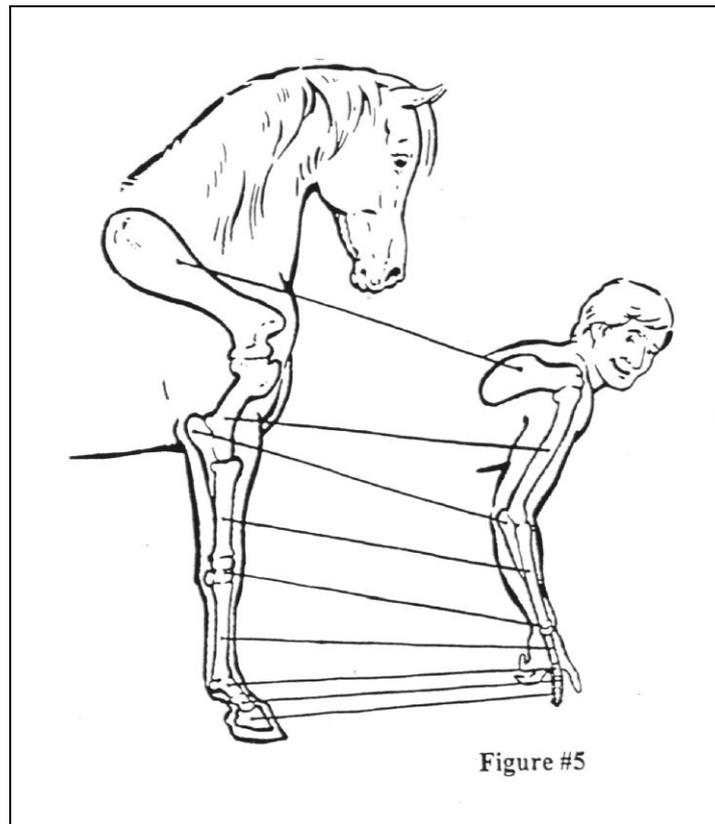
Figure #4 is a view of the rear of the horse as you stand behind him.

The first thing you notice is how different sets of legs deviate from a plumb line dropped vertically from the point of the buttocks to the ground.



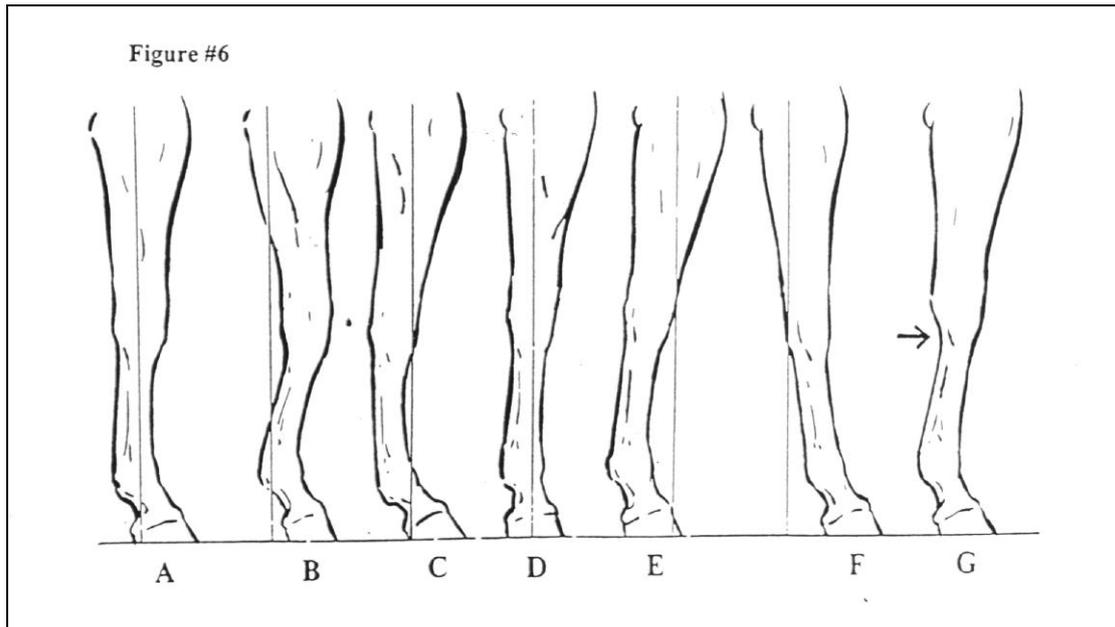
- ❖ In the Ideal 'A', the plumb line bisects the centre of the hamstring, the hocks, cannon, fetlock and hoof. A horse thus conformed has straight, smooth action. Both legs on the same side (front and rear) travel on the same plane.
- ❖ 'B' is a truly cow-hocked horse. Hocks are twisted and close together. The canons do not fit correctly into the hocks, causing curbs, jacks and spavins. This particular individual is also 'rafter hipped'. He lacks the muscling, seen in 'A' to fill out his profile. Often a young horse, which appears fat and sleek from the side, will evidence the rear profile indicated. It is mostly caused from over-feeding and lack of exercise.
- ❖ 'C' is often mistakenly called cow-hocked. He is in reality a very functional individual. Though his hocks are close, the canons fit into them correctly. He toes out, but is usually not unsound. He can still lift his leg and move out because his stifles are positioned on the sides of his barrel even though his hocks do not fall on the same plumb line.
- ❖ Horse 'D' on the other hand, is hampered in his movement by being toed-in. He is open at the hocks rather than the stifle, and would have trouble where his legs try to move past the barrel as he moves them forward. He is called 'base-narrow'.
- ❖ 'E' is the opposite, being 'base wide'. He would travel spraddled out with little hock action and would lack the full function of his stifle as well.

Looking at the front end of the horse in **Figure #5** will show how the horse's shoulder and front leg correspond to man's.



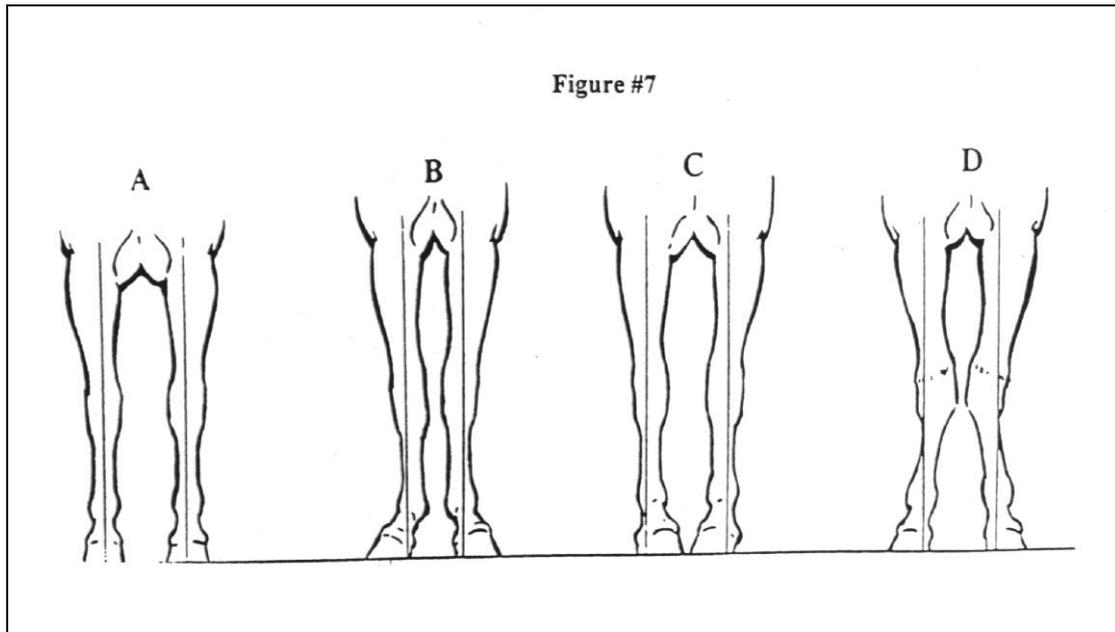
The shoulder and forearm with elbow compare easily, but man's wrist becomes the horse's KNEE! The bones of the hand come together to form the horse's cannon while the bones of his middle finger form the pastern and coffin bone.

Figure #6 illustrates various types of forelegs viewed from the side.



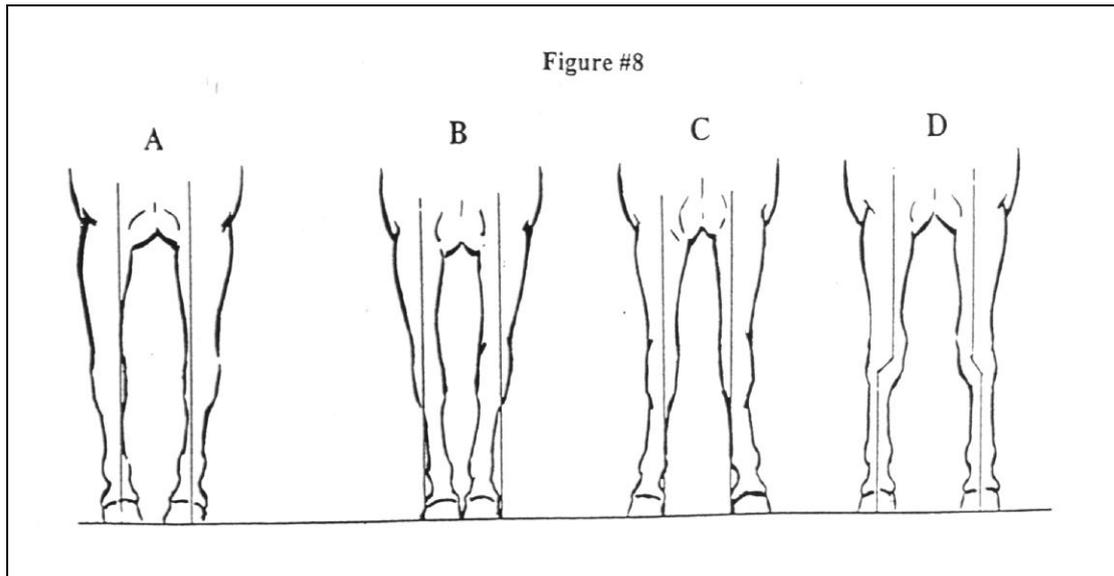
- ❖ 'A' shows a correct leg, straight and able to support the weight above it.
- ❖ 'B' is 'over in the knee', and while the leg is not as attractive as the ideal leg, it is not apt to become unsound. Though the leg is not quite straight, it will support weight, and the joint has not much unnecessary strain put on it.
- ❖ 'C' is 'calf kneed' or 'back at the knee' and this is much more serious. Under stress, the bones in this leg will suffer as weight puts stress in exactly the opposite direction from which the joint should bend. The legs of a horse are designed to accommodate motion with some degree of concussion when the horse's hoof meets the ground.
- ❖ 'D' being straight and short in the pastern, has no where to absorb the shock of that concussion. Thus, he would be rough riding at the best and unsound at the worst. His shock absorption system is faulty.
- ❖ 'E' and 'F' are respectively 'camped under' and 'camped out'. They do not support weight as they should, but are less hazardous to permanent unsoundness than is the post leg, or 'D'.
- ❖ 'G' is 'tied in' below the knee. This means that he is lacking support from either bone, tendon or both in a critical area. One would like to see relatively the same depth of bone and tendon at the point where the cannon joins the knee as at the top of the fetlock joint. The front of the cannon bone and the back of the tendons should form a parallel line as viewed from the side from the knee to the fetlock.

Figure #7 illustrates front legs viewed from the front.



- ❖ 'A' is again our ideal. A plumb line dropped from the point of the shoulder would pass through the forearm, knee cannon, fetlock, pastern and would bisect the hoof.
- ❖ 'B' is obviously toed out, but not just in the hoof. He starts to toe out in the pastern, and it is this joint that will receive the abuse and show the damage.
- ❖ 'C' toes in or is 'pigeon toed' and is apt to paddle. But he will not interfere with himself, as 'B' will, so he is more serviceable, though not much better to look at.
- ❖ 'D' is knock-kneed and because of the weight will be compressed on the outside of the knees, rather than through the centre, serious problems will occur when the horse is stressed.

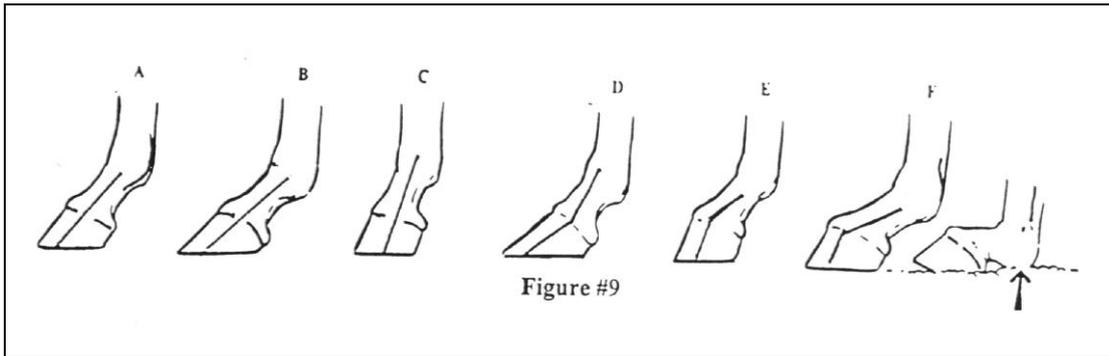
Figure #8 continues with front leg types.



- ❖ 'A' being 'open' at the knees, will be a clumsy mover and will not be able to trot very well.
- ❖ 'B' is base narrow.
- ❖ 'C' is base wide. Both horses will lumber in their gaits because of poor movement in the shoulders. The former is open at the elbows while the latter is closed.
- ❖ 'D' is 'bench kneed' – he has offset cannons. In other words, the cannons don't come down out of the centre of the knee. He will develop high splints and knee problems when stressed.

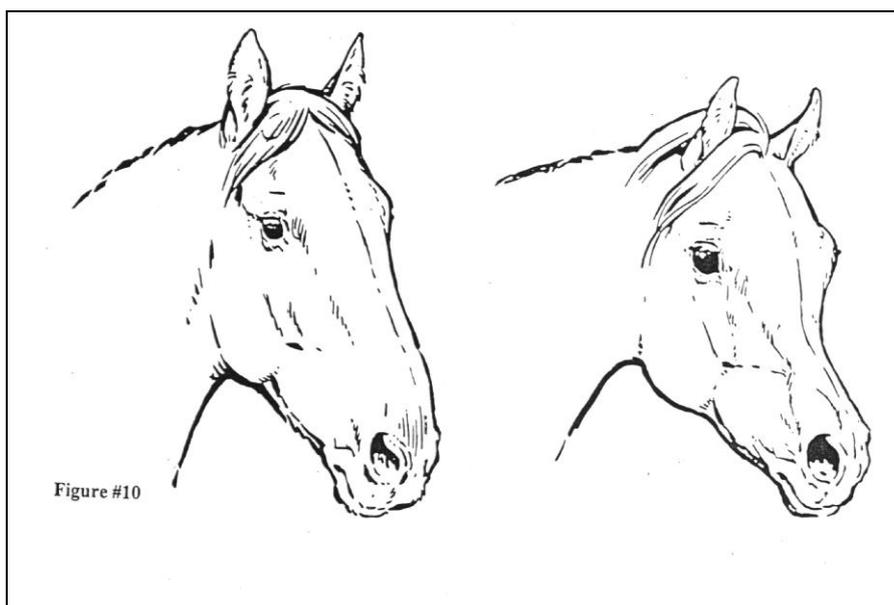
Stress constitutes hard work such as long hours working cattle, racing, endurance riding or playing polo. Many of our show horses are never actually stressed to these extremes.

Figure #9 concentrates on the lower leg and hoof.



- ❖ 'A' is the ideal, with good length of pastern and both pastern and hoof at the correct angle to the ground. 'B' and 'C' show basically improperly trimmed feet.
- ❖ 'B' is long in the toe.
- ❖ 'C' is short with too much heel. Both have the correct equipment, but it has been artificially misused.
- ❖ 'D' and 'E' show corresponding hooves corresponding to 'B' and 'C', but the leg above does not follow the same line, hence, the broken angle effect. Both 'D' and 'E' stress the coffin bone and promote unsoundness.
- ❖ 'F' shows a 'coon foot' or a horse soft in the pastern. The pastern is long and the attachments are weak. Under stress of a hard gallop or hard stops and rough ground, this horse will eventually injure the sesamoid bone. His gait will also be too springy and camel like. One can often tell if a horse tends toward this problem by close examination of the ergot. If the ergot is rubbed off or infected, or if the surrounding hair is gone, there may be room for question.

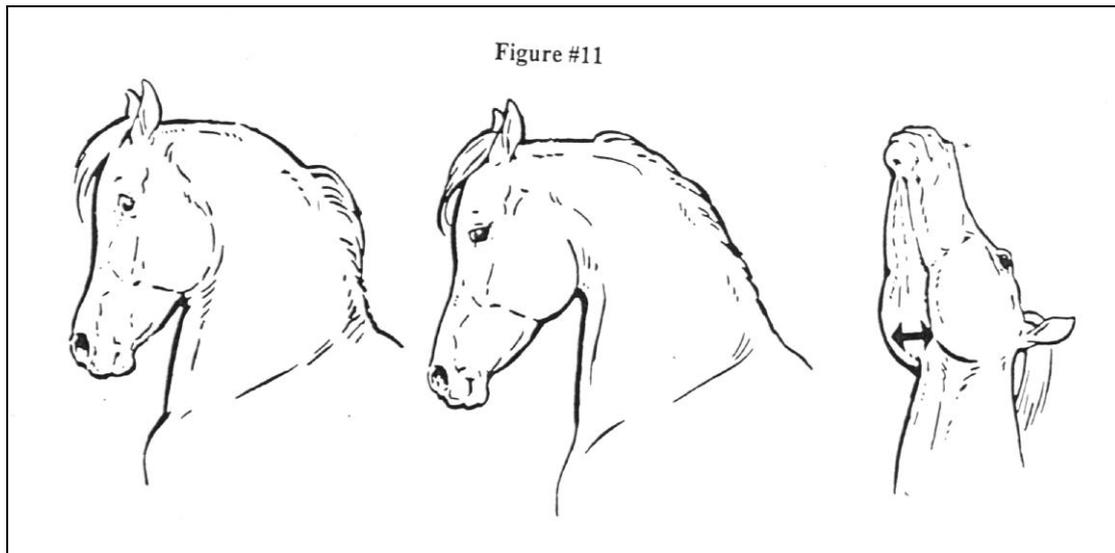
Figure #10 compares the head of a typical 'cold blooded' horse with that of a typical Arabian.



There is an overall intelligent look about the Arabian's head that the other simply does not possess. There is refinement in the well chiselled, clean head. The space between the eyes leaves room for some thought to occur. The placing of a large eye, well set on the head, will make a horse appear more intelligent in his actions even if he isn't any smarter than his companion. He will have a better disposition simply because he can see more things efficiently. He can see what is around him and behind him with less adjustment. Because of his increased powers of observation, not as many things will spook him or surprise him. The peripheral vision of the pig-eyed cold-blooded horse will often cause him to see things much later as they approach him from the side or behind. The forehead of the Arabian is properly called the 'Jibbah' by the Bedouin and had great value placed upon it. They believed the better the Jibbah in terms of swell and breadth, the better the chance for intelligence in the animal.

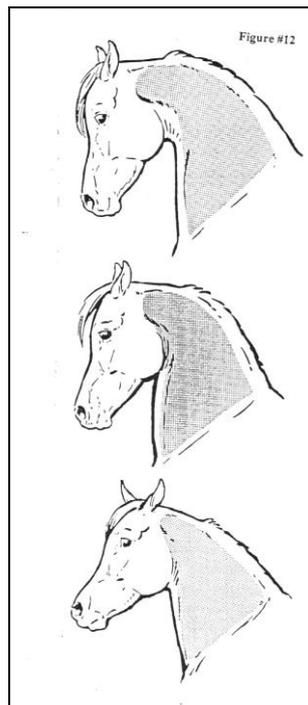
The large, flaring nostril allows for adequate air intake under stress conditions. A clean throatlatch and space between the branches of the jowls also aid in the horse's breathing process.

Figure #11 shows the ideal horse in the centre with a short – necked coarse – throated companion on the left.



To the right of our ideal, a double-headed arrow indicates what is meant by space between the jowls. If the horse is worked with a proper headset, and still is able to breathe properly when moving, his windpipe cannot be compressed. Narrow bars and thick throat latch restrict the supply of air and cause the horse to resist the rider's wishes by throwing or lugging his head in order to breathe.

Figure #12 indicates three types of necks.

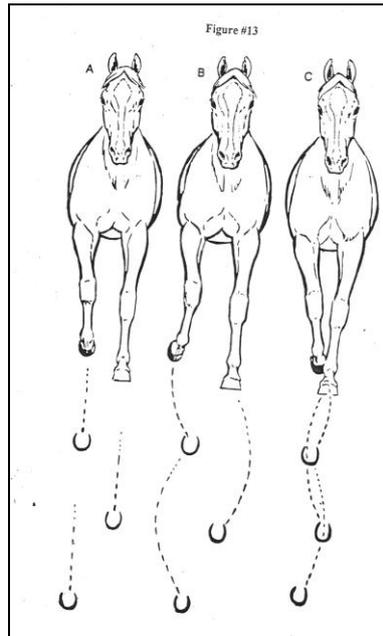


At the top is our ideal. He is long from poll to crest and long and clean in the throatlatch. He has room to flex, give to the bit and bend through the neck – and still breath efficiently. The middle horse has a reasonably long neck, but is not long in the throatlatch region. His neck bulges below the jaw and will lack the grace with which our ideal handles his head and neck. Even if his breathing is not interfered with, he will still be less supple and responsive to the trainer's wishes. The bottom horse has a short, straight neck, which will cut down considerably on the grace and elasticity with which he moves. He will not be well balanced and will have more trouble than our ideal in rounding his back and engaging his hindquarters. This sort of neck usually fits less well into the shoulder and such a horse does not move 'on the square'.

The whole reason for knowing what is correct when talking about conformation is that conformation has a direct bearing on how the horse moves or performs his given duty. A horse can be beautiful, but not be able to move without injuring himself. As the horse was developed as a beast of burden for man, he must be able to satisfactorily complete a task for a period of time. If he can't he is worthless – no matter how pretty he is standing around.

The trot is the most significant and descriptive gait the horse has to offer to the educated horseman's eye, and we are only scratching the surface of the imperfections in a horse's way of going.

Figure #13 shows three different horses trotting toward the viewer.



- ❖ 'A' is our ideal. His front legs move straight and true. They travel in the same plane from front to back with no deviation. The hoof prints below each subject track the motion of each hoof.
- ❖ 'B' is probably a wide-chested horse that might stand a little pigeon-toed. He 'paddles' as he moves out. The hoof tends to swing out from the vertical plane causing an arc rather than a true straight-ahead motion. This horse would not be apt to go unsound as seriously as would his companion to the right.
- ❖ 'C' is the worst mover. He is base narrow and wings as he moves. As he strides forward, his hooves deviate from the vertical plane toward the inside. A horse that wings severely will injure himself by hitting the inside of the coronet, fetlock or cannon as the opposing hoof passes.

Figure #14 shows four horses moving away at a trot.

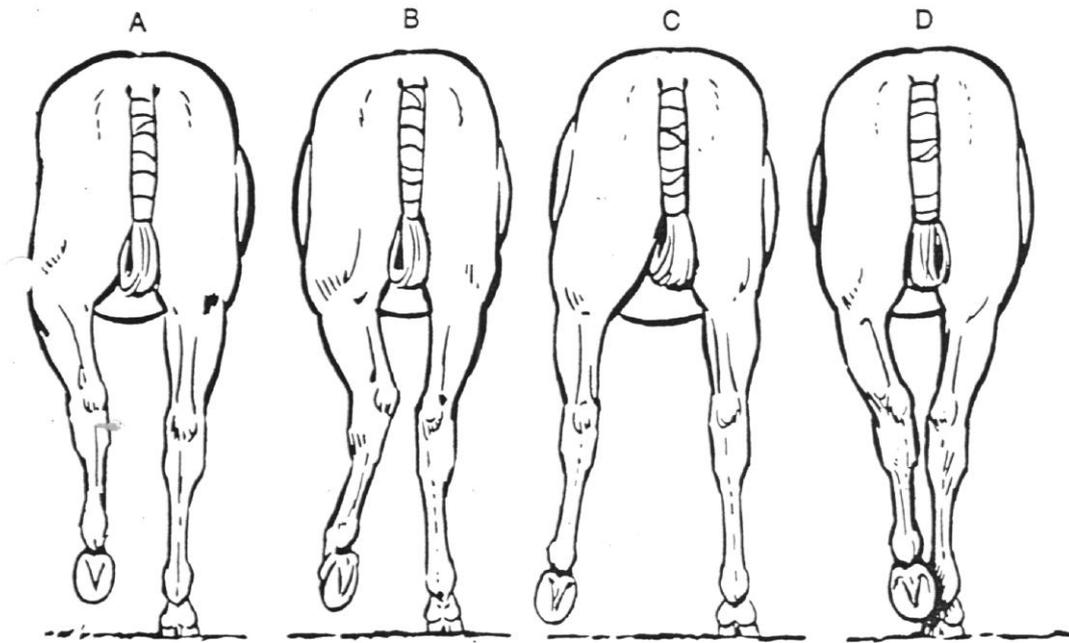
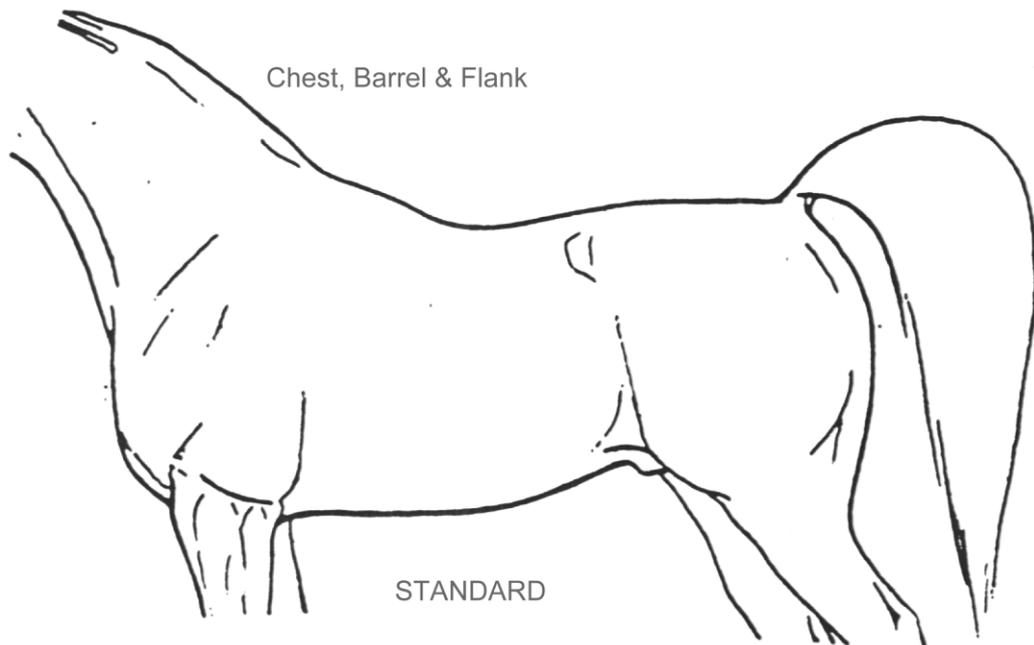


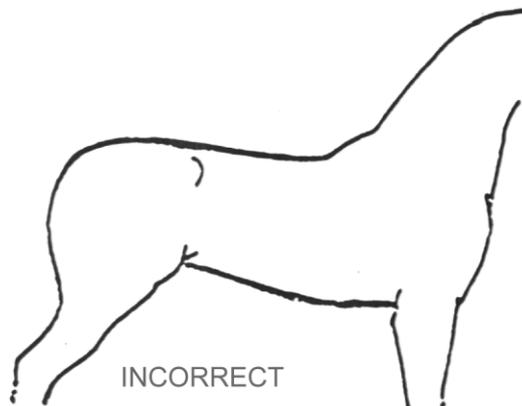
Figure #14

- ❖ 'A' is correct, moving with his hind legs in the same plane as his front legs.
- ❖ 'B' is moving too close at the hocks and toes-out, but he is wide at the stifle and can move freely. Will be able to get his hocks well under himself and will generally be a very serviceable mount.
- ❖ 'C' moves poorly in comparison, as he is narrow at the stifle and moves base-wide. He would have restricted hock action and a 'spraddled out' way of going.
- ❖ The worst problems are seen in horse 'D' however. His legs are set close at both the hocks and fetlocks. He is base-narrow and his hooves stand a very good chance of interfering with each other as he moves.

Perfectly moving horses are few, but available. The trick in choosing breeding horses is finding those that approach perfection in their legs, as well as type desired. The trick in choosing a riding horse is finding either the perfection mentioned or in knowing which faults can still leave a horse serviceable, sound and useful for the duration of his life.

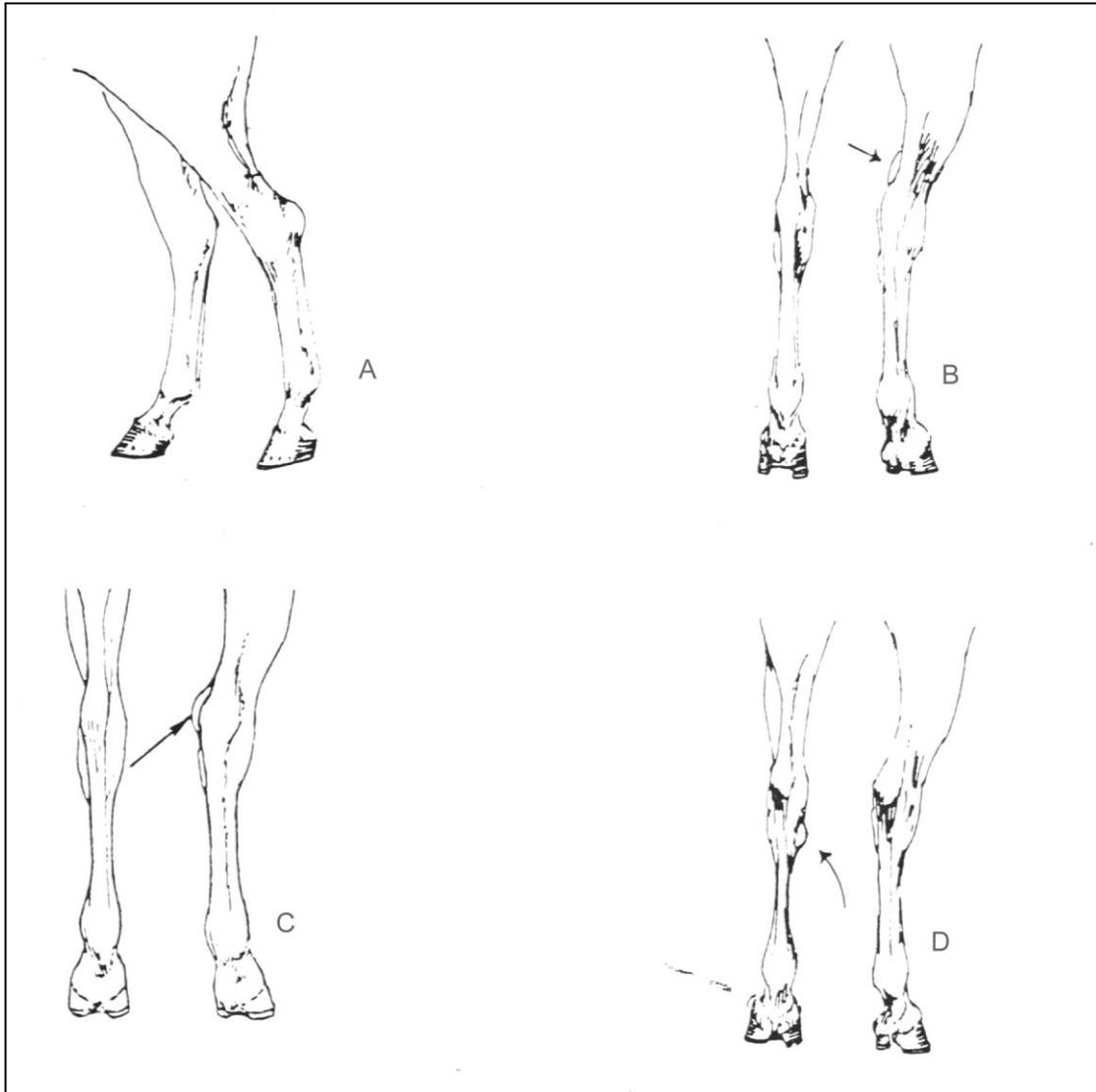


Chest Long, wide, muscular, deep with ribs well sprung
Barrel Deep and rounded. Deep through the girth – lots of heart room
Flank Wide and deep



Chest Drawn up (above elbow), not deep enough
Barrel Flat, 'slabsided'
Flank Narrow

HOCK



- A. **Capped Hock** – an enlargement on the point of the hock, usually caused by bruising
- B. **Thoroughpin** – a puffy condition in the hollows of the hock. It can be identified by movement of the puff, when pressed, to the opposite side of the leg.
- C. **Bog Spavin** – any inflammation or swelling of the soft tissue of the hock.
- D. **Bone Spavin or Jack Spavin** – a bony enlargement that appears on the inside and front of the hock at the point where the base of the hock tapers into the cannon bone.

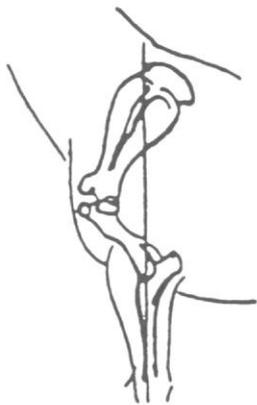
SHOULDER & WITHERS



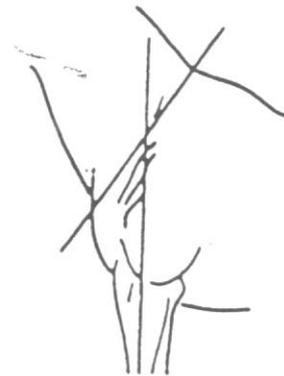
Standard



| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Shoulder | Sloping, long, clean and flat, free in movement, well laid over with muscle. |
| Withers | Moderately high and well defined. |



Incorrect



| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Shoulder | Short and straight |
| Withers | Low (mutton withered), flat and ill-defined |

CONFORMATION FAULTS

HEAD FAULTS:

1. **Undershot Jaw – Monkey Mouth:** A hereditary imperfection in the way the upper and lower jaw meet. An undershot horse has a lower jaw longer than the upper jaw (also known as “under bite”).
2. **Overshot Jaw – Parrot Mouth:** A hereditary imperfection in the way in which the upper and lower jaw meet. It is caused by the lower jaw being shorter than the upper jaw. These imperfections hinder the chewing of food, and may restrict the passage of food and water.
3. **Pig Eyes:** Pig eyes are small, narrow, squinty eyes. This decreases the field of vision.
4. **Human Eyes:** A large amount of sclera, or white part, around the eye, therefore, a smaller iris. This decreases the amount of dilation of the eyes for vision.
5. **Glass Eye:** The iris is white or light in color. This may increase photo irritation.
6. **Lop Ears or Cow Ears:** When the ears are set on the head low down and back. This hinders the horse’s ability to focus on sounds.
7. **Long Head:** That is, a head that is too long for the body. It gives an unsightly appearance and inadequate balance to the rest of the body.
8. **Narrow Head:** This usually is associated with not enough sinus space for cooling and filtering the air. Also, it is not a good support for the orbit of the eye, or the prominence of the eye for the field of vision.

