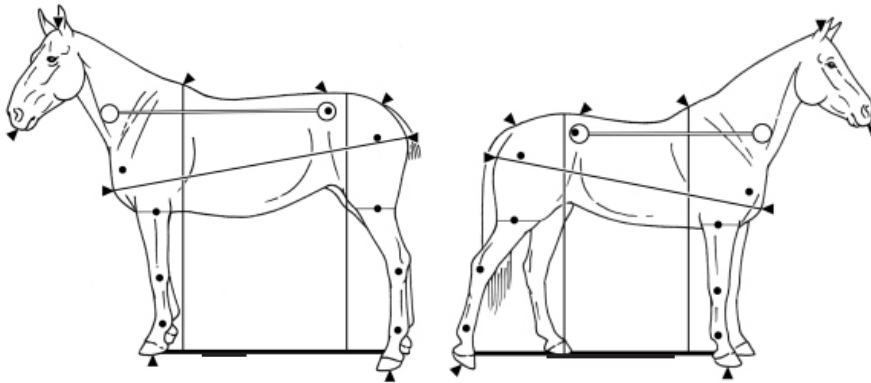


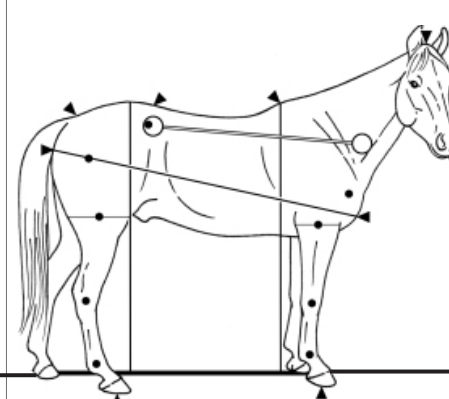
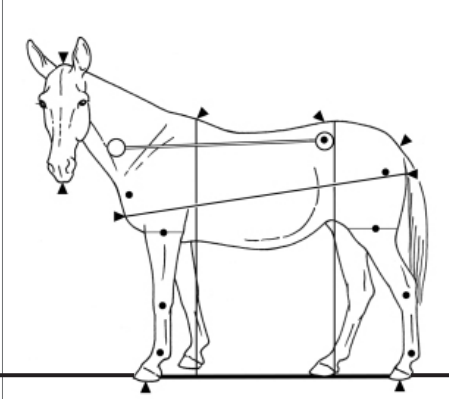
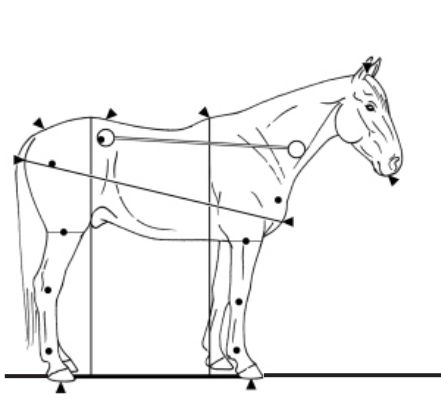
“Perfect” Arabian: This horse has a beautifully shaped pelvis, large, clean joints and excellent “bone” substance. The back is strong and well coupled; the neck is shapely; the head is proportionate, deep through the muzzle and clean. The eye is kind and intelligent. This horse has a relatively long femur, implying a naturally slow trot rhythm with long, sweeping strides. This is matched by a long forearm, which lends scope and freedom to the fore stride.

“Perfect” Australian Stock Horse: This breed was created by mixing old bloodlines imported during the first settlement of Australia 250 years ago with Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse. The croup-to-withers height ratio in this animal is the highest of the group, and the body-balance line also shows that he is the most “downhill,” yet still a very rideable horse. His pelvis is huge, taking after his Quarter Horse ancestors, yet because of his overall build, he is less of a racing specialist and more suitable for all-around pleasure riding and ranch work. Did you catch the capped hock? This blemish does not put me off in the least.



“Perfect” Cob: Although this image was taken more than a century ago, this ride-drive type can still occasionally be seen. Once valued as “delivery wagon horses,” the Cob was created by crossing Old Canadian, American Standardbred, Morgan and Thoroughbred lines. According to the “4 Ps” system, this animal is the very model of Primitive, with a larger head, shorter neck, lower withers, shorter croup and steeper pelvic angle than are today considered most aesthetically pleasing by many breed fanciers. I would, nevertheless, be proud to have bred this animal, because all the structural features that really matter are present. I happen, moreover, to like convex heads, and the look of nobility in this horse’s expression is compelling even in a century-old photo.

