Scioto County 4H

Horse Skillathon

# Study Guide 2023

# Care for your horse

**How to take your horse's temperature:** Use a glass or electronic rectal thermometer and tie a string with a clip on the end to the thermometer's end loop. Lubricate the tip with a dab of K-Y or petroleum jelly and gently insert the thermometer into his anus the depth of about two inches. **Normal temperature range is between 99 and 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit.**

**How to take your horse's pulse**: Place your horse's left front foot forward; Place the head of the stethoscope against his chest wall, just beneath the left elbow, then push the scope as far forward under the elbow as possible. Listen for the "lub-dub" sound of his heartbeat. Count the number of beats in a 15-second period and multiply that number by four to determine his beats-per-minute (bpm). **An average resting heart rate is between 30 and 40 bpm.**

**How to listen for gut sounds:** Hold a stethoscope against your horse's lower flank for at least one minute. Move the stethoscope higher on his flank and listen again. Move to his other flank and repeat. Normally you'll hear two to four soft bubbles/gurgles per minute, and one loud grumbling sound every two to three minutes. If his gut sounds are louder and/or more frequent, he may be experiencing mild colic. If you hear nothing (and your stethoscope is working) he may be experiencing severe colic. Silence indicates no gut movement.

**Do horses have stress?** Stress is the body's response to anything it considers threatening. For a horse this could be anything, including tailoring and traveling, showing, poor nutrition, feeding at irregular times, changes in other routines, environmental toxins, interactions within their social environment, variations in climate, and illness. Some types of stress include various physical stresses that are based on the physical makeup of the animal and its ability to respond to changes in diet, injury, etc. Psychological stresses are based on a horse's personality and its perception of life. For example, some horses are more stressed than others by being in a stall for long periods of time.

**Should I vaccinate?** The American Association of Equine Practitioners defines core vaccinations as those "that protect from diseases that are endemic to a region, those with potential public health significance, required by law, virulent/highly infectious, and/or those posing a risk of severe disease. Ohio Core vaccines are Tetanus, Rabies, West Nile, Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis. A Coggins test is a blood test to detect the Equine Infectious Anemia virus, or EIA. It is a viral disease that is HIGHLY contagious. Although often infected horses do not die, they will remain carriers, and must be isolated for the rest of their life. There is no cure.

General Care:

- Teeth should be checked and floated at least once a year by a qualified person.
- Horses urinate 3 or 4 times a day and is yellow to slightly brownish.
- Change in feed should occur over 7-10 day period with mixing old and new forage or concentrate.
- Free choice water and salt should be available at all times.

# Eat like a Horse….

Just like people, to stay healthy, horses need to eat a lot of different things. If they don't, then the horse can have problems. When a horse gets too much feed, they will become overweight, colic or other problems. A young horse that eats an unbalanced diet may grow slowly or not grow correctly. **Always store feed in a clean, dry well-ventilated area. Never feed moldy or dusty feed.**

**FORAGE:** The amount of hay to purchase and feed should be based on weight of the bales and nutrient value. Forages should make up the bulk of the diet. Forages include fresh grass or hay (which is dried grass). The high fiber of this feed is important to the health of the stomach and intestines. Also, good quality forage is high in nutrients, including energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Most horses can live very healthy lives on good quality hay or grass alone. Good quality hay should smell like fresh grass, should not be dusty or moldy, and should be soft when squeezed in bare hands. **A full-grown horse (1,000 pounds) will eat 15-20 pounds of hay each day AND a rule of thumb is to keep the forage level at 50% or more of the diet.** 2 acres of pasture per horse if no supplemental grain is fed. A range of grazing time could be as long as 6-10 hours per day for a horse at maintenance. Young, growing horses may need 15 hours a day.

**Facts of Hay:** Legume (alfalfa and clover) hay is higher in protein and energy than grass hay; therefore, you need to feed more (weight) grass hay then legumes. Grass hay will keep the horse busy eating longer, preventing boredom. Second and third cutting hays are higher in protein (18-24%) and energy than first cutting. However, horses only need 10-12% protein in their feed. A small rectangle bale of hay can range between 45 and 85 pounds per bale. Grasses (orchard, timothy, brome types) tend to be lower in protein and energy Weeds have limited nutritional value; weed seeds can be passed through the manure and infest your pasture, buy hay that does not contain many weeds. Some weeds are poisonous to horses. Hay for horses must be mold and dust free.

