

CONFORMATION STANDARD OF THE IDEAL SHOW HORSE

Head

The head should be in proportion to the body, not over large, well set on with defined features, the forehead broad, tapering to a finer muzzle with large open nostrils.

The eyes should be clear and bold, showing an intelligent expression and denoting calmness. The ears should not be too large but well-shaped, very alert and carried forward.

Neck

The Show horse should have what is commonly termed "a good length of rein" It should be graceful and supple whilst forming a natural arch from the withers to the poll and be in proportion to the size of the animal.

Shoulders

A good sloping shoulder with a well-defined wither is desirable, as the horse with this build will usually give a good ride, while a straight shoulder inevitably produces the opposite.

Chest

The chest should be well developed. The ribs well sprung with a deep girth.

Back & Body

The back should be relatively short and strong. There should be plenty of width from the point of hip to the croup with the tail well set on. The back should not be hollowed, dipped or roached.

Hindquarters

Should be rounded, well developed with a strong second thigh.

Limbs

The forelegs should be well set, not too wide apart nor too close. They should be clean and free from any puffiness or signs of faulty bone conformation.

The elbow defined and standing clear of the body.

The knees should be flat and pronounced, not round or small.

The cannon bone should be strong, wide from front to back and not too long.

The tendons should be well defined, the fetlock wide and clean.

The pasterns should be of medium length and slope.

The hind legs should follow a vertical line from the point of the buttock to the point of the hock to the back of the fetlock. The hocks should be large, strong and clean cut.

The hooves should be neither too large nor too small with a regular slope to the wall of each foot; the heels should be strong, wide and deep. The soles should be clean well defined with a pronounced frog.

Note: Splints are a healing process and should not be interfered with. They can be unsightly and may increase in size if a horse is kept in work after the splint begins to form. Horses should not be discriminated against because of splints.

Faults such as offset knees, bench knees calf knees and back at the knee can all be contributing factors in the appearance of splints. If a horse is put down with splints the contributing conformation defect must be the reason for this decision. Splints that are not accompanied by conformation defects should not be taken into account unless a Judge is unable to decide between two top class horses that have shown exemplary workouts.

Scars are not the fault of the horse and provided that they do not impinge on the movement of the horse and provided that the scar is relatively unsightly no penalty should be imposed.

The locomotion of a horse must be true; deviations in the extreme are not acceptable. While few horses and ponies are 'dead straight' we are looking for a horse or pony that strides out freely and briskly with relatively straight action.

MANNERS - EDUCATION - PACES

The Show horse should be obedient and well mannered. However, over exuberance or disobedience for a few strides may be forgiven. These horses should not be compared with dressage horses. A hack should always display a willingness to go forward, be controlled, bright and interested in its work.

The Show horse is not expected to perform any 'true' collected movements such as collected walk, trot or canter, nor expected to perform advanced movements such as multiple flying changes etc.'

Paces

The hack should display good forward movement. It is essential for all paces to be regular and even. Any form of irregularity should be penalised. All paces should be straight and true without any noticeable deviations.

The Walk

Natural and ground covering, regular even four beat gait. The hind feet should at least cover or ideally overstep the print of the front feet. The action should be loose, the sequence being lateral.

Walk On A Long Rein

The sequence and action stay the same as the walk, however a longer contact being given on the reins allows the horse to lower the head, lengthening the frame and the stride.

The Trot

Is a rhythmical two beat gait, the limbs should move in a diagonal sequence separated by a moment of suspension. The trot should be well balanced, the horse should move forward with impulsion, the steps light, with good hock action.

Lengthen Trot

The rhythm and sequence should remain the same as the trot. The frame of the horse should lower and lengthen allowing more reach from the shoulders and impulsion from behind. The moment of suspension increases, producing a distinct lengthening of stride.

The Canter

Is a three beat gait, where at canter to the right for instance, the footfalls follow one another e.g. left hind, left diagonal (i.e. left fore & right hind), right fore, followed by a moment of suspension of all four feet in the air before the next stride begins. The horse should go forward freely with balanced light steps with obvious impulsion coming from the hindquarters.

Lengthen Canter

The horse goes forward covering more ground but maintaining the same rhythm. The strides should be long and even and the movement well balanced. The horse may reach a little more forward with the neck and be a little more in front of the vertical.

The Gallop

Is a four beat gait in which the horse must cover plenty of ground with great impulsion from the hindquarters. Whether it is a full or hand gallop, it should always be controlled. At its conclusion, the downward transition should be light and easy.

DEFINITIONS OF MOVEMENTS

Simple Change

This is a movement where the horse is bought back from canter to trot and after a few (two or three) steps is re-started into canter with the other leg leading. A simple change may also be performed through the walk.

Flying Change

The flying change of leg is executed in close connection with the moment of suspension, which follows each stride of the canter. The horse should remain calm and straight, maintaining the same rhythm. The flying change is not encouraged in A & P Show workouts.

The Rein Back

This is a movement where the feet are raised and set down almost simultaneously by diagonal pairs i.e. left fore right hind etc. The horse should be straight and any resistance to or evasion of the hand or deviation of the quarters from the line should be penalised. Three to four steps are normally required, with the horse immediately walking forward to regain ground. Keep in mind that in dressage horses are not asked for rein backs at novice levels.

The Halt

The horse should stand attentive, motionless and straight with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs. The neck should be raised with the poll high and the head slightly in front of the vertical.

On The Bit

In all its work, even at the halt, the horse must be on the bit. A horse is said to be "on the bit" when the neck is raised and arched, according to the degree of training and the extension of the pace. The head should remain just slightly in front of the vertical.

Acceptance of the Bridle

The horse must accept the bridle, whether it is a snaffle or a simple double bridle. It should go forward without resistance, accepting a soft contact. The horse may lightly 'champ' the bit but the mouth should not be open or the tongue over the bit.

On The Line

The horse is moving on the correct line when it is perfectly straight from the tip of the nose to the tail when going forward on a straight line and is flexed through the poll and bent through the body when on a curve or when on a circle.