

**The  
STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE  
for the  
PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSE**



**Mare and foal**

**THIS DESCRIPTION APPLIES TO MATURE HORSES**

compiled by

**THE ARABIAN HORSE SOCIETY OF  
AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

Illustrations by kind permission of

**PETER UPTON (from his "The Classic Arabian  
Horse") and SHEILA STUMP (Gallop, Colours  
and Markings)**



**A six month old filly**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Arabian with a known history going back about five thousand years, is the oldest breed of horse in existence. The earliest records depict his ancestors as war horses in the green crescent of Mesopotamia - swift spirited steeds hitched to chariots or bestrode by marauding warriors.

Along with the conquering armies, his forebears and his fame spread throughout the known world. As the prized possession of the great kings and rulers, the Arabian horse became a symbol of power and wealth and he was universally acclaimed as the saddle horse "par excellence." He was the original source of quality and speed, and he remains pre-eminent in the sphere of soundness and endurance.

Either directly or indirectly, the Arabian contributed to the formation of virtually all the modern breeds of light horse.

## **GENERAL APPEARANCE AND IMPRESSION**

A unique combination of beauty and utility, the typical Arabian is a symmetrical saddle horse combining strength and elegance - with a bright, alert outlook and great pride of bearing. The sharply defined facial features, the thin skin with its silken, iridescent coat, the fine hair of the mane and tail and the hard clean legs with their exceptionally clean cut tendons and joints, are characteristic Arabian features associated with a quality of the highest degree.

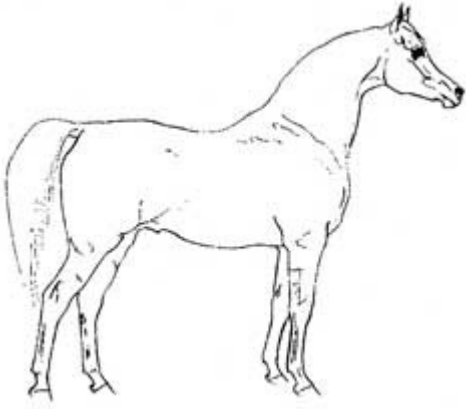
The movements give an impression of lightness, agility and grace, associated with a free, ground covering stride and great impulsion. There is no standard height, however the usual range is from 14-1 hands to 15-1 hands.

## **ATTRIBUTES**

Hearing and sight are acute. Highly intelligent with a unique temperament combining spirit and courage with tractability and exceptional affinity for humans, the Arabian likes to please, but resents abuse.

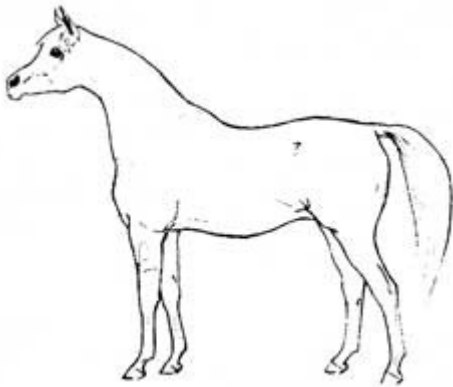
The Arabian, with its outstanding soundness of wind, limb and constitution is renowned for an endurance capacity far above the average and likewise for its prepotency, fertility and longevity.

