

Feed according to weight, body condition and workload – A basic guide

Step one – How much does your horse or pony weigh?

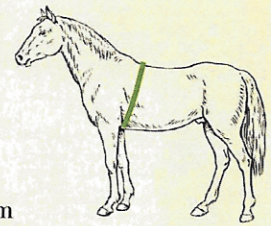
You can work this out in several ways:

Weighbridge

Take your horse to a public weighbridge or visit a yard that has a horse weighbridge.

Weigh tape

Place the weigh tape over your horse's back just behind the withers and pass around him as close to the elbow as possible on a slight diagonal. Pull the weigh tape firmly but not too tight so it is smooth around his coat, then take a reading.

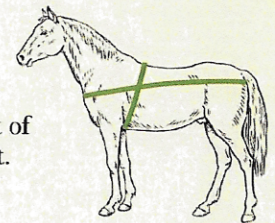


Weigh tape

Weight formula

To calculate approximate bodyweight using body length and girth measurement:

Measure your horse's girth (circumference) and length (from point of shoulder to point of buttock) and use the following calculation to give an approximate figure for bodyweight.



Weight formula

For bodyweight in kg: $\frac{\text{girth (cm)} \times \text{girth (cm)} \times \text{body length (cm)}}{11877}$

Carroll, C.L. and Huntington, P.J. (1988) Body condition scoring and weight estimation of horses. *Equine Veterinary Journal*, 20 (1), 41-45.

Step two – What is your horse or pony's body condition score?

Knowing your horse's body condition score is as important as knowing his weight - use the table below to condition score your horse.

Condition Score 0 - Emaciated



- Pelvis: Angular, skin tight. Very sunken rump. Deep cavity under tail.
- Back and Ribs: Skin tight over ribs. Very prominent and sharp backbone.
- Neck: Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.

Condition Score 1 - Poor



- Pelvis: Prominent pelvis and croup. Sunken rump but skin supple. Deep cavity under tail.
- Back and Ribs: Ribs easily visible. Prominent backbone with sunken skin on either side.
- Neck: Ewe neck, narrow and slack base.

Condition Score 2 - Moderate



- Pelvis: Rump flat either side of back bone. Croup well defined, some fat. Slight cavity under tail.
- Back and Ribs: Ribs just visible. Backbone covered but spine can be felt.
- Neck: Narrow but firm.

Condition Score 3 (IDEAL) - Good



- Pelvis: Covered by fat and rounded. No gutter. Pelvis easily felt.
- Back and Ribs: Ribs just covered and easily felt. No gutter along the back. Backbone well covered but spine can be felt.
- Neck: No crest (except for stallions), firm neck.

Condition Score 4 - Fat



- Pelvis: Gutter to root of tail. Pelvis covered by fat. Need firm pressure to feel.
- Back and Ribs: Ribs well covered - need pressure to feel. Gutter along backbone.
- Neck: Wide and firm.

Condition Score 5 - Obese



- Pelvis: Deep gutter to root of tail. Skin distended. Pelvis buried, cannot be felt.
- Back and Ribs: Ribs buried, cannot be felt. Deep gutter along back. Back broad and flat.
- Neck: Marked crest, very wide and firm. Fold of fat.