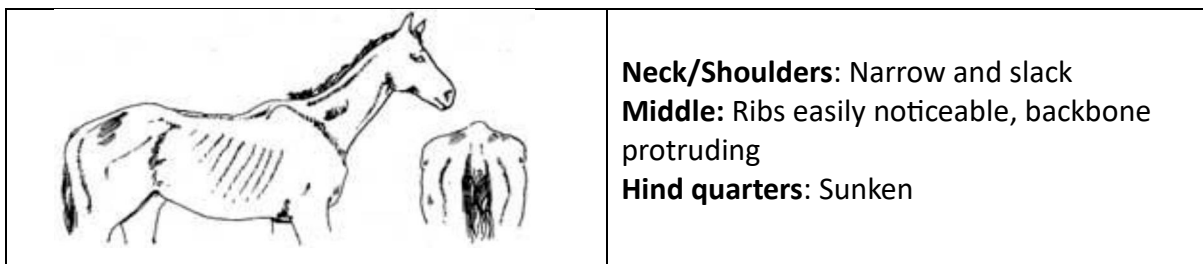


Body Condition Scoring (BCS)

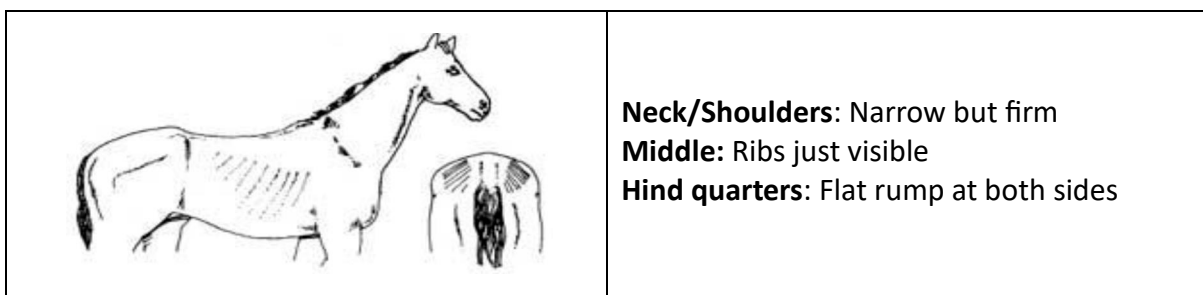
- Horse body condition scoring (BCS) is a method used to assess the overall condition or fat cover of a horse.
- It's a useful tool for horse owners, veterinarians, and caretakers to monitor the horse's nutritional status and make appropriate dietary adjustments if needed.
- The 5-point scale ranges from 1 to 5, with each score representing different levels of fat cover and muscle development.
- BCS should be assessed through both visual observation (looking) and palpation (feeling the horse's body) to accurately determine the score.

Here's a general breakdown of the 5-point scale and the images illustrate the general characteristics and appearance associated with each point for assessing a horse's body condition.

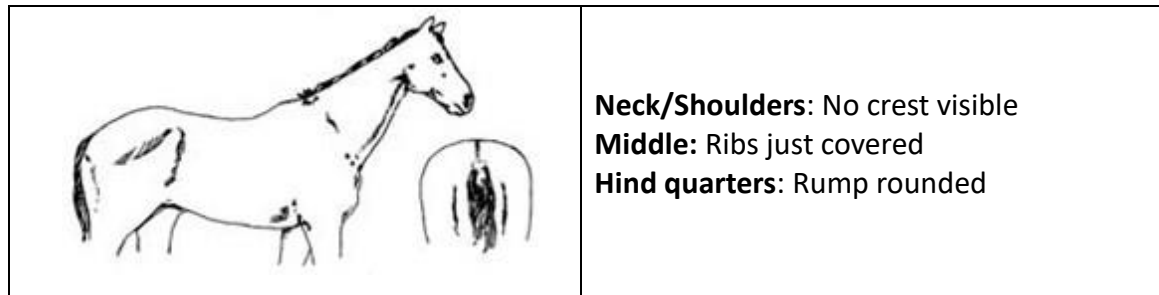
1. Poor: This score indicates a horse with prominent skeletal structure. There's minimal fat cover, and the horse appears to be very thin.