**CONCENTRATE:** Grain (textured, pelleted, or extruded) can be added to the diet if a horse needs more energy (for exercise or growth), protein (for muscle development), or vitamins and minerals (for healthy bones and body). Horses receiving good quality forage often do not need concentrates in their diet. Treats can be used as a reward for good behavior or just as a snack. Horse treats can be bought at the store, but apples and carrots also make good snacks for horses. Treats shouldn't make up the bulk of the diet. Horses should not get more than 1/2% of body weight in grain per day.

**WATER:** A horse must have ample clean, fresh water available at all times**. A horse will drink 10 to 12 gallons of water per day depending on temperature, humidity levels, ration content and workload.** In the winter months, stock tank heaters will help prevent ice build-up and make water accessible to animals. Water is the most important part of the diet, because a horse will get sick after just 2-3 days without water. Horses at work can lose 2-3 gallons of water in sweat/ hour.

**SALT:** Blocks provide horses with extra salt and are usually left out where the horse can eat a little when they want it. Most horses will not overeat salt.

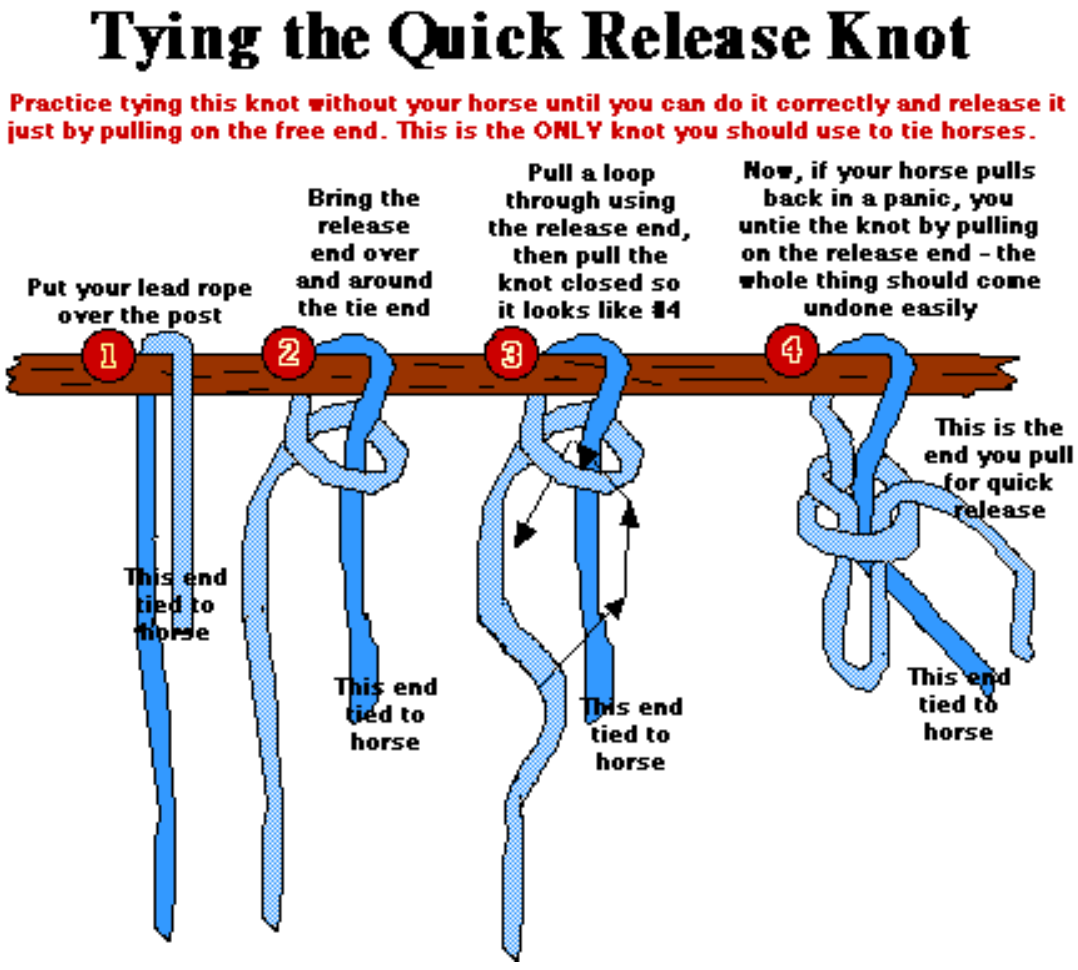
# Horse Safety

· Never sit on the ground or groom from your knees and always be in a position to move away quickly. When moving behind the horse, walk as closely to it as possible, keeping a hand on it at all times. If it kicks, you will be hurt less because the kick has not had time to gain full momentum.

