

There can be many reasons why each individual behavior may occur. However, a total Ridden Horse Pain Ethogram score of 8 or more indicates the presence of musculoskeletal pain. Some lame horses may have a score of less than 8.

Before applying the RHpE, see important tips in the footnotes.

HORSE NAME _____ DATE _____

FACIAL MARKERS

- 1** Ears Back
Ears behind vertical position for at least 5 seconds.

Notes: _____

- 2** Eyes Closed
Eye lids half closed or closed for at least 2-5 seconds.

Notes: _____

- 3** White of the Eye*
Repeated exposure of the sclera (white of the eye).

Notes: _____

- 4** Intense Stare
Glazed expression (zoned out), or staring intensely for at least 5 seconds.

Notes: _____

- 5** Mouth Open/Close
Mouth open with separation of teeth for at least 10 seconds, or repeatedly opening and shutting mouth with separation of teeth for at least 10 seconds.

Notes: _____

- 6** Tongue Out
Tongue hanging out or moving in and out more than once.

Notes: _____

- 7** Bit Pulled Through**
Bit pulled through to one side of the mouth.

Notes: _____

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BODY MARKERS

- 8** Head Up/Down
Repeated up and down head movement not in rhythm with trot.

Notes: _____

- 9** Head Tilt
Repeatedly tilting head.

Notes: _____

- 10** Above Vertical
Head in front of vertical (more than 30 degrees) for at least 10 seconds.

Notes: _____

- 11** Behind Vertical
Head behind the vertical (more than 10 degrees) for at least seconds.

Notes: _____

- 12** Head Side to Side
Head tossing, twisting or swinging repeatedly side to side.

Notes: _____

- 13** Tail Position
Crooked tail (held to one side). Tail clamped to the midline.

Notes: _____

- 14** Tail Swishing
Swishing tail repeatedly.

Notes: _____

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GAIT MARKERS

- 15** Rushed Gait
Frequency of more than 40 trot steps per 15 seconds; irregular rhythm in trot or canter with repeated changes of speed.

Notes: _____

- 16** Slowed Gait
Frequency of fewer than 35 trot steps per 15 seconds, often appearing as a passage-like trot.

Notes: _____

- 17** Moving on 3 Tracks
Hindlimbs do not follow the tracks of the forelimbs (moving crookedly on three tracks).

Notes: _____

- 18** Canter Dysfunction
Repeatedly striking off with incorrect forelimb leading; disunited or cross-cantering; changing leg in front and/or behind.

Notes: _____

- 19** Spontaneous Change of Pace
Breaking from one gait to another, for example from canter to trot.

Notes: _____

- 20** Stumble, Trip, Toe Drag***
Repeated bilateral hindlimb toe drag disturbing the ground surface. Stumbling or tripping repeatedly in front or behind.

Notes: _____

- 21** Changing Direction, Spooking Suddenly
Changing direction against the rider's cues; spooking.

Notes: _____

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GAIT MARKERS

- 22** Resistant
Reluctant to go forward; needing repeated physical or verbal encouragement.
Stops spontaneously.

Notes: _____

- 23** Rearing

Notes: _____

- 24** Bucking

Notes: _____

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Horses should be assessed performing their full repertoire of movements for approximately 10 minutes after a period of warm up.
- When applying the Ridden Horse Pain Ethogram the horse should be assessed from the side, from behind and from the front.
- * White of the Eye - Some horses have a blue eye or a small iris in one or both eyes, so the sclera (white of the eye) is visible at rest. The criteria for this behavior cannot be applied to these horses.
- ** Bit Pulled Through - If the canons (mouthpieces of the bit are too wide for the horse's mouth, it will be difficult to evaluate this behavior.
- *** Stumble, Trip, Toe Drag - If the horse is being worked in an arena with deep footing or in long grass, it may appear to have a hindlimb toe drag, so this behavior cannot be evaluated.

This worksheet does not constitute diagnosis, nor suggest specific treatment. If you suspect that your horse is experiencing discomfort or pain, seek help from a veterinarian.