

## The Pre-purchase Examination

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Purchasing a horse is of course the logical step for those who are unable to or do not want to breed their own horse. If you are lucky enough to find what you are looking for, what should your next step be? Even if you find your new equine friend from a reputable breeder or fellow rider, it is prudent to have a vet conduct a pre-purchase examination; although this is not a warranty, it will at least give you a 'snapshot' of the horse's health status at the time of the vet check.

*JEN* asked Dr. Andrew Easton to explain what would be covered in the pre-purchase examination report from your vet. Of course, the examination should be carried out by a qualified vet and ideally in the presence of both the owner/breeder and the purchaser. It is also important to note that each vet check is privileged information for the purchaser organising the check and is therefore not transferable. What may be relevant to one purchaser may not fit the criteria of another.

The examination content will depend on the age of the horse, whether the horse is a mare, gelding or stallion and whether the horse has been started under saddle. The pre-purchase examination report will also act as a record with regard to the description of the horse or pony, (colour, brands, markings, scars and whorls).

The report covers a physical assessment (see list below) and will state if the findings are within normal limits or appear to be abnormal, as well as any findings that require further examination.

<i>Skin</i>	<i>Eyes</i>	<i>Mouth</i>
<i>Nasal &amp; Paranasal</i>	<i>Larynx &amp; Trachea</i>	<i>Pulmonary</i>
<i>Cardiovascular</i>	<i>Digestive</i>	<i>Gait</i>
<i>Nervous System</i>	<i>Musculoskeletal</i>	



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The previous list relates to foals and juvenile horses; adult horses already under saddle will also be assessed during and immediately after strenuous exercise, at a period of time after exercise and during a final examination walking, trotting, turning and backing.

For both mares and stallions further examination of the reproductive organs can be included as required.

After these stages of examination the attending vet may suggest further special procedures such as endoscopy, radiography etc., if the findings warrant further examination. It is also possible to request a blood test for drug screening at this time.

It is worth noting that if, as the purchaser, you require a warranty covering the horse or pony's height, freedom from vices, temperament or freedom from any drugs you should seek this in the contract from the seller, as this is not the responsibility of the vet. You should also discuss the suitability of the horse or pony for your chosen use with the breeder.

Happy horse hunting!

