

BLEMISHES AND UNSOUNDNESS

An integral part of selecting a horse lies in your ability to recognize common blemishes and unsoundnesses and your ability to rate the importance of each.

A thorough knowledge of normal, sound structure makes it easy to recognize imperfections.

Any abnormal deviation in the structure or function of a horse constitutes an unsoundness. From a practical standpoint, however, a differentiation is made between abnormalities that do and those that do not affect serviceability.

Blemishes include abnormalities that do not affect serviceability--such as wire cuts, rope burns, nail punctures, show boils, or capped hocks.

Unsoundness include more serious abnormalities that affect serviceability.

Faulty gaits:

Dishing or padding means swinging the forefeet sideways when moving, especially at the trot. Often caused by heavy shoeing, which interferes with the horse's normal action.

Brushing or interfering refers to the interference of the inner portions of a hoof with the opposite leg so as to cause abrasions, cuts and other injuries.

Overreaching refers to the interference of a hind hoof with a foreleg, or vice versa, to cause abrasions, cuts and other injuries.

Forging is similar to overreaching except that the hind shoe strikes the fore shoe, resulting in a metallic click.

Faults corrected by trimming:

Splayfoot (front toes turned out, heels turned in) can be helped or corrected by trimming the outer half of the foot.

Pigeon Toe--(front toes turned in, heels turned out--opposite of splay-foot) can be helped or corrected by trimming the inner half of the foot more than the outer half.

Quarter Crack (a vertical crack on the side of the hoof) usually can be corrected if the hoof is kept moist and the toes shortened.

Cocked Ankles (standing bent forward on the fetlocks--usually hind fetlocks) can be helped or corrected by lowering the heels. Cocked ankles will not occur if foals are allowed to get ample exercise and are not overfed, and the foal's heels are kept trimmed so that there is plenty of frog pressure.

Contracted Heels (close at heels) can be spread apart if the heels are lowered and the frog allowed to carry more of the animal's weight.