## GENERAL APPEARANCE



**The Stallion**

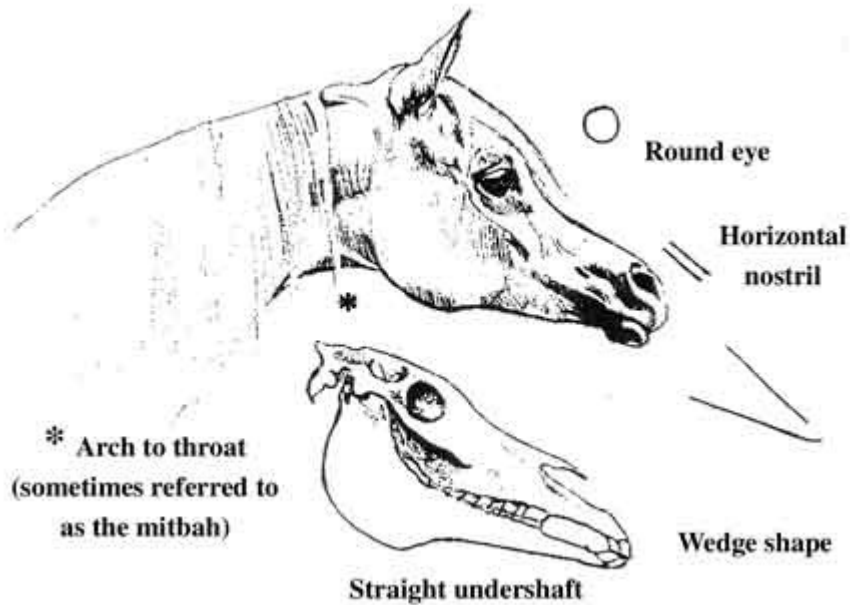
Stallions should exhibit great masculinity with powerful muscle development, commanding presence, and great pride of carriage. The neck should be high set and arched with a well developed crest. The stallion's head has shorter ears and stronger musculature of the forehead and jowls. The feet are usually smaller than in the mare. The scrotum must carry two well developed testicles.



**The Mare**

Mares should be feminine. They are not as strongly made as the stallion with a softer expression and greater refinement. The neck is lighter and often less arched but should have a similar curved attachment to the head. The carriage, light footed and proud, is usually less flamboyant than that of the stallion.

## THE HEAD



The head is a distinctive feature of the Arabian breed. It should be short with a broad forehead and deep circular jowls set wide apart, and tapers to a small, refined muzzle.

The ears are short, pricked and alert with fine edges and well defined tips curved delicately inwards.

The eyes should be large, dark and full, a blunted oval in shape, set relatively low in the head. A very important feature of the horse's expression, they should be soft and lustrous in the mare, while in the stallion they should be bright and sparkling with spirit and vitality.

The majority of Arabians exhibit a dish or depression in the profile of the face. The dish is situated about halfway between the poll and the muzzle, and varies considerably from almost imperceptible to quite pronounced. It is usually more marked in mares than in stallions.

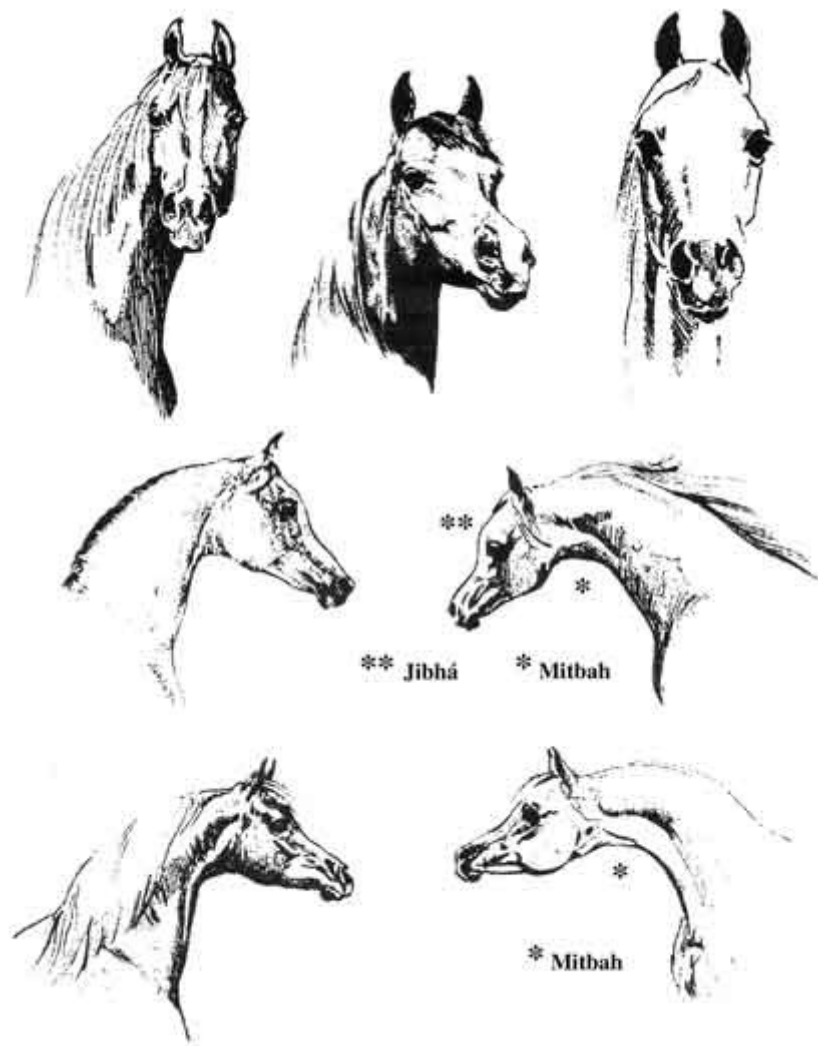
""The forehead may be flat or can bulge somewhat (in a jibhá), see neck illustrations.

