



Body condition influences everything in your horse's life, from reproductive efficiency, to performance, to good health.

By using Body Condition Scoring, you can find out what kind of shape your horse is in, and work to improve the score. Scoring focuses on critical areas of the body, based on palpable fat and visual appearance.

Ideal Horse Body Condition Scores

Most horses, including performance horses and growing horses, should be in a body score of 5-6. For optimum reproductive efficiency, broodmares should be a 5-7, and not allowed to lose condition such that they are below a 5 during breeding season. Horses over a condition score of 7 may be at a greater risk for developing metabolic disorders such as insulin resistance.

- A. Along the Neck
- B. Along the withers
- C. Crease down back
- D. Tail head
- E. Ribs
- F. Behind shoulder

1. Poor

Extremely emaciated. Spinous processes, ribs, tail head, hip joints, and lower pelvic bones project prominently; bone in withers, shoulders and neck are easily noticed. No fatty tissue can be felt.

2. Very Thin

Emaciated. Slight fat covers base of spinous processes, transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous processes, ribs, tail head, hip joints, and lower pelvic bones are prominent. Withers, shoulders and neck structure faintly discernable.

3. Thin

Fat buildup about halfway on spinous processes. Transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat covers ribs. Spinous processes and ribs easily discernable; tailhead prominent but individual vertebrae cannot be identified visually. Hip joints appear rounded but easily discernable; lower pelvic bones not distinguishable. Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated.

4. Moderately Thin

Slight ridge along back. Faint outline of ribs discernable. Tailhead prominence depends on conformation, but fat can be felt around it. Hip joints not discernable. Withers, shoulders and neck not obviously thin.

5. Moderate

Back is flat; ribs easily felt, but not visually distinguishable. Fat around tailhead feels a bit spongy. Withers round over spinous processes; shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.

6. Moderately Fleshy

May have slight crease down back. Fat over ribs spongy; fat around tailhead soft. Small fat deposits behind shoulders and along sides of neck and withers.

7. Fleshy

Might have slight crease down back. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Fat around tail head soft; fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders and along neck.

8. Fat

Crease down back. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around tailhead very soft; area along withers filled with fat. Area behind shoulder filled with fat, noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along inner thighs.

9. Extremely Fat

Obvious crease down back. Patchy fat appears over ribs. Bulging fat around tail head, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck. Fat along inner thighs may rub together. Flank filled with fat.