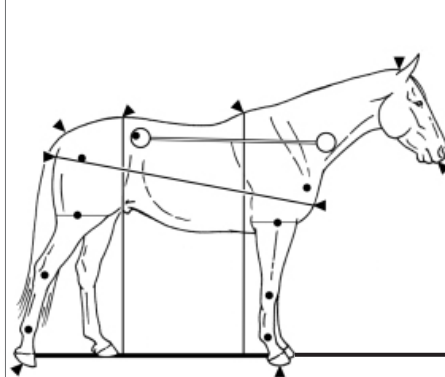
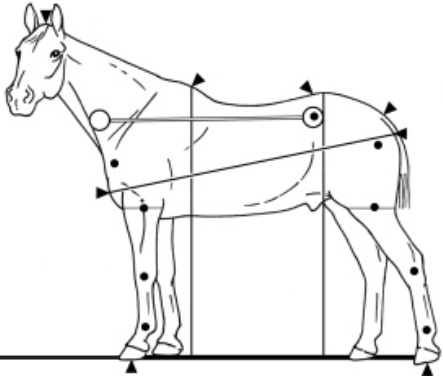
“Perfect” Connemara: Because this mare has been photographed while standing in weeds with just the front aspects of her pasterns visible, the fore hoofs have been extrapolated in order to complete the analysis. There isn’t anything to object to in this magnificent riding pony: She is the very picture of harmony and of the smooth articulation of parts, and this is therefore a photo that every aspiring horse judge should study.



“Perfect” Moyle Horse: Rex Moyle was a gentleman from Idaho whose family has been breeding horses of this stamp since the days of wagon trains and cattle drives. They are a blend of old Morgan bloodlines and mustangs, with a dash of U.S. Cavalry remount Thoroughbred thrown in. If you were to offer me my choice of the horses presented here, this is the individual that I would take home. Everyone experienced in horsemanship will develop, and has a right to, their own particular “taste”—this should not prevent the judge from being able to see excellence in every different breed.

“Perfect” Mule: This Molly, the produce of a Belgian dam yet standing only 14.2 hands and weighing 1,100 pounds, is just lovely. Kind and curious in expression, she exhibits structural excellence at every point. Mules, when they are excellent, almost always fall more into the Primitive category than the Perfect—but in every way that counts, Primitive is Perfect. Did you catch the saddle mark near the withers? This mule’s owners have been using her without paying enough attention to the fit of her tack. (There are also “camel calluses” on the fronts of her knees and faintly on the outsides of her fore ankles, her elbows and the girth area just behind the elbows, indicating that she has not been bedded deeply enough.)

“Perfect” Quarter Horse: In previous installments, I have said that using a horse for riding that has been bred for racing is a “project.” This certainly does not mean that Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses are to be rejected for riding purposes. There are people involved in both these breeds whose main object is to produce horses shaped for riding. Note that while the overall body balance is somewhat downhill, this horse’s forearm is long enough that croup height and withers height come out exactly equal. This horse also has a relatively short freespan and strong loin coupling. The joints are good, the bone substantial, and the feet well-shaped and proportionate. (The head is beautiful but its length is not assessed because it is turned toward the camera and the perspective is thus foreshortened.) This gelding’s least attractive feature is his neck, but that is not due to structure—this horse’s rider did not help him arch his neck, release tension, properly flex, make good transitions or go correctly on the bit. Inexpert riding produces wrong posture and inharmonious muscular development.



“Perfect” Thoroughbred: Another image from more than a century ago, this is the best example I could possibly present of an English Thoroughbred specifically produced not for the racetrack but for the hunting field. A superb individual standing 16.1 hands and weighing 1,275 pounds, he belonged to a portly member of the aristocracy—exactly the type of animal capable of packing 250 pounds across country. The horse’s best features are the magnificent shoulder and a neck that is not only long but shapely, with the base placed high compared to the chest. The bone substance is almost unbelievable, with huge joints and beautiful hooves. The expression is bold and self-possessed, yet willing. Truly, this is a horse worth a duke’s ransom.

“Perfect” Warmblood: Unfortunately, sometimes when an animal of high caliber comes into the possession of people who have a lot of ambition to go along with their skill, the animal suffers from being pushed beyond his limits. By the time I met this horse, he had passed from the hands of professional jumper-trainers to a private individual who was enjoying him despite having to work around the bowed tendon he suffered as a result of “serious” training. The judge must look past this injury to notice the long and somewhat fine neck, level overall body balance, and strong back of medium length. The head shows sufficient quality and is deep through the muzzle. As with the Connemara mare, the best thing about this horse is not any one attribute, but the harmonious combination of many individual features.