FORELEG FAULTS:

1. **Calf Knees – Sheep, Knees -Back at Knees:** Knees (when viewed from the side) that break backward. Calf knees are objectionable since bowed tendons and knee chip fractures often develop.
2. **Off Set Knees – Bench Knees:** When the Coronoidea (as viewed from the front) fail to emerge from the center of the knee. This fault very often causes large splints to develop.
3. **Bow Legged – Bandy Legged:** Lateral deviation of the corpus which causes a medial deviation (valgus deformity) of the distal limb. This condition is less common than knock knees but is treated similarly.
4. **Knock Knees – Knees Narrow:** Horses that stand in at the knees or that are too close at the knees. Knock-kneed condition is caused by the bones of the upper and lower leg not entering and leaving the corpus squarely. Knock-kneed horses, if worked at high speed, usually have interference problems.
5. **Stands Wide – Base Wide:** The left and right feet are naturally placed farther apart than the proximal parts of the limbs. This conformation causes more weight to be carried on the lateral aspect of the foot and predisposes the animal to unlevelled feet, lateral ringbone and side bone, and wind puffs of the fetlock joints.

6. **Splayed foot – Toes Out:** A term applied when a horse stands with the toes of his front legs turned outward. A horse with this defect cannot rock his front feet upward from the heel, break it over at the toe and carry it straight forward. The striding leg of a splay-footed horse will swing inward toward the supporting leg, and the horse will be guilty of “winging”. Interference is almost inevitable.
7. **Straight or Short Pasterns:** The short upright pastern increases the effect of concussion on the fetlock joint, the pastern joint, and the navicular bone. A horse with this conformation has increased predisposition to osselets (traumatic arthritis of the fetlock joint), ringbone of the pastern joint, and navicular disease. This type of conformation is often associated with base narrow, toe-in conformation and is most often present in the horse with short limbs and powerful body and limb musculature. A straight shoulder usually accompanies this type of conformation.
8. **Coon Footed – Excessive Sloped Pasterns:** The pasterns of the coon-footed horse slope more than the dorsal surface of the hoof wall. In other words, the foot and pastern axis is broken at the coronary band. It may occur in either the fore or hind feet, and it causes strain on the flexor tendons, sesamoid bones, and distal sesamoid ligaments. There may also be strain on the common digital extensor tendon.
9. **Tied in Knees – Tied in Tendons:** Viewed from the side, the flexor tendons appear to be too close to the cannon bone just below the corpus. A heavy fetlock may give the appearance of “tied-in knees” even though the condition is not actually present.
10. **Long Cannons – High Knees:** The cannon bones are longer in proportion to the body, which makes it look as though the knees are set higher.
11. **Pigeon Toed – Toes In:** A pigeon-toed horse appears to be standing with the toe of the hoof turned toward the center of the body. Such a horse commonly exhibits paddling as a result of this fault.
12. **Buck Knee – Knee Sprung:** Buck-kneed (or Knee-sprung) horses are ones over-at-the-knee or whose knees protrude too far forward when viewed from the side. They are less stable on their front legs than horses whose knees (as viewed from the side) are perfectly straight and squarely placed beneath the body for purposes of support. If buck-knees are accompanied by long toes, such horses usually stumble, particularly if the going is a little soft.

REAR LEG FAULTS:

1. **Post Legged:** Excessively straight pelvic limbs. These predispose the animal to bog spavin and to upward fixation of patella.
2. **Camped Out:** The hind feet are placed too far caudally with reference to the body. This shifts more weight to the thoracic limbs and may indicate a pelvic limb lameness.
3. **Bow Legs – Bandy Hocked:** When a horse stands pigeon-toed on its hind feet, with the points of its hocks turned outward, it is said to stand bandy-legged behind. Such horses usually go wide at the hocks, making collected performance difficult. The bandy-legged horse frequently has a lateral twist to its hocks, often referred to as “rotating hocks”, which cause early unsoundness of the hock joints because they cannot withstand the increased strain imposed upon them.

4. **Base Wide:** The left and right feet are naturally placed farther apart than the proximal parts of the limbs. This conformation causes more weight to be carried on the lateral aspect of the foot and predisposes the animal to unlevelled feet, medial ringbone and side bone, and wind puffs of the fetlock joints.
5. **Base Narrow:** The left and right feet are naturally placed farther apart than the proximal parts of the limbs. This conformation causes more weight to be carried on the medial aspect of the foot and predisposes the animal to unlevelled feet, lateral ringbone and side bone, and wind puffs of the straight fetlock joints.
6. **Short Pasterns:** The short upright pastern increases the effect of concussion on the fetlock joint, the pastern joint, and the navicular joints.
7. **Long Cannons – High Hocks:** The cannon bones are longer in proportion to the body, which makes it look as though the hocks are set higher.
8. **Coon Footed:** The pasterns of the coon-footed horse slope more than the dorsal surface of the hoof well. In other words, the foot and pastern axis is broken at the coronary band. It may occur in either the fore or the hind feet, and it causes strain on the flexor tendons, sesamoid bones, and distal sesamoid ligaments.
9. **Stands Under – Slightly Sickie Hocked:** Viewed from the side, the entire limb is placed too far forward, or sickie hocks are present. A perpendicular line drawn from the tuber ischii would strike the ground well behind the limb.
10. **Toe Out:** When viewed from the front, the toes point away from one another. The condition is usually congenital and is usually due to limbs that are crooked from their origin down. In some cases, however, the condition is aggravated by a twisting at the fetlock. It may be accompanied by either base-wide or base-narrow conformation. The flight of the foot goes through an inward arc when advancing and may cause interference with the opposite limb.
11. **Cow Hocked:** A condition that, depending on severity, may or may not predispose the horse to an unsoundness. A cow-hocked horse stands with the points of the hocks turned inward, while being base-wide and splay-footed at the hoofs (not to be confused with simply being narrow or close behind, in which hocks points in but the horse is also base-narrow). A cow-hocked horse moves its rear legs through an inward arc while traveling.

FOOT/HOOF FAULTS:

1. **Club Foot:** A foot with a dorsal hoof wall angle of 60 degrees or more which imparts a cylindrical shape to the foot. The foot axis may or may not be broken. If unbroken, the upright foot and pastern axis will tend to shorten the stride and gave a rougher ride than normal.
2. **Dished Foot:** Frequent occurrence associated with laminitis when the coffin bone pulls away from the dorsal wall of the hoof.
3. **Contracted Narrow Feet – Mule footed:** A foot which is narrower than normal, especially in the pal mar or plantar aspect. This may be caused by a lack of frog pressure and often occurs in horses which are improperly shod. The front feet are

more commonly affected than the back, and occasionally the contraction is so severe, lameness results.

4. **Founder-laminitis:** A serious ailment of the fleshy laminate. All feet may be affected, but the front ones are more susceptible.
5. **Broken Axis of Pastern and Hoof:** A foot in which the laterally observed foot axis and pastern axis are not identical, i.e., a foot in which the angle of the dorsal hoof wall as it meets the ground is not identical to the angle of the pastern when viewed laterally.
6. **Feet Out of Balance:** A foot with one quarter lower or higher than the opposite quarter.

NECK FAULTS:

1. **Poor hinge:** This refers to the head attachment to the neck. The head may be set on too low, the throat latch may be too thick, or the horse may be short from the poll to the crest.
2. **Thick Throat Latch:** Lack of clean definition of the throat between the head and the neck.
3. **Excessive Heavy Neck:** This is when the thickness of the neck is excessive, generally, going along with an excessive crest.
4. **Low Set:** This is when the neck attachment at the shoulder is lower at the withers. This is associated, generally, with a straighten shoulder.
5. **Swan Neck:** This is a low set neck that has a prominent ventral curve.
6. **Ewe Neck:** This is a swan neck with a dip in front of the withers.
7. **Straight Neck:** There is no shape to the neck.
8. **Short:** Bulky, thick and stagy in proportions.
9. **Excessive Crest:** This is a neck problem associated with fat accumulation in the crest.

TAIL FAULTS:

1. **Wry Tail:** When the tail is carried rotated and off to one side.
2. **No Tail Carriage:** Lack of ability to lift the tail.
3. **Low Set Tail:** Tail set on low in relation to the hip.

BODY FAULTS:

1. **Long Coupling – Long Back:** Long coupling, weak coupling, long back, these all refer to the area where the lumbar vertebra joint the sacral vertebra. This is the area that collection occurs, at the back rounds. Weakness in this area will cause problems with balance and movement.

2. **High Croup:** This is when the posterior superior iliac spine is prominent. This can be associated with a steep hip, and it is usually associated with poor muscling in the croup.
3. **Sway Back – Low in Back:** Lack of support in the back, inability to round the back and bring the hind-quarters under.
4. **Rafter Hips:** This is when posterior superior iliac spine and the anterior superior iliac spine are very prominent, and there is a lack of muscling in between. This is a hip that loses its roundness when viewed from the rear.
5. **Short Croup:** Shortness from the point of the croup to the tail head.
6. **Short Hip:** Shortness from the point of the hip to the point of the buttock.
7. **Straight Shoulder:** Open angle or greater angle of the shoulder.
8. **Flat Withers – Mutton Withers:** Lack of definition between the shoulder and the withers.
9. **Shallow Body:** This is a horse that lacks depth throughout the body.
10. **Steep Sloping Hip:** Greater angulations of the hip.
11. **Hernia:** The profusion of any internal organ through the wall of its containing cavity, but it usually means the passage of a portion of the intestine through an opening in the abdominal muscle.

MOVEMENT FAULTS:

1. **Irregular Strides:** Lack of balance and cadence in the horse's movement.
2. **Short Strides:** When the anterior phase of the stride of one leg is shorter than the other.
3. **Wings In:** Movement of a foot toward and then away from the median plane at the beginning and end of a stride, respectively (the usual movement accompanying toe-out conformation).
4. **Choppy Stride:** Lack of forward momentum, no reach with the forelimb.
5. **Lack Coordination:** Lack of balance, cadence and smooth rhythmic movements.
6. **Paddle Out:** Movements of a foot away from and then back toward the median plane at the beginning and end of a stride, respectively (the usual movement accompanying toe-in conformation).

BLEMISHES AND UNSOUNDNESS:

1. **Lameness or Soreness:** Objectionable gait deficits in the show ring.
2. **Splints Caused from Faulty Conformation:** Bony bumps usually resulting from interfering or structural abnormalities.

3. **Ring or Side Bone:** A bony outgrowth involving one or more bones and/or joints of the pastern region. It affects the fore foot although, occasionally, the hind foot is involved. This condition usually causes a progressive lameness, as the bony outgrowth completely rings the pastern region (hence the name ringbone). It is usually accompanied by a stiffened ankle if either the pastern joint or coffin joint is involved.
4. **Epiphysis's:** Inflammation of the growth plate, enlargement of the long bones, especially the distal extremities of the radius, tibia, and third metacarpal and metatarsal bones. This results in an hourglass shape to the joints. Frequently, all limbs are affected to some degree. There is a variable degree of lameness. This is associated with young, rapidly growing horses.
5. **Jack Spavin:** Arthritis on the inside of the two lower hock joints.
6. **Bowed Tendons:** Tearing of the tendon or tendon sheath in the area of the cannon bone.
7. **Cataract/Cloudy Eye:** Visual obstruction due to a scar on the cornea or cloudiness of the lens.
8. **Osselets:** An inclusive term referring to a number of abnormal conditions around the fetlock joints. Generally, it denotes a well-defined swelling slightly above or below the joint and off center to the rear of the leg. Horses show evidence of pain when the ankle is flexed.
9. **Curb:** This is an enlargement of the plantar aspect of the fibula bone due to inflammation and thickening of the plantar ligament.
10. **Bog Spavin:** A soft filling of the natural depression on the inside and front of the hock. A bog spavin is much larger than a blood spavin.
11. **Capped Hock:** Swelling located on the point of the hock. These swellings are caused by injuries which result in excess secretion of the synovial fluid.
12. **Capped Elbow:** Swelling located on the point of the elbow. These swelling are caused by injuries which result in excess secretion of the synovial fluid.
13. **Thoroughpin:** A puffy condition in the hollow of the hock. The puff can be seen mostly on the outside, but is moveable when palpated. Thoroughpin rarely causes lameness.
14. **Wind Puffs – Joint Capsule Hygromas:** A puffy enlargement of the pastern joint, also referred to as “windgall”. The enlargement is fluid filled distension of the bursa (joint sac or capsule).
15. **Splints With No Faulty Conformation:** Abnormal bony growths which can occur on the inside and/or outside of the cannon bone. They are most common on the inside of the front leg, when found on the hind cannon, they are usually on the outside. Splints may enlarge or be high enough to interfere with normal knee or hoof movement and, thereby, cause irritation and lameness.
16. **Scar from Injuries:**

GAITS

The **type of movement** for each division the Arabian breeds are shown in are determined by the class specifications in the USAE Rule book. [These rules were written by the Arabian horse community – breeders, owners, exhibitors and judges].

The best type of movement for each division in the rule book was written to describe the most functional and efficient movement for that division.

The **type** of movement should not be confused with **quality** of the movement. Any type of movement can be performed well, and no one type of movement is superior to another.

Success in the show ring creates popularity and fads. It has a dramatic influence on the way the Arabian horse breeds are ridden, trained and bred to move. Judges have an obligation to know correctness and quality of gaits, as well as how they are applied to each division according to the USAE Rule book.

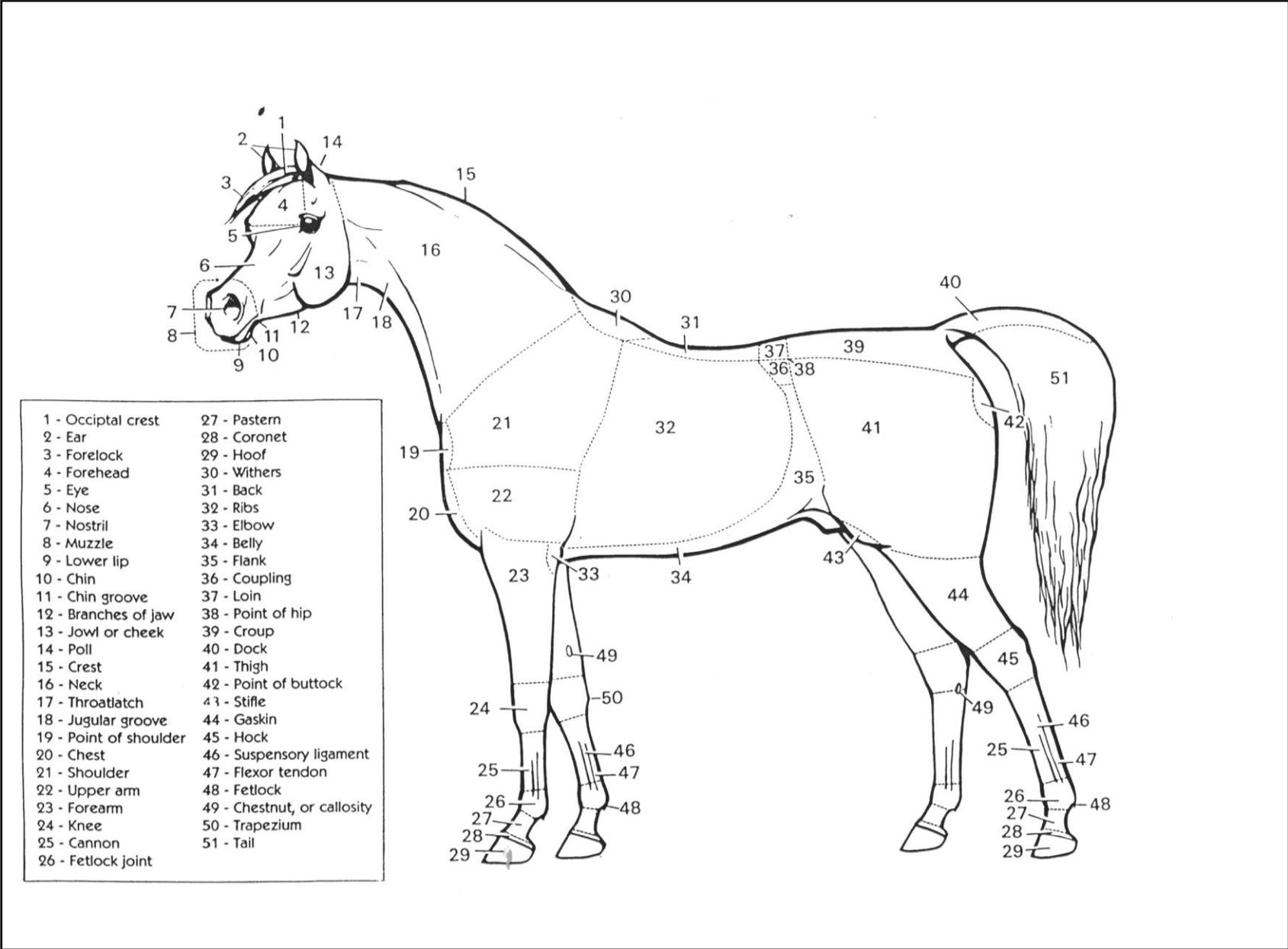
A **walk is a four-beat gait** in any division the horse is being show in.

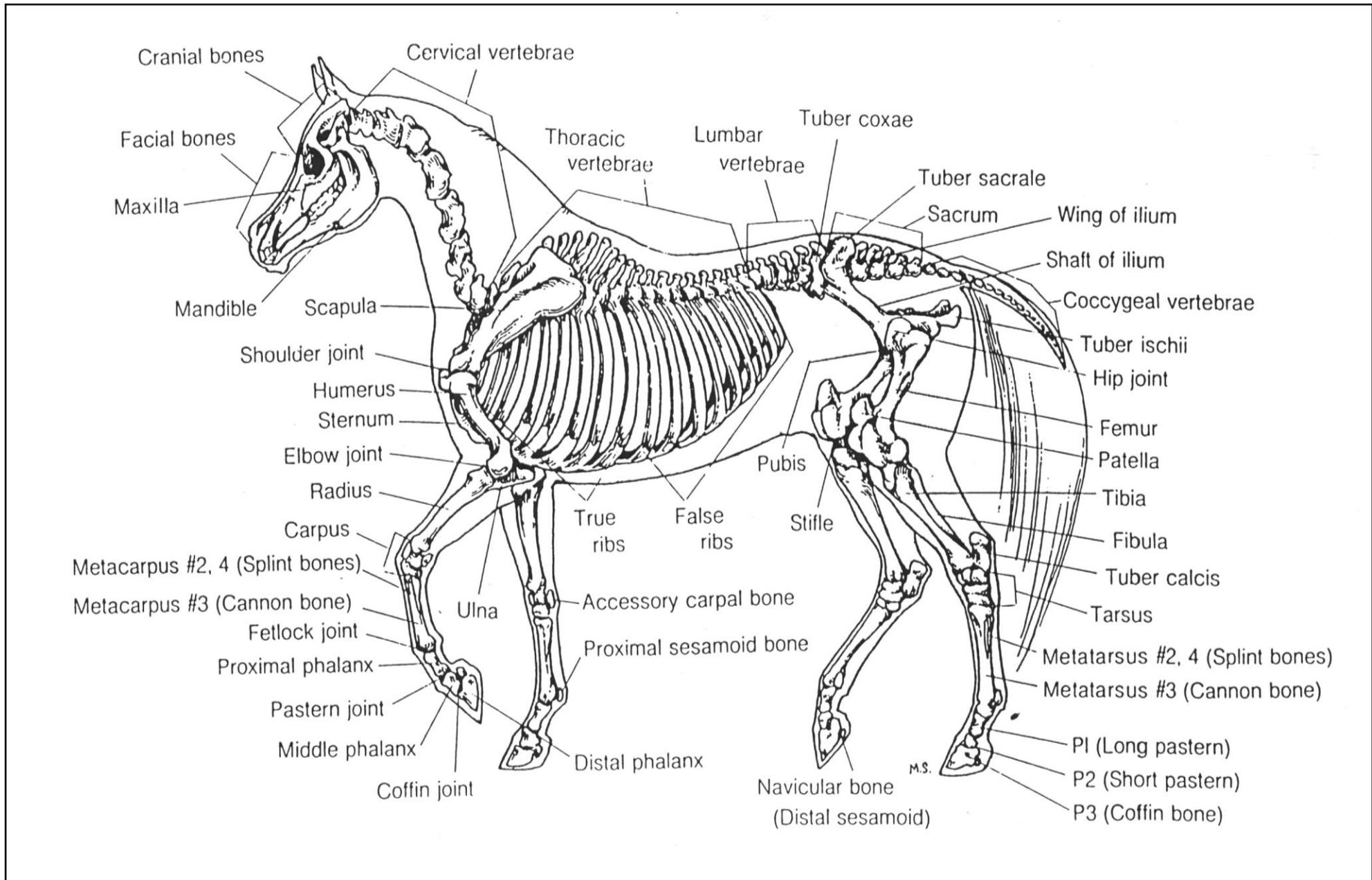
A **jog-trot or trot is a two-beat gait** in any division the horse is being shown in.

A **lope or canter is a three-beat gait** in any division the horse is being shown in.

In the show ring the horses are asked to move at a particular gait and speed, in a specific direction, and to carry themselves in a certain fashion. In each division the frame and way of going varies, but the mechanical aspects of the walk, trot/jog, and canter/lope are the same within all the divisions. A horse that moves with an inappropriate type of movement, for the division he is being shown in, should be discriminated against, no matter how well he moves. The type of movement (or way of going) specified for a particular division should be given priority over and inappropriate type of movement for that division.

PARTS OF THE HORSE





SKELETON OF THE HORSE

HALTER TRAINING FOR THE SHOW RING

STEP ONE

FORWARD AND BACKWARD MOTION

Because of the initial halter breaking lessons our horses already know how to walk forward. Now we must teach them to back-up. This step is very important for total control later in the training process. To start out, we lead the horse forward a few steps then we stop, with several feet of lead rope between the horse and ourselves. Now with a whip, we tap the horse on the chest as we move towards them. Keep in mind that if the horse only moves a step or two backwards it is all right. We keep repeating this exercise until the animal walks backwards as long as we ask them to do so.

STEP TWO

SIDE-TO-SIDE

Now that we have the horse walking forward and backwards we must teach them to move right and left at our command. This exercise is accomplished by holding the horse by the lead directly under the horse's halter with one hand and tapping the horse's whole body with the whip using our other hand (you must slowly walk backwards while tapping at first) Tap one side for 30 or 40 feet, then tap the other side changing hands. Continue this exercise until the horse totally understands. Then, while walking backwards make the horse go back and forth changing directions every 10 feet or so. Soon you can have the horse move side-to-side while only moving the whip from side-to-side.

Now you have total control of all four directions. We call this "putting the horse in a box".

STEP THREE

STOPPING WITH THE PROPER HIND LEG SPLIT

This step is relatively easy to teach the horse, and it is a very important step. This is the first step for achieving a show horse pose. The one complication is that every horse has to find their own proper split for his balance – we usually don't find that out until they learn most all the other steps, and is close to a finished product.

To train, you first take a lead with a chain, run the chain through both the side rings of the halter and snap it back to the ring where the chain attaches to the lead. Then pull the chain to the snap and snap the chain into the snap so that the chain does not touch the horse. This is called a "captive chain". Now while you walk backwards (the horse walking towards you about 4 or 5 feet from you), concentrate on the horse's right rear leg (the hind leg on your left side since you are facing the horse). Just before that leg leaves the ground you say "whoa" and pull down very hard on the lead (remember you won't hurt the horse because the chain is "captive"). Do this very hard about 6 times, on the 7th just say "whoa" and stop. The horse will stop without touching the lead and with a proper split.

STEP FOUR

STEPPING THE FRONT LEGS OUT

This next lesson for the horse is a little more difficult to teach, but is absolutely necessary for balance. To get the best possible halter pose we must have a solid foundation. Stepping the front legs out along with the proper hind leg split gives us that foundation. Step four is actually a two-part process.

PART ONE Pull the horse's lead off to your left (be sure you are facing the horse). Until the horse steps over to the side and forward (you will always have the horse move his hind legs forward as well) for now you can allow this. If the horse does not want to move, keep pulling harder until he does. After a couple of training sessions you can start part two.

PART TWO This is more difficult. We must teach our horse to step his front legs out without moving the hind legs (some horses learn this faster than others). To achieve this, you must go slowly, gently pulling the front legs out and anticipate when the horse is going to move his hind legs. Your job is to try and stop him before he moves the hind legs by saying "whoa" very loudly and raising your hands quickly in the air – this works as a stop sign. If the horse does move his hind legs (and he will!), shake the lead with a "captive chain" in a downward motion hard. Keep repeating this step over and over, rewarding each time the horse moves his front leg or legs forward and to the side without moving the hind legs. After you master the stepping out to your left, now teach the same movement to the right.

STEP FIVE

TRAINING THE HORSE TO USE HIS NECK TO COME OUT TO YOUR HAND AND FOLLOW YOUR HAND

Some people find this to be the most difficult training step. Most of these people do not know a proper method, so they try all kinds of tricks or movements that end up in frustration for the horse and handler. When teaching this skill do not worry about any of the previous training steps (just work on the neck only). Also, all these procedures should be taught in a quiet atmosphere if possible, because it is hard for a horse to concentrate if there is a lot of distraction.

Now, remember we are going to work on the neck only, so we start by simply saying "whoa" – raising our whip hand with whip in the air, we now move our hand towards the horse's nose slowly, about 6 inches to a foot, and stop. If the horse puts its nose out at all we pet him as a reward. If the horse does not, we move our hand a little closer and stop and wait. If the horse still does not move his head and neck at all, we move our hand all the way to his nose and touch it. Now we walk backwards several steps and repeat this step.

Next, we again stop the horse – raise our whip and give the horse a target. This time though, we tap the horse on the side of the neck with the whip then immediately take the butt of the whip to the horse's nose. Again, we walk backwards several steps, stop and give the horse our target (which is the butt of the whip in our right hand). If the horse does not come to our hand right away, we tap the side of his neck and immediately give him the target again. If he still does not use his neck, we tap his neck again and take the butt of

the whip into his nose and touch it. Once the horse understands the communications of your target, you can speed his response time up. As the horse learns this, he will start using his neck just part way. You must tap his neck and give him the target until he, on your command comes all the way to the target. Once the horse understands this communication, they will learn to come to your hand wherever your hand is.

STEP SIX

ELEVATION

For a final show pose, elevation is one of the most important features. This, on many occasions separates the winners from the losers. Again, forget all the other steps when working on elevation. We start out by simply saying “whoa”. Now we raise both of our hands slowly, then shank the lead and captive chain down and to the side, hard, immediately we then pull the horse towards us. Now we walk backward several feet (with the horse walking towards us). Again we say “whoa”, raise our hands slowly but steadily then shank hard to the side and down, and then pull the horse forward. Repeat this a few more times. If the horse just keeps backing up you must now put the chain under the jaw. Pull with steady pressure until the horse comes off the pressure of the chain.

At this point the horse knows two neck movements. Up when your hands go up and out to the target when you give him the target.

STEP SEVEN

LEADING AND TROTTING WHILE AT THE END OF YOUR SHOW LEAD

In your arena start at your horse’s left side, walking in the same direction. Have at least four feet of lead – no chain. Take the lead (with the slack in it) and throw the slack up toward the side of the horse’s face – do not let go of the lead. Also, you should do this with a cotton rope, with no chain, so you will not hurt the horse while walking.

Now, look over your left shoulder and with your whip, tap the back of your horse’s hind legs, keep looking over that shoulder and tapping the horse’s hind legs until you have completed at least three circles. Do these steps several times adding more length to your lead each time, throwing the excess rope towards the face and walking 50 to 75 feet in a straight line, then look over your left shoulder again, tapping the horse to come around you if necessary. If the horse is lagging behind while you have your arm up, and he is at the end of the rope, all you have to do is dip your left shoulder and look over it, and he will come forward.

The same method is applied for the trot. Now we have to teach the horse to trot and not to break into a canter. At the end of the lead, you trot the horse and when the horse breaks you say “whoa” loud and stop at once, and with the whip you tap him on the chest and make him back-up about 10 to 15 feet. Then turn your head over your left shoulder to make him come forward. Repeat these steps several times and you will have the best entrance at the Horse

Now that your horse understands all the steps, you can now put them all together and admire your finished product. Because each horse thinks, learns and is built differently, you will have different problems with different stages of these training methods. However, this system will work as long as you give the horse ample time and you do not get impatient.

HUNTER PLEASURE

The *good* hunter pleasure horse combines the manners and attitude of a well-trained pleasure horse with the frame, movement and way-of-going of a hunter under saddle. The hunter should have a long, low silhouette with a reaching stride which allows it to cover maximum ground with minimum effort. The head and neck serve as a balance arm and are carried in a comfortable position, appropriate for its own individual conformation. The hunter exhibits supreme obedience without sacrificing the interest or desire to go forward, maintaining light contact on the bit.

Maximum credit should be given to the responsive, confident, willingly guided individual that performs according to the class specifications, showing correct hunter movement and suitability as a hunter. The hunter is balanced in all aspects: gaits, conformation and disposition. This horse is an athlete with physical ability and way of going to traverse across hunt country with strength and finesse, yet maintaining a calm, quiet manner, which makes the hunter an enjoyable and easy riding horse. The ideal hunter pleasure horse gives the appearance of being very fit and capable of its tasks. Ultimately, the hunter has a great deal of charm and strength, leaving one with the impression this horse is a true *pleasure to ride*.

THE HUNTER PLEASURE horse's frame and way of going should be based on correct, traditional principles. In order to determine just what the IDEAL or CLASSIC hunter frame is, it helps to understand hunter criteria, such as; **suitability, movement, frame, engagement, contact, quality, manners and attitude**.

SUITABILITY: The hunter pleasure horse must be a horse that is suitable to be used as a hunter. The hunter must show free-moving, long, low steps and a natural, easy carriage or frame. High stepping horses, (this does not mean English type action, but an up and down motion) or horses with very high set necks are not desirable as hunter pleasure mounts.

The hunter pleasure horse should have a well laid back shoulder providing the freedom of movement through the shoulder, not the knee, and good length of stride, a reasonably short back for strength and a powerful hip. The neck should be well set and of adequate length to be carried easily and used for balance. The stride from the rear end should be powerful and reaching well under the belly with each step. The stride should never look quick or hurried, it should look long and powerful with suspension as the horse covers the ground easily. The hunter should be a bold, powerful horse, balanced front end to rear end, yet always calm and obedient.

Horses that can perform in a manner described by the following criteria may be suitable or appropriate hunter pleasure mounts. However, all horses may not be able to perform as described, all horses may not be appropriate hunter pleasure horses. Horses not performing to the following criteria horses not showing correct hunter movement or frame should be penalised.

MOVEMENT: The ideal movement of the hunter is long, free flowing strides with minimal upward and maximum forward motion. The hunter moves with long, low steps, reaching forward with such ease, smoothness and suspension they seem to be floating across the ground.

The knees must not show exaggerated flexion, the strides must not be quick, and the motion of the steps should not resemble a sewing machine, up and down. The legs should move forward gracefully and freely so the strides appear to be effortless and long with minimal bending and lifting of the knees.

Hocks should bend and drive as the hind legs move forward in long, powerful strides. The hind feet should step well under the belly, showing good reach, ideally reaching well over the foot print of the front foot. The movement of the hind legs actually comes from a soft, supple back, allowing the horse to reach with long steps rather than quick steps.

The hunter must never give the impression of being stiff, it must be relaxed through the neck, back and hocks allowing for long, free flowing fluid gaits. If the horse is overflexed the movement cannot be correct.

GAITS

The quality of gaits or horse's movement is not listed as a separate specification in a performance class, however, gaits and movement are of utmost importance in every class criteria. The horse's movement is critical in judging, it is the backbone of a performance class. It is of utmost importance that the judge consider the way of going or quality of gaits of every horse in every class and recognise and consider the difference in the way of going, or correct movement for each different type of performance class.

Judges are required to consider the performance at each gate equally in adjudicating this class.

WALK: A four-beat gait, straight, true and flat-footed. Regular and unconstrained with good reach.

At the walk the hunter must propel itself forward from behind with long reaching strides. The horse's head and neck are relaxed as the horse moves its legs one after the other so that four hoof beats may be heard. The horse moves from one foot to the other with no period of suspension. The walk should be regular, show good reach and be ground covering.

TROT: A two-beat gait; straight and regular. The trot should be mannerly, cadenced and balanced. To be performed at medium speed with a free moving, ground covering stride with rider posting.

The trot is a two-beat diagonal gait in which opposite fore and hind feet hit the ground together. The hunter's trot must be free flowing, balanced and cadenced with rhythm and drive. The hunter's trot should give the appearance of strength and ease of gait, a picture of elegance as the horse swings its front legs forward, through the shoulder, with each step and stretches for the ground. The hocks should bend and the hind legs should reach well under the belly, the steps reaching over the footprint of the front foot, showing power and suspension, giving the appearance of floating over the ground. Speed is not a factor, the trot should never be hurried.

Exaggerated action, (this does not mean English type action, but up and down motion from the knees rather than a swing through the shoulder for reach) quick, stiff or short strided movement must be penalised. Horses trotting too fast to maintain balance and cadence should also be penalised.

CANTER: *A three-beat gait; even, smooth, unhurried, correct and straight on both leads.*

The canter must show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be relaxed and supple allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power and drive. The horse's neck should be relaxed and carried in a natural position for each individual's conformation.

The canter should be uninhibited, showing long, reaching steps, not short, high or overly collected steps. The canter should be an easy, comfortable gait for both horse and rider.

HAND-GALLOP: *The hand-gallop is performed with a long, free, ground covering stride. The amount of ground covered may vary between horses due to difference in natural length of stride. A decided lengthening of stride should be shown while the horse remains controlled, mannerly, correct and straight on both leads.*

The hand-gallop is a gallop in hand – an easy controlled gallop showing a definite lengthening of stride while remaining obedient, mannerly and SAFE. The horse's frame, its back and neck, should lengthen as it stretches out and reaches with longer, powerful strides from the hindquarters. The hand-gallop should give the appearance of being an easy, natural gait for the hunter, keeping rhythm and balance while showing good reach and impulsion. The hand-gallop must never look hurried or out of control. The hand gallop is the gait which, in a hunter, performs a course over fences. It must cover ground, but it must be safe, balanced and controlled.

FRAME: The neck should be carried lower, and the head should be carried in a more relaxed manner with less bend at the poll, and the horse should be in a generally longer frame than that of the English Pleasure, Country Pleasure or Show Hack horse.

High headed horses and horses behind the vertical must be penalised.

It is important that the hunter pleasure horse looks like a hunter, carries itself as a hunter and moves like a hunter. This is not a class for pseudo western or English horses in different attire.