The lower edges of the jaw bones are straight with clean cut edges.

The nostrils are comparatively large and very flexible, being capable of great expansion when dilated from exertion or excitement.

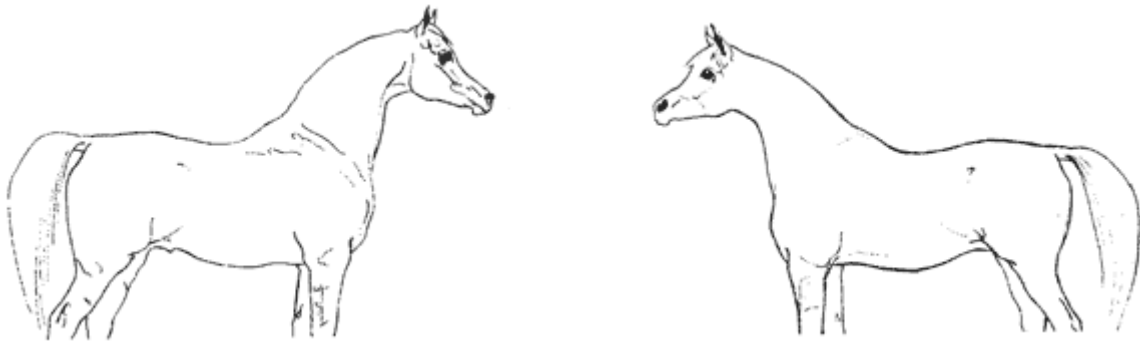
The mouth is long with firm, sensitive lips, and the chin neat and distinct.

## THE NECK



The neck should be arched and moderately long and in proportion to the body, set high into the shoulders, and rising more steeply from the wither than in other breeds. The curve of the neck behind the poll should match the curve of the well detached pliant throat (Gullet).

## THE BODY



**Male**

**Female**

The body should be capacious with a deep chest of medium width and long, well sprung ribs giving a deep rounded barrel and good depth through the flank. The side view should exhibit the short topline and long underline of a typical saddle horse. The withers should be well developed and higher than the croup.

