



Part 2 Horse Maintenance

By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini

Health:

Keeping the horse healthy is very important for the sport. It is not a single person's duty, but it starts from the breeder to the owner, groom, vet, rider and to the coach who plays a role as well. The place where the horse is kept should be healthy and the food should be balanced and related to the physical effort (discussed before) while the exercise should be regular but not strenuous. There should be early detection and treatment of diseases, emergencies and injuries. Preventive measures like vaccination, regular visits from a dental specialist and de-worming are important to keep the horse healthy for the sport.

Colic: There are different types of colic but they are all extremely painful and may lead to a twisted gut. Colic often causes death, but if it is detected early by the groom or by the horseman, the horse should then be successfully treated. Colic could also be prevented by proper feeding, scheduled regular exercise, and correct handling of the horse. Types of colic include: day-off colic, water colic,

Discipline	Strength	Speed	Spring	Suppleness	Stamina
Dressage	25 %	5 %	30 %	30 %	10 %
Show Jumping	25 %	10 %	35 %	25 %	5 %
Cross Country	10 %	20 %	10 %	20 %	40 %

Discipline	Anaerobic	Aerobic
Show Jumping	70 %	30 %
Dressage	60 %	40 %
Cross Country	40 %	60 %

nervous colic, wind-sucking colic, and sand colic. Always remember that a horse has a relatively very small stomach; it is nearly as small as that of a sheep holding about 15 liters!!

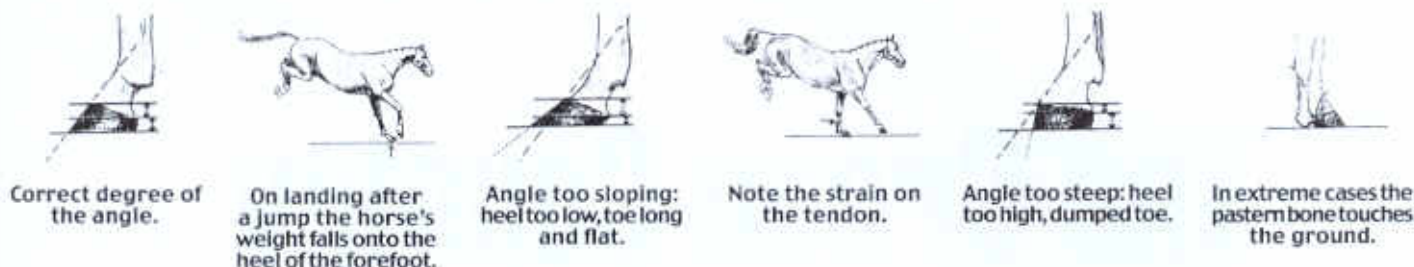
Lameness:

In a show with no vet around or is busy with another horse, it is the coach's decision not to let the horse compete due to illness. That is why the coach should know enough about lameness and other medical emergencies. Three important questions arise in a case of lameness:

- Which leg is lame? (Location)
- Which part of the leg? (Site)
- What caused the lameness? (Cause)

If the horse is lame in front, the chances are that the cause is in the foot. Whereas if it is a behind lame, one can bet it is in the hock. Always think and start from bottom and work up from foot to shoulder or hip. Remember that practice makes perfect. Causes of lameness in sport horses vary from bad shoeing up to fractures. Causes like swollen joints, navicular disease, ringbone and spavins

Good shoeing will save the tendons of the horse. (Fig. 1)



Correct shoeing is vital to the horse. (Fig. 2)



are mostly due to irregular work, too much training, extra stress by extra weight or sharp unbalanced turns. Tendon trouble can be due to too much jumping or excess speed, as well as external injury. To prevent navicular disease (common in show jumping horses) there should be correct shoeing and correct riding of turns. Very sharp turns at high speed should be ridden with the outside rein and inside leg. Always remember that prevention is better than treatment.

Fitness:

The horse should be physically and mentally fit enough to perform without getting tired in order to get the best out of him. Each equestrian activity demands different preparations of strength, speed, spring, suppleness and stamina which therefore may require different training. Understanding how to train to achieve specific goals is the back bone of any fitness programme, and for this it is necessary to be aware of the difference between aerobic training (muscle use with oxygen) and anaerobic training (muscle use without oxygen)

Anaerobic activity is the strenuous exercise that requires muscles to work without the use of oxygen for short periods of time producing lactic acid which has its impact on the muscles, joints and internal systems of the horse. It takes place in show jumping at almost every fence, and in dressage during canter pirouettes, extensions and piaffe.

Mental fitness is also very important for the best performance of the horse. Horses are not motivated by gold medals or glory, and it is difficult for them to understand why another circuit of the gallops is required. Therefore it is vital to avoid overstraining the horse. Keep the horse

happy by varying his work; but always finish with him willing and able to do little more by working in company, and by being quick to give extra rest days if needed. The horse needs to be set free sometimes and the most significant factor for your horse's enjoyment is ensuring that he is comfortable doing work and using his back well (relaxed). Keeping your horse fit and happy without stress and without spoiling him is the key for a successful sport.

Shoeing:

"No foot...no horse". You might also want to add, "And no farrier, no foot". A farrier is a skilled craftsman who needs to visit the horse every 6 weeks or so to replace shoes or just to keep the feet trimmed and in good condition. Having little height or width in the heel is a serious defect as this will expose the navicular area and the wings of the pedal bone to serious harm. The front feet should be at an angle of about 55 degrees on the ground, whilst the hindfeet should be at a lesser angle of 45 degrees. The pastern should be at the same angle as the foot. It is extremely important that the sport horse is properly shod. If a show jumper is badly shod, this will increase the stress on his tendons and might damage the joints. (See fig. 1)

If the horse has not been shod for sometime, the bars of the shoes may get embedded into the heel of the hoof, consequently disturbing his steps. The pressure on the heels is maximised on landing so it is important to leave the heels high enough to act as a shock absorber. Wider shoe webs prevent the shoes from pressing into the bearing surface of the hoof wall.

Hot shoeing is better than cold because

one can make the shoe fit the hoof and not the hoof fit the shoe. When shoeing cold it is most difficult to make the hoof and the shoe meet all around. With a new shoe the nail heads still fit into their grooves, but when altering the shoe or re-shoeing, the grooves might have gotten too narrow and the nail heads will no longer fit properly into their grooves. This may lead to the loss of the shoe at times making it break part of the hoof. Correct shoeing is vital to the horse. (See fig. 2)

Clenches are to be turned down and hammered against the wall into a shallow bed under the bend of the nail. This way is much better than making the usual mistake of rasping the extra nail which will weaken the clenches.

Clips should be large enough to support the shoe from slipping.

Studs are used to give a better grip to the shoe. There are different types of studs: blank for the inside of the hoof, sharp for the outside, studs for hard going, and studs for road work. In general, 2 studs per shoe should be used and the foot should be horizontal all the time. In order to avoid injuries, studs should be taken out immediately after jumping and before the horse is loaded or put back into the stable.

On hard and rocky grounds, some horses wear a shock-absorbing-sole between the shoe and the hoof: "the speed flex hoof".

Care should be taken to observe shoe problems such as neglected correction of hoof deformities, dumped toes, club foot, hard and brittle feet, rotted frog or thrush, as well as slow hoof growth. Remember again: "no foot...no horse".

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