Correct frame and correct movement must be credited and incorrect frame and movement must be penalised.

A hunter's 'frame' or general carriage should not suggest extremes. The ideal frame for each horse depends on its particular conformation. The hunter's topline should be level, however, this reference to level is to the relationship between the height of the croup and the withers, not the poll and the croup. A horse with its croup higher than its withers cannot get its own weight off of its forehead and balance itself.

It is a matter of individual conformation as to where each horse should actually carry its neck and poll in relation to its withers. The shape of the horse's entire body is a result of where it is allowed to carry its poll. If the horse's poll is lower than its withers it is a good indication that the hindquarters are not underneath for balance and impulsion. Depending on the horse's conformation the poll will usually be about 10 to 20 cm above the withers when moving with proper impulsion from behind. The neck must be relaxed and carried easily.

Ideally the hunter will present a balanced curve from poll to croup, but must give the impression of equality of movement between front end and rear end, balanced and cadenced with long, free flowing strides. Horses presented as such should be credited.

It is very easy for Arabians to over bend at the poll and therefore carry themselves behind the vertical, therefore not reaching through the back to the bridle. Just because it is easy, this is not correct, even though it is widely accepted. Horses that are behind the vertical and too low are not in balance. The gaits are compromised, usually quick; even if they are able to travel fast, the horses are not able to actually reach for ground with long strides. The strides will be quick and short with the overall frame giving a downhill impression.

It is up to you as the judge to credit the correct frame of the hunter and to penalise the horses that are being shown behind the vertical, often also behind the bridle. It is important that the hunter pleasure horse looks like a hunter, carries itself as a hunter and moves like a hunter. This is not a class for western pleasure horses moving faster in different attire or English type horses held over.

Correct hunter frame and correct hunter movement must be credited.

As in all other performance classes, correct movement and frame or carriage is the basic criteria of the class.

ENGAGEMENT: *The connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the rider's hand with light contact on the bit is engagement. This engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy. The hindquarters should be nicely engaged, the hind legs working under the horse's body with moderate power, not strung out or trailing behind. This engagement is the appropriate amount of energy created by the hip, stifle and hock.*

How deeply a horse reaches its hind legs under the body depends on its conformation, training, confidence and relaxation. Suitable conformation gives the horse the ability and strength to properly and easily engage the hindquarters and back to carry itself. Through proper training and development the horse learns engagement which enables it to connect through the back and use itself properly. The horse that understands the training and has the proper muscular development is confident. Relaxation of the horse's body and mind comes from confidence and understanding the training, which allows it to engage and perform properly.

A horse that is tense is unable to relax its back, become supple and engage the hindquarters; resulting in shorter, faster steps, a lack of fluidity, suspension, ease of movement and overall stiff appearance.

CONTACT: Light contact with the horse's mouth must be maintained at all gaits.

The horse must allow the rider to take a light contact on the reins without dropping behind the vertical or behind the bit. The horse must show energy and response from behind and must allow the rider to shape the energy with the leg, seat and hands through signals to the bit and light contact. Light contact is the line of communication from the rider's hand to the horse's mouth. The horse should move in a balanced frame between light contact in the rider's hand and the rider's leg. Some horses drop behind the vertical to escape the rider's hands, some horses are shown with too much contact to make them round, while

others are shown on loose rein, free moving but not connected or engaged because of lack of contact.

Light contact is the goal, not strong heavy contact and not loose reins. The ideal is a slightly rounded frame with a light contact that looks natural and easy.

QUALITY: The strength and athleticism required to perform the tasks of a hunter pleasure horse with ease and finesse. Quality is the degree of excellence exuded by muscle tone, depth of muscle, clean fine bone, balance front to rear, good carriage and dignified presence.

MANNERS AND ATTITUDE:

It is imperative that the horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride and displays a pleasurable and relaxed attitude.

Manners are reflected in the way the horse performs. Hunters must be obedient and responsive to the rider, must be willingly guided and controlled with light contact, show good behaviour and disposition. Manners should reflect the horse's obedience to the rider with safety being all-important. The good hunter pleasure horse must display good manners by responding to the rider with willingness and ease while showing acceptance and a good disposition toward the surroundings and other horses in the arena.

Attitude shows willingness. While the hunter is performing to the criteria of the class, it should do so in a pleasant and willing manner. It should be prompt without anticipating, relaxed without being dull and must be attentive to the rider. Attitude is the horse's mental approach to the job at hand and expression shown through behaviour and conduct. Good attitude is reflected in a soft eye, alert ears, relaxed back, a willingness to perform, a quiet mouth and generally pleasant look.

APPOINTMENTS

- ❖ Bridle shall be light, show type; either snaffle, pelham, full bridle or kimberwick bit acceptable. Bits shall not be discriminated against as long as it is an acceptable bit. Browbands and cavesons other than hunter and dressage types not permitted, nor are metal ornamented bridles, browbands or cavesons. Saddle seat style coloured browbands or cavesons, figure eight, drop, or flash nosebands are not permitted.
- ❖ Breastplate or breast collar is optional. Martingales or tie-downs are not permitted
- ❖ Type of English saddle is optional, but forward seat type saddle recommended. No cutback saddles allowed. Girth either leather, web, string or suitable material. Bright colours or square pads are not appropriate, but permissible.
- ❖ Spurs and crop or bat, no longer than 12 cm including the lash (except side saddle) are optional at the riders discretion.
- ❖ Informal attire of suitable material is required and consists of conservatively colored coat, breeches or jodhpurs and boots. A conservatively colored hunting cap or derby is mandatory. Hunter seat attire should be well fitted, conservative, workmanlike, traditional and neat. Bright colours frills and flare are not proper. Formal attire is not permitted.

HUNTER PLEASURE CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

MANNERS:

The conduct or behaviour with which the horse performs. Obedience and responsiveness to the rider, the willingness to be guided and controlled. Acceptance of surroundings and other horses in the arena.

PERFORMANCE:

The physical act of doing all of the gaits, transitions from one gait to another, the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all the requirements of the class.

SUITABILITY AS A HUNTER:

The ability to perform appropriately to the criteria of the class. Having correct hunter movement, proper hunter frame and carriage with engagement and light contact. Suitability as a Hunter requires that the horse has a purpose and creates the necessity to perform properly to hunter criteria..

QUALITY:

The strength and athleticism required to perform the tasks of the Hunter Pleasure horse effortlessly and with finesse. The degree of excellence, condition, presence, carriage, balance and strength. A horse that is pleasing to the eye.

CONFORMATION:

The horse's correct structural form as it relates to the functions and performance of a hunter pleasure horse.

In all Hunter Pleasure classes, class specification are:

HUNTER PLEASURE: *To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand-gallop both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on manners, performance, suitability as a Hunter, quality and conformation.*

HUNTER PLEASURE HORSES - *Child/Junior Rider*

To be shown at a walk, trot and canter both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Suitability as a hunter
- d Manners
- e Conformation

JUNIOR HUNTER PLEASURE HORSES - (7 Years and under)

To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand gallop both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Suitability as a hunter
- d Manners
- e Conformation

JUNIOR HUNTER PLEASURE HORSE - CHAMPIONSHIP - (7 Years and under)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Hunter Pleasure Horse section for Junior Hunter Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand gallop both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily.

To be judged on:

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Suitability as a hunter
- d Manners
- e Conformation

SENIOR HUNTER PLEASURE HORSES- (7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand gallop both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Suitability as a Hunter
- e Conformation

SENIOR HUNTER PLEASURE HORSE CHAMPIONSHIP- (7 Years and older)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Hunter Pleasure Horse section for Senior Hunter Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand gallop in both directions of the ring. To stand quietly and back readily.

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Suitability as a Hunter
- e Conformation

In all Hunter Pleasure classes, except Junior Horse classes, manners are considered first in the judging criteria. However, in Junior Horse classes quality is considered first in the

judging criteria, allowing junior horses to be rewarded for potential, quality and performance rather than be penalised for lack of experience and finish.

Note that all Hunter Pleasure horses are required to hand-gallop. All class specifications require ***suitability as a Hunter***, and the hand-gallop is foundation to a Hunter, therefore required in all Hunter Pleasure classes. Speed is not the important factor in the hand-gallop; it is a lengthening of the stride.

All horses in this class should be suited to being a hunter.

Horses may show with a braided mane and/or tail, but it is not required.

Backing is required and must be judged.

FAULTS

BAD MANNERS:

Including wringing tail, pinned ears, cutting to the centre of the arena, balking, bolting, kicking, bucking, gapping on the bit, not responsible to the rider.

BAD ATTITUDE:

Including sour ears, swishing tail, avoiding contact with the bit, not performing with ease - smoothness and confidence, stressed and agitated, resistance.

POOR PERFORMANCE: Including wrong leads, breaking gaits, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider's hands, lack of response to the rider's aids.

POOR MOVEMENT:

Quick, short or choppy strides, too high knee action, clunky, too fast or too slow. Lacking reach and engagement. Horses that do not move correctly, as a hunter, must be penalised.

UNTRUE GAITS:

Uneven, out of cadence, out of balance.

UNNATURAL HEAD CARRIAGE:

Too low, too high, behind the vertical, neck too arched.

FRAME TOO EXTREME:

The horse is too collected, strung out, or in an unnatural position for its own conformation. Horses going behind the vertical must be penalised.

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN LIGHT CONTACT:

The horse that drops behind the vertical or bit to evade the rider or bit, loose reins, the horse that is intimidated in the bridle or the horse that is pulling or heavy on the bit or above the bit.

CREDITS

PROPER HUNTER MOVEMENT AND FRAME :

Strides, which are long, low and free flowing, showing maximum reach with minimal upward motion from the knee. Hindquarters showing powerful, long steps, reaching well under the horse. Credit the hunter that gives the appearance of gliding across the ground with suspension and ease, balanced and cadenced with self-carriage. The frame is natural and easy, with the horse maintaining light contact to the bridle. Credit the horse that gives you the impression that it has the movement and physical ability to jump over a course of fences.

GOOD MANNERS AND GOOD ATTITUDE:

The horse that is obedient and responsive to the rider, willingly guided and controlled, shows good behaviour and pleasant manner.

GOOD PERFORMANCE:

Performing the class requirements correctly and easily with finesse.

SUITABILITY AS A HUNTER:

The horse that shows the strength and character to be a hunter. Depicting proper hunter carriage or frame, hunter movement, confidence and calm attitude.

MAINTAINING LIGHT CONTACT:

The horse's willingness to maintain light contact, accept the rider's hand and leg, to be controlled easily and guided willfully should be rewarded.

QUALITY AND CORRECT CONFORMATION : Allow the horse to perform with ease, strength and finesse.

Judging is not an absolute. It is a matter of observation and evaluation, based on certain established criteria and rules.

However, in judging performance classes everything is relative. All faults should be avoided in one or more of the class specifications. However, a minor fault may not be elimination. Good judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horses performing the most correctly, as established by the class criteria and specifications should be the winners.

However, it is up to you as the Judge to CREDIT WHAT IS CORRECT and PENALISE WHAT IS INCORRECT. Even if what is incorrect is usual or accepted it is still incorrect.

SHOW HACK

The good show hack horse is neither a dressage horse (although extended and collected gaits are required) nor an English pleasure rail horse. The show hack is, however, the epitome of the well-trained rail horse. It has the ability to perform all of the required gaits with uninterrupted cadence in three forms: *normal, collected and extended*. When asked to extend the horse's entire frame lengthens and not merely the stride. When asked to collect the entire body supples and becomes round resulting in shorter, higher strides. The show hack performs all of its tasks willingly with light contact.

The ideal show hack possesses the best qualities of many other types of show horses in one horse: vitality, presence, animation, supreme quality, excellent performance and impeccable manners. Every dimension of this individual is balanced. The show hack is a great athlete that performs softly at times and boldly other times, always with strength and finesse. This horse earns the respect of the horseman by leaving the impression it is fit, highly trained and capable of any task within reason. The show hack is a true joy to ride.

By rule show hack is a class for the very well trained horse. Although extended and collected gaits are required, it is not necessarily a class for just Dressage horses. Elevation and high knee action are not to be emphasised so an English pleasure horse may not necessarily be the ideal horse for this class. It is a class for the very well trained, brilliant performance horse.

A show hack must be able to perform all of the gaits with a noticeable transition between the normal, collected and extended gaits. The horse must be under complete control and easily ridden. Obedience to the rider is of prime importance. If the horse exhibits clear transitions in a balanced and level manner, appearing to be giving a comfortable and pleasurable ride, he is performing correctly for this class.

Show hacks must be balanced and show vitality, animation, presence, clean fine limbs and supreme quality. Soundness is required.

The show hack must first be a very well trained horse performing all of the gaits and transitions correctly and obediently in a balanced, easy manner. The show hack must remain light and responsive to the rider while performing with brilliance and animation.

TRANSITIONS

Transition is the moving from one gait to another gait, a change in the extension or collection of a particular gait or a halt. Horses should move through the gaits without heavy pulling on the bridle, gapping on the bit, tossing the head or moving sideways. The horse must not collapse, stiffen or lose rhythm or cadence when asked to collect, nor should the horse pull downwards, drop its shoulders and lose the connection from the hindquarters when asked to extend.

As transitions are performed the horse should appear almost elastic as it moves through the collected to extended gaits. Remaining balanced, cadenced and obedient throughout, the horse should not lose rhythm or cadence through the transitions. The gaits should maintain the same cadence in all phases. The show hack should exhibit an energetic thrust from the hindquarters to propel itself into collected gaits by further engagement of the hindquarters, rounding the back, dropping the haunches, stepping further underneath

the body and elevating the forehand, always remaining light in the rider's hands, responding easily with no resistance.

Transitions should be clear and immediate with no resistance to the rider. The horse should remain light between the rider's hand and leg demonstrating smooth and straight forward or downward transitions.

BALANCE

Balance is the horse's bodily poise, the state of equilibrium or equal relationship front and rear, the equality of movement between front end and rear end. The show hack must never give the impression of travelling downhill or on the forehand. The shoulders should be free with proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse.

CADENCE

Cadence expresses the quality of locomotion in which the steps follow each other in a uniform sequence, rhythm and measure. Cadence is the sequence of well-regulated strides where the steps are resolute, lively, even and progressive in their purpose. When strides are cadenced they are pronounced, clear, decisive and elastic. A well-schooled horse should be able to perform strides considerably longer or shorter than their normal length without losing their resoluteness or evenness.

RHYTHM

Rhythm denotes the quickness or slowness of the sequence in which the gaits are performed. It is the rate at which the horse keeps its legs moving in a constant sequence of strides and the repetition of the steps in a regular pattern.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is the connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the rider's hand with light contact on the bit. This engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy. Proper engagement is necessary for a show hack. The hindquarters should be nicely engaged, the hind legs working under the horse's body with moderate power, never strung out or trailing behind. This engagement is the appropriate amount of energy created by the hip, stifle and hock, resulting from the development of the physique and ability of the horse. How deeply a horse reaches its hind legs under the body depends on its conformation, training, confidence and relaxation. Conformation enables the horse to engage the hindquarters and back. Training teaches the horse and develops the muscular structure enabling it to engage the hindquarters. Confidence is created by the horse understanding the training. Relaxation allows the neck, back and hindquarters to work together.

GAITS

Judges are required to consider the performance at each gait equally in adjudicating this class.

WALK

The walk is a four-beat gait; straight, true and flat-footed.

NORMAL WALK

The normal walk is regular and unconstrained, moving forward energetically and calmly. At the normal walk the horse should stride with lively, regular steps. The length of stride is determined by the natural length of leg and swing of each horse as the horse moves forward from one foot to the other with no period of suspension, remaining on a light but steady contact with the bit.

COLLECTED WALK

In the collected walk the strides are shorter and higher than at the normal walk. The head approaches vertical but should never move behind it. Pacing is a serious fault.

The steps are more cadenced and should cover less ground than the normal walk without any loss of elasticity or activity in the gait. The hind feet touch the ground slightly behind the imprints of the front feet as the strides are shorter and the horse propels itself upward rather than forward. Horses should remain straight while maintaining the same rhythm of the normal walk.

EXTENDED WALK

In the extended walk the horse is allowed to lengthen the frame and stride while the rider maintains light contact. The horse should cover as much ground as possible without rushing.

The horse should perform with the utmost effort to gain ground, moving forward with regular rhythm and cadence. Complete loss of rein contact is not desired, or allowed by rule.

However the neck and back should stretch slightly as the horse reaches with longer steps propelling itself forward. Ideally the hind feet should step well in front of or over the imprints of the front feet.

TROT

The trot is a two-beat gait; free-moving, straight, rider maintaining light contact with horse's mouth at all times.

NORMAL TROT

The normal trot is light, crisp, balanced and cadenced with rider posting. The horse should move straightforward with free, lively, energetic steps. Elevation and high knee action is not to be emphasised. The trot should show elegant carriage and strength from the hindquarters while moving in an easy, natural manner.

COLLECTED TROT

In the collected trot the horse's stride is shorter and lighter, maintaining balance and impulsion. The neck is more raised and arched than at the normal trot as the head approaches the vertical line but never moving behind it. The rider is **sitting**.

Cadenced strides in a proud carriage are characteristics of the collected trot. The engagement or stepping under of the hind feet and rounding of the back should show the transfer of the horse's weight to the hindquarters allowing the horse to propel itself forward and upward, lightening and elevating through the shoulders. The neck should lift and arch slightly according to the horse's conformation. The connection or engagement of the hindquarters and a supple back creates suspension or a light, springy step. There should be no loss of forward propulsion, straightness, or too prolonged a period of suspension or be too slow.

The collected trot should remain straight and true showing light, springy, cadenced steps and forward movement in a balanced manner.

EXTENDED TROT

Maintaining the same cadence and performing at medium speed, the horse lengthens its stride as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters in the extended trot. The horse should remain light in the rider's hand as it lengthens its frame. The rider is posting.

The extended trot should show considerable length of stride without pulling down on the rider's hands or losing balance and rhythm. The brilliance of the extended trot depends upon an energetic thrust from the hindquarters and a distinct forward swinging movement of the shoulders. The ground covered will vary among horses due to the difference in natural length of stride and conformation. Speed and high knee action should not be determining factors. However, the quality of the extended trot and trueness of gait of each individual should be evaluated.

CANTER

The canter is a three-beat gait; straight on both leads and smooth.

NORMAL CANTER

The normal canter has light even strides and should be moved into without hesitation. The horse should show a moderately arched neck, suited to its own conformation should maintain light contact on the bit and show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be relaxed and supple allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power.

COLLECTED CANTER

Marked by the lightness of the forehand and the engagement of the hindquarters, the collected canter is characterised by supple, free shoulders. The neck is more raised and arched than in normal canter as the head approaches the vertical line while never moving behind it.

The collected canter should show a proud posture giving the impression of cantering uphill. The horse becomes more engaged as the hindquarters reach further underneath the body, allowing the neck and shoulders to elevate by lifting itself at the withers. The collected canter should not just be slower, and slower is not always better. The quality and trueness of the gait must be evaluated. The collected canter must maintain a clear three-beat, remaining straight with activity and drive.

EXTENDED CANTER

Maintaining the same cadence, the horse lengthens its stride as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters in the extended canter. The horse should remain light in the rider's hand as it lengthens its frame.

The extended canter should show a longer stride due to greater impulsion or thrust from the hindquarters, propelling itself forward. The horse's neck and back may stretch slightly as it reaches for more ground, but must never pull downward or become out of balance onto the forehand. Speed is not the determining factor when judging the extended canter. Quality of gait, responsiveness to the rider, willingness to go forward while remaining calm and maintaining the cadence of the canter should be considered when evaluating the extended canter.

HAND-GALLOP

The hand-gallop is performed with a long, free, ground-covering stride. The amount of ground covered may vary between horses due to differences in natural length of stride. The distinction between the hand-gallop and the extended canter is that the extended canter is the ultimate linear extension of stride within the hand of the rider while the hand-gallop is a looser, more free elongation of stride and frame of the horse. A decided lengthening of stride should be shown while the horse remains controlled, mannerly, correct and straight on both leads. Extreme speed is penalised.

The hand-gallop is not just a faster extended canter, but a true elongation of lengthening of the horse's stride and frame. The hindquarters should reach well underneath the horse with long, powerful strides, the shoulders should reach forward freely and the neck and back should show stretch as the horse truly moves to a hand-gallop. The whole horse should have a longer appearance. The horse must remain balanced, obedient, calm and light in the rider's hand while actually reaching forward to a true hand-gallop.

FALL

Entries will be eliminated by fall of horse or rider during the class.

APPOINTMENTS

- ❖ Bridle shall be light, show type; either single snaffle, double (full) or pelham. Kimberwick bit is permitted. Certain bits may not be discriminated against as long as they are acceptable bits. The judge must not have any preconceived ideas as to which bits are more desirable or have personal preference. The exhibitor is allowed to choose the bit most appropriate for that horse and each horse should be judged as an individual according to the performance it is giving and how it is presented, not by the bit it is wearing.

- ❖ Browband and cavessons other than hunter or dressage are prohibited. Saddle seat style browbands and cavesons are also not allowed. Unconventional tack, such as figure eight, drop or flash nosebands are not prohibited.
- ❖ English saddle of any kind is required. Girth either leather, white web, nylon string or suitable material. Spurs, whip or crop are optional at the exhibitor's discretion.
- ❖ Acceptable Hack attire is required. It consists of conservatively colored coat, breeches (or jodhpurs) and boots. A conservatively hunting cap or derby is required. Formal attire consisting of white breeches, top hat and tails or shadbelly coat, may be worn. Horses may be shown with braided mane and/or tail, but it is not required. Decorations are prohibited. Braided mains are usual; however, tails usually are not braided if the mane is not braided.

SHOW HACK CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

MANNERS

Manners are the conduct and behaviour with which the horse performs. Manners are evidenced by obedience and responsiveness to the rider and a willingness to be guided and controlled. A well-mannered horse accepts its surroundings and other horses in the arena.

PERFORMANCE

Performance is the physical act of doing all of the gaits, the transitions from one gait to another, the collected, normal and extended gaits, and the halt. The execution or accomplishment of carrying out all the requirements of the class constitutes performance.

QUALITY

A quality horse possesses the presence, carriage, athleticism, balance and strength required to perform effortlessly and with finesse. A quality horse is pleasing to the eye with a high degree of excellence, depth of conditioning and muscle tone.

CONFORMATION

Conformation is the horse's correct structural form as it relates to the functions and performance of a show hack horse.

All Show Hack classes are to be judged by the same class specifications:

SHOW HACK - *Child/Junior Rider*

To be shown at a walk, trot and canter, and hand gallop; collected, extended and normal gaits to be called for; to stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Manners
- d Conformation

JUNIOR SHOW HACK - (7 Years and under)

To be shown at a walk, trot and canter, and hand gallop; collected, extended and normal gaits to be called for; to stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Conformation

JUNIOR SHOW HACK - CHAMPIONSHIP- (7 Years and under)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Show Hack section for Junior Show Hack classes. To be shown at a walk, trot and canter, and hand gallop; collected, extended and normal gaits to be called for; to stand quietly and back readily.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Conformation

SENIOR SHOW HACK- (7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, trot and canter, and hand gallop; collected, extended and normal gaits to be called for; to stand quietly and back readily. To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Conformation

SENIOR SHOW HACK- CHAMPIONSHIP (7 Years and older)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Show Hack section for Senior Show Hack classes. To be shown at a walk, trot and canter, and hand gallop; collected, extended and normal gaits to be called for; to stand quietly and back readily.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Conformation

Stripping of horses are *not* permitted.

FAULTS

BAD MANNERS

Bad manners include wringing tail, pinned ears, cutting to the centre of the arena, balking, bolting, kicking, bucking, gapping on the bit and not responding to the rider.

BAD ATTITUDE

A bad attitude is indicated by sour ears, swishing tail, avoiding contact with the bit, not performing with ease, smoothness and confidence, stress or agitation, resistance.

POOR PERFORMANCE

Poor performance includes wrong leads, breaking gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider's hands, lack of response to the rider's aids.

UNTRUE GAITS

Untrue gaits include uneven steps, out of cadence or rhythm.

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN LIGHT CONTACT

Failure to maintain light contact includes pulling down too heavily on the reins or behind the bit with loose reins or vertical position.

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN QUALITY OF GAITS.

Failure to maintain quality of gaits includes, being too slow, or lack of impulsion or engagement, going too fast, going downhill, being out of balance or trailing out behind.

LACK OF STRAIGHTNESS IN GAITS, TRACKING CROOKED, HAUNCHES TO THE INSIDE

ABRUPT, ROUGH TRANSITIONS

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CREDITS

- ❖ Good manners and good attitude
- ❖ Good performance
- ❖ Balance and cadence
- ❖ Smooth, clear, accurate transitions.
- ❖ True, quality gaits, straight and even
- ❖ Maintaining light contact
- ❖ Presence and self-carriage
- ❖ Brilliance, animation, vitality
- ❖ Obedience and responsiveness.

JUDGING

Show Hack is not a fault and out class. You should not try and trick the exhibitor into a mistake by calling for the gaits in an unrealistic manner. The gaits and transitions should be called for in a manner which allows you to properly evaluate the performance of the horse, the quality of gaits and the execution of transitions.

Calling the gaits properly will allow you to see which horses remain supple, balanced, cadenced, obedient without resistance to the rider. Transitions should be clear and immediate. The definition and accuracy of the transitions should be judged. Normal gaits should be free and easy. When asked for a collected gait you should see the horse's haunch drop under, the back round, the hocks bend and step under, the withers, shoulders and neck lift and steps become shorter and more cadenced. When asked to extend a gait, the stride lengthens, the neck and back stretches slightly, the horse drives with powerful steps from behind covering more ground remaining light in the rider's hand and never losing balance.

As a rule of thumb, allow the horses to move into a normal gait, then ask for collected or extended transitions. It is acceptable to move from a collected gait to another gait, but it is not acceptable to call for a canter from the extended trot. Use logic when judging and calling the gaits.

The winner should be the horse that correctly does the class requirements with animation, vitality and a bit of arrogance. The winner is very well trained with impeccable manners, a brilliant attitude and dignified presence.

Judging is not an absolute. It is a matter of observation and evaluation.

Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules. However, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Each fault is a void in one or more of the class specifications, although a minor fault may not be elimination. All faults should be considered according to their severity and the depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by class criteria and specifications should be the winner.

| Gait Comparison - <u>SHOW HACK</u> | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <u>TROT</u> | <u>WALK</u> | <u>CANTER</u> | <u>HAND GALLOP</u> |
| A two-beat gait Free-moving Straight Rider maintaining light contact with horse's mouth at all times | A four-beat gait Straight True Flat-footed | A three-beat gait Straight on both leads smooth | Long Free Ground covering stride |
| <i>Normal Trot</i> Light Crisp Balanced cadenced | <i>Normal Walk</i> Regular Unconstrained Moving energetically & calmly forward | <i>Normal Canter</i> Light even strides Moved into without hesitation | <i>Hand Gallop</i> Controlled Mannerly Correct and straight on both leads A decided lengthening of stride |
| <i>Collected Trot</i> Stride shorter & lighter Maintaining balance & impulsion Neck more raised & arched head approaches the vertical line, never moving behind it | <i>Collected Walk</i> Strides shorter & higher Head approaches the vertical, but never moves behind it Pacing is a serious fault | <i>Collected Canter</i> Marked by lightness of forehand & engagement of hindquarters Supple, free shoulders Neck more raised & arched Head approaches the vertical line, never moving behind it. | <i>Collected Canter</i> Extreme speed to be penalised <u>The distinction between the hand gallop and the extended canter.</u> The hand gallop is a looser, more free elongation of stride and frame of the horse. The extended canter is the ultimate linear extension of stride within the hand of the rider |
| <i>Extended Trot</i> Same cadence Medium speed Lengthens stride due to greater impulsion from hindquarters Lengthens frame Horse remains light in rider's hands | <i>Extended Walk</i> Lengthens frame & stride light rein contact Covers as much ground as possible without rushing | <i>Extended Canter</i> Same cadence Lengthens stride due to greater impulsion from hindquarters Lengthens frame Horse remains light in rider's hands | |

ENGLISH PLEASURE

THE GOOD ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES have a brisk, animated stride that allows them to comfortably move forward with authority, grace and elegance. Their gaits result from a balanced, cadenced motion that emanates from impulsion created by the hindquarters. It is this impulsion that generates the energy for their strong, elastic shoulders and front legs to implement the range of motion that takes place. Their natural conformation allows them to carry the head and neck in an upright position to serve as a balance arm.

THE IDEAL ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES are bright, confident, responsive and perform all the gaits correctly while under light contact. They should be balanced in all aspects, conformation, gait and disposition. These individuals are athletes with the physical talent to do their tasks with strength and finesse, the good temperament to do them willingly and the inherent ambition to do them well. They have the spirit of a show horse and give the appearance they enjoy their job, which makes them attractive and pleasing to the eye. Ultimately these horses have a great deal of charisma and they give the impression of being ***a real pleasure to ride***.

The English Pleasure horse's carriage and way of going should be based on established elements performing the criteria, and well thought out written rules that combine to make an ideal English Pleasure Horse. To determine what is the ideal, it helps to understand the requirements and criteria of the class.

THE GAITS

It is imperative that the English Pleasure horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride and displays a pleasurable attitude. To this end all gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness.

Judges are required to consider the performance of each gait equally when adjudicating this class.

Walk, a four-beat gait: brisk, true and flat-footed with good reach.

At the walk the horse must propel itself forward from behind with long, reaching steps. The horse's neck and back are relaxed as the horse moves from one foot to the other with no period of suspension, unevenness or jog. "Brisk" should indicate forward with even, deliberate, reaching strides.

Normal Trot, a two-beat gait: to be performed at medium speed with moderate collection.

The normal trot must be mannerly, cadenced, balanced and free moving. Posting is required. The trot is a two-beat gait in which opposite fore and hind feet hit the ground together. The trot must be balanced, cadenced, free-moving and easy with rhythm and drive. The trot should show elegant carriage and strength from the hindquarters, lift and elevation through the horse's whole front end, not just the front legs. The trot should show equality of movement front end and rear end. The trot should never look forced, labored or artificial. Moderate collection in the English pleasure horse allows for higher action or knee elevation and a greater drive or thrust from the hindquarters. Through moderate collection the English pleasure horse displays higher action or knee lift because the hindquarters step further under the horse's body, lifting the forehead and allowing the horse to lift its shoulders and knees.

Strong trot, a two-beat gait: this trot is faster and stronger than the normal trot. It is performed with a lengthened stride, powerful and reaching, at a rate of speed which may vary between horses since each horse should attain his own strong trot in harmony with his own maximum natural stride. The horse must not be strung out behind. He should show moderate collection without exaggeratedly high action in front. He must present a willing attitude while maintaining form. The strong trot must be mannerly, cadenced, balanced and free-moving. Posting is required. Maintaining cadence, balance and ease of movement, the strong trot is faster, showing a lengthened stride. The strong trot should be powerful with the horse balanced over its hindquarters reaching with long, powerful strides elevating the forehead, stepping up to its ultimate stride, never pushed beyond. The horse should never lose cadence or balance. The strong trot must come from the powerful thrust of the hindquarters and a softness in the front end. Speed should not be the determining factor. The quality of the strong trot with cadence, balance front end and rear end, strength and ease of movement are factors to consider. The strong trot must never lose its purity or gait, and should not look forced, labored or artificial.

Canter, a three-beat gait: smooth, unhurried, with moderate collection, correct and straight on both leads. The canter should show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be supple and relaxed allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power and drive. The canter should show moderate collection allowing the English pleasure horse's hindquarters to step further underneath itself, elevate its front end, lifting its knees higher, giving a lofty, rolling appearance to the canter. The canter should be uninhibited, showing reach and not short or choppy steps. The canter should be moved into easily and be straight and comfortable for both horse and rider.

Hand Gallop: The hand-gallop is performed with the long, free, ground covering stride under control. The amount of ground covered may vary between horses due to the difference in natural length of stride. The hand-gallop is not a fast collected canter but a true lengthening of stride, correct and straight on both leads. Extreme speed to be penalized. There shall be a distinct difference between the canter and the gallop. The hand-gallop should show a longer stride because of greater impulsion or thrust from the hindquarters propelling the horse forward. The greater thrust from the hindquarters results in higher elevation in the shoulders and knees. The horse should show a willingness to go forward while remaining light, calm and maintaining cadence and balance.

ENGLISH PLEASURE SPECIFICATIONS

MANNERS:

Manners are the conduct or behavior with which the horse performs. Manners include obedience and responsiveness to the rider, with safety being of utmost importance. The horse must exhibit a willingness to be guided and controlled. Manners also include acceptance of the surroundings and other horses in the arena. Manners are often first in order of priority because the safety of the rider and others in the arena are of prime importance.

PERFORMANCE:

Performance is the physical act of doing all of the required gaits and transitions from one gait to another. It is the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all of the requirements of the class.

ATTITUDE:

Attitude is the horse's mental approach to performing. Attitude is also the willingness to perform in a relaxed, pleasant approach to the class requirements. Soft eyes, alert ears, quiet mouth and tail, an overall pleasant look express a good attitude.

QUALITY:

Quality is the strength and athleticism required to perform the tasks of an English pleasure horse. It is the degree of excellence, condition, presence, carriage, athleticism, balance front to rear and strength required to perform effortlessly and with finesse. A quality horse is pleasing to the eye.

CONFORMATION:

Conformation is the horse's correct structural form as it relates to functions and performance of an English pleasure horse.

PRESENCE:

Presence is that dignified air, the "special" look, the "look at me" attitude, the special spirit that gets your attention. The bloom, shine, depth of conditioning and muscle, athleticism and finesse that sets an individual apart from the others exemplifies presence in the English pleasure horse.

SUITABILITY OF HORSE TO RIDER:

Suitability is the horse's appropriateness for a particular rider in English pleasure. It is the horse's obedience to the rider with safety being all important.

ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSE - Child/Junior Rider

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. To be judged on :

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Manners
- d Suitability of horse to rider

JUNIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES - (7 Years and under)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. To be judged on :

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Manners
- d Suitability of horse to rider

JUNIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES – CHAMPIONSHIP (7 Years and under)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian English Pleasure horse section for Junior English Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. To be judged on:

- a Quality
- b Performance
- c Manners
- d Suitability of horse to rider

SENIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES - (7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, trot, strong trot, canter, and extended canter (hand gallop). To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Quality
- d Conformation
- e Suitability of horse to rider
- f Presence

SENIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSES – CHAMPIONSHIP (7 Years and older)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian English Pleasure horse section for Junior and Senior English Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, trot, strong trot, canter, and extended canter (hand gallop). To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Attitude
- d Quality
- e Suitability of horse to rider

- e Conformation
- f Presence

All English Pleasure horses must wear a long, natural, unbraided mane (with or without a clipped bridle path) and a natural, unset, ungingered tail. The use of glitter on or in the mane, tail, hair or hooves is prohibited.

Refer to Rule Book for rules on tack, attire and appointments.

CREDITS OF THE ENGLISH PLEASURE

SUITABILITY:

They have the spirit of a show horse and give the appearance they enjoy their job which makes them attractive and pleasing to the eye”.

“Their natural conformation allows them to carry the head and neck in an upright position and serve as a balance arm”.

