

Body Weight Formula

The formula for body wt =

Heart girth in inches x 2.54 = heart girth in centimeters

Body length (point of shoulder to point of rump) in inches x 2.54 = centimeters

$(\text{heart girth in cm})^2 \times (\text{body length in cm}) \div 11,877 = \text{weight in kg.}$

Wt in kg x 2.2 = weight in pounds

This formula is a little easier –

$(\text{Heart girth}^2 \times \text{Length}) \div 330 = \text{Weight in lb}$

Where heart girth and length is in inches

Best Condition

Horses are ranked on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 being poor and 9 being extremely fat. Horses should be maintained at condition scores of 5-7 for optimum health and performance. Optimum BCS for working horses is 5-6, and optimum BCS for broodmares is 6-7. The difference in the optimum scores is that reproductive efficiency is better when broodmares are maintained at scores of 6-7. Broodmares that have foaled need some fat stores due to the high nutritional requirements of lactation and recovery from foaling. It is more difficult to put needed weight on a lactating broodmare versus keeping the broodmare in optimum body condition.

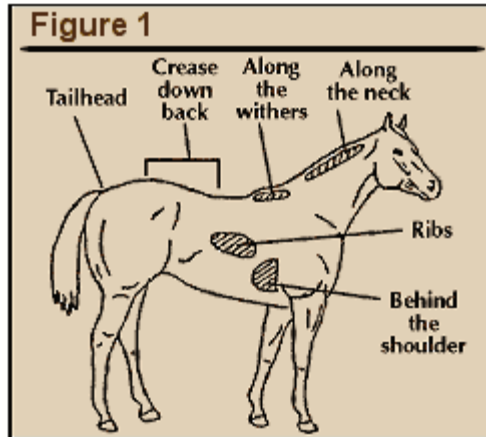
Horses maintained at BCS of 4 or below may suffer from decreased immunity, impaired reproductive efficiency, and lower work tolerance. Maintaining horses at BCS of 8-9 is not economically justified and predisposes them to colic, laminitis, and founder. Overly fat horses also have poorer reproductive performance and decreased work performance.

How to Score

Visually observe the horse's side profile from a distance of 15-20 feet. This will usually give one a good idea of the general condition of the horse — too thin, too fat, about right.

- Horses with noticeable ribs will score 4 or lower.
- If the ribs are not noticeable, the horse will score 5 or greater.
- Horses with long or thick hair coats will need closer examination by feeling the rib area. Be sure to distinguish between fat and muscle bulk/tone.

► Next, move close to the horse. Observe and feel for fat at the back, ribs, neck, shoulders, withers, and tail-head, comparing the horse's condition to the descriptions listed on the Horse Body Condition Scorecard which shows areas on the horse to evaluate for fat coverage.

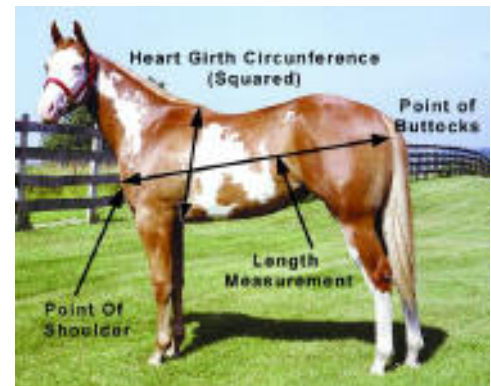


► If a horse meets most, but not all criteria for a score, use 0.5 point increments. For example: if a horse meets most criteria for a BCS of 5, and some criteria for a score of 6, a BCS of 5.5 should be assigned. Make feed adjustments based on condition score. A horse maintained at optimum body condition will achieve better reproductive and performance efficiency.

Estimating a Horse's Body Weight

$(\text{Heart girth}^2 \times \text{Length}) \div 330 = \text{Weight in lb}$

- Measure in inches the heart girth just behind the withers and elbows
- Measure in inches from point of shoulder to point of buttocks.
- This measurement has a 0.90 correlation with actual weight



Claudia