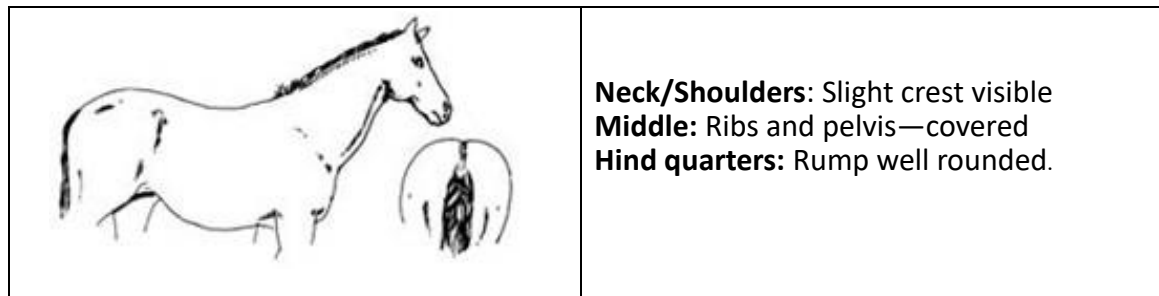
2. Moderately Thin: Horses with a BCS of 2 will have some fat cover but will still display prominent skeletal features. This horse appears thin overall.



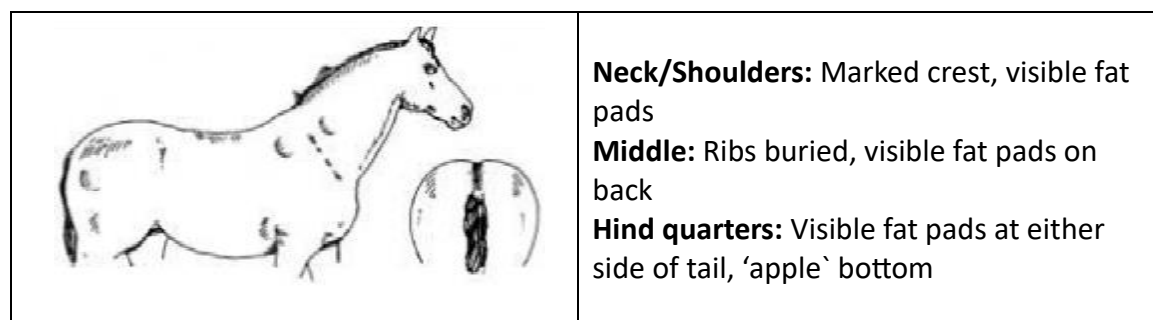
3. Good: A score of 3 represents a horse with a more ideal body condition. The ribs are not prominently visible but can be felt when touched. The back appears smooth, and the horse has a reasonable fat cover.



4. Fat: This score indicates a horse carrying excess weight. The ribs are difficult to feel due to fat cover, and the horse may have fat deposits along the neck, with a crease down the back.



5. Obese: Horses with a BCS of 5 have excessive fat cover, which is visually evident and easily felt. The neck, back, and tailhead may have significant fat deposits, and there's an overall roundness to the body.



Adapted from: Carroll C.L. and Huntington P.J. 1988; Rowland, M., Coombs, T. & Connor, M. 2019.

- Remember: Keeping your horse at the correct weight is essential for your horse's health and welfare.

- A healthy body score is around two and a half to three and a half. This takes in to account seasonal changes as horses may lose weight in the winter and put it back on in the summer.
- Regular monitoring and adjustments to diet and exercise may be necessary to maintain a healthy body condition.