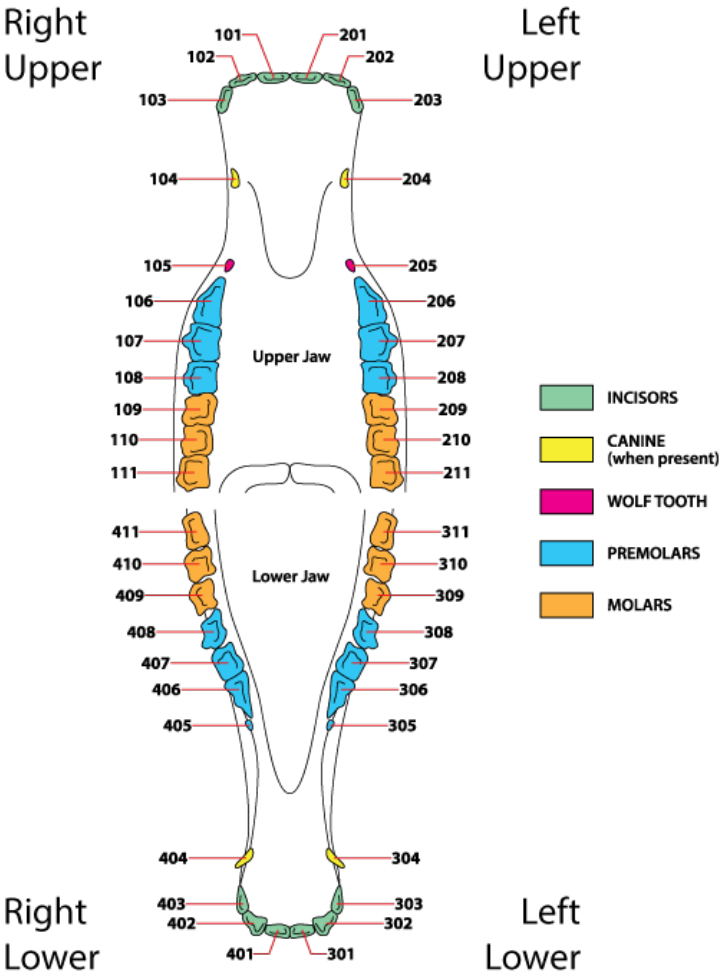
· Do not climb over or under the lead line of a tied horse. The horse may pull back and cause you to trip over the line, and you will have no quick escape should the horse lunge forward. Some clothing may frighten a horse, such as flapping jackets or plastic raincoats. Allow the horse to adjust if it is afraid or remove the coat. Strange objects such as umbrellas also may have the same effect. Respect handlers and riders by approaching with caution.

· When mounting, make sure the reins have direct contact with the horse's mouth because you do not want a horse to walk off.

· When you lead a horse, walk on the left side of his body near the throat latch. Be sure to keep an arm's distance away from the horse, so you don't get stepped on. When turning, always turn the horse AWAY from you. Never wrap the lead around your hand.



# Horse Teeth




Telling Age of Horse: People have been determining the age of horses by the teeth for years. It is more accurate with younger horses, and as the horses ages it becomes more difficult. Horses who are stabled may appear younger than range horses because of the wear on teeth. If you want to determine the age of the horse, you use the 12 front teeth, incisors. Canine teeth or "tusks" may appear midway between the incisors and molars at 4 or 5 years of age in the case of geldings or stallions, but seldom appear in mares. Adult horses have 24 molar teeth. There are four major ways to estimate age of horses by appearance of their teeth:

* **Occurrence of permanent teeth**
* **Disappearance of cups**
* **Angle of incidence**
* **Shape of the surface of the**


**Abnormal teeth conditions**

"**Parrot mouth**" is a result of the upper and lower incisors not meeting because the lower jaw is too short. This condition is rather common and may seriously interfere with grazing.

"**Monkey mouth**" is the opposite of parrot mouth and is seldom seen in horses.

