

Spotting lameness

Lameness in horses is very common and refers to an abnormal movement within a horse's gait. It can be caused by something simple or be more severe and is occasionally life-threatening. At Petplan Equine, almost 45% of all claims in 2015 were related to lameness.



1

Is he lame?

Whilst trotting your horse on a hard surface in a straight line, check:

- ✓ Is your horse nodding his head?
- ✓ Has he got an irregular rhythm?
- ✓ Is he unusually reluctant to move forward or showing signs of discomfort?

If **YES** to any one of these questions, it is very likely **your horse is lame**

2

Which leg?

- If his head nods down as the right fore touches the ground **he's lame left fore**
- If his head nods down as the left fore touches the ground **he's lame right fore**
- His gait is not regular but it is not clear which leg he is nodding on **it is possible he is suffering from a hind limb lameness or pain higher up**

3

What next?

- **Call** - If your horse is lame, it is important to call your vet
- **Discuss** - Most vets are happy to discuss a horse's condition with clients before committing to a visit, so if you're unsure, call your vet for some advice
- **Trial rest** - You may wish to try a short period of box rest or small paddock turn out to monitor your horse, but only do this on your vet's advice

Always remember, if you are in any doubt about your horse's welfare **call your vet!**

Tips for trotting your horse up:

Use a straight, flat, hard surface 20-30 yards and ask a friend to help

Watch the horse in walk first then trot

Keep the lead rope loose, so you do not interfere with the horse's movement

Keep level with your horse's shoulder and turn him away from you to allow maximum visibility

To find out more and to test your lameness spotting skills visit petplanequine.co.uk/lameness



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