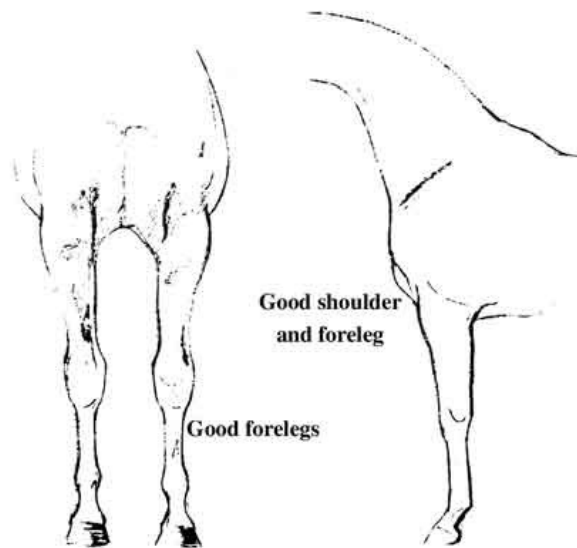
## THE FOREHAND

### THE SHOULDER

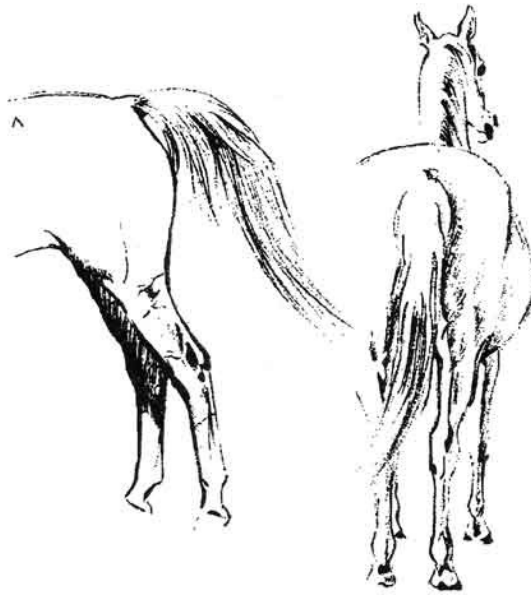
The shoulder should be long and lean with the shoulder blade sloped at approximately 45 degrees. Thus the point of the shoulder will be set well forward and high, the humerus will be more perpendicular and the elbow will be set further forward from the girth, with ample scope for free movement over the flattened area of the lower girth region. The combined effect of these features produces the characteristic easy, long-reaching stride.

### THE FORELEGS

Standing, the forelegs should be perpendicular to the body. The forearms are long and well muscled, the knees broad and flat and the cannons short with cleanly defined tendons running parallel to the bone which should be flat and of adequate substance, but free of any appearance of coarseness. Fetlocks are clean cut and pasterns are of medium length, strong and elastic, showing the same degree of slope as the shoulder.



## THE HINDQUARTERS



**Good with hip bones placed high and wide across straight hind leg**

### HINDLEGS AND THE HINDQUARTERS

The croup should be long from point of hip to point of buttock. It should also be long and comparatively horizontal from point of croup to butt of tail. At rest, the tail setting should be level with the back and not with the point of the croup. In motion the croup becomes more horizontal, raising the tail setting. The buttock is set high and projects back well past the point where the tail meets the body.

Note that there has to be a visible rise from the back, over the loins, to the point of the croup, followed by a lowering of the croup to the butt of the tail. The butt of the tail is seen to be set into the horse level with the back when viewed from the side.

Viewed from behind, the croup should appear wide and strongly muscled and the point of the croup should not project above the muscles on either side of it.

The thighs should appear wide and well muscled.

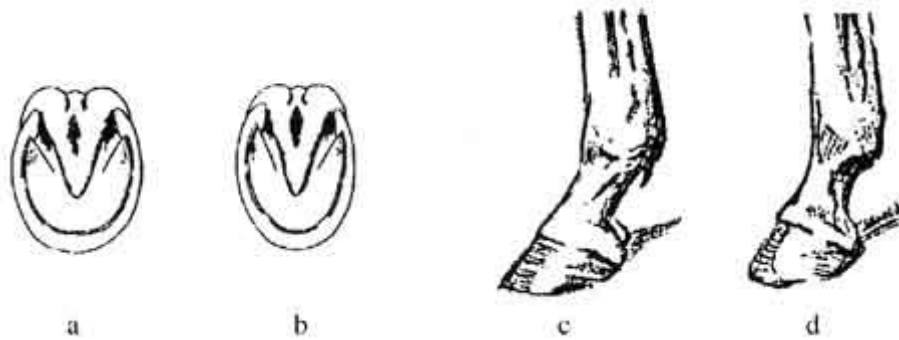
The stifles should be set clear of the body and capable of very free movement.

The gaskins are long and well muscled. The hocks are large and flat with points well defined.