The English pleasure horse must be an upright horse with a naturally high set neck and head carriage, breaking over easily at the poll allowing for the head to be carried easily in position. This horse must move with power and strength emanating from the hindquarters, naturally lifting its shoulders, arching its neck and stepping well underneath itself reaching for ground with powerful strides, elevating and bending at the knees and hocks. This horse must use its shoulders freely, lifting its front legs and snapping them up while reaching forward. This horse must be bright and alert.

MOVEMENT

They “Good English Pleasure horses have a brisk, animated stride”.

All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness. Unlike the Country English Pleasure, these horses motion exhibits “high action”. High action is defined as an intensified and ambitious manner of moving forward with collection in an upright frame with balance created by a round, supple back with substantial engagement of the hind limbs. There is a raising of the front end of the horse’s torso as a result of the hind limb thrust which propels the horse upward and forward energetically with determination and deliberate power.

Although an elevated knee should always result from the power and drive of this engagement of the hind limbs, it is not exclusive to “high action”. High action is the result of frame (conformation and extent of collection), degree of impulsion (energy) and a zealous spirit (attitude).

At the trot, high action is expressed in the front limb motion in two basic styles depending on the individual’s conformation, training, breeding and/or attitude. Some fold their front limbs tightly by flexing their elbow, knee, fetlock and coffin joints acutely resulting with their front legs rising and falling in a “marching” type movement. Others seem to roll from the shoulder more causing a somewhat open leg to reach more with full extension occurring just prior to the foot’s contact with the ground resulting in a “floating” type motion. Either style is acceptable as long as the horse’s is performing the trot correctly with balance and cadence.

WILLINGNESS AND OBVIOUS EASE

“These individuals are athletes with the physical talent to do their tasks with strength and finesse, the good temperament to do them willingly and the inherent ambition to do them well”.

Willingness and obvious ease means the horse is naturally and athletically capable of doing the requirements of the class easily. The horse should not need to be urged and prodded continually to go forward, nor should the rider continually need to restrain the horse with a right hold or a constant bumping on the bridle.

The horse should have the strength and balance necessary to propel itself forward with strong, reaching, ground-covering strides. Bending the hocks, lifting and reaching well up underneath its belly, using its back and hindquarters for impulsion. The horse's shoulders should be elevated, steps free-moving with reach, elevation and bend at the knees. The overall expression of the horse should be pleasing.

CADENCE

“Their gaits result from a balanced, cadenced motion ...”.

Cadence expresses the quality of locomotion in which the steps follow in a uniform sequence, rhythm and measure. Cadence is the sequence of well-regulated steps. The steps are resolute, lively, even and progressive in purpose. When strides are cadenced, they are pronounced, clear, decisive and elastic. They are even and regular.

BALANCE

“They should be balanced in all aspects : conformation, gait and disposition”.

Balance is the horse's bodily poise, the state of equilibrium or equal relationship front to rear. The equality of movement between the front end and rear end is of great importance. The English pleasure horse must never give the impression of traveling downhill or on the forehead. The rear legs must never trail behind. The shoulders should be light and free with easy motion and lift. There should be proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse. Balance and cadence are sacrificed and gaits become impure and inconsistent when the horse is pushed too fast or forced to collect or elevate its own natural capabilities.

SMOOTHNESS

“... that allows them to comfortably move forward with authority, grace and elegance”.

Smoothness comes from a relaxed, supple back and the horse's own easy of going. A supple back allows the horse to propel itself upward and forward from the hindquarters without resistance in the back and neck. Resistance results in a stiff horse. If the horse's back is stiff, the neck and mouth will become rigid, resulting in tension between the horse and rider, uneven, stiff and choppy gaits. Relaxation, ease of movement and suppleness in the back and neck allow smoothness in the gaits and transitions.

ENGAGEMENT

“...that emanates from impulsion created by the hindquarters”.

Engagement is the connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and rider's hand, with light contact on the bit. Engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy. The hindquarters should be nicely engaged with the hind legs working well under the horse's body with considerable power, not strung out behind or trailing behind. This engagement is the energy created by the hip, stifle and hock. How deeply the horse reaches its hind legs under the body depends on its conformation, training, confidence and relaxation in the back. Lack of engagement results in short, uneven steps, rear legs following rather than stepping under and pushing.

MODERATE COLLECTION

“It is this impulsion [created by the hindquarters] that generates the energy for the strong, elastic movement in their shoulders and front legs to implement the range of motion that takes place”.

When properly collected the horse's back is supple and rounded allowing both hind legs to step further under the horse's centre of gravity. The hindquarters are then able to carry more weight and propel the body powerfully upward and forward. Because the centre of gravity is shifted back the haunches or hindquarters carry more weight. This shift of weight allows the horse's hind legs to step under and push the horse's forehead upward, lightening, and freeing the shoulders. The forehead is lightened enabling the horse to elevate with its neck arched and the head carried elegantly. With the hindquarters carrying the weight, the forehead is lifted and the knee elevation increases with the degree of collection and the horse's own natural talent and strength.

GREAT PRESENCE

“Ultimately, these horses have a great deal of power and charisma, giving the impression of being exciting and a real pleasure to ride”.

Presence is the manner in which a horse carries itself or its bearing. It is in a word, “style”. The outstanding individuals make their own “space”, even in a crowded arena.

FAULTS OF THE ENGLISH PLEASURE HORSE

BAD MANNERS

Bad manners includes wringing tail, pinned ears, rigid, open, bad or gapping mouth, cutting to the center of arena, balking, bolting, rearing, kicking, bucking, not responding to the rider. Bad manners must be severely penalized as they are a risk to the rider and others in the arena.

BAD PERFORMANCE

Bad performance includes wrong leads, break of gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider’s hands, and lack of response to the rider’s aids.

BAD ATTITUDE

Bad attitude includes sour ears, swishing tail, avoiding contact with the bit, fussy mouth, rigid mouth, not performing with ease, smoothness and confidence, stress, agitation or showing resistance.

UNTRUE GAITS

Untrue gaits include uneven gaits, skipping, pacing, racking, loss of cadence, and moving too fast to maintain balance and cadence.

POOR MOVEMENT

Poor movement includes out of balance front to rear, falling out of form, forced, labored or artificial looking, choppy or rough.

HORSE NOT SUITABLE TO RIDER

A horse not suitable to rider is too much for the rider to control or handle comfortably, a horse not willingly guided or controlled, a horse that spooks or bolts, rears or bucks, and a horse which jeopardizes the rider’s safety or the safety of others in the arena.

CAUSES FOR ELIMINATION

1. Showing (horse) aggression or discontent toward rider or any other person in the arena.
2. Whip marks. **NOTE:** Judges must excuse from the ring, not just eliminate from consideration.
3. Clear evidence of fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, flank, or hip areas.
4. Illegal Equipment/Appointments.
5. Horses not wearing a long, natural, unbraided mane and a natural, unset, ungingered tail.
6. The use of glitter on or in the mane, tail, hair or hooves.
7. Violations of shoeing regulations.
8. Any horse leaving the ring without the exhibitor's volition is deprived of an award in that class.
9. Failure to be serviceably sound and in good condition (horse)
10. Horses shown with artificial appliances.
11. Abuse.

CONCLUSION

Judging is not an absolute. It is a matter of observation and evaluation.

Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules. However, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Other criteria, such as manners, attitude and quality, must also be considered. All of the faults should be considered according to their severity and the depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observation of the finer points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by the class criteria and specifications, should be the winner.



English Pleasure horse using both front and hind ends, fair position



English Pleasure horse, good in front but back is hollow and hocks are trailing out behind

COUNTRY PLEASURE

Good Country Pleasure horses have a free-flowing stride that allows them to comfortably and calmly move forward with grace and style. Ideally their gaits should result from a balanced, cadenced motion that emanates from moderate impulsion created from the hindquarters. Their natural conformation allows them to carry the head and neck in a relaxed, upright position and serve as a balance arm. They are bright and alert while remaining attentive and responsive to the rider.

The attitude of the ideal Country Pleasure horse is pleasant, confident, responsive and obedient. These horses perform all the gaits correctly in an unassuming, unforced fashion while under light contact. They are totally balanced individuals with manners that are exemplary. These horses have a genuine desire to please their riders, a quiet nature to do their tasks willingly, and the physical ability to do them easily. They have the discipline of a well-trained horse and the finesse of an athlete while giving the appearance they enjoy their job, which makes them pleasing to watch. Ultimately, these horses instil a great deal of confidence in those who ride or watch them and give the impression of being a ***true pleasure to ride***.

The Country Pleasure horse's carriage and way of going is based on key elements that combine to make the ideal pleasure horse. To determine what is ideal, it helps to understand the criteria and requirements of the Country pleasure horse.

GAITS

It is imperative that the horse give the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride. A quiet, responsive mouth is paramount. All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness.

Judges are required to consider the performance of each gait equally in adjudicating this class.

WALK

The walk is a four-beat gait. It should be true, flat-footed and ground covering.

At the walk the horse must propel itself forward from behind with long reaching steps. The horse's head and neck are relaxed as the horse moves from one foot to the other with no period of suspension. The walk should be even and relaxed.

NORMAL TROT

The normal trot is a two-beat gait. It is to be balanced overall, relaxed, easy-going with elasticity and freedom of movement. High action **MUST** be penalised. Posting is required.

The trot is a two-beat diagonal gait in which opposite fore and hind feet hit the ground together. The trot must be balanced, cadenced, free moving and easy, with rhythm and drive. The trot should show power and elegant carriage with strength from the hindquarters while moving in an easy, ground-covering, natural manner. The trot should never look forced, laboured or artificial.

STRONG TROT

The strong trot is a two-beat gait. To be faster with lengthened stride, maintaining balance, ease and freedom of movement. High action must be penalised. Posting is required.

While maintaining the same cadence, balance and ease of movement, the strong trot is faster, showing a lengthening of stride. The horse should not pull down on the rider's hands or lose balance or rhythm. The brilliance of the strong trot depends on an energetic thrust from the hindquarters and a distinct forward swinging movement of the shoulders. This is not a flinging of the feet, but a true swing from the shoulder with good reach. The ground covered will vary between horses due to difference in natural length of stride and conformation. Speed and high knee action are not determining factors. However, the quality of the strong trot, balance front to rear end and cadence are factors. The strong trot must never look forced, laboured or artificial.

NOTE : High Action must be penalized at the normal trot and strong trot. High action is defined as an intensified and ambitious manner of moving forward with collection in an upright frame with balance created by a round, supple back with substantial engagement of the hind limbs. There is a raising of the front end of the horse's torso as a result of the hind limb thrust which propels the horse upward and forward energetically with determination and deliberate power.

Although an elevated knee should always result from the power and drive of this engagement of the hind limbs; it is not exclusive to 'high action'. High action is the result of frame (conformation and extent of collection), degree of impulsion (energy) and zealous spirit (attitude).

CANTER

The canter is a three-beat gait to be smooth, unhurried, straight and correct on both leads.

The canter must show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be supple and relaxed allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power and drive. The horse's neck should be upright, appropriate for the horse's conformation.

The canter should be uninhibited, showing long, reaching steps, not short, choppy, high or overly collected steps. The canter should be moved into easily and be smooth and comfortable for both the horse and rider. The canter should never be stiff or lack rhythm and energy.

HAND-GALLOP

The hand-gallop is to be a faster gait with lengthened stride, controlled, straight and correct on both leads. Extreme speed is to be penalised.

The hand-gallop should show a longer stride due to greater impulsion or thrust from the hindquarters propelling itself forward. The horse should show a willingness to go forward while remaining light, calm and maintaining cadence and balance.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSE

HALT, BACK, WALK OFF ON A LOOSE REIN.

It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring.

The halt should be obedient, smooth and balanced. The horse must not pull down on the rider's hands, throw its head and neck out, plant its front feet abruptly or take an excessively long time to stop. The horse should respond to the rider softly and quietly by giving to the bridle, stepping under behind, softening in the back and executing a smooth, easy stop or halt.

When asked *to back*, the horse should give to the bridle and the rider's legs and step backward comfortably with even, unhurried steps.

The walk off on a loose rein should not be hurried, but relaxed and pleasant with long even steps. This is the horse's opportunity to stretch its back and neck a little, take a deep breath and chew or re-adjust its mouth on the bit.

The rider should not throw away or let go of the reins completely, showing total lack of contact and loss of control. The horse should not pull or jerk the reins from the rider's hands nor should the horse turn its head and neck upside down in a camel-like fashion.

The rider should give the horse some actual slack in the reins, allowing the horse to relax and stretch to meet and even chew the bit a little.

As the rider *gathers the reins*, the horse should obediently, softly and quietly accept the contact, connect to the bit by stepping under from the hindquarters, elevating the forehead and resume the tasks at hand.

COUNTRY PLEASURE SPECIFICATIONS

ATTITUDE

Attitude is the horse's mental approach to performing, willingness to perform, relaxed pleasant approach to performing the class requirements. Attitude is expressed by soft eyes, alert ears, quiet mouth and tail and a pleasant look. The Country Pleasure horse should be the most relaxed, easy going of the saddle seat type pleasure horses. A pleasant, willing-to-do attitude is of prime importance.

MANNERS

Manners are the conduct or behaviour with which the horse performs. They are exemplified by obedience and responsiveness to the rider, safety being of utmost importance, and the willingness to be guided and controlled. Acceptance of the surroundings and other horses in the arena.

PERFORMANCE

Performance is the physical act of doing all of the required gaits, transitions from one gait to another, the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all the requirements of the class.

QUALITY

Quality is determined by the degree of excellence, condition, presence, carriage, athleticism, balance and strength required to perform effortlessly and with finesse. A horse that is pleasing to the eye has quality.

CONFORMATION

Conformation is the horse's correct structural form as it relates to the functions and performance of a Country Pleasure horse.

SUITABILITY OF HORSE TO RIDER

Suitability of horse to rider is the horse's appropriateness for that rider for Country Pleasure. It is the horse's obedience to the rider with safety being all-important. It is the horse's obedience to the rider with safety being all important.

COUNTRY PLEASURE CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSES - *Child/Junior Rider*

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. To be judged on :

- a Attitude
- b Quality
- c Performance
- d Manners
- e Conformation
- f Suitability of horse to rider

JUNIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSES - (*7 Years and under*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. Quiet, responsive mouth is paramount. To be judged on :

- a Attitude
- b Quality
- c Performance
- d Manners
- e Conformation

JUNIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSES – CHAMPIONSHIP *(7 Years and under)*

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Country Pleasure horse section for Junior Country Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, normal trot and canter. It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. It is imperative that the horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride. A quiet, responsive mouth is paramount. To be judged on:

- a Attitude
- b Quality
- c Performance
- d Manners
- e Conformation

SENIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSES - *(7 Years and older)*

To be shown at a walk, trot, strong trot, canter, and extended canter (hand gallop). It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. It is imperative that the horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride. A quiet, responsive mouth is paramount. To be judged on :

- a Attitude
- b Manners
- c Performance
- d Quality
- e Conformation
- f Suitability of horse to rider

SENIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSES - CHAMPIONSHIP*(7 Years and older)*

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Country Pleasure horse section for Senior Country Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, trot, strong trot, canter, and extended canter (hand gallop). It is mandatory that horses be asked to halt on the rail, stand quietly, back, and walk off on a loose rein at least one direction of the ring. It is imperative that the horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride. A quiet, responsive mouth is paramount. To be judged on:

- a Attitude
- b Manners
- c Performance
- d Quality
- e Conformation
- f Suitability of horse to rider

CREDITS OF THE COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSE

SUITABILITY:

These horses have a genuine desire to please their riders.....

A horse that can easily perform the requirements of the class with the necessary carriage and finesse will generally be suitable. However, this horse must not only have the physical ability to do these tasks, it must also have the manners and attitude appropriate to perform willingly.

Their natural conformation allows them to carry the head and neck in a relaxed, upright position and serve as a balance arm.

The Country Pleasure horse should be an upright horse with a naturally high set neck and carriage, breaking over easily at the poll to allow the head to be carried easily in position. This horse must not have extremely high action or exaggerated, high knee elevation, but should give the appearance of strength, comfortable ease of motion and elegance. Strides should be bold, powerful, fluid and ground covering while being cadenced, balanced front to rear end, showing elasticity and freedom of movement.

MOVEMENT:

These horses perform all the gaits correctly in an unassuming, unforced fashion while under light control

All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness. This cannot be achieved in the Country Pleasure horse without some degree of collection. To understand collection, one must recognize what the horse and rider must do to achieve it. The following two quotes explain it from the perspective of the horse and then the rider.

“The horse gathers himself for action by engaging his hindquarters, shifting his balance backward and lightening his forehand. His back rounds in a bascule and his neck arches and rises, especially at the base. His head is carried high and he flexes at the poll, which is the highest point of the horse. His movement becomes light and mobile, with shorter, higher strides and active hindquarters, and he is able to shift his balance instantly in any direction. Collection implies that the horse’s mechanism is “cocked, he has great impulsion at his command and awareness, in nature it is seen in moments of excitement”

- **Susan Harris; Horse Gaits, Balance and Movement.**

“Collection is by pushing the seat and both legs up against the reins which are held equally in both hands. By driving the hind legs more under, the body of the horse will become shorter and his neck will be more beautifully shaped. Without any further action on the part of the rider, the horse will raise his forehead by lowering his hindquarters. In this way, the necessary balance is achieved for and impressive pace, the activity of the hind legs will be stimulated; and the correctly arched back will be made to swing harmoniously....”

- Col. Alois Podhajsky – Complete Training to the Horse and Rider.

Even in minimal collection, there is some raising of the forearm that results in varying degrees of knee elevation, depending on conformation, suppleness and elasticity of the front limbs. This type of front limb motion should not be used with “high action”.

WILLINGNESS AND OBVIOUS EASE:

“...a quiet nature to do their task willingly, and the physical ability to do them easily..”

Willingness and obvious ease means the horse is naturally and athletically capable of doing the requirements of the class easily. The horse should not have to be urged and prodded continually to go forward nor should the rider continually need to restrain the horse with a tight hold or a constant bumping on the bridle.

The horse should have the strength and balance necessary to propel itself forward with strong, reaching, ground-covering strides, reaching well up underneath its belly, using its back and hindquarters for impulsion. The horse’s shoulders should be elevated, steps free-moving with reach. The overall expression of the horse should be pleasing.

CADENCE:

“...cadenced motion that emanates from moderate impulsion created from the hindquarters”

Cadence expresses the quality of locomotion in which the steps follow each other in uniform sequence, rhythm and measure. Cadence is the sequence of well-regulated steps. The steps are resolute, lively, even and progressive in purpose. When strides are cadenced, they are pronounced, clear, decisive and elastic. They are even and regular.

BALANCE:

They are totally balanced individuals.....

Balance is the horse's bodily poise, the state of equilibrium or equal relationship front to rear, the equality of movement between the front and rear end. The Country Pleasure horse must never give the impression of travelling downhill or on the forehand. The shoulders should be light and free with easy motion. There should be proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse.

BALANCE AND CADENCE:

Ideally their gaits result from a balanced, cadenced motion...

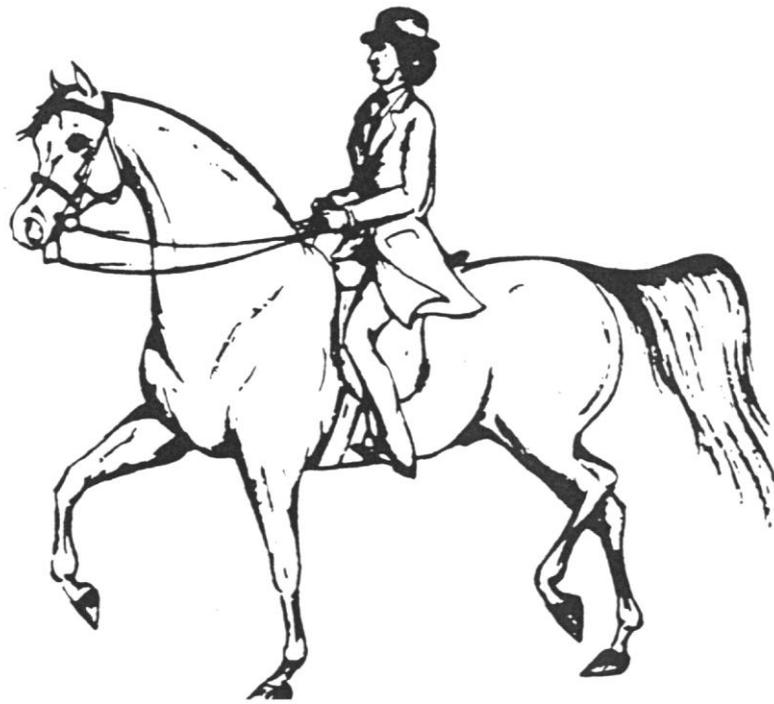
Balance and cadence are sacrificed and gaits become impure and inconsistent when the horse is pushed or forced to collect or elevate beyond its own natural capabilities.

SMOOTHNESS:

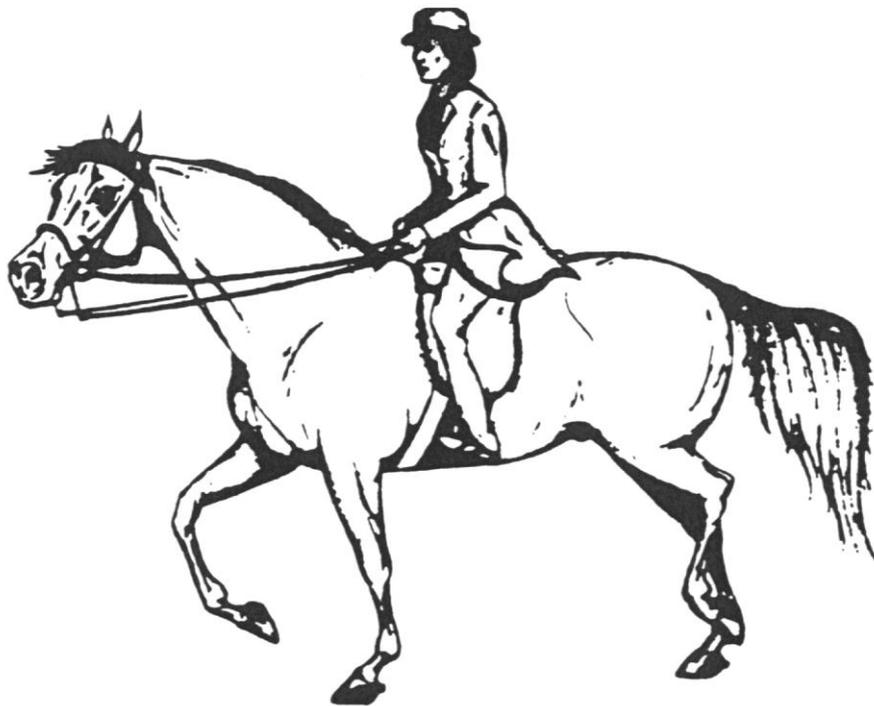
...have a free-flowing stride that causes them to comfortably and calmly move forward with grace and style

Smoothness comes from a relaxed, supple back and the horse's own easy way of going. A relaxed back allows the horse to propel itself upward and forward from the hindquarters without resistance in the neck and back. Resistance results in making the horse stiff, the horse's gaits are uneven, stiff, short or choppy, the mouth rigid and the neck stiff, the horse's back is stiff and there is tension between the rider and the horse.

Relaxation in the back allows the horse to step under and push from the hindquarters reaching with cadence and balance. This also allows the horse to move with free, easy steps. Relaxation, ease of movement and suppleness in the back and neck allow smoothness in the gaits and transitions.



Country Pleasure horse - good, relaxed, happy attitude.



Country Pleasure horse - head low, nose out, neck straight, no flexion at poll, ears back. has an unhappy expression

QUIET, RESPONSIVE MOUTH

...giving the appearance they enjoy their job, which makes them pleasing to watch.

The mouth is quiet and responsive when the horse and rider are relaxed and working together rather than against each other. A quiet, responsive mouth shows the horse's willingness to be guided and controlled and shows the horse is comfortable doing the required tasks.

A quiet, responsive mouth does not mean the horse cannot move its mouth or lips, or for that matter even open its mouth slightly on occasion, to soften in the jaw or create saliva for softness and comfort. Normal movement or loosening of the jaw is acceptable and desirable for response and softness.

We do not want to see a horse gapping, gnawing, chomping, locking its jaw or neck and jaw out and pulling on the bridle. Nor do we want to see a horse whose mouth is locked, rigid, or stiff in the jaw or locked into a head position with the bit. Nor do we want to see the horse drop behind the vertical, behind the bit or be intimidated by the bridle.

There should be light contact with the horse showing acceptance of the bit as a means of communication. The horse should look comfortable in the bridle with a soft responsiveness to the rider's hands.

ATTITUDE

The attitude of the ideal Country Pleasure Horse is pleasant, confident and obedient.

It is imperative that the horse gives the distinct appearance of being a pleasure to ride. Attitude is the horse's mental approach to the job at hand and expression shown through behaviour and conduct. While performing the criteria of the class, it should do so in a pleasant, willing manner. The horse should be prompt without anticipating, relaxed without being dull, willing to perform and must be attentive to the rider. Good attitude is reflected in a soft eye, alert ears, relaxed back, a willingness to perform, a quiet mouth and tail and a generally pleasant look.

PRESENCE

Ultimately, these horses instill a great deal of confidence in those who ride or watch them and give the impression of being a true pleasure to ride.

Presence is the manner in which a horse carries itself or its bearing. It is in a word,

STYLE.

FAULTS OF THE COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSE

BAD ATTITUDE

Bad attitude includes sour ears, swishing tail, avoiding contact with the bit, fussy mouth, rigid mouth, not performing with ease, smoothness and confidence, stress, agitated or showing resistance. A bad attitude must be severely penalised as it shows the horse's unwillingness to perform and be a pleasure to ride. A good attitude is of utmost importance for a good Country Pleasure horse.

BAD MANNERS

Bad manners includes wringing tail, pinned ears, cutting to centre of arena, balking, bolting, kicking, bucking, gapping on the bit, not responding to the rider.

POOR PERFORMANCE

Poor performance includes wrong leads, breaking gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider's hands, or lack of response to rider's aids.

HORSE NOT SUITABLE TO RIDER

A horse that is not suitable to the rider is too much for the rider to control, a horse not willingly guided or controlled, that spooks or bolts, rears or bucks, and jeopardises the rider's safety.

UNTRUE GAITS

Untrue gaits include uneven gaits, skipping and pacing, including forced or too high knee action, quick, short or choppy strides, clunky, too fast, falling out of balance or form, stiff legged movement, or rough gaits.

CREDITS OF THE COUNTRY PLEASURE HORSE

- Credit the horse that is performing the class requirements brilliantly with a good attitude, bright and responsive, showing impeccable manners.
- Credit the horse that is performing with ease of movement, balanced and cadenced at all gaits with strength and finesse.
- Credit the horse with self-carriage, quality and presence.
- Credit the horse that is allowing the rider to have a good time and a pleasurable ride.

CAUSES FOR ELIMINATION

Showing (horse) aggression or discontent toward rider or any other person in the arena.

Whip marks. NOTE : Judge must excuse from the ring, not just eliminate from consideration.

Clear evidence of fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, flank, or hip areas.

Illegal Equipment / Appointments.

Horses not wearing a long, natural, unbraided mane and a natural, unset ungingered tail.

The use of glitter on or in the mane, tail, hair or hooves.

Violations of shoeing regulations.

Any horse leaving the ring without the exhibitor's volition is deprived of an award in that class.

Failure to be serviceably sound and in good condition (horse).

Horses shown with artificial appliances.

Abuse.

CONCLUSION

JUDGING IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE. It is a matter of observation and evaluation. Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules, however, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Other criteria, such as attitude, manners and quality must also be considered. All faults should be considered according to their severity and the depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best horse for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by class criteria and specifications should be the winner.

DRIVING

Driving classes include English Pleasure Driving and Country Pleasure Driving.

ENGLISH PLEASURE DRIVING

The good English Pleasure Driving horse must be brilliant and animated. They should be balanced in all aspects both front and rear. These horses have the spirit of over-achievers and give the appearance they love to perform, which makes them attractive and exciting to watch.

JUNIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE DRIVING (*Under 7 Years*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized.) To stand quietly. In English Pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Quality
- b Manners
- c Performance

JUNIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE DRIVING – CHAMPIONSHIP (*Under 7 Years*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized.) To stand quietly. In English Pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Quality
- b Manners
- c Performance

SENIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE DRIVING (*7 Years and older*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized.) To stand quietly. In English pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Quality
- c Performance

SENIOR ENGLISH PLEASURE DRIVING – CHAMPIONSHIP (7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized). To stand quietly. In English pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Quality
- c Performance

A Two or four-wheel vehicle is required.

PERFORMANCE: Performance is the physical act of doing all of the required gaits and transitions from one gait to another. It is the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all of the requirements of the class.

MANNERS: Manners are the conduct or behaviour with which the horse performs. Manners include obedience and responsiveness to the driver, with safety being of utmost importance. The horse must exhibit a willingness to be guided and controlled. Manners also include acceptance of the surroundings and other horses in the arena. Manners are often first in order of priority because the safety of the driver and others in the arena are of prime importance.

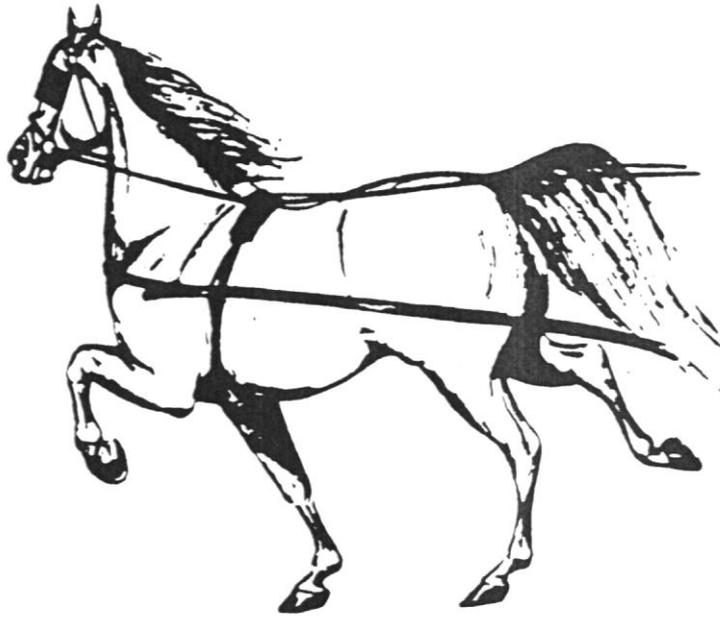
ATTITUDE: Attitude is the horse's mental approach to performing. Attitude is also the willingness to perform in a relaxed, pleasant approach to the class requirements. Soft eyes, alert ears, quiet mouth and tail, an overall pleasant look express a good attitude.

QUALITY: Quality is the strength and athleticism required to perform the tasks of a Driving horse. It is the degree of excellence, condition, presence, carriage, athleticism, balance front and rear and strength required to perform effortlessly and with finesse.

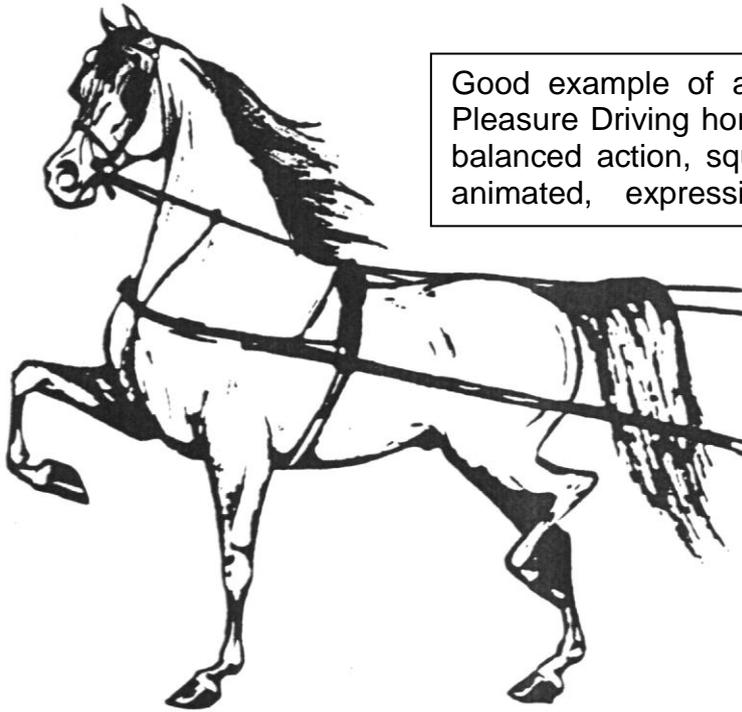
CONFORMATION: Conformation is the horse's correct structural form as it relates to functions and performance of a Driving horse.

PRESENCE: Presence is that special spirit that gets your attention. The bloom, shine, athleticism and finesse that sets an individual apart from the others.

SUITABILITY OF HORSE TO DRIVER: Suitability is the horse's appropriateness for a particular driver in the class. It is the horse's obedience to the rider with safety being all-important.

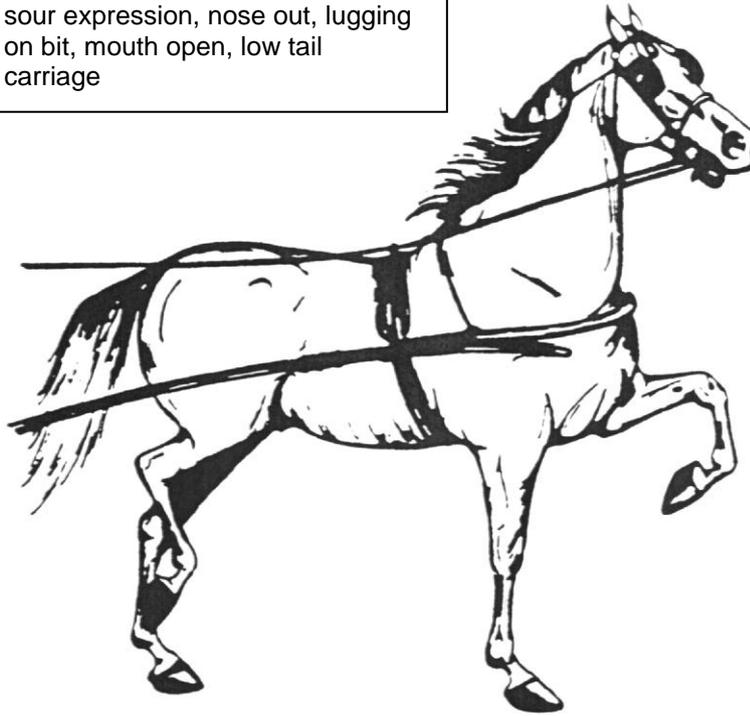


Pleasure Driving faults, ears back, winging with front feet, toeing out and going wide behind, hocks strung out, not under horse.

