

Middle California Region USPC
Hind Leg Conformation
Study Guide

Correct Hind Leg Rear View

Good hind legs viewed from the rear should be symmetrical, with the hocks and lower legs straight and parallel. The stifles must point out a little to allow the legs to swing forward, and the legs should not be too close or too far apart.



Bowed Hocks

Bowed hocks point outward, with the cannon bones slanting inward. This puts extra stress on the hocks and the inside of the hoof and legs, which may develop into bone spavin, bog spavin or thoroughpin.



Cow Hocks

Cow hocks point in towards each other, with the cannon bones slanting outward. This puts extra stress on the inside of the hocks, contributing to bone spavin, bog spavin or thoroughpin



Wide Behind

Hind legs placed too far apart are a type of base wide conformation, even though they may appear straight. This limits the reach of the hind legs and gives the horse a shorter stride; in severe cases, increased concussion can cause ringbone.



Narrow Behind

Hind legs placed too close together are often underdeveloped, making them weaker and prone to strains. They also can cause interfering, which may lead to injury or lameness.



Correct Hind Leg Side View

When viewing good hind legs from the side, you should be able to drop a plumb line from the point of buttock to the back of the hock and down the bag of the leg to the ground. The cannon bones should be vertical.



Post Leg

The leg is too straight through the hock and the stifle, putting the whole leg in front of the plumb line from the point of buttock. This increases the stress on the whole leg, especially the hock and the pastern. May cause bone spavin, bog spavin or thoroughpin.



Sickle Hock

The hocks are slightly bent (in the shape of a farmer's sickle) with the legs in front of the plumb line. This increases stress on the hocks, putting the horse at risk for curbs, bog spavin, thoroughpin or bone spavin.



Camped Out Behind

The hind leg is set behind the plumb line dropped from the point of buttock. Camped out hind legs are weaker, and the horse will have difficulty engaging his hind end, resulting in a loss of power.