Viewed from the side, the horse is long from hip to hock and, when standing squarely, a perpendicular line from the point of the buttock to the ground should pass to the point of the hock and down the back of the flexor tendons and fetlock joint.

The hind cannons are slightly longer and stand slightly wider apart than the front cannons and should be parallel when viewed from the rear.

## THE HOOVES



**a)Fore hoof b)Hind hoof c)Fore hoof pastern & fetlock d)Hind hoof pastern & fetlock**

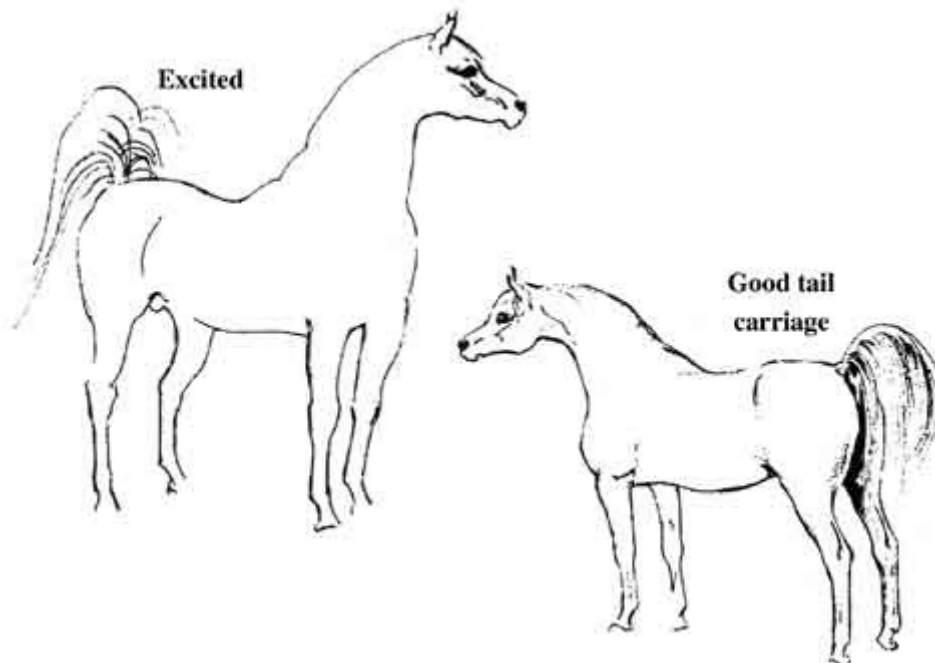
Hooves are rounded and of generous size, with the horn of the walls and strong and the heels wide and of adequate depth. The frog is well developed and the soles distinctly concave (compared to other breeds the Arabian has rather a large foot for its size).

The hind hooves are a little more pointed and narrower than the fore hooves and usually turn out slightly.

## TAIL CARRIAGE

### TAIL CARRIAGE

When the horse moves, the tail is elevated to be carried proudly in a high pronounced arch.





## PACES AND ACTION

**Limb Movements** should be straight and even at all paces.

**The Walk** is smart and free, with the hind feet overstepping the prints of the fore feet by up to 30cm.

**The Trot** is free swinging with the forelegs thrown well forward from the shoulder; the feet dwell a moment at full stretch before coming to the ground, giving the characteristic floating action. There should be a matching free forward swing of the limbs from the shoulders and the stifles, with the knees and hocks being well flexed and the hind legs brought well forward under the body.

**The Canter** is very smooth and elastic, well balanced with outstanding agility and sure footedness.

**The Gallop** is very free and light, with a long ground covering stride.

### THE PACES

**Walk:** 4 time

The horse moves his legs laterally and consecutively so that there are 4 hoof beats to a stride. 2 or 3 feet are always on the ground and there is no period of suspension.

(1) Off-hind

(2) Off-fore

(3) Near hind

(4) Near fore

(If the rhythm is irregular, the walk is impure)

**Trot:** 2 time

Alternative diagonals are moved simultaneously giving 2 hoof beats to a stride.

The diagonals are separated by a moment of suspension.