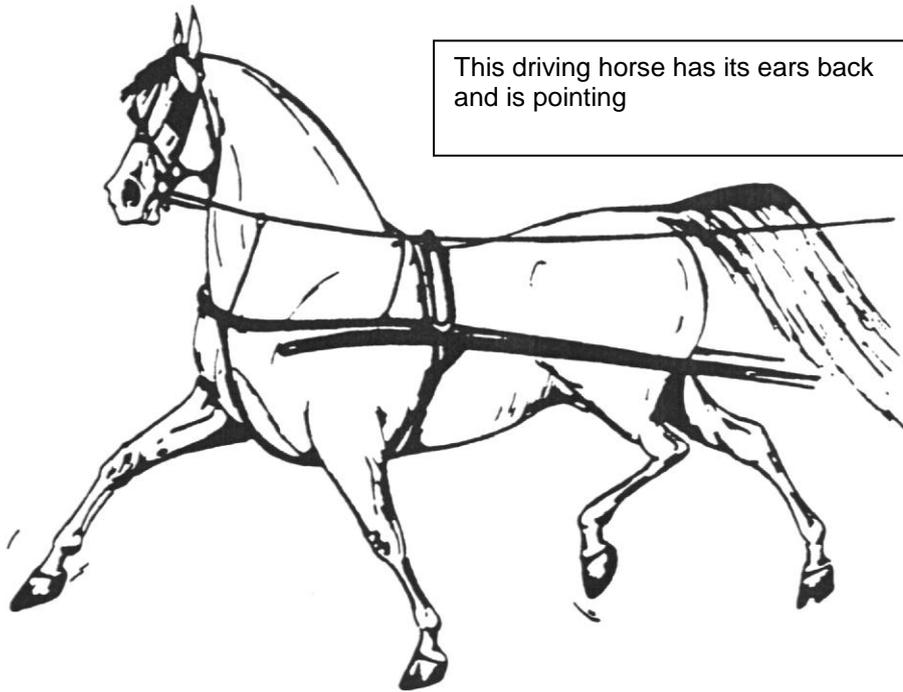


Good example of a English Pleasure Driving horse, good balanced action, square trot, animated, expressive ears

Driving horse faults, ears back, sour expression, nose out, lugging on bit, mouth open, low tail carriage



This driving horse has its ears back and is pointing



COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING

The good Country Pleasure Driving horse has a calm free-flowing stride. The attitude is pleasant, responsive and obedient. This horse should perform all gaits correctly in an unforced manner while under light contact.

JUNIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING (*Under 7 Years*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. To stand quietly. In country pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Attitude
- b Manners
- c Performance
- d Quality

JUNIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING - CHAMPIONSHIP (*Under 7 Years*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. To stand quietly. In country pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Attitude
- b Manners
- c Performance
- d Quality

SENIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING (*7 Years and older*)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized). To stand quietly. In country pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Attitude
- c Performance
- d Quality

SENIOR COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING - CHAMPIONSHIP(7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized). To stand quietly. In country pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Attitude
- c Performance
- d Quality

LADIES COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIP(7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, normal trot and strong trot. (Extreme speed to be penalized). To stand quietly. In country pleasure driving classes horses will not be required to back.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Attitude
- c Performance
- d Quality

A two or four-wheel vehicle is required.

SUITABILITY: The Driving horse must be an upright horse with a naturally high set neck. The horse must be a smooth and powerful mover, naturally lifting its shoulders, arching its neck and moving with strong, ground covering strides. The horse should be brilliant and alert.

MOVEMENT: All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness.

WILLINGNESS AND OBVIOUS EASE: Willingness and obvious ease means the horse is naturally and athletically capable of doing the requirements of the class easily. The horse should have the strength and balance necessary to propel itself forward with strong, reaching ground-covering strides. The overall expression of the horse should be pleasing.

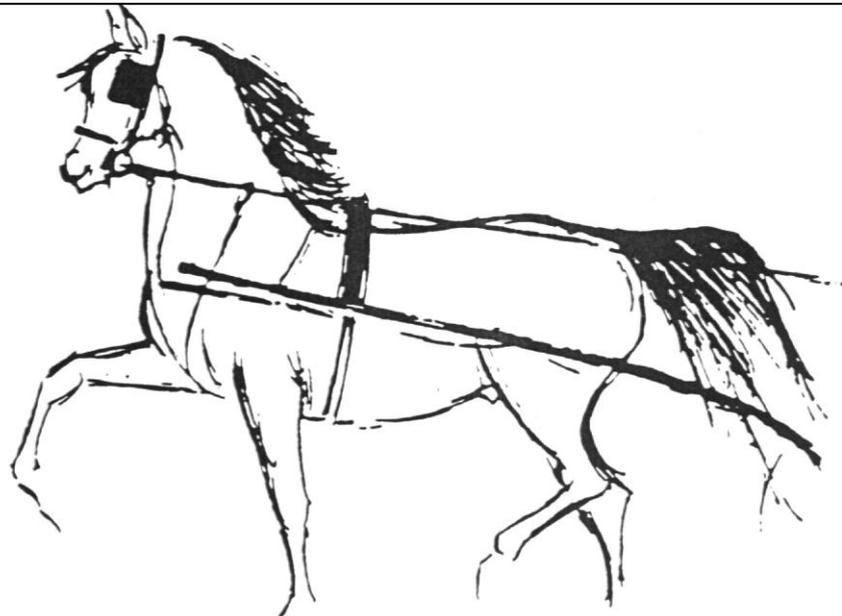
CADENCE: Cadence is the beat, time or measure of rhythmical motion or activity. When strides are cadenced, they are strongly marked, clear, even and regular.

BALANCE: Balance is the stability produced by even distribution of weight. The shoulders should be light and free with easy motion and lift. There should be proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse.

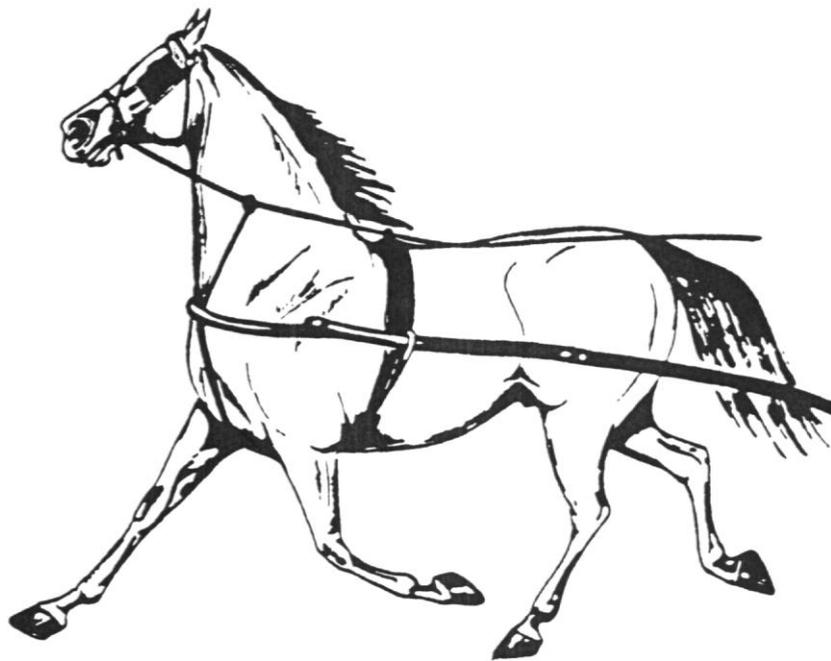
SMOOTHNESS: Smoothness comes from a relaxed, supple back and the horse's own easy way of going. A supple back allows the horse to propel itself upward and forward

from the hindquarters without resistance in the back and neck. Relaxation, ease of movement and suppleness in the back and neck allow smoothness in the gaits and transitions.

ENGAGEMENT: Engagement is the connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the driver's hand, with light contact on the bit. Engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy.



Good Country Pleasure Driving horse



Pleasure Driving horse faults, ears back, nose out, no flexion at poll, landing on heels, hocks trailing, low tail carriage

MODERATE COLLECTION: When properly collected, the horse's back is supple and rounded allowing the hind legs to step further under the horse's centre of gravity. The hindquarters are then able to carry more weight and propel the body powerfully upward and forward. The forehand is lightened, enabling the horse to elevate with its neck arched and the head carried elegantly.

FAULTS

BAD MANNERS

Bad manners includes wringing tail, pinned ears, rigid, open or gapping mouth, cutting to the centre of the arena, balking, bolting, rearing, kicking, bucking, not responding to the driver. Bad manners must be severely penalised, as they are a risk to the driver and others in the arena.

BAD PERFORMANCE

Bad performance includes break of gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the driver's hands and lack of response to the driver's aids.

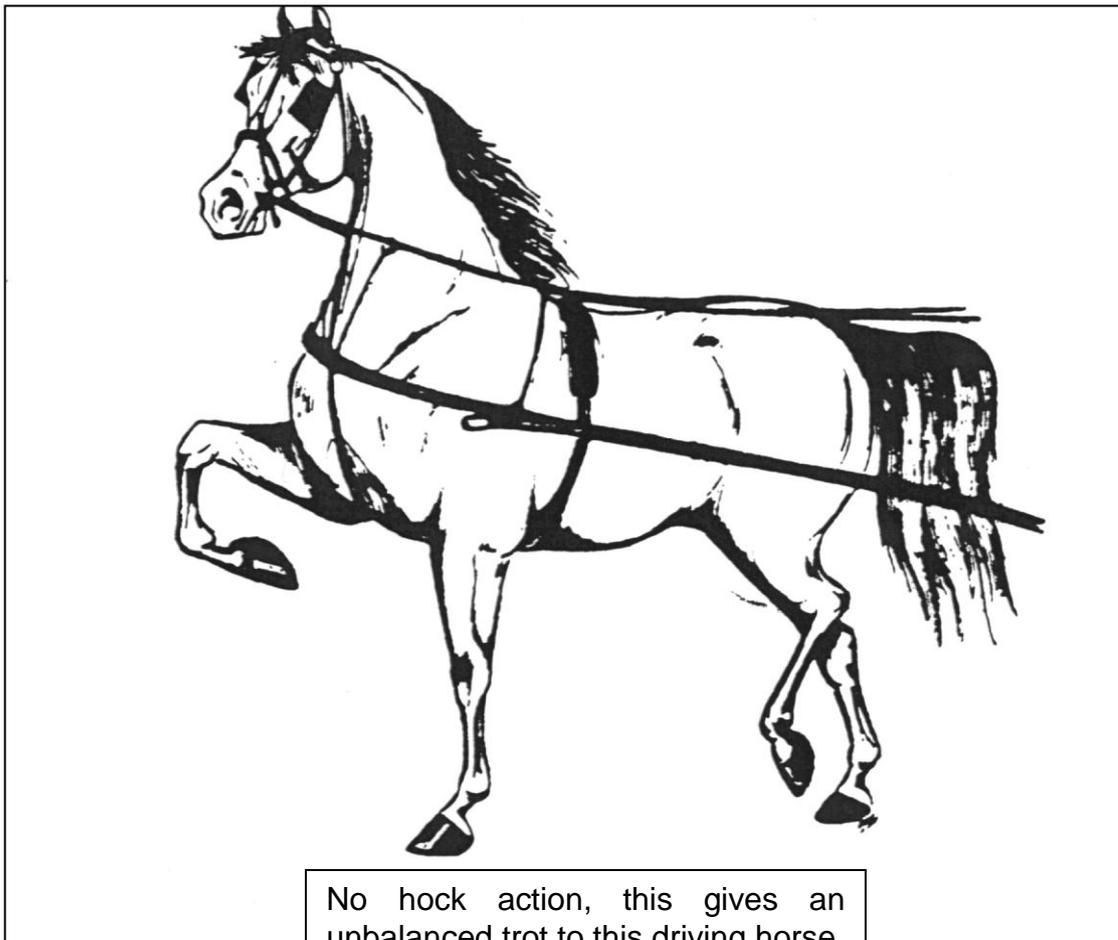
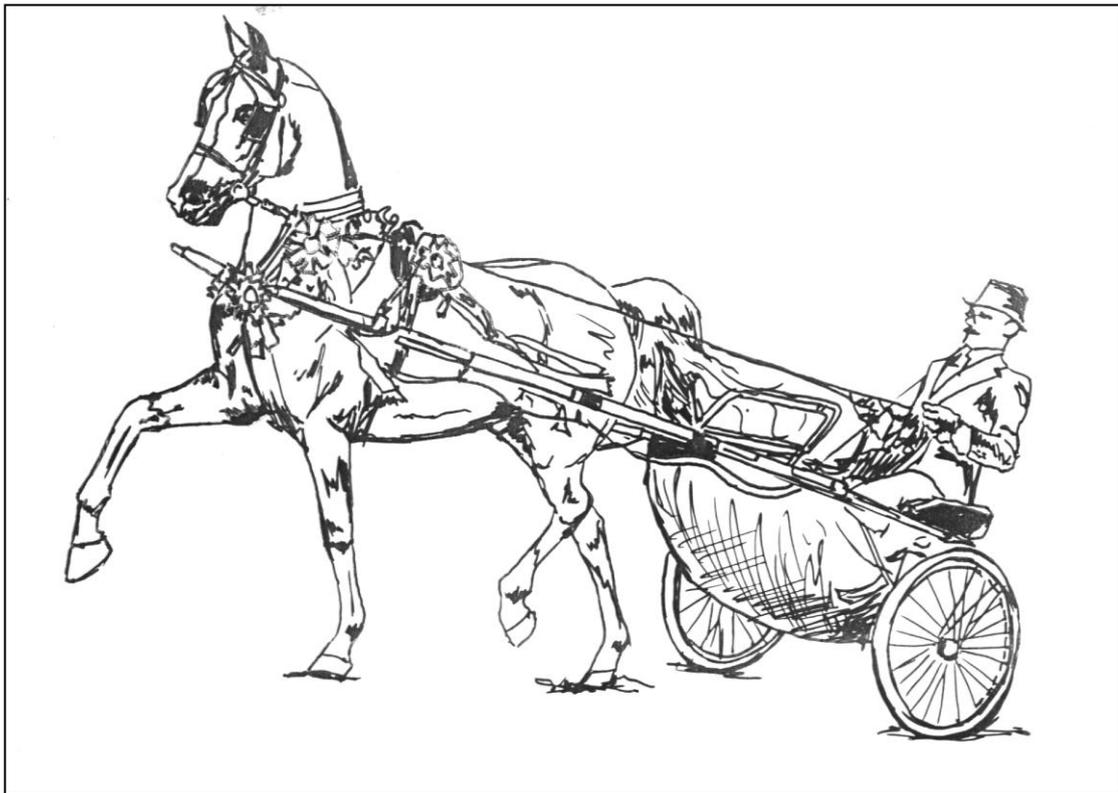
CREDITS

Credit the horse that performs brilliantly with a pleasant attitude and polished manners, showing a desire to perform and an eagerness to please.

Credit the horse that is responsive to the driver and performing the class requirements with willingness, ease and confidence.

Credit the athlete who is able to perform in a balanced and cadenced movement with strength and finesse showing quality and presence.

JUDGING IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE. It is a matter of observation and evaluation. Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules. However, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Other criteria, such as manners, attitude and quality must be considered. All of the faults should be considered according to their severity and depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observation of the finer points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by the class criteria and specification should be the winner.



No hock action, this gives an unbalanced trot to this driving horse

WESTERN PLEASURE

THE WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE

The good western pleasure horse has a comfortable, free flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with the horse's conformation. It should cover a reasonable amount of ground with little effort. Ideally, the horse should have a balanced, sweeping motion that requires no more or less than light contact by their riders. The head and neck serve as a balance arm and are carried in a relaxed, natural position appropriate for each horse's conformation.

Maximum credit should be given to the responsive, confident, willingly guided horse that correctly performs all the required gaits with strength and finesse. The horse should be balanced in all aspects: conformation, gait and disposition. Such a horse is an athlete that goes softly and gives the appearance of being fit and capable of their tasks. Ultimately, the horse is very eye appealing and gives the impression of being ***a pleasure to ride***.

LIGHT CONTACT

Light contact with the horse's mouth must be maintained at all gaits. Light contact should be measured by a horse's response to the rider's hands, seat and legs and not merely by the tension in the reins. However, an excessively draped rein is just as undesirable as an extremely tight rein. The individual that willingly and quietly responds to subtle cues by the rider is performing with light contact.

THE GAITS

The Walk: A ***four beat gait; True, flatfooted and ground covering*** The ideal walk is bright and ground covering with a slight over stride of the front hoof by the rear hoof. Some horses will exhibit subtle head movement. This slight head movement assists the brachiocephalicus neck muscle to move the arm and foreleg forward. This head movement is always acceptable as long as the horse is in balance.

The walk should be a deliberate, sweeping motion, which does not waste energy while responding to the guidance of the rider. A horse should have rhythm and use his legs to propel his body forward. You can count the four beats as the feet hit the ground. Each foot should leave the ground at the same pace as it landed.

The Jog-Trot: A ***two beat diagonal gait; Free, square, slow and easy***. The horse should be relaxed through the back and have a true 2-beat diagonal gait at the jog-trot. His hocks are well under him and his front legs are reaching forward. There is a definite rise in the back, which allows the legs to sweep underneath the horse. The horse should remain collected and moving forward in a smooth fashion.

The Lope: A true 3 beat gait; smooth, slow, easy and straight on both leads. A properly executed lope has a rhythmic, rolling effect, which is truly beauty in motion.

The three beat sequence of the footfall of a horse of the left lead is:

- ❖ Right rear foot. (drive leg)
- ❖ Right fore and left rear feet. (diagonal legs)
- ❖ Left fore foot. (lead leg)

The beats of the lope do not take place in equal intervals; rather there is a slight hesitation between the one and two beats. In the good lope the impulsion of the “drive leg” causes a graceful lift in the back and initiates the rolling effect of this gait. It is this lift that is responsible for the subtle, but definite hesitation between the one and two beats. This hesitation allows the two diagonal legs to sweep under the horse. Finally, the “lead leg” swings forward and lands to balance the horse as the drive leg rises again to start the sequence over. A suspension takes place after the third beat as a result of this rhythmic, rolling effect. Absence of the hesitation will cause a failure for this suspension to take place and directly result in a compromise of gait correctness and quality.

The Hand Gallop: Not merely an extended lope, but a gallop in hand, extreme speed to be penalised. The genuine hand gallop has a very distinct difference from the lope. The good hand gallop derives from the further engagement of the hindquarter resulting in a lengthening of stride without sacrificing frame or cadence. It is bold and strong. It is the western pleasure horse’s expression of elegance in motion.

NOTE: All gaits are considered equally when judging.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE

Horses must come to the line up at the gait requested. In the line up, horses must stand quietly and may be asked to back individually or as a group. Horses not to stretch in the line up.

If horses are asked to back they should back readily in a straight line. There should be no visible sign of resistance.

WESTERN PLEASURE SPECIFICATIONS

MANNERS: The conduct or behaviour of the horse as it performs. The ability to be willingly guided and controlled with light contact. This includes the horse’s acceptance of its surroundings and other horses in the arena

PERFORMANCE: The execution and accomplishment of required tasks.

SUBSTANCE: The strength required to do the required tasks for an extended time with minimal effort.

QUALITY: The degree of athleticism required to appear effortless and with finesse. This requires condition, presence, carriage, balance and excellence.

CONFORMATION: The correct structural form as it relates to the functions of a western pleasure horse.

ATTITUDE: The horse's mental approach to the entire discipline of western pleasure. A horse's attitude is reflected in his ears, tail, mouth and way of going. A desirable way of going is recognised in a soft eye, relaxed back, a willingness to go forward comfortably, and an overall pleasant appearance.

SUITABILITY OF HORSE TO RIDER: The horse's appropriateness for that rider for western pleasure determines suitability of horse to rider

Western pleasure classes will be judged by the above specifications in this order:

WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE – *Child/Junior Rider*

To be shown at a walk, jog-trot and lope. To enter the ring at a jog-trot. Halt at judges discretion. To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Substance
- d Conformation

JUNIOR WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE - (*7 Years and under*)

To be shown at a walk, jog-trot and lope. To enter the ring at a jog-trot. To be shown in a snaffle bit or bosal. Halt at judges discretion. To be judged on:

- a Substance
- b Performance
- c Conformation
- d Manners

JUNIOR WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE – CHAMPIONSHIP (*7 Years and under*)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Western Pleasure Horse section for Junior Western Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, jog-trot and lope. To enter the ring at a jog-trot. To be shown in a snaffle bit or bosal. Halt at judge's discretion. To be Judged on :

- a Substance
- b Performance
- c Conformation
- d Manners

SENIOR WESTERN PLEASURE HORSES - (7 Years and older)

To be shown at a walk, jog-trot, lope and hand gallop. To enter the ring at a jog-trot. Halt at judges discretion. To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Substance
- d Conformation

SENIOR WESTERN PLEASURE HORSES - CHAMPIONSHIP (7 Years and older)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Western Pleasure Horse section for Senior Western Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, jog-trot, lope and hand gallop; extreme speed to be penalized. Halt at judge's discretion.

To be judged on:

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Substance
- d Conformation

WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE CHAMPIONSHIP

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Western Pleasure Horse section for Junior and Senior Western Pleasure Horses. To be shown at a walk, jog-trot, lope and hand gallop; extreme speed to be penalised. Halt at judges discretion. To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Performance
- c Substance
- d Quality
- e Conformation
- f Attitude

CREDITS OF THE WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE:

PROPER ENGAGEMENT:

“Ideally, they should have a balanced, sweeping motion that requires no more or less than light contact by their riders.”

The connection from the horse’s hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the rider’s hand with light contact is “engagement”. Engagement gives the horse’s forward motion a sense of energy. It is the appropriate amount of energy generated by the hip, stifle and hock. This causes the hind legs to be working under the horse’s body with moderate power, not strung out or trailing. How deeply the horse reaches underneath itself with the hind legs (amount of engagement) depends on its conformation, training, confidence and relaxation.

PRESENCE:

“Ultimately, they are very eye appealing and give the impression of being a pleasure to ride”.

Presence is the manner in which a horse carries itself or its bearing. It is in a word, “style”.

BALANCE:

“They should be balanced in all aspects; conformation, gait and disposition”.

Balance is the overall poise of the horse. Every dimension of the western pleasure horse should be in a state of equilibrium. In other words, opposing forces that comprise each aspect of the ideal western pleasure horse meet “somewhere in the middle”.

GOOD ATTITUDE AND MANNERS:

“Maximum credit should be given to the responsive, confident, willingly guided horse...”

The excellent western pleasure horse must appear to enjoy his tasks and respond to the rider readily.

NATURAL, FREE AND EASY MOTION:

“The good western pleasure horses have a comfortable, free flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with their conformation. They should cover a reasonable amount of ground with little effort”.

The western pleasure horse's origin stems from the old west. The cowboy needed a comfortable horse that could take him considerable distance. In order to do so, the excellent western pleasure horse needs this type of motion.

NATURAL HEAD CARRIAGE:

“The head and neck serve as a balance arm and are carried in a relaxed, natural position appropriate for each individual's own conformation”.

Without the head being carried in a natural position the horse will have to find other means to compensate for not being able to balance his frame. This generally results in a compromise in his motion, attitude, and/or presence.

CONDITION:

“These horses are athletes that go softly and give the appearance of being fit and capable of their tasks”.

Condition is exuded by muscle tone, depth of muscle, clean fine bone, balance front to rear, good carriage and a dignified presence.

EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE:

“...That performs all the required gaits correctly with strength and finesse”.

Not only must the excellent performers be correct, but also they must accomplish their tasks with a degree of difficulty by doing their tasks well. This requires strength (substance) and finesse (quality). The excellent performer has the strength to work with delicacy and refinement in their execution for as long as it takes to conduct the class.

WESTERN PLEASURE CHART

| WESTERN PLEASURE | GOOD | MINOR FAULTS | MAJOR FAULTS | ELIMINATION |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| WALK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground covering • Flat footed • Good Attitude | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow • Disinterested • Not attentive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous • Jogging • Not walking | |
| JOG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy riding • Good motion • Consistent • Steady | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too slow • Too fast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not performing a two-beat gait • Failing to jog front and back • Hard or rough riding | |
| LOPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy riding • Good motion • Consistent steady | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too slow • Too fast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong lead • Pulling • Not performing three-beat • Hard or rough riding | |
| EXTENDED LOPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy riding • Good motion • Consistent • Steady | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent speed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking gaits • Pulling • Hard or rough riding • No increase in speed | |
| BACK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper flexion • Readily responsive • Back in straight line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitant • Not backing straight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throwing head • Gaping • Pulling not backing • Rearing | |
| GENERAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth • Steady • Easy riding • Proper flexion & balance • Good attitude | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over or under flexion • Sour ears • Switching tail • Inconsistent speed • Out of balance • Poll too high or too low to throw horse out of balance • Improper or incomplete appointments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throwing head • Bad mouth • Constant bumping • Gaping • Consistent breaking of gait • Obvious schooling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two hands on reins (exception Snaffle/ Hackamore horses) or fingers between closed reins or more than one finger between split reins • Kicking • Illegal equipment • Lameness • Cueing hors in front of cinch • Fall of horse and rider • Bleeding mouth |

FAULTS OF THE WESTERN PLEASURE HORSE

1. Untrue gaits
2. Excessive speed
3. Wrong leads
4. Excessive slowness
5. Unnatural head carriage
6. Resisting rider's commands
7. Gapping
8. Failure to maintain light contact
9. Quick, choppy strides
10. Appearing sullen, dull, lethargic, intimidated, drawn, and/or overly tired (undue stress)
11. Breaking gait
12. Poor attitude
13. Incomplete appointments must be penalised, not necessarily disqualified

The preceding are all faults that should be considered according to their severity when judging the western pleasure horse. Each one is a void in one or more of the class specifications.

CAUSES FOR ELIMINATION

1. Two hands on reins or fingers between reins when using romal reins or more than one finger between reins when using split reins and excess rein falls on the side of the reining hand (Exception: Snaffle Bit or Hackamore Horses)
2. Kicking
3. Illegal Equipment
4. Lameness
5. Cueing in front of the cinch.
6. Fall of horse or rider.
7. Showing (horse) aggression or discontent toward rider or any other person in the arena.
8. Whip marks.
Note: Judge must excuse entry from ring, not just eliminate from consideration.
9. Clear evidence or fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, flank or hip areas.
10. Failure to wear proper attire: western hat; long sleeve shirt with collar; necktie; kerchief or bolo tie; trousers or pants (one piece long sleeve equitation suit with collar is acceptable); chaps and boots.
11. Horses not wearing a long, natural unbraided mane and a natural, unset, ungingered tail.
12. The use of glitter on or in the mane, tail, hair or hooves.
13. Violation(s) of shoeing regulations
14. Any horse leaving the ring without the exhibitor's volition is deprived of an award for that class.
15. Failure to be serviceably sound and in good condition (horse).
16. Showing with artificial appliances.
17. Abuse

REMEMBER....

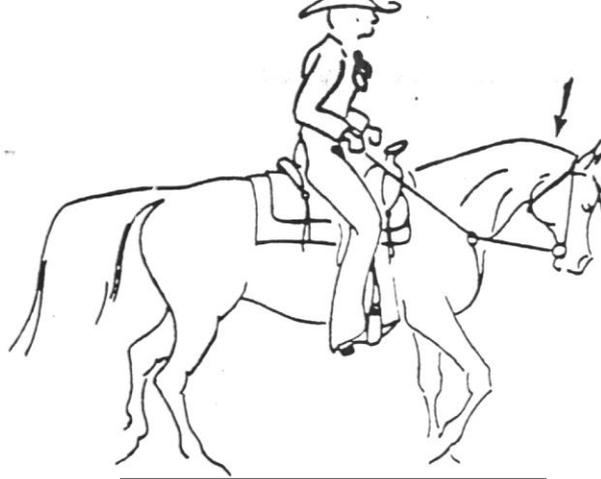
Judging is not absolute. It requires observation and evaluation. In other words, it is exactly what it is: A Matter of Judgement.

It is based on certain criteria (class specifications) and rules in judging the western pleasure horse everything is relative. All faults should be considered according to their

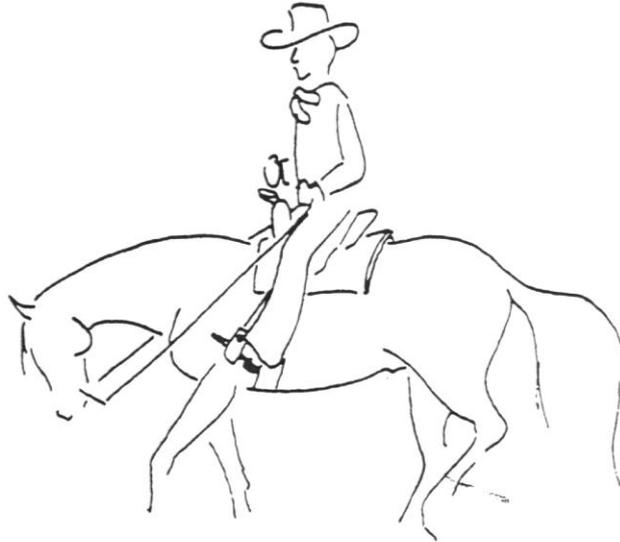
severity and the depth of the competition. Each fault is a void in one or more of the class specifications. However, a minor fault may not be elimination and it may not even allow a superior individual to lose a class amongst a weak field of competitors. The best horses in a particular western pleasure class on a particular day should always win, even if those horses fall far short of being excellent individuals.

Good judging depends upon correct observance of the fine points and the selection of the best western pleasure horses in that class.





Horse flexing at fifth vertebrae



Horse in overflexed position with his poll lower than the withers



A Western Pleasure horse with a good head position, comfortable, allowing him to demonstrate his athletic ability.

COSTUME

The Arabian Mounted Native Costume class is a unique exhibition of the Arabian breed. For the spectator, the Costume Class is the most eye-catching and spectacular class of the Arabian Division.

It is obvious that in our costume classes very little of the horse is visible, other than the head and neck and the tail. These visible portions of the horse must be capable of conveying the 'bedouin-charging-over-the-desert-sands' effect. For this purpose, a high, arching neck and a high tail carriage are requisite. Crowd pleasing animation and alert eagerness are very important in the costume horse, but he must also be under perfect control at all times. The overall picture should be one of spirited enthusiasm on the part of both horse and rider.

AT ALL TIMES REMEMBER : **PERFORMANCE** IS PARAMOUNT ! IT COUNTS SEVENTY FIVE PERCENT OF THE TOTAL – THE COSTUME COUNTS TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT.

SUITABILITY: The Costume horse must be an upright horse with a naturally high set neck and high tail carriage. The horse must be a smooth and powerful mover, naturally lifting its shoulders, arching its neck with strong, ground covering strides. The horse should be brilliant and alert.

MOVEMENT: All gaits must be performed with willingness and obvious ease, cadence, balance and smoothness

WILLINGNESS AND OBVIOUS EASE: Willingness and obvious ease means the horse is naturally and athletically capable of doing the requirements of the class easily. The horse should have the strength and balance necessary to propel itself forward with strong, reaching, ground-covering strides. The overall expression of the horse should be pleasing.

CADENCE: Cadence is the beat, time, or measure of rhythmical motion or activity. When strides are cadenced, they are strongly marked, clear, even, and regular.

BALANCE: Balance is the stability produced by even distribution of weight. The shoulders should be light and free with easy motion and lift. There should be proper engagement and impulsion from the hindquarters to carry the horse.

SMOOTHNESS: Smoothness comes from a relaxed, supple back and the horse's own easy way of going. A supple back allows the horse to propel itself upward and forward from the hindquarters without resistance in the back and neck. Relaxation, ease of movement and suppleness in the back and neck allow smoothness in the gaits and transitions.

ENGAGEMENT: Engagement is the connection from the horse's hindquarters through the back and neck to the bit and the rider's hand, with light contact on the bit. Engagement gives the horse's forward movement a sense of energy.

MODERATE COLLECTION: When properly collected, the horse's back is supple and rounded allowing the hind legs to step further under the horse's center of gravity. The hindquarters are then able to carry more weight and propel the body powerfully upward and forward. The forehand is lightened, enabling the horse to elevate with its neck arched and the head carried elegantly.

GAITS: Extreme or reckless speed to be penalised.

WALK: A four-beat gait: brisk, true and flat-footed with good reach.

At the walk the horse must propel itself forward from behind with long, reaching steps. The horse's neck and back are relaxed as the horse moves from one foot to the other with no period of suspension, unevenness or jog. Brisk should indicate forward movement, not a sluggish inhibited "almost walk." The horse should move forward with even, deliberate, reaching strides.

CANTER: A three-beat gait: smooth, unhurried, with moderate collection, correct and straight on both leads.

The canter should show impulsion, balance and engagement. The horse's back must be supple and relaxed allowing the hindquarters to reach under and work with moderate power and drive. The canter should show moderate collection allowing the Costume Horse's hindquarters to step further underneath itself, elevate its front end, lifting its knees higher, giving a lofty, rolling appearance to the canter. The canter should be uninhibited, showing reach and not short or choppy steps. The canter should be moved into easily and be straight and comfortable for both horse and rider.

HAND-GALLOP: The hand-gallop is performed with the long, free, ground covering stride under control. The amount of ground covering may vary between horses due to the difference in natural length of stride. The hand-gallop is not a fast collected canter but a true lengthening of stride, correct and straight on both leads. Extreme speed to be penalised. There shall be a distinct difference between the canter and the gallop.

The hand-gallop should show a longer stride because of greater impulsion or thrust from hindquarters propelling the horse forward. The greater thrust from the hindquarters results in higher elevation in the shoulders and knees. The horse should show a willingness to go forward while remaining light, calm and maintaining cadence and balance.

BACK: Horses shall stand quietly and back readily

COSTUME CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE: Performance is the physical act of doing all of the required gaits and transitions from one gait to another. It is the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all of the requirements of the class.

MANNERS: Manners are the conduct or behaviour with which the horse performs. Manners include obedience and responsiveness to the rider, with safety being of utmost importance. The horse must inhibit a willingness to be guided and controlled. Manners also include acceptance of the surroundings and other horses in the arena. Manners are often first in order of priority because the safety of the rider and others in the arena are of prime importance.

COSTUME HORSE – *Child/Junior Rider*

To be shown at a walk, canter and hand gallop; extreme speed or reckless speed to be penalised. Horses shall stand quietly and back readily. Horses will be judged on the following in order of importance :

- a Performance
- b Manners
- c Costume

JUNIOR COSTUME HORSE - (*7 Years and under*)

To be shown at a walk, canter and hand gallop; extreme speed or reckless speed to be penalised. Horses shall stand quietly and back readily. Horses will be judged on the following order of importance :

- a Performance
- b Manners
- c Costume

JUNIOR COSTUME HORSE – CHAMPIONSHIP (*7 Years and under*)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Costume Horse section for Junior Costume Horses. To be shown at a walk, canter and hand gallop; extreme speed or reckless speed to be penalized. Horses shall stand quietly and back readily.

- a Performance
- b Manners
- c Costume

SENIOR COSTUME HORSES - (*7 Years and older*)

To be shown at a walk, canter and hand gallop; extreme speed or reckless speed to be penalised. Horses shall stand quietly and back readily. Horses will be judged on the following order of importance :

- a Performance
- b Manners
- c Costume

SENIOR COSTUME HORSES – CHAMPIONSHIP (*7 Years and older*)

To be eligible, horse must have been entered, shown and judged in a designated qualifying class in the Arabian Costume Horse section for Senior Costume Horses. To be shown at a walk, canter and hand gallop; extreme or reckless speed to be penalized. Horses shall stand quietly and back up readily.