**"Cribbing" is a habit common to stabled horses which damages incisors by chipping or breaking them.**

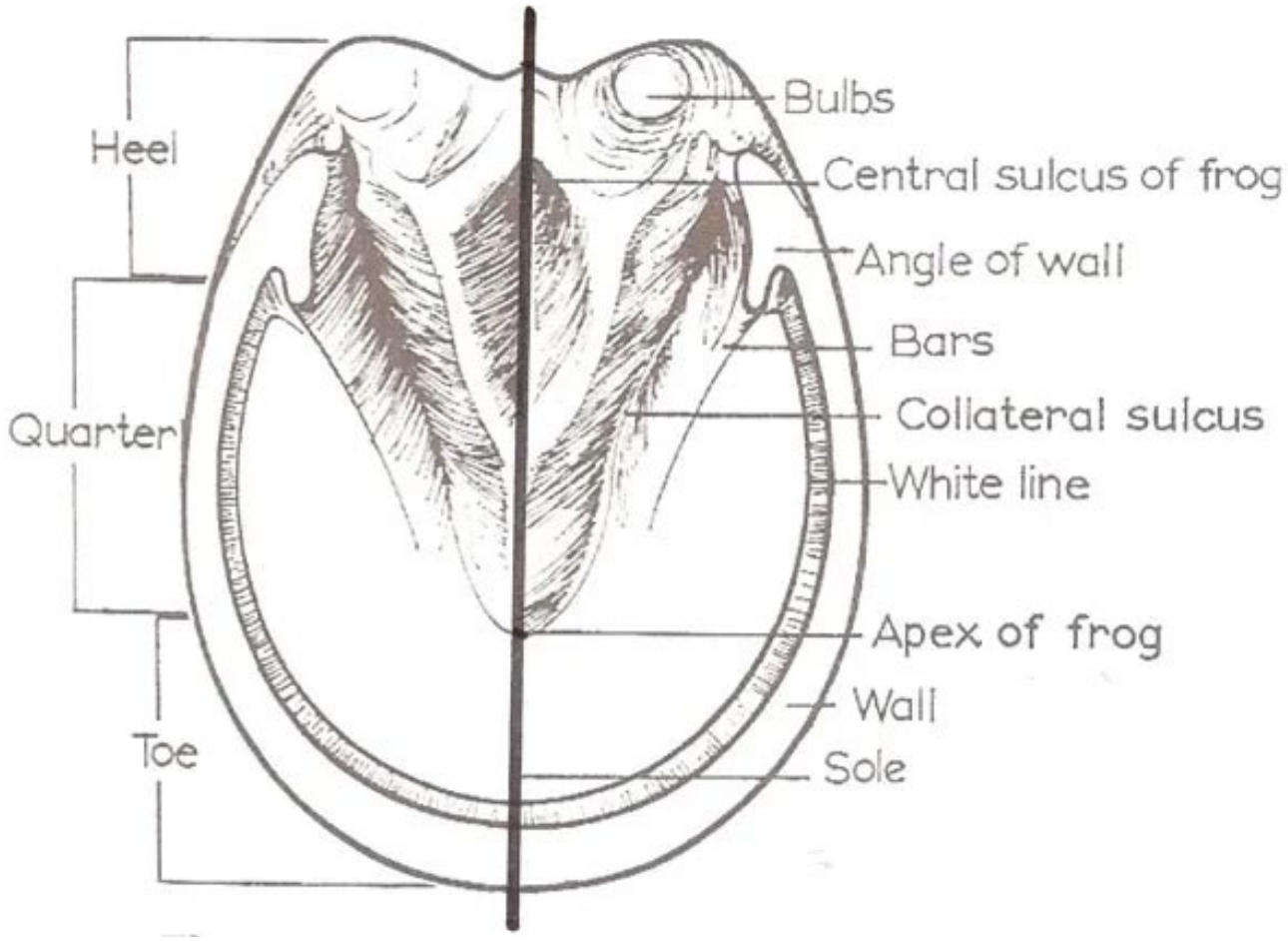
**Definition**

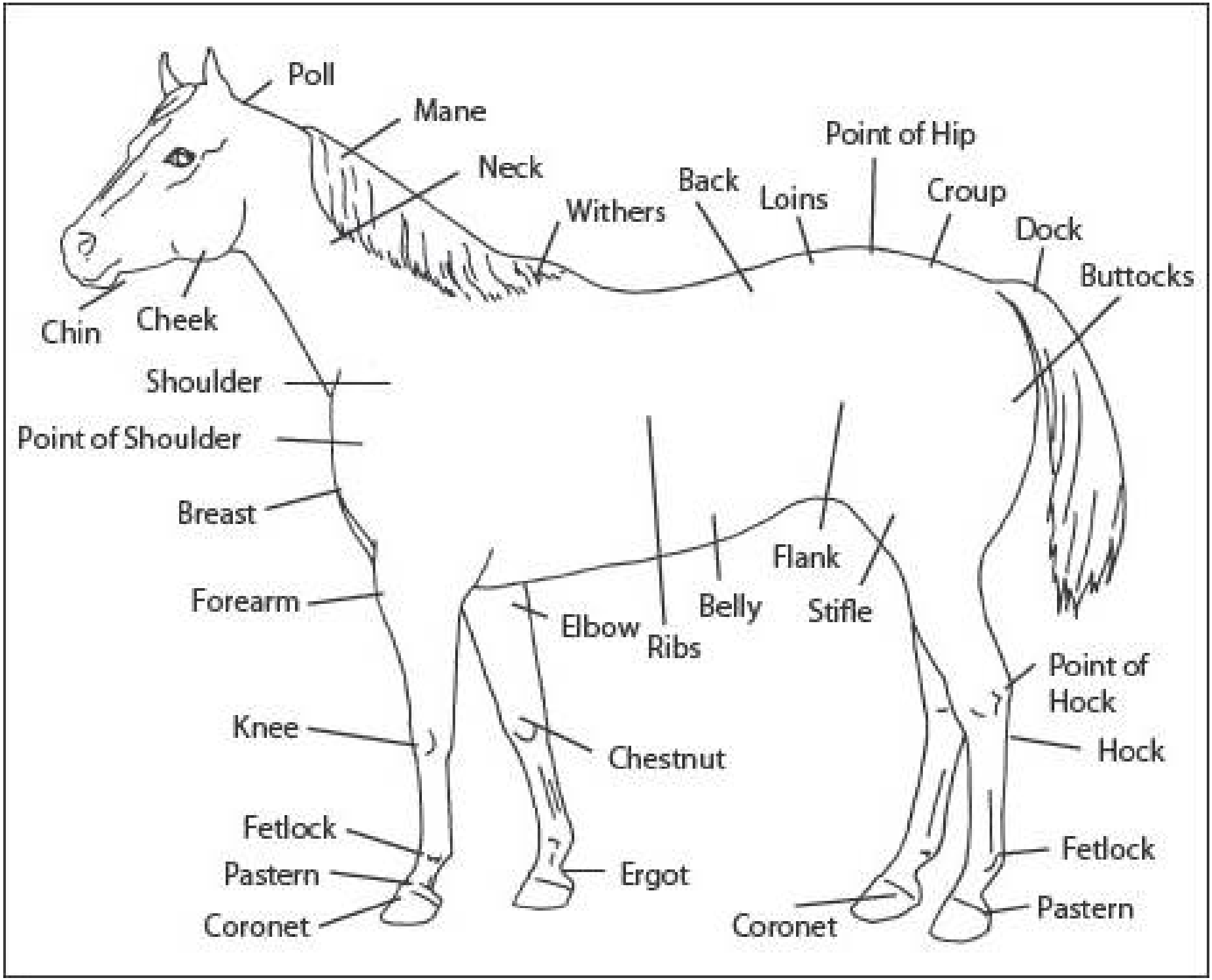
"**Galvayne's Groove**" A groove said to appear at the gum margin of the upper corner incisor at about 10 years of age extends halfway down the tooth at 15 years and reaches the table margin at 20 years. It then is said to recede and disappear at 30 years.

"**Bishoping**" is tampering with cups to make the horse appear younger than it is.

"**Floating**" is filing high spots in molars to facilitate chewing. Molars should be checked regularly by veterinarians as the horse approaches mid-life and should be kept floated as needed thereafter.