(1) Left diagonal - near fore and off-hind.

(2) Right diagonal - off fore and near hind.

(If the rhythm is irregular, the trot is impure eg foreleg in advance, hindleg in advance, hind legs at canter.)

**Canter:** 3 time

A bounding movement of 3 hoof beats to a stride. Sequence of the feet on ground (1) 1 hind leg and 2 forelegs (2) 1 foreleg (3) suspension (4) 1 hind leg (5) 2 hind and 1 foreleg.

Off-fore lead:

(1) Near hind

(2) Diagonal of off-hind and near fore

(3) Off-fore

For near-fore lead (1) off hind (2) diagonal near hind and off fore (3) near-fore.

(A disunited canter is impure as is a canter when 4 hoof beats are heard which means that the diagonal hind is in advance of the fore leg.)

**Gallop:** 4 time

A horse galloping with the off fore leading the following is the sequence:-

(1) Near hind

(2) Off hind

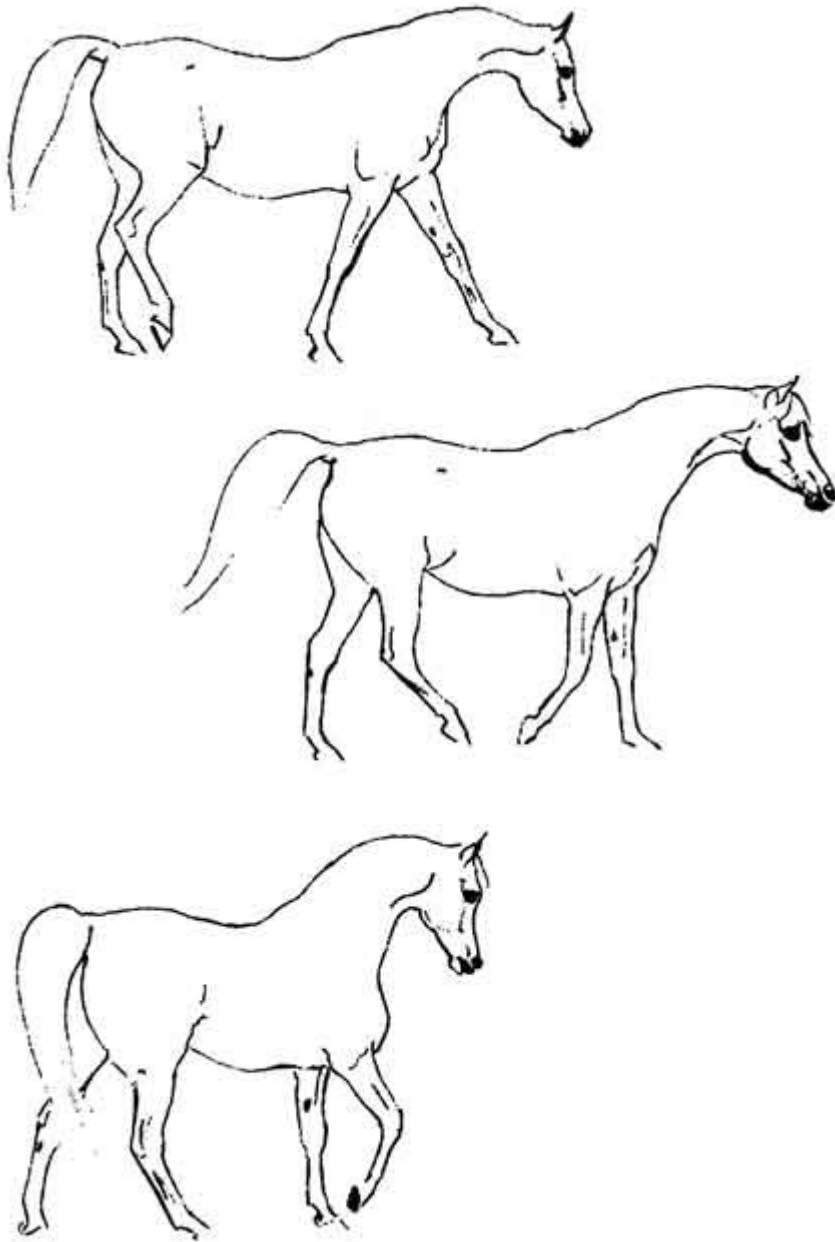
(3) Near fore

(4) Off fore

Suspension.