- a Performance
- b Manners
- c Costume

FAULTS

BAD MANNERS : Bad Manners includes wringing tail, pinned ears, rigid, open or gapping mouth, cutting to the centre of arena, balking, bolting, rearing, kicking, bucking, not responding to the rider. Bad manners must be severely penalised as they are a risk to the rider and others in the arena.

BAD PERFORMANCE: Bad performance includes wrong leads, break of gait, resistance, rough or abrupt transitions, heavy on the rider's hands, and lack of response to the rider's aids. Extreme or reckless speed to be penalised.

CREDITS

Credit the horse that performs brilliantly with a pleasant attitude and polished manners, showing a desire to perform and an eagerness to please.

Credit the horse that is responsive to the rider and performing the class requirements with willingness, ease and confidence.

Credit the athlete which is able to perform in a balance and cadenced movement with strength and finesse showing quality and presence.

JUDGING IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE: It is a matter of observation and evaluation. Judging is based on certain established criteria and rules. However, in judging performance everything is relative. Each horse must be judged against the performance of the others in the class. Other criteria, such as manners, attitude and quality, must also be considered. All of the faults should be considered according to their severity and the depth of competition. Good judging depends upon correct observation of the finer points and the selection of the best horses for the purpose of the class. The best horse, performing the most correctly as established by the class criteria and specifications, should be the winner.

GAIT COMPARISONS

| WALK – FOUR BEAT | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <u>WESTERN PLEASURE</u> Walk <u>A four-beat gait</u> <u>True</u> Flat footed Ground covering | <u>HUNTER PLEASURE</u> Walk <u>A four-beat gait</u> <u>True</u> Flat-footed Straight Regular Unconstrained With good reach | <u>COUNTRY ENGLISH</u> Walk <u>A four-beat gait</u> <u>True</u> Flat-footed Ground covering | <u>ENGLISH PLEASURE</u> Walk <u>A four-beat gait</u> <u>True</u> Flat-footed Brisk With good reach |

JOG/TROT – TWO BEAT, DIAGONAL, FREE, BALANCED/SQUARE

| <u>WESTERN PLEASURE</u> | <u>HUNTER PLEASURE</u> | <u>COUNTRY ENGLISH</u> | <u>ENGLISH PLEASURE</u> |
|--|---|---|--|
| Jog – Trot | Trot | Normal Trot | Normal Trot |
| <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Free</u> <u>square</u> slow easy | <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Free moving</u> <u>balanced</u> ground covering stride cadenced mannerly straight regular medium speed | <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Freedom of</u> <u>movement</u> <u>balanced</u> easy-going relaxed with elasticity High action MUST be penalised | <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Free moving</u> <u>Balanced</u> cadenced mannerly moderate collection medium speed |
| | | Strong Trot <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Freedom of</u> <u>movement</u> <u>Maintaining balance</u> Ease Faster Lengthened stride High action MUST be penalised | Strong Trot <u>A two-beat gait</u> <u>Free moving</u> <u>balanced</u> cadenced mannerly moderate collection without exaggeratedly high action in front faster stronger lengthened stride powerful reaching not strung out behind willing attitude while maintaining form |

CANTER / LOPE – THREE-BEAT

| <u>WESTERN PLEASURE</u> | <u>HUNTER PLEASURE</u> | <u>COUNTRY ENGLISH</u> | <u>ENGLISH PLEASURE</u> |
|---|--|---|---|
| Lope | Canter | Canter | Canter |
| <u>A three-beat gait</u> <u>Smooth</u> <u>Slow</u> <u>Straight on both leads</u> Easy | <u>A three-beat gait</u> <u>Smooth</u> <u>Unhurried</u> <u>Straight on both leads</u> Even correct | <u>A three-beat gait</u> <u>Smooth</u> <u>Unhurried</u> <u>Straight on both leads</u> correct | <u>A three-beat gait</u> <u>Smooth</u> <u>Unhurried</u> <u>Straight on both leads</u> Moderate collection correct |

HAND GALLOP – LENGTHENED STRIDE

| <u>WESTERN PLEASURE</u> | <u>HUNTER PLEASURE</u> | <u>COUNTRY ENGLISH</u> | <u>ENGLISH PLEASURE</u> |
|---|--|---|--|
| Hand gallop | Hand Gallop | Hand gallop | Hand gallop |
| <u>A real hand gallop</u> Not merely an extended lope A distinct difference between the lope and the hand gallop Extreme speed penalised | <u>Lengthening of stride</u> Long Free Ground covering Controlled Mannerly Correct Straight on both leads | <u>Lengthened stride</u> Faster than canter Controlled Correct Straight on both leads Extreme speed MUST be penalised | <u>A true lengthening of stride</u> Distinct difference between canter & hand gallop NOT a fast collected canter Long Free Ground covering controlled Correct Straight on both leads Extreme speed penalised |

HORSEMANSHIP

GENERAL DO'S AND DONT'S

Be courteous at all times to fellow exhibitors, ring personnel, office workers, judges and the like. Sportmanship is paramount in the field of equitation sport. Congratulate the winners. Your time will come someday and you would want the same courtesy extended to you. Also, be helpful to your fellow exhibitors. Point out in a tactful manner that their jod strap is undone or that their horse has slobbered on their chaps, etc.

Leave room in the line-up for the nervous horse or rider. In addition to being courteous and safety-conscious, this will lessen the effect that the nervous horse might have on your mount.

Show disciplined control of your mount, but never abuse it if it makes a mistake, either in the ring or after leaving the ring. The show arena and grounds are not proper places to 'teach the horse a lesson'. Emotions runs high and a lot is at stake, and because of this most mistakes are due to rider errors for which the horse should not be punished.

Do not wear anything or put anything on the horse or rider that jiggles, flaps or waves. This includes loose hair or hair ribbons, flapping ties or fringe and unpinned numbers. All of these are very distracting to the judge, especially not being able to read a rider's number. If a rider trims their number, care should be taken not to reduce the size so that the judge struggles to read the number. Pinning numbers both top and bottom will make a smoother picture.

Riders should enter the arena ready to show, displaying confidence and presence. Show that you are a rider and not just a passenger. Poise and consistency, even under adverse conditions, are necessary. Perfect the performance of your horse to reflect the best of your abilities. A ground covering smooth walk should not be so strong that it's lateral movement creates too much body motion in the rider. A smooth, cadenced jog or trot will be much more attractive than a bone jarring concussive gait. Likewise, a smooth flowing canter or lope will enhance a rider's skills rather than the four beat gait that shakes or vibrates the rider.

ATTIRE OF RIDER / TACK OF HORSE

1. Properly fitted, clean tack and clothing along with a well groomed, neatly clipped horse go a long way toward perfecting the ultimate final picture.
2. Informal saddle suits should be of a conservative, preferable dark colour which appears to be solid. Small pinstripes or herring bone type patterns are acceptable as long as the material appears from a distance to be of a solid nature.
3. Spurs, if worn, must be unrowelles and not so large that they noticeably interfere with the smooth line of the jod pants.

THE SEAT

The seat means the rider's position in the saddle and the security and control over the horse that must accompany it.

A good seat is dependent upon a judicious combination of balance, suppleness and grip. The good horseman rides most of the time by balance and pose, with which rhythm is closely associated. His position in the saddle must be such that he can apply grip instantly to preserve balance *before* this is lost. Suppleness makes balance possible and perfects it.

A good saddle will assist the rider to sit with the seat in the centre and lowest part and will also allow for varying lengths of stirrup leathers to be used, without the seat being pushed back. Such a saddle is adequate for all forms of normal riding; but for race-riding, advanced dressage and advanced show jumping, special saddles may be required.

It is essential to acquire and maintain a good, strong seat, independent of any assistance from the reins. This is achieved by regular, active riding and can be assisted by the practise of suppling exercises.

THE POSITION OF THE RIDER

The seat should be well down in the centre and lowest part of the saddle, the rider sitting square and level. The upper part of the body should be upright and free from all stiffness especially about the waist. Stiffness in one part of the body will produce muscular contraction in another. The head should be erect and the eyes looking between the horse's ears. The rider should be straight without being stiff and supple without appearing slack.

The knee and thigh should at all times be close to the saddle, with the large thigh muscle behind, so as not to lie between the saddle and the thigh bone. The natural grip thus formed by a correct knee and thigh position, must be downwards and inwards, and should not be unduly exerted, except in an emergency. The knee and ankle must be supple. Any stiffness in these joints will tend to make the upper part of the body stiff.

The lower part of the leg should be kept back and free to apply close behind the girth. It should hang lightly touching the horse's side with the stirrup leather vertical when on level ground. An incorrect position of the lower leg will upset the rider's balance, needing an alteration of the body to a faulty position to restore it.

The foot The downward thrust on the stirrups will pass into the heels, causing them to sink below the level of the toes and allowing the ankle joints to flex freely with the movements of the horse. To this end the stirrup should usually be held on the ball of the foot; when occasion arises it will not be difficult to put the feet home in the stirrups. The foot should rest in a relaxed position with the toe pointing generally towards the front. Toes turned out to excess affect the proper contact of the knee with the saddle and tend to encourage a grip with the calf. Toes turned in to excess tend to stiffen the ankle and remove the calf from contact with the horse's side.

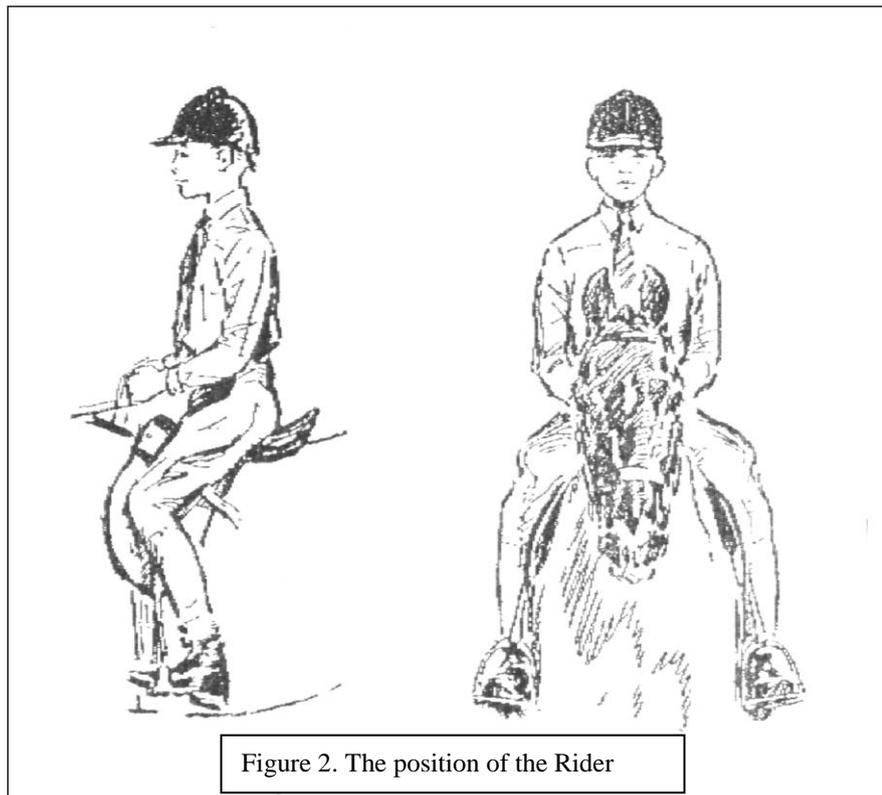


Figure 2. The position of the Rider

The position of the knees and toes, being dictated by the position of the whole leg from the hip joint, should be natural and not forced.

The arms should hang naturally down to the elbows, which should be lightly touching the sides. Viewed from the side, the forearms should be in a straight line through the reins to the horse's mouth. The hands, with the thumbs uppermost, will be just above and in front of the front arch of the saddle. The wrists and fingers should be supple and ready to follow every movement of the horse's head and neck. There should be no exaggerated rounding of the wrists.

THE LENGTH OF STIRRUP TO ADOPT

If a rider adopts a very long stirrup he will have a weak seat as there will be nothing to prevent him from being thrown or pulled forward. The only advantage will be the full use of the legs. If the stirrup is too short the rider's seat is pushed back so that the weight is on the horse's loins and the seat and leg aids cannot be effectively used.

The rider who adopts a short stirrup is less likely to be pulled forward, owing to having the full length of his thigh in front of him. The disadvantage of the short stirrup is the loss of use of the leg. It can be seen, therefore, that it is best to adopt a length of stirrup which gives as strong a seat as possible without hindering the use of the legs. This is the length generally adopted in the hunting field. (See Figure 2)

The pupil should learn to measure his correct length of leather by standing facing the saddle, placing the knuckles of the fingers of the right hand on the stirrup bar on the saddle and measuring the leather and iron under the arm. A good practical length will allow the iron to reach into the arm-pit.

It will be found that the beginner frequently rides with stirrups too short. This is because he is gradually working his way down in the saddle. It is a good idea to ride for a short time without stirrups. Then stretch down the legs and toes as far as they will go. After this, fit the stirrups again and it will be found that in many cases, they have to be lengthened.

To lengthen or shorten stirrups

To alter the right stirrup, first take the reins in the left hand. With the right hand take hold of the spare end of the leathers and with the thumb on the top of the buckle, steer the tongue of the buckle with the first finger, the other three fingers holding the spare end of the leather; disengage the tongue and guide into the required hole, then move the buckle up close to the bar of the saddle by pulling down on the inside leather, and replace the end of the leather. The foot should *never* be removed from the stirrup. Riders should get into the habit of changing the length of their stirrups without looking down.

The position at the walk

The position of the upper part of the body does not alter except that it moves slightly in rhythm with the natural movement of the horse. The rider must look in the direction in which he is going.

The position at the trot

There are two ways of riding at the trot: 'Sitting', when the seat should not leave the saddle and 'Rising' in the saddle. The former is used during transitions from one pace to another and on other occasions, when required. It enables the rider to remain in closer contact with his horse and not to lose contact if his mount tries to evade any of the aids.

The rising trot, when done correctly, is an easy motion for both horse and rider. The trot of a horse is an alternate movement of the two diagonals (a pace of two-time). The off-fore and the near-hind are the right diagonal, and the near-fore and the off-hind, the left diagonal. A rider is said to be riding on the right diagonal when his seat returns to the saddle as the horse's off-fore and near-hind come to the ground. The diagonal can be changed by sitting down in the saddle for an extra beat before commencing to rise again. The rider should change the diagonal when he changes the rein and at frequent intervals when hacking. In practically all cases, due to insufficient practice and lack of training, one diagonal appears to be more comfortable than the other. In the rising trot the movement should be smooth with no jerks or bumps. The upper part of the body should be inclined slightly forward and care taken not to thrust the seat back. The small of the back should be supple. There should be no effort on the part of the rider to rise in the saddle. The body should be placed in such a position that the horse is made to do all the work of throwing the body up. The movement should be assisted by the knees and ankle joints.

The main fault in trotting is trying to rise with a stiff and hollow back. This will mean that the stomach is pushed forward as the rider rises. In a bad case the effort is so great that the rider will resort to the reins in order to pull himself up.

The complete novice, however, will tend to get the body too far forward.

The position at the canter

The canter is a pace of three-time. In other words, there are three distinct beats to each stride.

At this pace the suppleness of the small of the back is most important. The upper part of the body should give to the motion and rhythm of the horse. The seat should remain well down in the saddle and should not appear to leave it.

One main fault is a stiff and rigid back, resulting in the seat bumping up and down in the saddle. Another is sitting on the fork with the weight too far off the seat bones, thus 'driving the horse into the ground'.

The position at the gallop

There are two alternative positions, which may be adopted for riding at the gallop.

1. When a horse requires driving, the rider should sit well down in the saddle and push the horse forward with his seat and legs.
2. When a horse moves freely the rider should adopt a forward position. The weight of the body should be taken on the knees and stirrups. The weight of the seat should be off the saddle with the body leaning forward over the hands. As long as the horse is maintaining a firm and even contact with the bit, this position is easily maintained. It is easier for the horse if this forward position is adopted, as the rider's weight will be poised over the centre of gravity.

THE HANDS

It is essential for a rider to have good hands so let us consider what is meant by 'Good Hands'.

Through the reins, and therefore the hands, the rider has his fingers on the pulse of the horse. He regulates the pace, directs the horse, and asks for 'flexion's' through this medium and it is of the utmost importance that he understands the influence he produces in this manner. The hands at all times must be light and responsive. They must be able to 'give' and to 'take' instantaneously, so much so that it becomes almost a reflex action.

Later it will be shown how a horse's training revolves around his mouth. In order to produce a well-balanced animal it is necessary for the horse to accept and hold the bit lightly in his mouth. He will then be ready at the slightest indication of the rider to obey any command given to him. None of this can be accomplished unless the rider has light and sensitive hands so that he is capable of feeling and correcting the slightest resistance on the part of the horse. If the horse resists in his mouth it is felt throughout his body, which becomes stiff and unyielding.

The rider does not use his hands alone; they must always work in conjunction with his back and legs, but it is the sense of touch through the fingers that makes or mars a horse's mouth, and the whole future of a rider's success in riding and training horses will depend upon whether his hands are sensitive to every reaction in the horse's mouth. He must know when and how they should 'ask' and they should be 'soft'. The hands should remain at the same level and be steady. Only one hand should 'ask', while the other retains the

light contact with the horse's mouth. When 'asking' they must not be drawn back but used as in the 'squeezing-of-a-sponge' and then remains soft and still again when the horse has 'given' to the demanded flexion by relaxing his jaw. They must be ready to come into immediate action once again at the slightest sign of resistance from the horse.

The upper part of the rider's arms should hang loosely close to his sides. The forearms and wrists must be supple and relaxed so that they can act as a sort of buffer between the movement of the rider's body and the horse's mouth. As the rider becomes more efficient he will sit more erect and still, so the horse will feel no movement whatever when the hands are being polite and soft.

A very common fault seen in riding is too much movement of the hands. A horse's mouth is very sensitive and it is the rider's aim that it should remain so. But, if the hands are continually working backwards and forwards or up and down with every movement of his body, it is not surprising that the horse's mouth becomes insensitive, as he gets repeated jab with every step he takes.

It will now be seen how important it is for the rider to have a strong and independent seat, because he must never use the reins in order to maintain his position in the saddle. The reins are only meant to guide and direct the movements of the horse and the rider must remember that the softer the hands the softer will be the horse, whilst heavy hands can only produce a heavy horse.

THE AIDS

The word '*Aids*' has two meanings.

1. The signal, by means of which the rider conveys his intentions to the horse, signals which the horse must be taught to understand and obey.
2. The means at our disposal for producing these signals.

For example, when a young horse is being lunged, the trainer's means for producing the necessary signals will be the cavesson, the whip and the voice, while the signals by which he conveys his intentions will be the action of the cavesson, whip and voice. By the intelligent application of these aids used in conjunction, and by instantly rewarding obedience, the trainer will teach the horse to answer to the correct aid.

The means at our disposal can be sub-divided into Natural and Artificial aids:

1. *Natural*: The hands, legs, body and voice
2. *Artificial*: Whips, spurs, Martingales, etc.

NATURAL AIDS

The body

The body, through the back muscles and their influence on the seat, plays an important part in riding. The back muscles influence the seat in two ways; when relaxed they enable the rider to maintain his balance under adverse conditions and so lend security to the seat; when braced – i.e., when the spine is straightened – they influence the horse in accordance with the corresponding hand and leg aids.

The seat

It is only from the basis of a firm, deep seat that the rider is able to gain the correct use of his legs. It is through the seat that the rider will first perceive the horse's evasions that emanate, as many do, from the hindquarters.

The legs

1. Create impulsion or energy
2. Guide and control the hindquarters

To increase pace or energy the inside of the calves of the legs are applied against the horse's sides, repeating the pressure as necessary. The legs should not be drawn far back nor should the toes be turned out too much.

To guide and control the hindquarters the rider may use either leg independently in the manner described above, except that the leg is drawn slightly back to indicate the way in which it is desired to move or control the hindquarters.

The hands, by means of the reins:

1. Regulate the energy created by the legs
2. Control the forehand
3. Guide, check or allow pace.

The voice

Assists in controlling the horse in the early stages of training. The voice can encourage or soothe, check or frighten. The aids should work in harmony with one another.

ARTIFICIAL AIDS

Whips, spurs and Martingales, all come under the heading of 'Artificial Aids'. They are supplementary aids to the legs and hands and a means of correction.

The stick

The best form of stick is usually made of cane and should be between 48 and 52 cm long. It is carried loosely in the palm of the hand with 10 – 15 cm⁴ to 6 inches protruding in front of the hand. If it is carried correctly, it will be pointing towards the horse's opposite ear.

Should the horse not respond to the rider's legs, the stick may be used to reinforce the leg aids so that the horse will learn to obey the seat and leg aids alone. It can be used in either hand just behind the rider's leg; the hand holding the stick must be removed from the reins when the stick is used. As soon as the horse obeys the stick should be put back in the correct position. The application of the stick by a flick of the wrist with the hand still holding a rein, except by an expert, upsets the proper contact with the horse's mouth and should not be done.

To hit a horse properly, as opposed to using a flick of the wrist, the stick should be held in the hand with the butt by the little finger and the long end between the thumb and first finger.

To put the reins in one hand and change the grip so that the stick is held as above is a knack, which has to be learned and needs practice.

It is important that the rider should be able to use the whip in either hand, the left being more useful than the right. Inexpert horsemen are apt always to use the right hand; the horse quickly realises this and generally runs out to the left when refusing a fence.

The stick may be used for punishment in rare cases when a horse refuses to obey. It will then be applied behind the leg, definitely and without delay. The rider must be satisfied that his horse is not frightened or puzzled but understands quite clearly what is wanted; that the horse is not lame or unwell nor full of gaiety and merely pulling the rider's leg. Above all, the rider's temper must be under control and he must not be frightened. On the rare occasions when punishment is merited it must be given immediately, with calm and cool deliberation and must not be excessive.

A horse should never be hit over the head; serious injury may result if this is done.

Spurs

The object of the spurs is to make the horse light and responsive to the leg. They should only be used by riders who are sufficiently advanced to have complete control of their legs. They should only be applied if the horse does not respond to the pressure of the leg. Spurs with rowels should never be used. Spurs with curved necks should point downwards; they must not be worn upside down.

Care should be taken to have spur straps cut the right length so that the spur lies horizontal along the seam of the riding boot.

The spur is applied gently, with the inside of the spur against the horse's side, care being taken not to turn the toe out so that the back of the spur is used.

Martingales

(1) **Standing Martingale.** A strap attached at one end to the noseband, and at the other between the horse's forelegs to the girth, supported by a neck strap. It should be used for no other purpose than to prevent the horse carrying its head above the angle of control, and not in order to hold the head down. It should never be attached to a dropped noseband.

Fitting

When the horse's head is up in the correct position for moving, and the martingale is attached at both ends, put your hand underneath the martingale and push it up; it should just reach into the horse's gullet.

(2) **Running Martingale.** One end is attached between the horse's forelegs to the girth and the other end divides into two straps, each with a ring at the end, through which the reins are passed. A neck strap supports the martingale. If used on the curb rein, care must be taken that the rings of the martingale are not so large as to constitute a danger by getting over the rings on the bit. The running martingale is an artificial aid to prevent the horse carrying his head above the angle of control.

Fitting

When attached to the girth with both rings up one side, these rings should reach to the withers.

The neck strap for both standing and running martingales should fit so that it will admit the width of the hand at the withers. The buckle should be on the near side of the neck.

APPLICATION OF THE AIDS

This requires knowledge of techniques as well as natural ability.

In every case the lightest possible aid should be applied to get the best possible results. The application of the aids on a young horse must be clear, definite and even exaggerated. As the training proceeds, the aids will become more delicate until, with the trained horse, they become practically invisible to the onlooker whilst at the same time maintaining their clarity to the horse.

Every aid requires the complete harmony of the body, legs and hands, without which it is quite impossible to get smooth results, and the aids must be sustained to the necessary degree throughout all movements. By placing the horse in the correct position before the aid is given, he can obey more easily what the aid indicates.

To increase the pace to a walk or a trot

Close both legs, straighten the spine and ease the reins, still maintaining a light contact with the horse's mouth. As soon as the horse obeys, the pressure of the legs should be sufficient only to maintain the desired pace and energy.

The extended trot

Increase the pressure of both legs, asking the horse to lengthen his stride but not to quicken it. It is most important to keep the rhythm and to maintain the contact with the horse's mouth. The horse should not increase the weight on the reins but his neck should be lengthened. This should not be attempted in the early stages of training.

To decrease pace or halt

Close both legs, straighten the spine and bring the horse up into a still hand. He should decrease pace smoothly, with a steady head-carriage and when halting, should stand squarely on all four legs. As soon as the horse has obeyed, relax the pressure of the legs and the feeling on the reins, and then maintain the pace as desired.

The rein-back

Before commencing a rein-back, the horse must be standing to attention with a fairly low head carriage and a relaxed jaw.

Apply both legs and seat in order to send the horse up into the bit, but instead of yielding with the hands as in the case of the walk, retain the pressure. When the horse has taken the required number of steps backwards, the rider must ease the reins to allow the horse to halt or to go forward as required. The horse should rein-back in a straight line in two-time, moving alternate diagonals, with the head carried correctly. If the rider has to pull at the horse's mouth to obtain the rein-back, the horse is not ready for this movement.

To circle or turn to the right

Throughout the movement keep the seat in the centre and lowest part of the saddle, the rider sitting square to the movement of the horse, the head erect and the eyes looking forward over the horse's ears. Guide the forehand round to the right with the inside rein, which is responsible for bend and direction; the outside rein, which controls balance and pace, must allow the necessary movement of the horse's head to the right without checking. The rider's right (inner) leg, applied at the girth, maintains impulsion while the left (outer) leg, being farther back controls the hindquarters, ensuring that the hind feet follow in the tracks of the forefeet.

The horse's head must not be turned outwards, nor should he bend his head and neck inwards more than the rest of the body.

In the elementary stages, a more 'open' rein should be used with the horse's head slightly bent in the direction in which he is going and the hind feet following in the tracks of the forefeet.

Aids for the canter of a named leg

To canter off-fore leading (right canter) With the right rein bend the horse slightly to the right, sit well down in the saddle and, with the pressure of both legs, the left further back than the right, make the horse strike off into a canter. The left leg should be applied distinctly behind the girth to prevent the horse's quarters swinging out; the right leg at the girth to increase the impulsion.

With an untrained horse the canter should only be attempted from a trot while circling.

The rider must on no account look down to see which leg is leading, he must learn to feel which shoulder is slightly in advance of the other and which hind leg comes to the ground first.

To canter near-fore leading (left canter). Reverse the above.

Terms at the canter

A horse should always canter 'united'.

A horse is said to be cantering 'true' or 'united' when the leading foreleg and the leading hind leg appear to be on the same side and is said to be cantering 'disunited' when the leading hind leg appears to be on the opposite side to the leading foreleg.

A horse is said to be cantering 'false' and 'counter-lead' when he is cantering to the left with the off-fore leading, or to the right with the near-fore leading.

BITTING

PRINCIPLES OF BITTING

For the person who knows the principles of horse training and is possessed of a firm seat and good hands, the theory of biting is a small subject. But the person who tries to find some mechanical contrivance to put in a horse's mouth will seldom achieve permanent satisfactory results.

It must be remembered that the power to control a horse by a bit is only accomplished by the system of correction and reward. If the horse obeys the action of the reins, the rider should give to him at once.

The whole principle of biting, etc., is the application of pressure on the mouth, the horse giving way to it by relaxing the jaw, and the instantaneous acknowledgement by the hands of the rider.

A horse may pull for any or all of the following reasons;

1. Excitability.
2. Lack of balance and training.
3. Pain or fear of the bit.
4. A hard mouth.

Excitability

The majority of young horses will be excitable when first ridden in company. They will reach at their bridles, throw their heads about and, if allowed, attempt to run away. At this stage, great care must be taken not to damage their mouths. They must not be allowed to 'go on', but must be taken away from the crowd directly they show signs of losing their mouths. They should be ridden in a snaffle and their mouths and lips should be watched constantly for cuts and bruises.

Lack of balance and training

Before his muscles are developed and he has accustomed himself to the weight of the rider, a horse will often through lack of balance, experience difficulty in reducing pace. It should be realised that at this stage the horse's mouth is still unmade and so unless the rider uses tact and sympathy in reducing the pace, much harm will result. What may be mistaken for a hard mouth (when it is really only the horse's inability to respond quickly) may easily be made one by the rider using force.

Pain or fear of the bit

A badly fitted bit or a sore mouth will often cause a horse to pull in order to get away from the pain.

A dry mouth, swallowed tongue and tongue over the bit are all evasions from pain caused by biting.

A dry mouth is the result of the tongue being drawn back and the mouth being slightly open. The air passes rapidly through the mouth and quickly dries it up. In their dry state the bars of the mouth are easily torn and bruised. A dry mouth is usually associated with an 'unmade' mouth and a stiff jaw.

A swallowed tongue and tongue over the bit are caused by the horse trying to evade the pressure of the bit. In either case the bars are easily damaged or if the tongue is over the bit, the under part of the tongue becomes torn.

The conformation of a horse's head and neck is of considerable importance in biting. If the channel that lies between the branches of the lower jaw is too narrow, or the head and neck are too closely coupled, the animal will have difficulty in flexing correctly. A horse with either fault is usually unpleasant to ride, and if the rider persists in trying to obtain the correct head-carriage, pain will be caused and the horse, as a result, will become a puller. It is better, in such cases, to allow the horse to find its own natural head carriage.

A hard mouth

The bit other than a snaffle lies on the tongue and on the bars of the mouth which are extremely sensitive. They are thinly covered with skin, in which there is a mass of nerves. Once these nerves are destroyed, feeling will disappear and the animal will become hard mouthed.

The nerves in the bars of the mouth are destroyed by continual bit injury and bruising due to pulling at young, undeveloped and excitable animals, to severe and badly fitting bits or to the horse having a stiff jaw.

BITS AND THEIR USES

There are three bits, *the snaffle*, the *double bridle* and the *pelham*, though there are many varieties of each.

The Snaffle

The jointed snaffle acts on the outside of the bars of the mouth, the lips, or the corners of the mouth according to the hand action.

The use of the snaffle in conjunction with the rider's legs, is to teach the horse to accept the bit with a still and correct head carriage and supple jaw.

The following are some of the different kinds of snaffles: -

1. *The smooth, jointed snaffle*, made of metal with a joint in the middle, is the one chiefly in use and, if fairly thick, it is the best kind to use.
2. *The egg-butt snaffle* which is less likely to pinch or damage the horse's lips than the ordinary ring snaffle.
3. *The snaffle with cheeks* (see Figure 3) and a thick jointed mouthpiece. The cheeks prevent the bit from rubbing the sides of the horse's mouth or from being pulled through the mouth from one side to the other. The keeper, holding the cheek to the bridle, prevents the bit from turning over in the mouth.
4. *The half-moon and straight-bar un-jointed snaffle*, made of vulcanite, rubber or metal. These are very mild and can be used on horses whose mouths have been injured.
5. *The twisted snaffle*. This is severe and should be avoided.
6. *The gag snaffle*. The action of this bit is on the corners of the lips. It is very powerful and should only be used by experts.

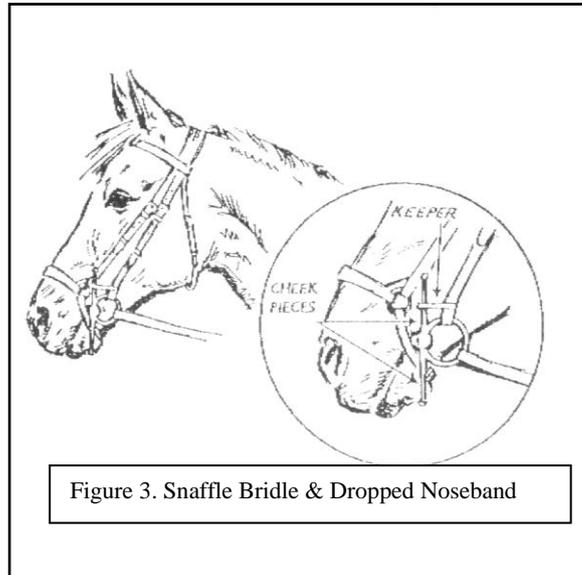


Figure 3. Snaffle Bridle & Dropped Noseband

7. *The snaffle and dropped noseband.* The dropped noseband should only be used in conjunction with a snaffle. It should be carefully fitted so that the front strap is well above the nostrils, where it cannot restrict the horse's breathing. The back strap passes below the mouthpiece of the bit and is adjusted so as to prevent the horse from crossing his jaw or opening his mouth wide. A dropped noseband also helps to prevent him from getting his tongue over the bit and helps to keep his mouth moist by preventing him from opening his mouth and drawing back his tongue.

The Double Bridle

This consists of a bridoon, which is a snaffle with a thinner mouthpiece than those described above, a curb bit with a fixed or moveable mouthpiece and a curb chain with a lip strap.

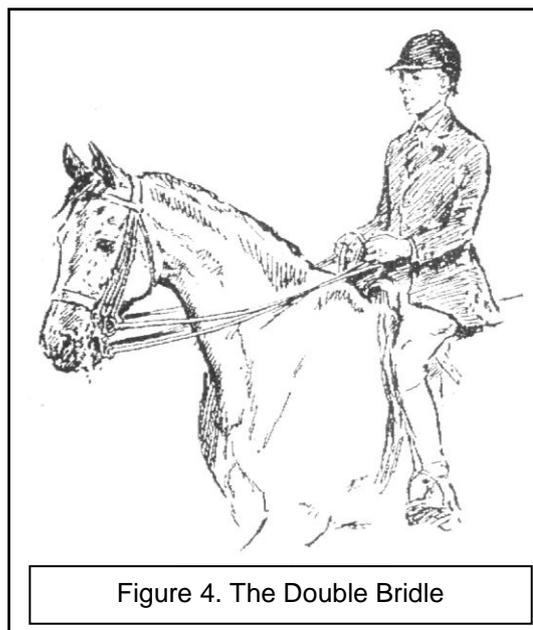


Figure 4. The Double Bridle

It should only be used when the horse has been taught, in a snaffle bridle, to offer no resistance in his mouth, to go forward freely and to come back to the rider with a relaxed jaw. Then the curb bit will afford additional control to the rider and help to give a lighter aid.

Its function is:

- (a) The bridoon acts in the same way as a jointed snaffle.
- (b) The curb can act at the same time as the bridoon to give a more refined and imperceptible aid and to help maintain a relaxed jaw.

