

Lesson Horse Wellness Check-up

- Head**
Look for scars, bruises or lacerations on the muzzle, forehead, jaw or poll; build-up of fluid or dirt in the nostrils; dirt or parasites in the ears; marks on the sides of the mouth from the bit; contusions or welts on the tongue; discharge from the eyes.
- Legs**
Look for scars, bruises or lacerations to the legs from coronet band to elbow; bruises or thrush to the hoof; cuts or build-up of debris between the bulbs; damage to the hoof wall; swelling or heat in any part of the leg.
- Heartgirth**
Make sure there are no welts or rub marks in the heartgirth area that might indicate poor saddle fit or improper cinching.
- Back**
Check the withers, back, loins and croup for any bruises, contusions or lacerations. Make sure the skin and hair over the withers are free of any marks that might indicate poor saddle fit or improper cinching. Check as well for any sensitivities to pressure on the back and loins.
- Coat**
Note the overall quality of the horse's coat. Check for dullness, patches of hairlessness or any symptom of bacterial or fungal infection.
- Mane & Tail**
Note the overall quality of the horse's mane and tail. Make sure the hair shafts seem healthy and unbroken, and check for any signs of infection near the roots.
- Weight**
Check to see if the horse is underweight or overweight (by appearances) Protruding ribs, for example, might indicate a dietary change is needed. Evaluate as well the horse's overall muscle development and toning.
- Vital Signs**
Check the horse's vital signs (pulse and respiration) to ensure they are within normal limits.
- Attitude**
Spend some time with the horse to evaluate his overall attitude. Listlessness or irritability might indicate disease or injury.

Report any deficiencies to your veterinarian for an in-depth exam. Treat any cuts or lacerations immediately.