

## ARABIAN CONFORMATION

Arabian conformation is good conformation on a horse that has Arabian type. What is Arabian type? Arabian type are those characteristics which distinguish a horse as an Arabian horse. Five key elements distinguish type. These elements are found in the head, neck, back, croup and tail.

1. The head: Comparatively small profile; straight or preferably slightly concave below the eyes. Comparatively short distance between eye and muzzle. Deep jowl; small muzzle, large nostrils. Forehead is broad, eyes large and prominent. Ears are short and fine.
2. The neck: Long, arched, set on high and running well back into withers. Throat is fine and clean.
3. The back: Short and strong.
4. The croup: Comparatively horizontal, strong and flat.
5. The tail: Naturally high tail carriage. Carried gaily and straight.

These qualities identify type in the Arabian Horse. If the horse has these qualities and "correct" conformation, we have our ideal standard.

Conformation should relate form to function. A horse needs eyes to see, nostrils to breath, jaw and teeth to eat, adequate lean neck and clean throat for blood, air and food to pass through. A neck to use as a balance arm, a body to house lungs, stomach and the machinery to operate the legs. Strong, correct legs are needed to propel the horse as he lives.

Correct conformation has been an ancient subject of controversy and remains so to this day. Some horses that are considered beauties of conformation are non-functional. They do not relate to either the potential physical abilities or ultimate soundness of the horse. They are, in sum, quite subjective, socially generated preferences - like long tails over short ones or slightly concave heads over Roman noses.

When we apply the popular word "correct" to conformation, it should make direct reference to two factors: conformation that is appropriate to the performance uses of the horse; and, conformation that avoids certain defects likely to render the horse unsound during use.

Conformation that avoids certain defects likely to render the horse unsound in use are the most important. If the horse is unsound, it will be unable to perform any use for the owner, regardless of how much it looks like an Arabian horse.

Conformation faults can be listed by priority. Fore legs bear 60-65% of the weight of the horse. Furthermore, approximately 75% of all lameness occurs in the fore legs. Therefore, the fore legs are very important. If the forelegs are badly conformed they are more susceptible to stress, strain and concussion. Angle and length in relationship of shoulder to arm determine stride. A longer stride is desirable because fewer steps are needed to cover ground and it is easier to ride. The stress line should come out at the heel and not the center of the hoof. The angle of the shoulder and pasterns will determine this stress line. Horses which are conformed so that the stress line comes out in the middle of the foot are more susceptible to navicular.

The front limb is vital to the horse's function. Flat bone is a description of bone and ligaments and is necessary for strong limbs. The hoof should be adequate to support the horse's body weight. Muscle seldom breaks down. Bone, Tendon or ligaments are more likely to break down. A straight leg will, with few exceptions, outlast a crooked leg.

1. The fore leg faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- Calf Knees
- Club Feet
- Bench Knees
- Knock Knees
- Toes Out
- Base Narrow
- Base Wide
- Toe In
- Buck Knees

2. The rear leg faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- Post Legged
- Bow Legged
- Stands Wide
- Camped Out
- Stands Under (sickle hocks)
- Stands Close
- Cow Hocked

3. The neck faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- Low Set
- Ewe Shaped
- Poor Hinge
- Thick
- Short

4. The body faults in order of seriousness are as follows:

- High Croup
- Flat Withers
- Long Coupling
- Low in the Back
- Shallow Body

5. Part of judging conformation is observing the horse in action. Features to consider when observing the horse in action are as follows:

- Length of stride
- Trueness
- Spring
- Regularity
- Power
- Height

6. Consideration must also be given to the substance and quality of the horse. Substance and quality can be found in the following:

- Smooth Muscles
- Clean well defined bone
- Fine textured hair coat
- Masculinity in Stallions
- Femininity in mares
- Refinement

The rules state that for purebred Arabians, "Emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance: type, conformation, suitability as a breeding animal, quality, movement, substance, manners, and presence. When Colts/Stallions and Geldings are judged together, the above class specifications will be used except that geldings shall not be judged on suitability as a breeding animal. In Gelding Halter classes, emphasis shall be placed in the following order of importance: conformation, type, quality, movement, substance manners, and presence. Transmissible weakness shall be considered a serious breeding fault in breeding stock. Colts and Stallions two years old and over must have both testicles descended.

For Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabians the rules state: Classes will be judged on conformation, quality, substance and Arabian type, in that order. The Half-Arabian or Anglo-Arabian may show

characteristics of any other breed. The foregoing first named three qualities shall take precedence in adjudication of halter classes over breed type.

Learn to identify conformation faults. You should have a priority in your mind as to the seriousness of each fault as it relates to the serviceable life of the Arabian horse.

Base your judging on sound conformation and type. When you have the knowledge to judge a class of Arabian horses, it is easy to place the horses in the class.

Avoid favoritism to horses or handlers. You are not to judge the handler or the handler's showmanship or popularity. The winningest handlers do not necessarily always have the best Arabian horse in the ring. The halter horse which won last week may not be the best horse in the class you are judging this week. Your job is to find the best Arabians in the class and award the prizes to those horses.

### CONFORMATION CHART

FAULTS	MAJOR	MINOR
HEAD FAULTS	Overshot Jaw - Parrot Mouth Undershot Jaw - Monkey Mouth Convex Head - Roman Nose Small Eye Glass/Blue Eyes (Purebred Classes Only) Coarse muzzle Coarse, Meaty Features Lop Ears	Narrow Eye Set Excessive Length to Head Large Coarse Ears Wide Set Ears - Sheep Eared Excessively Close Set Ears
FORE LEG FAULTS	Calf Knees - Sheep Knees - Back at Knee Club Feet Off Set Knees - Bench Knees Bow Legs - Bandy Legged Knock Knees - Knee Narrow Straight or Short Pasterns Coon Footed - Excessive Sloped Pasterns Tied in Knees - Tied in Tendons Splay Footed - Toes Out Long Cannons - High Knees Stands Wide - Base Wide Stands Close - Base Narrow	Pigeon Toed - Toes In Buck Knee - Knee Sprung
REAR LEG FAULTS	Post Legged Camped Out Long Cannons - High Hocks Bow Legged - Bandy Hocked Straight or Short Pasterns Coon Footed Stands Close - Base Narrow Stands Wide - Base Wide	Stands Under - Slightly Sickle Hocked Toe Out Cow Hocked

<b>FAULTS</b>	<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>MINOR</b>
<b>FOOT/HOOF FAULTS</b>	Club Foot Dished Foot Contracted Narrow Feet - Mule Footed Founder - Laminitis	Broken Axis of Pastern and Hoof Feet Out of Balance
<b>NECK FAULTS</b>	Poor Hinge Thick Throat Excessive Heavy Neck Ewe Shaped Low Set	Straight Neck (No Shape) Short Excessive Crest
<b>BODY FAULTS</b>	High Croup Long Coupling - Long Back Straight Shoulder Flat Withers - Mutton Withers Sway Back - Low in the Back Rafter Hips Short Croup Short Hip Shallow Body Steep Sloping Hip	
<b>TAIL FAULTS</b>	No Tail Carriage Wry Tail	Low Set Tail
<b>MOVEMENT FAULTS</b>	Irregular Strides - Lameness Stubby Movement Choppy Stride Short-Strided Wings In	Lack Coordination Paddles Out
<b>BLEMISHES AND UNSOUNDNESSES</b>	Lameness or Soreness Splints Caused from Faulty Conformation Ring or Side Bone Epiphysitis Jack Spavin Bowed Tendons Cataract/Cloudy Eye Ossolets Curb	Hernia Bog Spavin Capped Hock Capped Elbow Thoroughpin Wind Puffs - Joint Capsule Hygromas Splints with no Faulty Conformation Scars from Injuries

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