PERMITTED BITS

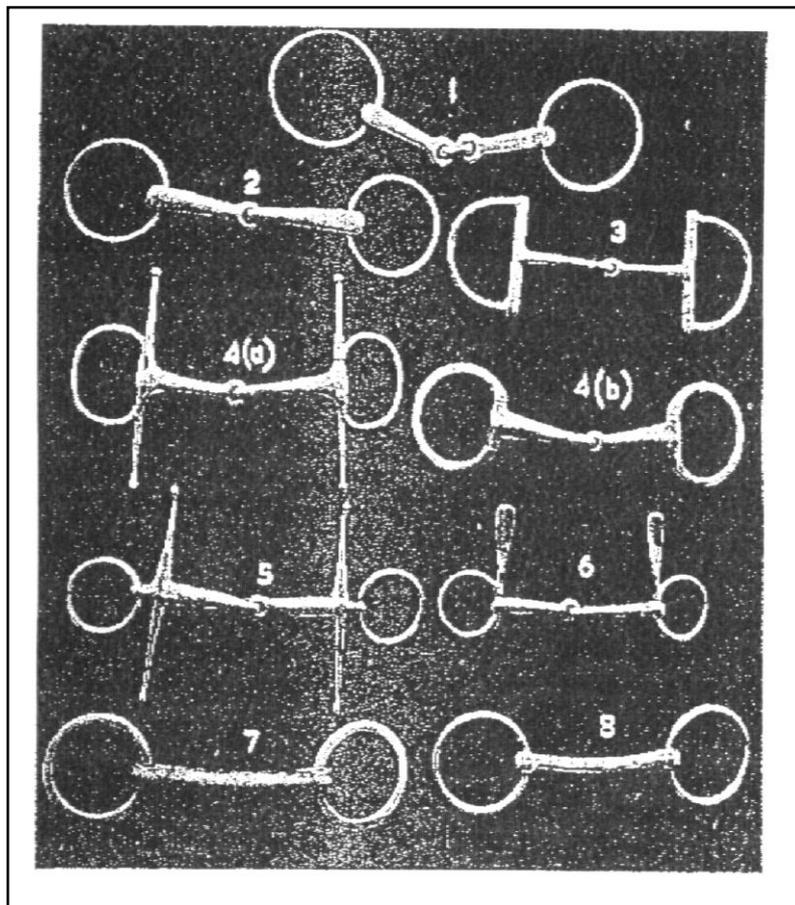


Figure 5

1. Ordinary snaffle with double jointed mouthpiece
2. Ordinary snaffle with joined mouthpiece
3. Racing snaffle
4. Egg-butt snaffle (a) with cheeks (b) without cheeks
5. Other types of snaffle with cheeks
6. Snaffle with upper cheeks only
7. Rubber snaffle, un-jointed
8. Un-jointed snaffle

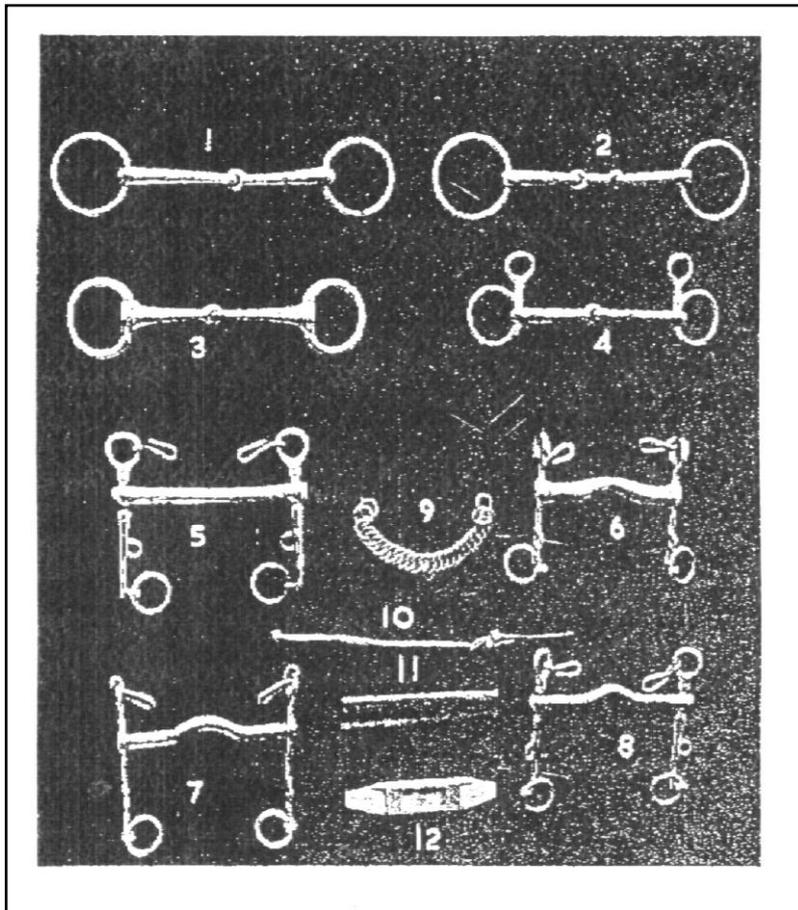


Figure 6

Various Bridoon bits

1. Ordinary bridoon bit
2. Bridoon bit with two joints
3. Egg-butt bridoon bit
4. Bridoon bit with cheeks

Various types of curb bits

5. *Half-moon curb bit*
6. Curb bit with curved cheeks & Port
7. Curb bit with loops for the lipstrap on the cheeks and with port
8. Curb bit with port & sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth)
9. Curb chain
10. Lipstrap
11. Rubber cover for curb chain
12. Leather cover for curb chain

Fitting

The bridoon should lie in the horse's mouth as high as possible without causing the lips to wrinkle. The curb bit should be immediately below it. The curb chain, which should be thick and flat, should lie snugly in the chin groove and be sufficiently tight to allow the cheek pieces of the bit to be drawn back to an angle of 45 degrees with the horse's mouth. If too loose, the curb chain is inclined to ride up above the chin groove when in use, or when not in use, to flap about and irritate the horse. The lip strap should pass through the ring which hangs from the bottom of the curb chain and be fitted loosely.

Action of the curb bit

The mouthpiece presses on the bars and the tongue. The cheeks of the bit act as a lever to increase the pressure on the bars of the mouth. The curb rein must therefore be used with great delicacy. The curb chain is the fulcrum and should be painless.

When the curb bit is used without a bridoon, the constant pressure on the lower jaw is inclined to numb the horse's mouth and kill all feeling, it is therefore not advocated.

The Pelham

This bit is a combination of the curb and bridoon on one mouthpiece, to the cheek of which is attached the bridoon and curb reins, thus trying to make the one bit perform the duties of two. This, in principle, is not a sound policy, but the fact remains that some horses will go better in a pelham than they will in anything else.

Sometimes with a pelham, a single rein is used, attached to a leather rounding itself attached to the bridoon and curb rings on the cheek of the bit. This cannot be advocated for use by those who wish to take advantage of the correct action of either bit, but it has proved advantageous in some cases.

BALANCE AND COLLECTION

In dealing with balance and collection, it must be remembered that a horse's forefeet, when on the ground, cannot be in front of a perpendicular line drawn through the nose. Thus, as the length of a horse's stride is increased, the head and neck must be extended.

Balance comes before collection. Unless a horse is balanced he cannot be collected.

Balance

A horse is said to be balanced when his own weight and that of his rider are distributed in such a way as to allow him to use himself with maximum ease and efficiency. The head and neck form the governing factors, or balancing pole, in weight distribution. It is by their position that a horse carries his centre of gravity forward or backward as the paces are extended or collected. A young horse, when at liberty, naturally learns to balance himself. When he is mounted, this balance will be upset by the weight of the rider and the centre of balance is displaced. Balance is acquired by developing the muscles, especially of the back and hind legs, by means of physical exercise. These include increasing and decreasing pace, both on the level and up and down hills and slopes, starting and stopping, turning, circling and jumping. In fact, balance improves as training progresses. The rider should not attempt to achieve it by artificially raising the horse's head.

When in progression, the centre of balance will constantly be displaced in one direction or another. As the pace increases the displacement will become further and further forward. One of the advantages of a short stirrup for the jockey is that he can more easily put his weight forward over the centre of balance.

Collection

Collection is the concentration of the horse's energy, when the whole of his body is collected into a shortened form with a relaxed jaw, on a very light rein, with even more active hind-legs, so that he has the maximum control over his limbs and is in a position to obey instantly the slightest indication of his rider.

To achieve this, the horse's muscles must undergo intensive training, in order to be capable of standing the extra strain put onto the hindquarters. True collection can never be obtained from the front by pulling back with the hands. By doing so, the rider will restrict the fluid and supple movements of the horse. The propelling force must come from behind and the impulsion so generated is controlled by the hands.

A SYSTEM OF BASIC TRAINING

Aims and Objects

If the rider takes a great deal of trouble in the initial stages of training, he will reap great benefits as time goes on, because in order to be a good rider a horse must go correctly in all paces. The system of training recommended here will benefit all horses and is essential for those that are being trained for Combined Training and Dressage Events.

Our aim and object is that the horse should learn what is necessary in order to become a good all-round riding horse.

The horse should go freely forward with an even rhythm. He must be 'on the bit' at all paces. He must have a steady, correct head carriage, be in balance, straight, supple and completely obedient to the rider's aids.

Let us consider how these aims can be achieved. It is wishful thinking to imagine this high standard of training can be achieved in a short time. It is not possible, and any short cut taken by the use of auxiliary reins, etc., will show itself in many different ways. Any restriction or force used will result in shortened paces and, more than likely, incorrect head carriage. For instance, should the rider use a martingale in order to hold the horse's head down, having it so fitted that the horse can 'lean' against it, the horse will be using the wrong muscles in his neck and will miss it the moment it is removed. Consequently he will throw up his head, feeling for the strap which is not there, all of which will have aggravated a fault which will take long to correct.

If a young horse is inclined to throw his head up into a dangerous position, it is advisable to use a standing martingale, properly fitted so that it only comes into action when the horse has thrown his head up beyond the point of control. Fitted in this way, it acts only as a safeguard for the rider and in no way hinders the horse's training. The use of a running martingale for this purpose is unwise, as it influences the reins and causes a false action on the horse's mouth.

The rider must plan the schooling of his horse and the plan must be strictly adhered to. It is most important that the horse should become proficient in one stage before taken on to the next. This point must be stressed, because the horse has to learn to know what the aids mean. If great care is taken to make the aids clear and correct, the horse will soon learn what is wanted of him, but if he is hurried and the aids are not clear, he will get muddled, hot up and go back in his training.

FIRST STAGE

A horse must learn to stand still when being mounted. It should be the first lesson in obedience and the rider must be very strict about this. He should get off every time the horse moves, remount, and only give the aid to move on when the horse has stood perfectly still.

The horse must learn to go forward to the slightest pressure of the rider's leg-aid. If at first the horse does not respond, the rider can use a fairly long switch with which to touch him behind the girth, at the same time as he gives the leg-aid to 'go forward'. The horse will

soon learn this aid and when he will go forward to the lightest pressure of the rider's legs, the stick need no longer be used.

The horse should trot forward at a brisk, controlled pace, with as long a stride as possible. Should he at any time quicken his pace, he must be brought back to a slower pace and then be asked again to gradually lengthen his stride (see Figure 17). Each time he quickens or loses rhythm, the pace must be reduced and the exercise repeated. The amount of forward impulsion created should be determined by the temperament of the horse.

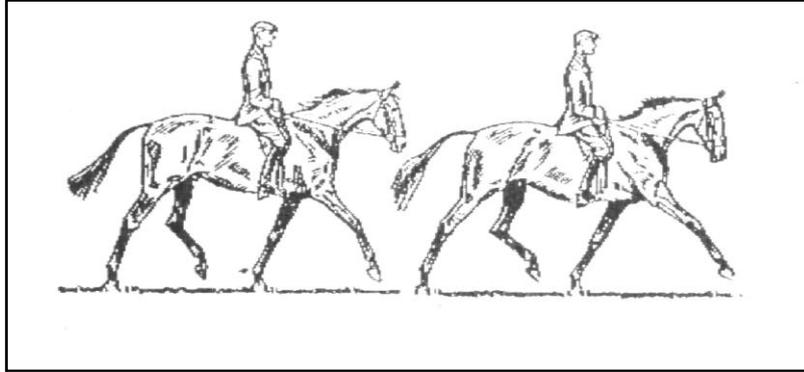


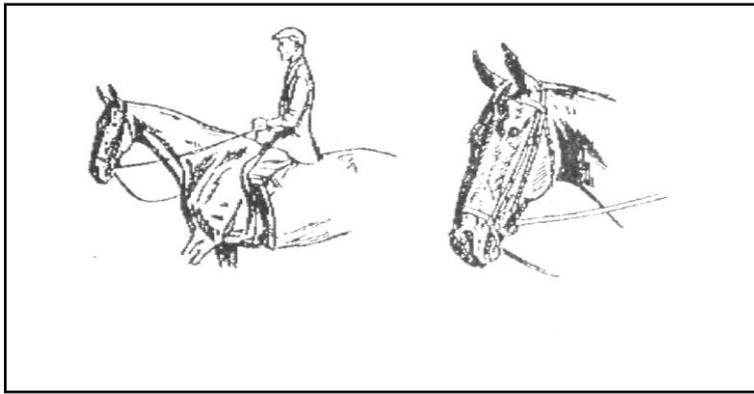
Figure 17. Lengthening the Stride

Whereas the free-going horse would probably go naturally forward with long strides, the slow, lazy horse will need to be kept going forward by the use of the rider's legs and seat. The rider must at all times maintain a light, smooth and even contact with the horse's mouth.

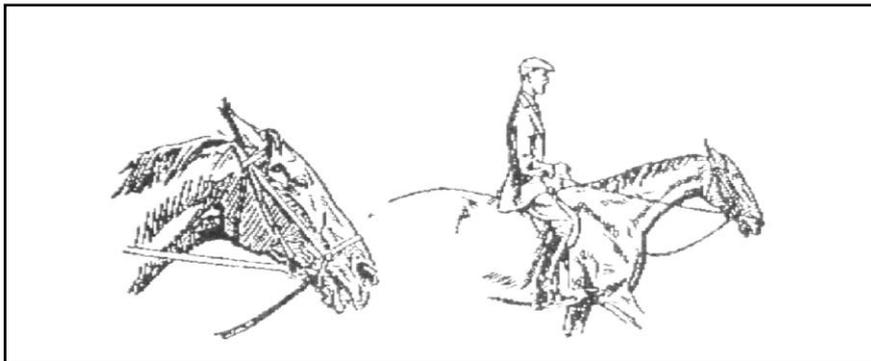
At this stage the correct head carriage will involve the neck being long and stretched and the head being in front of the perpendicular.

Positioning the head

We must know study how to get the horse's head in the correct position. If the horse carries his head too high, he must be 'asked' to bring it down. Nothing is gained by the use of force, because the moment the force is relaxed, the head will once more take the false high position. Most horses are stiffer one side than the other, which means they resist more to once side than they do to the other. Therefore they are slightly more bent one way, because the muscles are shorter on the side to which they are bent than on the other side. In order to get the horse going straight, the muscles on the short side (soft) side must be lengthened, so as to be the same as those on the resisting side.



No 1. Horse answering the rein on the 'soft' side



No 2. The horse resisting the rein on the 'hard' side

In order to ascertain which is the stiff side, the rider should walk the horse on a loose rein, then pick up the left rein only (See No. 1) and if the horse answers immediately by turning his head to the left and moving off in that direction, it is almost certain that this is the soft side. If the rider now drops the left rein and picks up the right rein and he finds that the horse will not turn his head to the right, but moves in that direction with a stiff jaw and neck, keeping his head straight or even turning it slightly to the left (See No. 2) then the right side is the stiff side. Having established this fact, the rider sets about 'asking' the horse to lower his head (if it is too high) and relax his jaw.

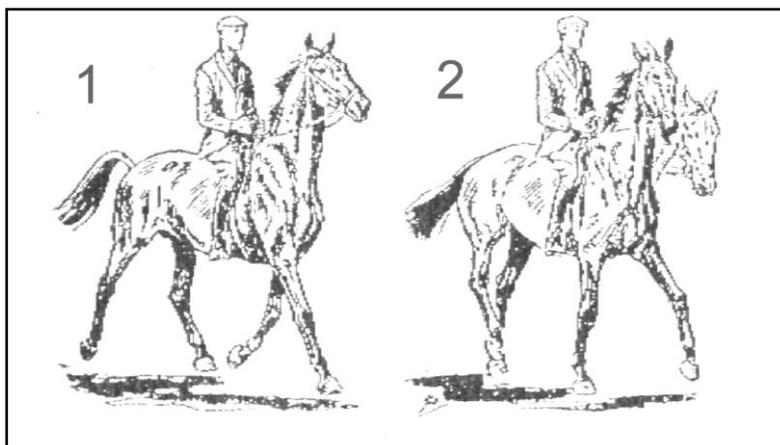


Figure 19. Horse must be 'asked' to lower his head

He proceeds at the trot as described and takes a light but firm contact with the left rein (soft side). This contact must be kept throughout the lesson, no matter in which direction he is going. Now, by a slight tightening of the fingers on the right rein (stiff side) he 'asks' for a relaxation of the horse's jaw and a consequent lowering of the head (See Figure 19, No 2) The motion is like 'squeezing water out of a sponge' and must not in any way be backwards. At the same time as the rider 'asks' with his right hand, he also uses his legs, the right leg giving a stronger aid than the left. If this is repeated every time the horse gets his head too high, he will soon learn to lower it and relax his jaw (See Figure 19) If the horse is stiff on the left side, the aids are of course, reversed.

In the case of too low a head carriage, the rider must use his legs to push the horse's head up, by making the hind legs more active (See Figure 20). The rider must never attempt to pull the head up with the hands, as the result would be a false head carriage, with the top of the neck bent in a concave position, which is very damaging to the training. Carrying the head up in this position has the effect of hollowing the horse's back and thus making it impossible for him to use his back correctly or to bring his hind legs under him. While the rider is teaching his horse to hold his head correctly, he must also concentrate on getting him into the habit of keeping it in this position when changing direction or altering pace.

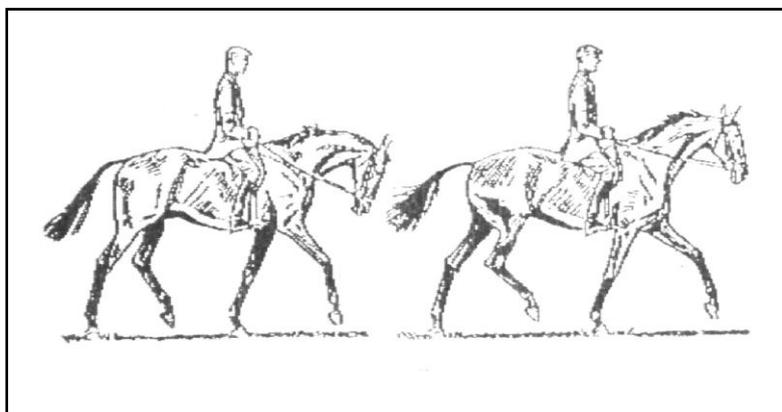


Figure 20. The rider must 'push' the horse's head up

He must also remember to keep his horse trotting on in the same cadence, with a long stride.

A horse is a creature of habit. He nearly always does the same thing in the same place. It is the artist who understands this and can anticipate a fault, correcting it before it has in fact, appeared.

Position of the head during transitions

At this stage the horse must be asked to reduce his pace from trot to walk very carefully and slowly. If he is hurried in any way, up will go the head again with the same false bend of the neck, causing a great deal of resistance in the mouth and back, or he might just catch hold of the bit and 'lie' on it. In order to get a smooth reduction of pace, the rider closes both legs, sits very deep in the saddle, whilst lightly resisting with the hands and 'asks' with the right hand and right leg, for a relaxation of the jaw and, as the horse responds, the rider must instantaneously be still with his hands and gently push the horse into a walk with his legs. The secret lies in 'asking' and rewarding by the *immediate* relaxation of the aid when the horse has responded.

From a walk, the horse must be brought back to halt, using exactly the same aids as when going from a trot into a walk. It is important for the horse to be made to stand squarely, equally balanced on all four legs. If one hind leg is left behind, the rider can gently tap this leg with a switch, while giving a gentle aid with his leg on the same side. The horse will gradually learn to answer and bring up the hind leg the moment he is asked. This will soon become a habit and he will adopt this stance on his own. It is sometimes difficult to feel which hind leg is left behind, without looking down. As a guide, one should remember that whichever fore leg is the last to move, it will be the opposite hind leg, which will need to be moved up. The horse must stand perfectly still until given the aid to move forward.

Practically every horse will alter the position of his head or change the length of his stride when changing direction or pace. The intelligent rider will anticipate this by preparing the horse for a change. He 'asks' on the stiff side with his hand and leg *before* changing direction or pace, as much to say, 'Pay attention, I am going to do something different'.

Until the horse will go forward with a level stride at a trot, change direction and come back to a walk without resisting or throwing up his head, he must not be taken on to the next stage. Large circles may be ridden but still the rider must demand nothing more than a level pace, a light mouth and obedience in going forward to the leg aids.

SECOND STAGE

The canter

The horse should now be ready to learn to strike off into a canter. As the canter is a pace of three-time, the 'Laterals' on the side to which he is cantering (that is, the leading fore leg and the hind leg on the same side) are slightly in advance of the other fore leg and hind leg, and therefore the horse should be slightly bent towards his leading fore leg. If he is bent correctly going around a left hand corner (which means he is slightly curved to the left) and then given the aids to canter, by the rider drawing back his right leg and creating a strong pressure with **both** legs, seat and back muscles, the horse will quite naturally into a left canter. It is important here to draw particular attention to the use of **both** the riders' legs, together with the seat and back muscles. A horse will very quickly learn this aid. If the rider gets slack about using the aid correctly and eventually just brings back his leg, together with the use of the opposite rein, he will find himself in difficulties when, in the future training, he wants to teach his horse lateral work. The aids being much the same the rider must make himself very clear to his horse, or he will find that on asking for a half-pass the horse goes into a canter. In the early stages the canter should be brisk and long, without collection, but with the same light contact with the horse's mouth. Should the horse start to 'lie' on the bit, he must be given a half-halt by a strong use of the rider's back, seat and leg aids, and then allowed to continue. If he puts up any resistance to one side, the same 'giving and taking' movement can be applied with the rein on the 'stiff' side, as has been described above. If there is no particular resistance to one side or the other, but just a general 'lying on the bit', the 'giving and taking' hand should be the one on the opposite side to the leading leg.

Only if the horse's hind legs are active is it possible to get a balanced horse 'sitting' on his hocks at the canter. Here again it is important to stress the tremendous power of the rider's back aid. With this aid, and a light resistance of the hands, the rider can 'push the horse's quarters under him'. This should be done gradually, until the horse will take up the position on his own account and become lightly balanced, while cantering on freely. With practice, the rider will come to feel the horse relaxing his back muscles, and the moment this happens he must sit still until he feels the back hard and resisting again. The he must repeat the aid until gradually the horse remains cantering in a soft, relaxed position.

In order to bring the horse quietly back to a trot from a canter, the rider straightens his spine and holds the horse with his legs, whilst resisting slightly with the hand on the 'soft' side and 'asking' with the other hand. This transition should be practised continually so as to get it smooth, with no resistance or upward movement of the horse's head. Gradually it will be found that the moment the rider sits deep, closes his legs and 'asks' with the hand on the stiff side, the horse will come straight into a correct trot stride and continue with a soft mouth, without any more resistance from the reins being necessary.

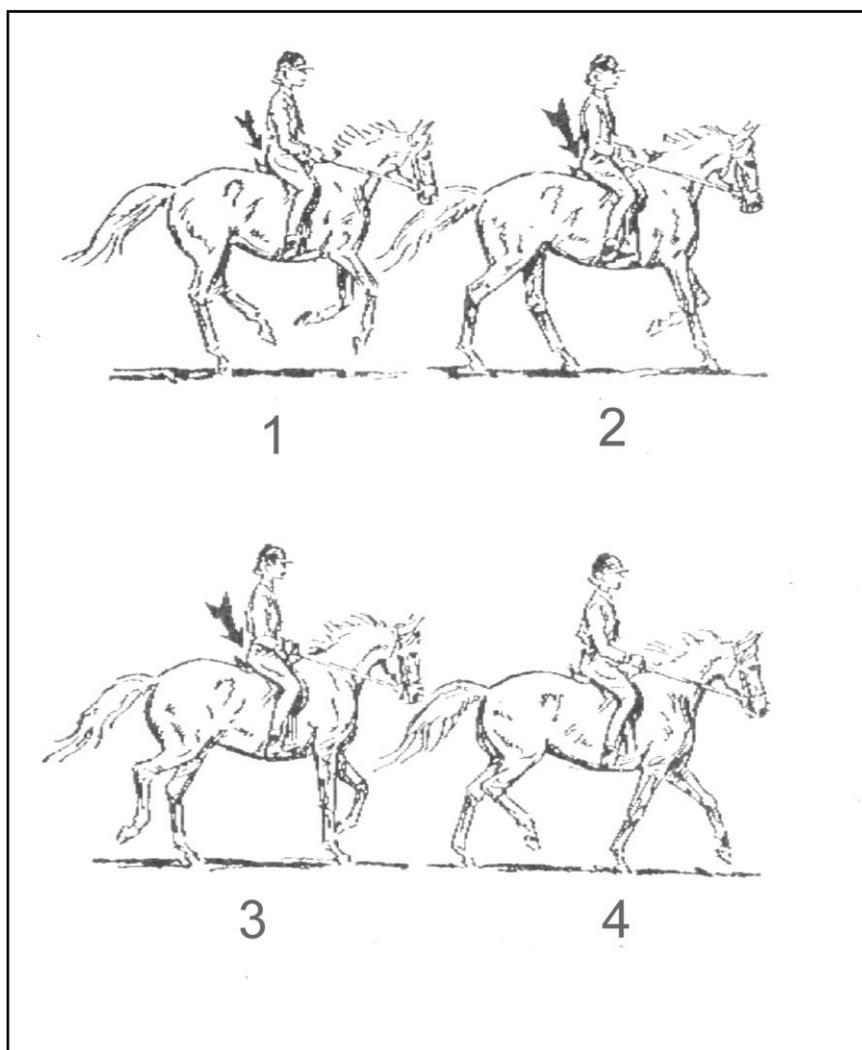


Figure 21. How to straighten the spine
Transition from Canter to trot.

Placing the horse on the bit'

The horse should now be ready to be put 'on the bit' and to stay on it. Up to now we have only asked for a relaxation of the jaw and that the horse should go with a very light contact with the bit. Now, using the same methods as before (i.e., the 'squeezing water out of a sponge' movement, whenever a resistance is put up) the horse must be made not only to relax the jaw, but to hold the bit softly in his mouth with a light contact and remain in this position at all paces and in all directions.

In order to trot correctly the horse must 'swing' his back and be active with his hind legs. Unless he can do this, it is impossible for him to get round a corner smoothly or to perform a circle correctly. When making a circle, the horse's inside lateral legs take a shorter stride than the outside laterals. If he is stiff and does not use his back, he cannot bend his hocks enough to keep the hind feet following exactly the imprints made by the fore feet. Therefore he throws them out and they perform a larger circle than the fore legs.

Suppling the horse

To overcome this the rider can supple his horse by means of various exercises. To supple the horse from front to rear, he performs a series of half-halts, obtained in the same manner as described above when coming from a trot to a walk, only in this case the horse is asked to trot on again just before breaking into a walk. The best method of suppling a horse laterally is to perform a shoulder-in. The importance of this exercise is that the horse must bend his spine, and by so doing flex his hocks, which can then be brought more underneath him. It is useless if he bends his neck only, which is undoubtedly what he will try to do. Because he finds it difficult to bend at the spine, he will try to create the illusion that he is doing so by bending his neck only, and thus evade the exercise. This will do more harm than good, because if he is allowed to make this evasion he will, in time, become what is called 'rubber-necked'. The term is self-explanatory and the fault very difficult to correct.

To perform a right shoulder-in the horse's forehand is taken off the tracks as if about to start a circle, but instead of continuing the circle the rider's inside (right) leg, held at the girth, pushes the horse's forehand to the left, so that the horse will continue going forward with the head, neck and spine following a curve of which the centre is the rider's right leg. At the same time the rider keeps the horse's hind legs on the track, and his quarters from going to the left, by bringing his left leg back behind the girth, thus controlling the quarters and maintaining the impulsion. (See Figure 22)

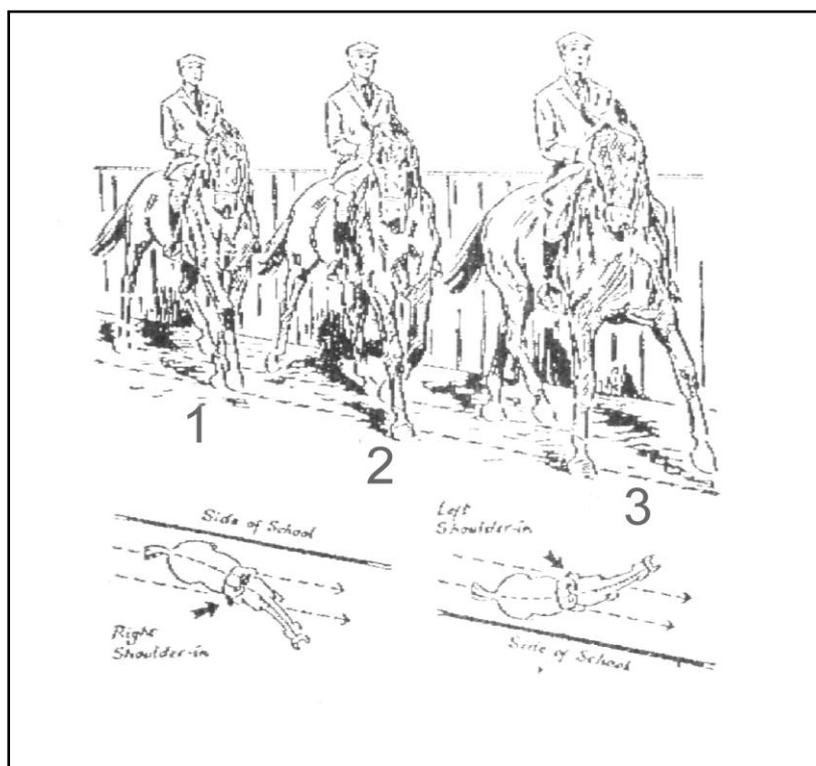


Figure 22. The right Shoulder-In

The easiest way to start the shoulder-in is on a bend. Coming round the corner the rider applies the above aids and, instead of straightening out after the corner, he holds this position. If the horse responds by performing just two steps sideways, the pressure of the inside leg should immediately be relaxed and the horse allowed to go forward in a large half-circle. It is better to continue on a circle than to bring the forehand back on to the track, because the horse being already bent in the direction of the circle, should be allowed to do the easiest movement as a reward for having responded to the aid. Very gradually the horse must be asked to do more and more steps at the shoulder-in until, with the greatest of ease, he will perform this exercise to either hand for quite long stretches.

This exercise is best performed at a trot, but sometimes it is easier to teach the horse to understand the aids first at a walk. However, as soon as the horse understands what is required of him, it should not be performed at a walk again. The better the movement, the better the exercise and it is dangerous to do too much work at the walk, except on a long rein, as the horse will lose impulsion and can more easily produce evasions and get behind the bit.

There can be different degrees of shoulder-in. It is better to get the horse moving on two different tracks so that, while the hind legs continue on one track, the fore legs follow a line parallel to them (See Figure 22), because in this way the rider will get more flexibility of the spine and more activity in the hind legs. At first the rider can ask for only a small bend, so that the inside hind leg follows the track made by the outside fore leg, but the rider must be quite certain that the horse is in this position and not just bending his neck. No force must be used in this exercise and it must not be performed if the horse's head is too high. The head and neck must remain still and in the correct position. To perform the left shoulder-in, the aids are reversed

In order to appreciate the importance of the shoulder-in as a suppling exercise, it should be realised that it is the easiest way in which to make a horse straight, because it makes him bend his spine on the stiff side and activates the hind legs, which otherwise he would not attempt to do.

Circles

It is now time to ask for more correctness in the horse's movements. To ride a circle correctly, the horse's spine should comply with the direction of the movement and follow the circumference of the circle. It is easy for a spectator to see if a horse is correct or not, because his hind feet should follow exactly in the tracks made by the fore feet. They may be on or over them according to the pace at which the horse is going, but not to one side or the other. It has been made clear why it is so necessary to ask only large circles during the early stages of training. The smaller the circle the more active must be the hind legs, in order that they bend enough to follow the tracks made by the fore feet.

It is interesting to assess the progress and accuracy of the training by riding a circle on ground upon which the imprints of the horse's hoofs can be seen.

A horse must always look to the way he is going (except in the shoulder-in) If performing a circle to the right, he must be bent in a curve round the rider's right leg, and if going to the left, he must be bent round the left leg (See Figure 23). A horse should follow the direction in which his head is pointing. That is why it is so necessary to be as accurate as possible when riding through corners during the early stages of training.

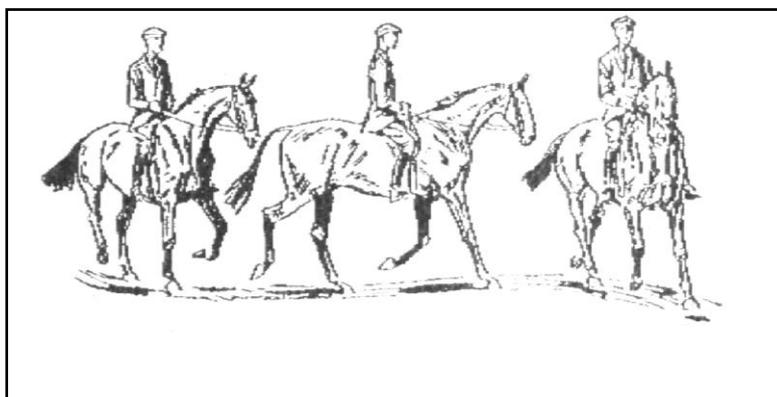


Figure 23. The horse must change the bend as he changes direction.

The rider must be careful to see that the horse remains on the bit during the whole circle. Any exercise incorrectly performed should be repeated again and again until it is done correctly. Then make much of the horse before continuing with another exercise, or give him a rest by walking on a long rein.

The turn of the forehand

In order to get control of the horse's quarters and to be sure he will go away from the rider's leg, the Turn on the Forehand can be taught. This exercise is a means to an end, and when achieved there is no necessity to use it again. The horse is placed alongside, but not too near, a fence or a wall. He must stand squarely on all four legs and be holding the bit lightly in his mouth. It is most important not to attempt to start this exercise if there is any resistance whatsoever in the horse's mouth. To turn to the right on the forehand, the rider gently 'asks' with the right rein, but should not turn the horse's head more than just enough to make his right eye visible. With the right leg drawn back behind the girth he pushes the horse's quarters over to the left. The rider's left leg remains at the girth to keep him from stepping backwards and to help send him forward the moment the turn is completed (See Figure 24). It is not a good thing to halt after a turn on the forehand because this is apt to cause loss of forward impulsion, and the horse can easily put up an evasion by getting behind the bit.

