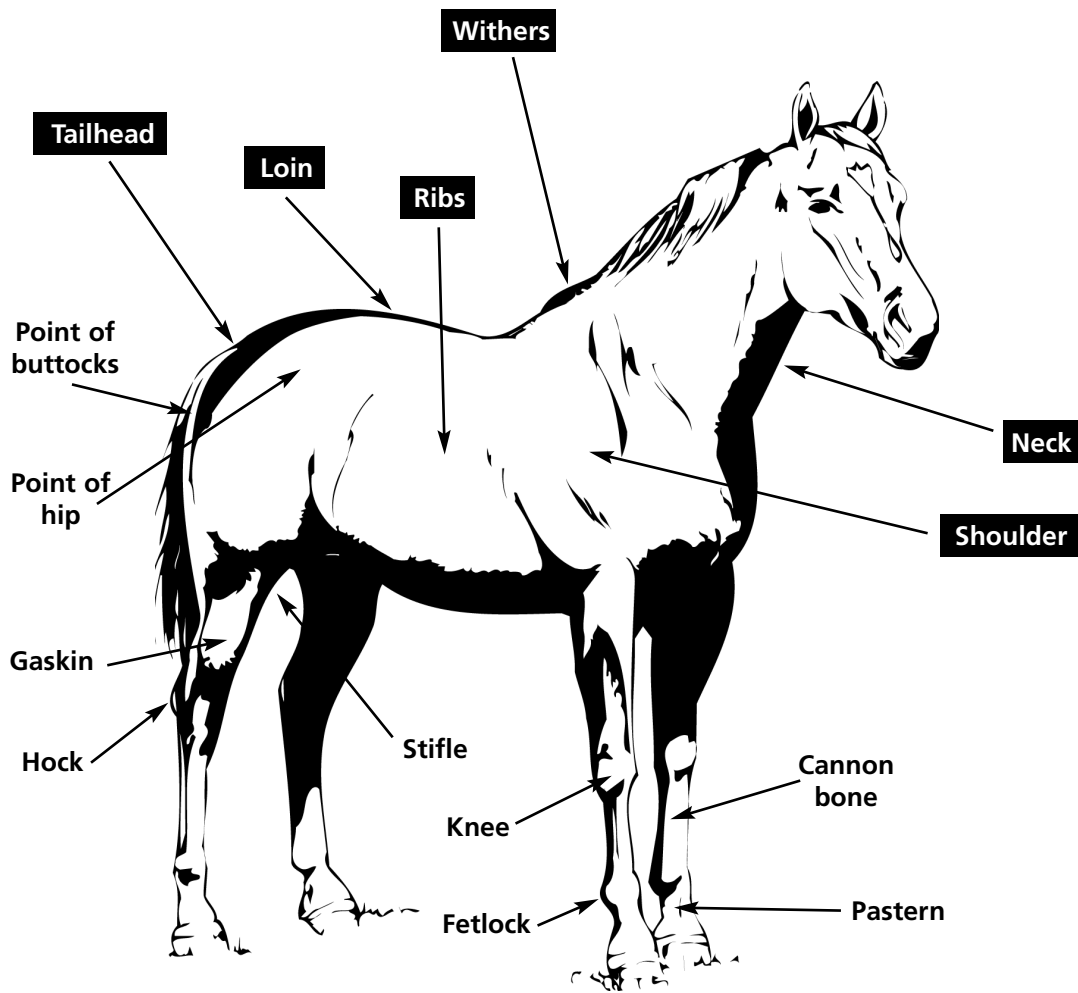


# Factsheet

## Henneke Body Condition Scoring System

To evaluate a horse's condition, ACO's and veterinarians use a standard system of checks, developed by Don Henneke, Ph.D., whose illustration and chart originally appeared in the *Equine Veterinary Journal* in 1983. The system involves massaging and scoring six main parts of a horse's body—neck, withers, shoulder, ribs, loin, and tailhead—on a scale of one to nine for their fat content.



Main points checked in Henneke scoring system:

- Neck
- Ribs
- Withers
- Loin
- Shoulder
- Tailhead

(over)

Condition	Neck	Withers	Shoulder	Ribs	Loin	Tailhead
<b>1</b> <b>Poor</b>	Bone structure easily noticeable	Bone structure easily noticeable	Bone structure easily noticeable	Ribs protruding prominently	Spinous processes projecting prominently	Tailhead, pinbones, and hook bones projecting prominently
<b>2</b> <b>Very thin</b>	Bone structure faintly discernible	Bone structure faintly discernible	Bone structure faintly discernible	Ribs prominent	Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes; transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded; spinous processes prominent	Tailhead prominent
<b>3</b> <b>Thin</b>	Neck accentuated	Withers accentuated	Shoulder accentuated	Slight fat cover over ribs. Ribs easily discernible	Fat buildup halfway on spinous processes but easily discernible; transverse processes cannot be felt	Tailhead prominent but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified; hook bones appear rounded but still easily discernible; pin bones not distinguishable
<b>4</b> <b>Moderately thin</b>	Neck not obviously thin	Withers not obviously thin	Shoulder not obviously thin	Faint outline of ribs discernible	Negative crease (peaked appearance) along back	Prominence depends on conformation; fat can be felt; Hook bones not discernible
<b>5</b> <b>Moderate</b>	Neck blends smoothly into body	Withers rounded over spinous processes	Shoulder blends smoothly into body	Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt	Back is level	Fat around tailhead feels somewhat soft
<b>6</b> <b>Moderately fleshy</b>	Deposited fat faintly discernible along neck	Deposited fat faintly discernible along withers	Deposited fat faintly discernible behind shoulder	Fat over ribs feels spongy	May have slight positive crease (groove) down back	Fat around tailhead feels soft
<b>7</b> <b>Fleshy</b>	Fat deposited along neck	Fat deposited along withers	Fat deposited behind shoulder	Individual ribs can be felt with pressure but noticeable fat filling between ribs	May have positive crease down back	Fat around tailhead is soft
<b>8</b> <b>Fat</b>	Noticeable thickening of neck	Area along withers filled with fat	Area behind shoulder filled in flush with body	Difficult to feel ribs	Positive crease down back	Fat around tailhead very soft
<b>9</b> <b>Extremely fat</b>	Bulging fat along neck	Bulging fat along withers	Bulging fat behind shoulder	Patchy fat over ribs	Obvious crease down back	Bulging fat around tailhead