

How to Perform a Physical Exam on Your Horse

1. List four observations about your horse's behavior when he feels healthy:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. List four observations about your horse's behavior when he is sick:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. My horse's normal body temperature is _____. I should be concerned if my horse's body temperature is higher than _____.

4. The normal heart rate for my horse is in the range of _____ beats per minute.

- I can listen to his heart by using a _____ and placing it on his chest just behind his elbow (Count # of beats in 15 seconds x 4).
- I can also feel his _____ by gently placing my fingers on the artery along his cheekbone.

5. When I watch my horse breathing he should take _____ breaths per minute.
6. I can also look at my horse's oral mucous membranes (gums) to obtain more information. Normally my horse's gums are _____ (color) and _____ (texture). When I press with my finger directly on to the gum the color will quickly blanch out and then return to normal within _____ seconds.
7. Another area to feel for a digital pulse is along the palmar aspect of the fetlock/pastern. If the pulse becomes more _____ this can be a sign indicating an inflammatory condition within the hoof.
8. Finally, I can listen for gastrointestinal sounds along my horse's flank. Normally the sounds should be _____. If the sounds are _____ then I should be concerned.

Tasks to Perform for Laboratory Exercise:

- Place a halter on the horse from the left side
- Determine temperature, pulse and respiratory rate (TPR)
- Palpate pulse from the facial artery
- Palpate submandibular lymph nodes
- Perform a skin pinch test to assess hydration
- Evaluate gum color and capillary refill time
- Auscult the heart and determine heart rate
- Auscult the abdomen and identify gastrointestinal borborygmi (sounds)
- Palpate the digital pulses
- Pick up a foot and remove debris with a hoof pick
- Perform range of motion exercises on the fore limb and palpate along the flexor tendons and suspensory ligament
- Extra- Learn how to apply a standing leg bandage