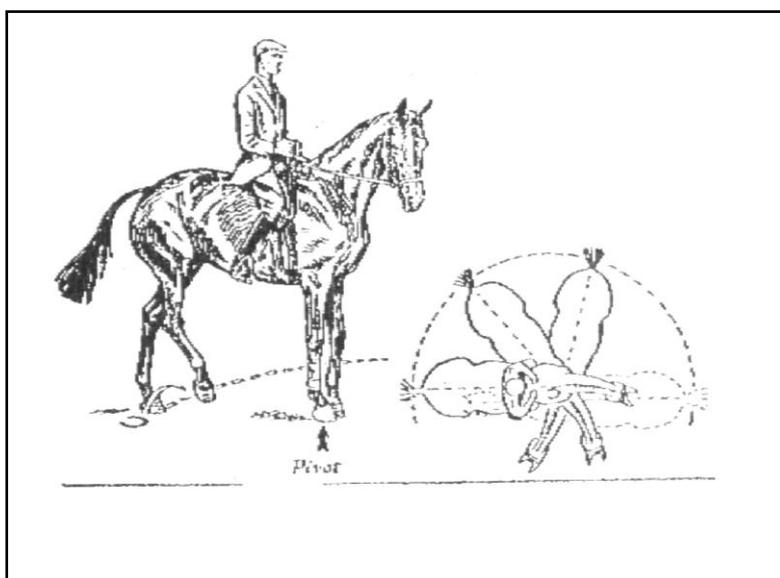


Figure 24. The right turn on the Forehand

In the turn to the right off fore is the pivoting leg, which can either actually pivot, or be picked up and put down again in the same place. The horse's off hind leg should cross over in front of the near hind. He must on no account step backwards. To start with, only two steps should be asked and the horse sent forward again, the rider gradually asking more and more until a full half-turn can be made without any resistance from the horse and with a perfectly still head carriage.

THIRD STAGE

The Rider

It is impossible to lay down any hard or fast rule for training a horse and this is only meant as a guide. Some horses take much longer than others do, so it is impossible to give any specific time. But if the word so far has been correct, the horse should by now be permanently 'on the bit' which means he is holding it lightly in his mouth, with a relaxed jaw and obeying the aids without resistance. Naturally, there will always be moments when the horse puts up an evasion and resists the bit, but he should respond immediately to a correction given. If he does not obey, and if there is no obvious reason, like excitement caused by another horse, a car going by, or a bird suddenly flying up, then the rider must ask himself why, and what has been wrong with his training. It may be that he uses too much hand and not enough leg. It may be that he is stiff himself, which will communicate itself at once to the horse, with dire results. Or it may be that he has not been clear enough with his aids.

It is very important for the rider to analyse himself and to be sure he is sitting correctly. If he is getting too far forward, he will not be in a position to give correct aids. If he were sitting in the shape of a bow, it would be impossible for him to use his back to push the horse forward. If he loses his temper, he will never get anywhere. So, if things go wrong, the rider must not blame the horse but himself, and correct his position if necessary.

Every day the rider must go over all these exercises we have discussed. As time goes by, he must ask for a better and better performance, aiming always towards perfection. He must be stricter with the not so good movements. If the rider is satisfied with the progress his horse has made, he may now take his training on a further step by teaching him to counter canter.

The counter canter

This is also an excellent suppling exercise, but it must not be attempted too early, as until the horse is fairly supple he cannot perform it correctly and he will start changing legs behind, which is a very difficult habit to cure.

First, try rather long and not very deep serpentines at the canter. For instance, canter in a school or alongside a fence on the right leg, then bring the horse off the track and return to the track without changing legs. The rider must remember to keep the horse bent to the right, even when going to the left, as it is important for him to keep the bend towards the leading leg. As the horse gets more and more supple, these serpentines can get deeper and deeper, until the rider can take his horse round a school in a counter canter and finally perform a complete circle (This means going round to the left with the right leg leading, or vice versa).

Progress must be very gradual, and the rider must be content with a little at a time. It is far better to go slowly and get it right, than to hurry in the early stages and then later have to correct other faults which have been produced by 'forcing the pace'. Naturally the exercise must be practised equally on both reins.

The counter canter must not be confused with the disunited canter, which is an evasion and is always incorrect. In the true canter, one pair of laterals (both legs on one side) should be in advance of the other pair (see above, under the heading 'The Canter'). In the disunited canter, the horse is leading with the near fore and the off hind, or vice versa.

The walk from the canter

The next exercise to teach the horse is the canter-to-walk. This must only be attempted if the rider is quite sure the horse will answer his seat aids and relax his back muscles by producing more active hock action. If the horse is at all stiff in the back, the rider will not be able to get a correct canter-to-walk and much resistance and throwing up of the horse's head will result, all of which will be very detrimental to the horse's training.

It is best to start this movement on a fairly large circle, as the horse finds it easier to be balanced at the canter when not on a straight line. Whilst keeping the horse bent slightly to the leading leg, the rider closes his legs, sits very deep and well down in the saddle and, by using strong seat and back-aids, supported by closed legs into resisting hands, pushes the horse's hind legs more and more underneath him, until the horse's balance is such that he can pass straight into a walk. This will not be accomplished the first time it is attempted, because it is probable that the horse will not be sufficiently in balance and will therefore have to take two or three steps at a trot. If the rider's aids are not clear or strong enough, the horse will come back with his weight on his forehead. The rider must make the horse canter more and more slowly by lowering the croup, and thus making him light in hand. Only then can the horse pass straight into a walk. As soon as the horse walks, the reins must immediately be relaxed and the horse allowed to walk freely on without any restriction.

The simple change

When the foregoing movement has been successfully achieved, the rider may attempt a simple change of leg, but it is most important to get the canter-to-walk first. It is also necessary before starting this exercise, to be sure that the horse will strike off into a canter on either leg on a straight line and be perfectly straight while doing so. It would be a mistake to try a simple change of leg if the horse throws his quarters in when striking off into a canter, as it would only aggravate this fault and then there would be many difficulties to overcome in order to get a correct change of leg. The reason for correct canter aids is now obvious.

If the rider's inside leg and seat are used to the same extent as the outside leg, the horse will not learn this annoying habit of pushing his quarters to the inside when striking off into a canter, and there will be no need for any corrections.

To practise the simple change of leg at the canter: Canter off on a named leg, perform a canter-to-walk and walk on for some distance before striking off on the other leg. Gradually reduce the length of walk in between the canters until there are only two or three paces at the walk. The resulting simple change of leg will have been performed with the greatest of ease.

This is the correct simple change of leg; but in all tests up to medium class this change can be done progressively through a trot. There must, however, always be a few paces performed at the walk.

Conclusion

If this system of training is carefully adhered to, so that all resistance is reduced to a minimum before any difficult exercise is asked, the rider will find these exercises falling into his lap, directly the horse understands what is required of him. Having taught the horse obedience and how to relax, the rider does not have the dual task of teaching him simultaneously a new aid, and overcoming a resistance. The secret is obedience – the proud result of correct training, which has caused the horse to give himself willingly and to obey with pleasure the indications of the rider. This training will have developed the horse's muscles and suppled him. It will also have got him into the habit of obedience, which will go a long way towards eliminating the possibility of refusals.

BREAKING AND SCHOOLING

An untrained horse does as he pleases, when he pleases. The horse is not by nature an animal that takes kindly to restraint. A horse that is to be ridden has to be taught to obey his rider's commands and to remain quiet and calm even in circumstances he is unfamiliar with. This process, known as 'breaking-in' calls for skill, time and patience.

An inexperienced rider should never attempt to break-in a horse or pony. If an animal is to have a fair chance of doing well and remaining unspoilt in his working career, only a trainer who knows exactly what he is doing should attempt this job.

Unskilled attempts at breaking-in can also be dangerous. Many un-broken horses are kind and placid, and most continue to be so after they have been introduced to the saddle. But there are many others that either dislike or fear the idea of being backed – that is, ridden for the first time. And if they are not handled correctly at this stage, they may harm themselves or the trainer in the process.

Thoroughbred racehorses are bred to mature early. Other horses and ponies take longer to reach physical maturity. They should therefore not be broken-in before they are three years old. And after the period of breaking-in, usually about three months, they should be left to rest and grow until they are four. Time taken in this way will be amply repaid later.

If a horse has been well handled from birth, breaking-in is a lot easier, because the first barriers against people will already have been broken down. He will be well used to wearing a headcollar, and will accept being led from either side.

First Steps

The horse should be brought into a loose box or stall and a headcollar and roller with cropper and breastplate put on. The roller should be gently placed on the horse's back as the trainer quietly talks to him. Gradually, the breastplate and cropper should be fitted and the roller tightened. The horse should be left with the roller on for a few hours each day, until it can be put on and removed easily and without any fuss.

The next stage is for the horse to accept the bit in his mouth. Breaking bits are thick-mouthed snaffles, usually jointed, with smooth keys hanging from the middle. They are designed to make the horse play and chew so that he mouths and lathers. If his mouth is dry, treacle on the mouthpiece, or a wooden breaking bit should improve matters.

A bridle fitted with the breaking bit is then put on the horse. The bit is adjusted so that it is high in the mouth, preventing him getting his tongue over it, a habit that is easier to prevent than cure. Then, again he is left to get used to the new situation for a short time each day.

Lungeing

The next stage is for the horse to be lunged quietly, either in an indoor school or an enclosed outside manège. A lungeing cavesson and line are used. The line is not attached to the bit, only to the noseband.

An assistant leads the horse around the circle while the trainer, holding the lungeing line, gives the horse commands. These commands should be used in exactly the same way throughout the breaking in and early training. It is common to use short, sharp tones when faster paces are required, and slow, drawn out ones when the horse is being asked to slow down. To start with, halt, walk and trot are used. The assistant synchronises his movements and those of the horse with the commands.

It is important for the horse to be worked equally on both reins (that is, in both directions) The trainer frequently asks the horse to halt and turn in to him so that he can send him off on the other rein.

Once the horse has began to keep out on the circle and respond to the trainer's voice, the assistant leaves him alone. The trainer then takes over completely, keeping the whip behind the horse to maintain impulsion. Free forward movement is vital, and the horse should keep a long and low outline.

Long-Reining

Next comes long reining. It is one of the most difficult stages in which to achieve success.

Long reins are attached to the noseband or the bit rings. They are passed through the stirrups – which are tied to the girth – before they run to the trainer's hands. The trainer walks behind the horse, suing the reins to teach him how to steer and to maintain impulsion. If the horse attempts to run away, the trainer uses one rein more than the other does and moves to the same side, the horse must then go onto a circle, and is therefore back under control. Long reining is one of the most important parts of breaking-in and should never be left out of the training programme.

Backing

Once the horse is going well unmounted, he may be backed and taught to accept a rider. The trainer will usually do this in a loose box or other small, enclosed space. His first task is to keep control of the horse while an assistant is legged-up to lie quietly across the saddle. This is done gently and slowly, and the horse is patted on his ribs and shoulders so that he remains calm. That is enough for the first day. Next day, the assistant lies across the saddle and the horse is led around the stable or yard. The assistant should pat the horse and take care to avoid knocking him or kicking him in the ribs.

When the horse has settled to this, the assistant may put his right leg gently over the saddle. At first, he bends low in the saddle so that the horse does not become frightened. Later, he tries sitting up straight.

The trainer will begin to lead the horse around, but always in an enclosed area. The assistant must not use his legs or seat. Later, he may pick up the reins, but must be careful to exert no pressure on the mouth.

The horse will gradually become used to the rider, but he should still be lunged before being mounted to use up some energy. This will lessen the chances of him bucking. But if he should start to buck, the assistant must stay on or bucking could become a bad habit.

Use of Aids

As the horse progresses, the trainer can start to lunge him with the rider mounted. The voice aids alone are given at first, and given by the trainer. Then the rider begins gently to use his legs and reins in unison with the trainer's voice. Then he takes over the voice aids himself, using the same ones as the trainer.

In the early stages, the aids are given in a primitive way. The reins are held open and gently pulled in the direction the rider wishes the horse to turn. The rider sits more heavily to that side, so that the turn is easier for the horse.

Quick leg aids are now used to get the horse moving forward freely, followed by a tap with the schooling whip if he does not obey. The rider sits still and avoids 'nagging' all the time with his legs. The horse must learn to carry the rider without being continually pushed. Usually the teaching is done from the ground by the trainer. Turns on the forehand are used, the trainer tapping the horse at the leg position, i.e., at the position of the rider's leg, until he moves over. The horse is then rewarded and, once a few strides have been completed, the rider may remount and use his legs and whip.

End of Training Period

To accustom the horse to coping with various sights and surroundings, he can now be ridden gently about the stable yard, fields and countryside on a light rein contact. He may at this stage need shoeing. When he is doing everything willingly, the training period can be brought to an end. He is turned out to grass until the following year, when he should be strong enough to stand more work.

AILMENTS

It is a folly to disregard or overlook the outward signs that a horse is ill and not to investigate them. There are many obvious signals that something is wrong. They include breaks in the skin, a running nose, dull eyes, poor coat, refusal to eat or drink, swollen glands, high temperature, rapidly falling-off condition, or 'going down' as a rider mounts.

Unless a horse's owner is sure of what those danger signals mean, it is better to call in a veterinarian than to give the horse do-it-yourself treatment. But there are many minor ailments that can be treated easily, and it is important to have a good first-aid kit and to find out how to use it.

First-Aid Kit

The kit should include cotton wool, scissors, thermometer, woollen leg bandages, crêpe bandages, disinfectant, Epsom Salts, antiseptic powder and antiseptic creams, kaolin paste and animalintex, zinc and castor oil cream, lead lotion, hydrogen peroxide, Vaseline and a supply of different wormers.

Cotton Wool is needed for cleaning wounds with warm water and antiseptic before they are treated further. Because it is disposable, it is also useful for wiping out running noses and for bathing eyes.

Temperature A horse's temperature is 38°C (100.4°F) The correct way to use a thermometer is to grease it with Vaseline and insert the bulb end into the horse's anus for 30 seconds or more. It is important not to let go of the thermometer, or it will be lost!

Epsom Salts A few tablespoons of Epsom Salts in warm water is excellent for drawing impurities out of wounds. A handful in the drinking water or bran mash before a rest day helps to keep the bowels open and purifies the blood.

Antiseptic Powder is used to disinfect and promote the healing of suppurating wounds. But continued use can produce proud flesh, when the wound begins to heal an antiseptic cream should be used instead.

Kaolin Paste, for sprains and swellings, may be used cold or hot as a poultice. It is heated by being put into a warm oven for 20 minutes and is then applied.

Animalintex is used, preferably as a wet, hot poultice, to draw out thorns or other foreign bodies that have been driven into the flesh. It is excellent for pricked soles.

Zinc and Castor Oil Cream and *Lead Lotion* are both useful for treating cracked heels. *Hydrogen Peroxide*, diluted is a strong antiseptic and *Vaseline* is useful for rubbing on clean heels before they get wet to prevent cracked heels.

Worming Horses need worming about every three months. Feeding a horse that has not been wormed is like pouring sacks of food down the drain. Wormy horses will never be in good condition, and worms can kill. Wormers can be administered in the feed or by syringe, but they are most effective by stomach pump. An equestrian veterinary surgeon should do this, it is an extremely dangerous thing for an inexperienced person to attempt.

Some Common Ailments

Lameness A horse that is lame in front will nod his head down on the sound leg and up on the lame leg as he tries to keep his weight off it. At the rear, the quarters drop lower as the lame leg reaches the ground, again because the horse is trying to spare the bad leg. If a horse is only slightly lame, his stride shortens, particularly with shoulder lameness, and he is said to be going slightly "uneven" or 'short'. A lame horse should never be ridden.

Some lameness is congenital and therefore means basic unsoundness, but lameness is more often caused by strain, knocks, cuts, bad stable management and so on.

One kind of lameness often found in ponies is in fact caused by misguided kindness. It is Laminitis, or fever of the feet. Laminitis generally occurs when an animal is allowed to eat too much rich spring grass and is not given enough exercise. It is inflammation of the laminae, the sensitive connecting tissue between the hoof and pedal bone. The animal will try to get the weight off the front of his feet and will tip back onto his heels. The hoof becomes extended and ridged. Prevention by keeping the animal without food during the day and turning him out at night is better than cure, since Laminitis is painful and recurring. Treatment involves giving antihistamine injections to restrict the flow of blood to the foot, trimming the hoof and remedial shoeing, and cold water bathing.

Cuts and other breaks in the skin or foot must be dealt with carefully. Trouble ensues when the wound heals from the outside inwards, because any dirt or foreign bodies in the wound may cause it to turn septic. The wound has then to be lanced, cleaned and re-healed. Penicillin injections may be necessary, and the healing will take much longer than it should have done.

There are three types of wounds: *the puncture*, caused by sharp objects such as nails, the *clean cut*, which should be stitched if deep, and the *lacerated, jagged wound* caused by such things as barbed wire.

Punctures of the sole – pricked soles – must be kept clean until they begin to heal from the inside. Poultices should be applied to them.

Wounds of the coronet region can cause lasting trouble if the cells that produce the horn are destroyed. Such wounds are difficult to poultice, but if they are not kept clean the horse may be off work for weeks.

Tetanus One serious complication that can now be guarded against is tetanus or 'lockjaw'. Tetanus bacilli are present in the soil, and if they find their way into open wounds they can be killers. The safest thing is to have the horse injected against the disease.

Coughs and Colds The symptoms are a running nose, cough, swollen glands, loss of appetite and a dull eye. If the cold is heavy and the nasal discharge thick, work should stop immediately to avoid damaging the horse's wind. The nostrils should be carefully cleaned. There are so many strains of equine cough, cold and influenza that it is always best to ask the vet's advice.

Pneumonia Can result from shock or a neglected cold. The symptoms are listlessness, loss of appetite and desire to lie down. The horse must be kept warm and given warm water to drink, and of course, the vet should be called.

Colic Stomach ache. Horses cannot be sick, so colic can be dangerous. The horse sweats, rolls his eyes, kicks his flanks and tries to lie down and roll. The vet should be called.

Broken wind An unsoundness. It is an incurable breakdown of the wall tissue in the lungs and results in coughing and double breathing.

Roaring Again an unsoundness of the wind. Roaring is paralysis of one side of the larynx and can be treated by tubing.

Strangles Starts like a cold, but abscesses develop and burst. It is highly contagious and sometimes fatal. The vet should be called.

Splints Bony growths between the splint bone and cannon bone. Injury or strain can start the process. Once formed, the horse should be sound, although the lump is unsightly. But splints can cause trouble when they are near a joint. The horse should be rested when they start to develop. If there is no improvement they can be removed by pin firing.

ENGLISH RIDDEN CLASSES – SHOWING

Part-Bred and Anglo Arabians are to be shown in accordance with the same class specifications and under the same rules as the Purebred Arabians.

TYPE OF SHOWING CLASSES

The following are the maximum number of classes recommended. If combination of classes is required at smaller shows, due to lack of entries, the three novice classes and the three open classes may be combined. The child and junior classes may not be combined.

PUREBRED RIDDEN CLASSES

- ❖ Riding Horse Novice - Mares
- ❖ Riding Horse Novice - Geldings
- ❖ Riding Horse Novice - Stallions
- ❖ Riding Horse Open - Mares
- ❖ Riding Horse Open - Geldings
- ❖ Riding Horse Open - Stallions
- ❖ Child's Riding Horse, Mares and Geldings. (*Rider to be under 14 years*)
- ❖ Junior Riding Horse (*Rider to be 14 but under 18 years*)
- ❖ Adult Riding Horse (*Rider to be over 18 years*).

CHAMPIONSHIPS - PUREBRED

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Novice Riding Horse
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Places at Accredited shows & Top 5 at National Championships)

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Open Riding Horse
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Places at Accredited shows & Top 5 at National Championships)

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Child/Junior Riding Horse
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Places at Accredited shows & Top 5 at National Championships)

PARTBRED AND ANGLO ARAB RIDDEN CLASSES

- ❖ Riding Pony Novice - 1,50m and under.
- ❖ Riding Horse Novice - over 1,50m.
- ❖ Riding Pony Open - 1,50m and under
- ❖ Riding Horse Open - over 1,50m
- ❖ Child's Riding Horse, Mares and Geldings (*Rider to be under 14 years*)
- ❖ Junior Riding Horse, Mares and Geldings (*Rider to be 14 but under 18 years*)
- ❖ Adult Riding Horse (*Rider to be 18 years and older*)
- ❖ Show Pony - 1,50m and under
- ❖ Show Hack - over 1,50m
- ❖ Show Hunter Pony - 1,50m and under
- ❖ Show Hunter - over 1,50m
- ❖ Working Hunter

CHAMPIONSHIPS – PARTBRED & ANGLO ARABIAN

Champion and Reserve Champion Partbred and Anglo Riding Horse
(Open to and compulsory for 1st, 2nd & 3rd prize winners)

CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

In the ridden classes, the judge will look for harmony between the horse and rider. Suitability for riding and evidence of schooling will be the overriding principle. The horse will also be judged on conformation, soundness, quality, type, movement, manners and the ride.

If time doesn't allow, it is not necessary for the judge to ride the horses. In the novice riding horse classes the judge will not ride the horses.

MANNERS AND ATTITUDE

PERFORMANCE

The physical act of doing all the paces, transitions from one pace to another, the execution or accomplishment of carrying out all the requirements of the class. The judge will be looking for a comfortable ride. Schooling and suitability for riding is essential.

CONFORMATION AND MOVEMENT

The horse's correct structural form and good limbs. Movement to be free and forward - showing ground covering strides.

QUALITY

The ideal Arab type and skin and bone quality.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING RIDDEN CLASSES

MINIMUM AGE

No horse under the age of three years of age on the closing date of entries is eligible for entry in the ridden classes

NOVICE CLASSES

In novice classes, novice means a horse that has not won any novice class or combined class, in the relevant category, as at the closing date of entries, at an accredited Arabian Horse Show where five (5) or more horses participated in the class nor has won a championship or reserve championship. The horse may be of any age. The number of horses participating in a class is the number of horses at the beginning of the class, immediately after closure of the gate.

CROSS ENTRIES

- ❖ No cross entries of horses and riders are permitted between Child, Junior and Adult classes.
- ❖ No cross entries of horses are permitted between novice and open classes
- ❖ Horses qualifying for and entered in a novice class, may also be ridden in either a Child, Junior or Adult class
- ❖ Horses qualifying for and entered in an open class, may also be ridden in either a Child, Junior or Adult class.

STALLIONS

- ❖ Stallions may be ridden either by a lady, gentleman or a junior over the age of fourteen (14) years.
- ❖ Children, under the age of fourteen (14) may only ride mares and geldings.

APPOINTMENTS

BITS

DESCRIPTION OF BITS

The following bits are permitted :

- a A snaffle bit, mullen-mouth and to measure no less than 10 mm in diameter against the outer loose-ring or eggbutt joint.
- b A pelham bit, jointed or mullen-mouth and to measure no less than 13mm measured against the outer joint (Children may use couplers).
- c A simple double bridle – defined as follows: a snaffle bridoon bit no less than 10mm in diameter against the outer loose-ring or eggbutt joint.
- d A curb bit, the lower cheek length to be no more than 8.5cm in length; the upper length no more than 3.5cm, the diameter no less than 13mm measured against the cheek, the mouth-piece to have a tongue groove only and no port.

NOVICE HORSES

A snaffle bit with a drop/cavesson/flash/grackle noseband

CHILDREN AND JUNIOR CLASSES

A snaffle bit with a drop/cavesson/flash/grackle noseband, a pelham bit (only children may use couplers), or a simple double bridle with a cavesson noseband.

HACKAMORE AND BITLESS BRIDLES

Hackamore and bitless bridles will not be permitted in showing classes

SADDLERY

No horse competing in a riding class shall wear a martingale, auxiliary reins, bandages, boots, blinkers, breastplates or cruppers. No sharp spurs will be allowed. (Rules apply in the arena only).

DRESS OR ATTIRE

CHILDREN

- a Jacket – Plain dark or tweed jacket
- b Hat – Black, brown or navy hard hat.
- c Jodhpurs – Beige, fawn or cream jodhpurs; never white.
- d Boots – Black or brown jodhpur boots
- e Shirt – White, cream or pastel shirt, plain, checked or striped.
- f Tie – Conservative tie or stock
- g Gloves – Plain conservative colour gloves either string or leather.

JUNIORS

- a Jacket – Plain dark or tweed jacket
- b Hat – Black, brown or navy hard hat.
- c Jodhpurs or breeches – Beige, fawn or cream; never white.
- d Boots – Black or brown jodhpur/long boots
- e Shirt – White, cream or pastel shirt, plain, checked or striped.
- f Tie – Conservative tie or stock
- g Gloves – Plain conservative colour gloves either string or leather.

ADULTS

- a Jacket – Plain dark or tweed jacket
- b Hat – Black, brown or navy hard hat or bowler.
- c Jodhpurs or breeches – Beige, fawn or cream; never white.
- d Boots – Black or brown long boots worn with breeches or jodhpurs.
- e Shirt – White, cream or pastel shirt, plain, checked or striped.
- f Tie – Conservative tie or stock
- g Gloves – Plain conservative colour gloves either string or leather.

GENERAL

- a Canes and crops – Plain cane or leather covered cane – maximum length of 65cm. Hunting crops permissible for Adults in hunter classes. Never riding or dressage whips.
- b Tie pins – Ties should be pinned down and the tie pin invisible; placed below the level of the coat top button.
- c Shirts – All shirts should have formal conventional collars. Collar pins should not stick out, checks and stripes should be discreet. The American roll collar type of shirt is permissible.
- d Boots – Boots with brown tops are not correct.
- e Spurs – Spurs are permitted for all ridden classes but no sharp or rolled spurs are allowed in english ridden classes. Children are not allowed to ride with spurs.

- f Hair – long hair should be securely tied back and a hair net worn.
- g Uniform – Military or Police uniforms are permissible.

RIDING HORSE - NOVICE MARES, GELDINGS & STALLIONS

CLASS DESCRIPTION

In this class, horses will be required to walk, trot with change of rein, canter with a simple change of leg.

The way of going should be based on correct, traditional principals. The judge will expect to see a horse with free forward movement maintaining a steady even rhythm in all three paces. The horse to accept the bit, showing a steady head, maintaining a soft contact with the rider's hands in all paces and transitions of pace. The carriage of head and neck to be in keeping with a novice outline. The engagement of the hind quarters to be appropriate to that of a novice horse. The horse to be relaxed, confident and responsive to the rider's aids.

To be judged on :

- a Performance
- b Manners and attitude
- c Conformation and movement
- d Quality

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ During the initial workout, all the horses enter the ring at a walk in a clockwise direction circling the judge.
- ❖ Horses trot, then canter, change rein through the trot diagonally across the arena in front of the judge, then trot, walk.
- ❖ Horses are called in individually whilst circling, in order of preference
- ❖ Each horse then performs an individual show, starting with the first placed horses. The show has to include a walk, trot, canter, change of rein through the trot and halt. No extensions and rein backs are required in a novice class. If time doesn't permit, horses at the end of the line to do an individual show, may be called two at a time.
- ❖ Horses circle at a walk, call in and line up, in order from left to right for presentation of prizes.

RIDING HORSE – OPEN MARES, GELDINGS & STALLIONS

CLASS DESCRIPTION

In this class, horses will be required to walk, trot with change of rein, extend the trot, canter with a simple change of leg, lengthen the canter, halt and rein-back.

The way of going should be based on correct, traditional principals. The judge will expect to see a horse with free forward movement maintaining a steady even rhythm in all three paces and their variations. The horse to accept the bit, showing a steady head, maintaining a soft contact with the rider's hands in all paces and transitions of pace. The carriage of head and neck to be slightly higher and more arched in keeping with the degree of schooling in the open horse. The engagement of the hind legs to indicate a high degree of training. Hindlegs working under the horse's body with power and not trailing behind. The horse to be relaxed, showing suppleness of back and neck.

To be judged on :

- a Manners and attitude
- b Performance and schooling
- c Conformation and movement
- d Quality

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ During the initial workout, all the horses enter the ring at a walk in a clockwise direction circling the judge.
- ❖ Horses trot, then canter, change rein through the trot diagonally across the arena in front of the judge, then trot, walk.
- ❖ Horses are called in individually whilst circling, in order of preference
- ❖ Each horse then performs an individual show, starting with the first placed horses. The show has to include a walk, trot, canter, change of rein through the walk, halt and rein-back, lengthened trot and lengthened canter. If time doesn't permit horses at the end of the line to do an individual show, two may be called at a time.
- ❖ Horses circle at a walk, call in and line up, in order from left to right for presentation of prizes.

CHILD'S RIDING HORSE

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Rider to be under the age of 14 years. Mares and geldings only. Horses will be asked to walk, trot and canter and perform a simple test.

In these classes horses to be suitable for the age of the rider. Above all else must show a kind and generous temperament easily controlled by the rider.

To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Attitude

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ During the initial workout, all the horses enter the ring at a walk in a clockwise direction circling the judge.
- ❖ Horses trot, then canter, change rein through the trot diagonally across the arena in front of the judge, then trot, walk.
- ❖ Horses are called in individually whilst circling, in order of preference
- ❖ Each horse then performs an individual show, starting with the first placed horses. The show has to include a walk, trot, canter, change of rein through the trot. Show of riders choice to show obedience and manners.
- ❖ Horses circle at a walk, call in and line up, in order from left to right for presentation of prizes.

JUNIOR RIDING HORSE

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Riders to be over the age of 14 years but under the age of 18 years. Open to stallions, mares and geldings. Horses will be required to walk, trot and canter with change of rein, extended trot and extended canter and perform a test of their own choice.

In these classes horses to be suitable for the age of the rider. Above all else must show a kind and generous temperament easily controlled by the rider.

To be judged on :

- a Manners
- b Attitude
- c Performance and schooling

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ During the initial workout, all the horses enter the ring at a walk in a clockwise direction circling the judge.
- ❖ Horses trot, then canter, change rein through the trot diagonally across the arena in front of the judge, then trot, walk.
- ❖ Horses are called in individually whilst circling, in order of preference
- ❖ Each horse then performs an individual show, starting with the first placed horses. The show has to include a walk, trot, canter, change of rein through the trot, extended trot and extended canter. Show of riders choice to show obedience and manners.
- ❖ Horses circle at a walk, call in and line up, in order from left to right for presentation of prizes.

ADULT RIDING HORSE

CLASS DESCRIPTION

In this class, horses will be required to walk, trot with change of rein, extended trot, canter with a simple change of leg, lengthened canter, halt and rein-back.

The way of going should be based on correct, traditional principals. The judge will expect to see a horse with free forward movement maintaining a steady even rhythm in all three paces and their variations. The horse to accept the bit, showing a steady head, maintaining a soft contact with the rider's hands in all paces and transitions of pace. The carriage of head and neck to be slightly higher and more arched in keeping with the degree of schooling in the open horse. The engagement of the hind legs to indicate a high degree of training. Hindlegs working under the horse's body with power and not trailing behind. The horse to be relaxed, showing suppleness of back and neck.

To be judged on :

- a Manners and attitude
- b Performance and schooling
- c Conformation and movement
- d Quality

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ During the initial workout, all the horses enter the ring at a walk in a clockwise direction circling the judge.
- ❖ Horses trot, then canter, change rein through the trot diagonally across the arena in front of the judge, then trot, walk.
- ❖ Horses are called in individually whilst circling, in order of preference
- ❖ Each horse then performs an individual show, starting with the first placed horses. The show has to include a walk, trot, canter, change of rein through the walk, halt and rein-back, lengthened trot and lengthened canter. If time doesn't permit horses at the end of the line to do an individual show, two may be called at a time.
- ❖ Horses circle at a walk, call in and line up, in order from left to right for presentation of prizes.

ENGLISH RIDDEN CLASSES - PERFORMANCE

Part-Bred and Anglo Arabians are to be shown in accordance with the same class specifications and under the same rules as the Purebred Arabians.

TYPE OF PERFORMANCE CLASSES

The following are the maximum number of classes recommended. Classes may be combined due to lack of entries. The children and junior classes may not be combined.

PUREBRED PERFORMANCE CLASSES

- ❖ Children Equitation (*Rider to be under 14 years*).
- ❖ Junior Equitation (*Rider to be 14 years but under 18 years*).
- ❖ Adult Equitation (*Rider to be over 18 years*).
- ❖ Child Rider (*Rider to be under 14 years*).
- ❖ Junior Rider (*Rider to be 14 years but under 18 years*).
- ❖ Adult Rider (*Rider to be over 18 years*).
- ❖ Child/Junior - Utility Riding Horse.
- ❖ Novice - Utility Riding Horse.
- ❖ Open - Utility Riding Horse
- ❖ Dressage
- ❖ Jumping

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Rider
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Places at Accredited shows)

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Utility Riding Horse
(Open to and compulsory for winners of classes : 1.1.7 - 1.1.9)
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Places at Accredited shows & Top 5 at National Championships)

Champion and Reserve Champion Purebred Dressage Riding Horse
(Top 5 at National Championships)

EQUITATION CLASSES

CLASS DESCRIPTION

An equitation test will be prescribed from the equitation tests in the back of this book. As the rider and not the horse is being judged, these classes do not qualify for Legion of Merit points.

CHILDREN EQUITATION

This class will be judged on performance only according to a test given to the competitors prior to the show. The seat and position of the rider, correct use of aids and effectiveness of the rider is judged.

JUNIOR EQUITATION

This class will be judged on performance only according to a test given to the competitors prior to the show. The seat and position of the rider, correct use of aids and effectiveness of the rider is judged.

ADULT EQUITATION

This class will be judged on performance only according to a test given to the competitors prior to the show. The seat and position of the rider, correct use of aids and effectiveness of the rider is judged.

BEST RIDER CLASSES

CLASS DESCRIPTION

These classes may be held as an alternative to the equitation classes. The same conditions apply as for the equitation classes. These classes do not qualify for Legion of Merit points

CHILD RIDER

To be judged on the ability of the rider, having regard to the correct seat, application of the aids and control of the horse.

JUNIOR RIDER

To be judged on the ability of the rider, having regard to the correct seat, application of the aids and control of the horse.

ADULT RIDER

To be judged on the ability of the rider, having regard to the correct seat, application of the aids and control of the horse.

UTILITY HORSE CLASSES

CHILD/JUNIOR UTILITY HORSE

Rider to be under the age of 18 year. Horses may be asked to perform a number of simple tests at the judge's discretion to demonstrate obedience, manners, comfort and versatility.

NOVICE UTILITY HORSE

Horses may be asked to perform a number of simple tests at the judge's discretion to demonstrate obedience, manners, comfort and versatility.

OPEN UTILITY RIDING HORSE

Horses may be asked to perform a number of advanced tests at the judge's discretion to demonstrate obedience, manners, comfort and versatility.

JUDGING PROCEDURE

- ❖ Competitors enter the arena and line up in numerical order.
- ❖ Each horse to do a special comprehensive test with 5 items of a practical nature, set by the judge.
- ❖ Suggested marking will be a mark out of 10 for each of the items and a mark out of 10 for general impression
- ❖ Horses are called in to take their places in accordance with their scores. When a tie occurs, a further test may be given, at the judges discretion.

DRESSAGE CLASSES

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Where numbers warrant, separate classes will be held for Children, Juniors and Adults, Where separate classes are held for Children, Juniors and Adults, an additional “high” novice test may be held open to all competitors and the dressage championship will be decided by the points obtained in this test. Only two tests per horse/rider combination may be entered at the Purebred National Championships.

These classes will be judged by a qualified dressage judge at Regional and National shows.

TESTS

Only novice or elementary tests from the current SANEF test book will be used. Tests chosen for Regional and National Championship shows will be at the discretion of the convenor.

JUMPING CLASSES

Where numbers warrant, separate classes will be held for Children, Juniors and Adults. The height of the jumps should be between 75 cm and 90 cm. The winners are not eligible for ridden championships.

