

## Buying a horse

Buying a horse can be an expensive investment; unfortunately, horses don't come with money-back guarantees. That is why it is important to have as much information as you can about the horse before you make a decision.

Whether you are looking at buying a child's pony, a pleasure horse or a high-performance athlete, you stand the best chance of getting one that meets your requirements if you invest in a pre-purchase examination carried out by an equine veterinarian.

Our job is not to pass or fail the horse; instead it is to provide you with as much information as we can in regard to the horse's physical condition and existing problems to allow you to make an informed decision.

A pre-purchase examination is like a 'snap-shot' in time; it provides information about that horse on that particular day, at that particular moment. Relying on a pre-purchase examination report that has been carried out on the horse months previously, or for another purchaser, is a mistake.

We have a standard five stage protocol used in all pre-purchase examinations. What stages are carried out depends on your intended use for the horse. We are happy to advise you; what examinations are best for you.

Stage 1 is a full physical examination at rest;

- Limbs and conformation
- Ears and eyes
- Nostrils, mouth and teeth
- Heart and lungs
- Bones, joints, tendons and ligaments
- Feet

Stage 2 is an examination during motion; specifically walking, trotting, turning, backing and lunging in a 10-metre circle and finally, flexion of all the joints.

Stage 3 is an examination during strenuous exercise to assess movement and breathing.

Stage 4 is an examination immediately after strenuous exercise to assess recovery.

Stage 5 is an examination 15 minutes after stage 4; and any changes in gait during walking, trotting, turning or backing are assessed.

We may recommend additional investigative tests such as;

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- Radiographs
- Ultrasonography
- Endoscopy

We will discuss our findings with you so you can make an informed decision. In reaching a decision you will need to assess a raft of information but keep the following points in mind;

- No horse is perfect in every aspect.
- Some conformation faults and medical conditions are manageable or may never seriously affect the horse's performance
- Try not to let any emotional attachment influence your decision

Ultimately the decision to buy or not to buy is yours alone, but we can be a valuable partner in that decision.