## Parts of the hoof

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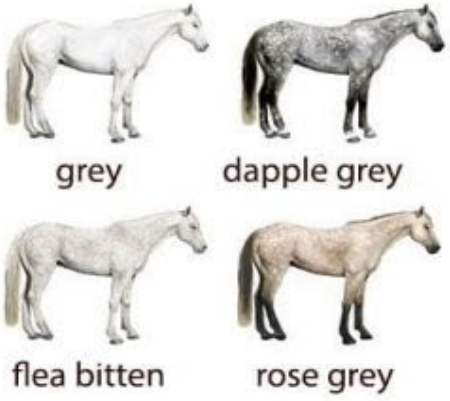
Mane
Neck
Withers
Back
Loins
Point of Hip
Croup
Dock
Buttocks
Chin
Cheek
Shoulder
Point of Shoulder
Breast
Forearm
Knee
Fetlock
Pastern
Coronet
Elbow
Ribs
Belly
Flank
Stifle
Chestnut
Ergot
Point of Hock
Hock
Fetlock
Pastern
Coronet

## ***COLORS AND MARKINGS***

# EQUINE COAT COLOURS

## DUNS


## GREYS




## BASIC


## BRIGHT


## CHAMPAGNE

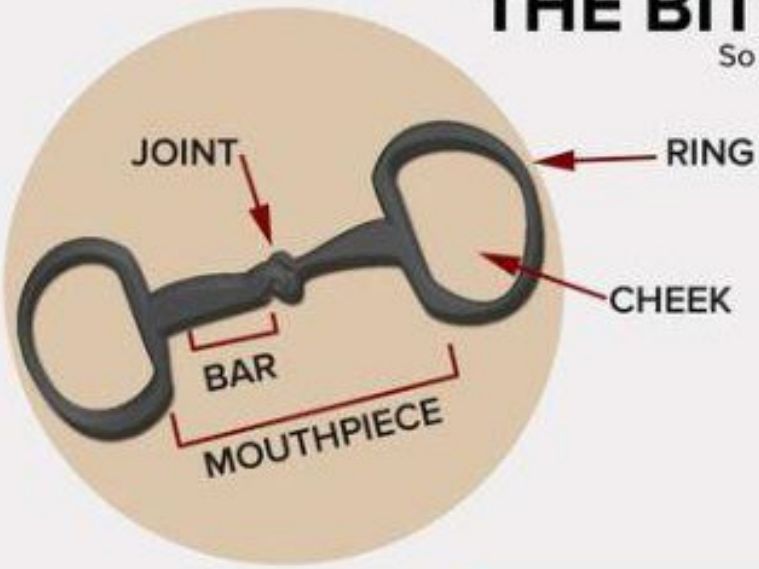

## WHITE


## PATTERNS


## ROANS

# THE BITS & PIECES

So what makes up a snaffle bit?




A snaffle bit is a **DIRECT PRESSURE** bit.

The amount of pressure you place on the reins is the same amount that the horse feels in its mouth.

The bit lies directly across the horse's tongue and does not rely on compound pressure like a leverage bit (Pelham and Curbs are leverage bits).

# RING TYPES

& how they affect the action of the bit

## LOOSE RING

Loose ring running through a hole in the end of the mouthpiece. Ring is able to rotate, making the bit more mobile than all other ring types. May pinch the lip and can be pulled into the mouth with too much lateral pressure.

Ideal for that disciplines require a more sensitive contact.

## EGG BUTT

Egg shaped ring on a swivel joint.

Less likely to pinch the lip than the loose ring. The fixed cheek offers a moderate amount of lateral control.

Lack of "cheeks" makes it easier for the bit to be pulled into a horse's mouth.

## D-RING

D-shaped ring on a swivel joint.

Allows no bit rotation and the straight bars of the "D" provide more lateral support than the egg butt snaffle.

Less likely to be pulled into the mouth.

## BAUCHER

**OR HANGING CHEEK**

Egg butt with an upper cheek ring to attach the bridle cheek piece to.

Bit lies flat and is fixed, concentrating pressure on the bar(s). Design prevents the bit from being pulled through the mouth.

## FULL CHEEK

Half moon ring on a swivel joint with a lower and upper "cheek".

Provides a large amount of lateral control and is not likely to be pulled into the mouth.

The cheeks can get caught on tack and other objects so caution should be taken. Bit keepers are often used with this ring style.

## HALF CHEEK

Egg butt snaffle with a lower "cheek" that extends downward.

Provides increased lateral support and is less likely to be pulled into the mouth. The cheek is generally flat and "spoon-like".

## FULMER

Loose ring variation of the full cheek.

Has the same lateral guiding control of a full check without being as rigid as the fixed version of the bit.

Allows bit rotation with less chance of pinching (compared to basic loose ring).

**Parts of the saddle, Both Western and English**