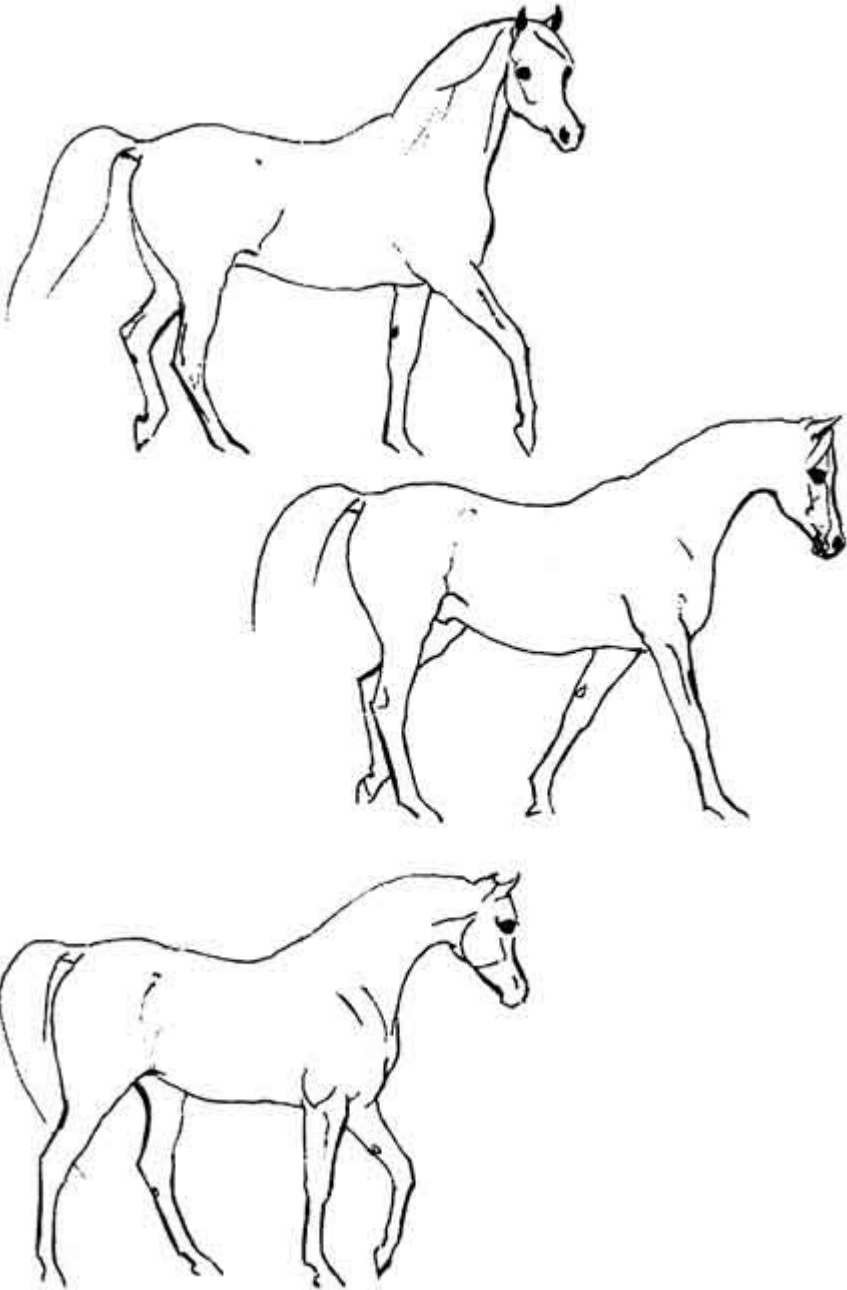
## **PACES AND ACTION**

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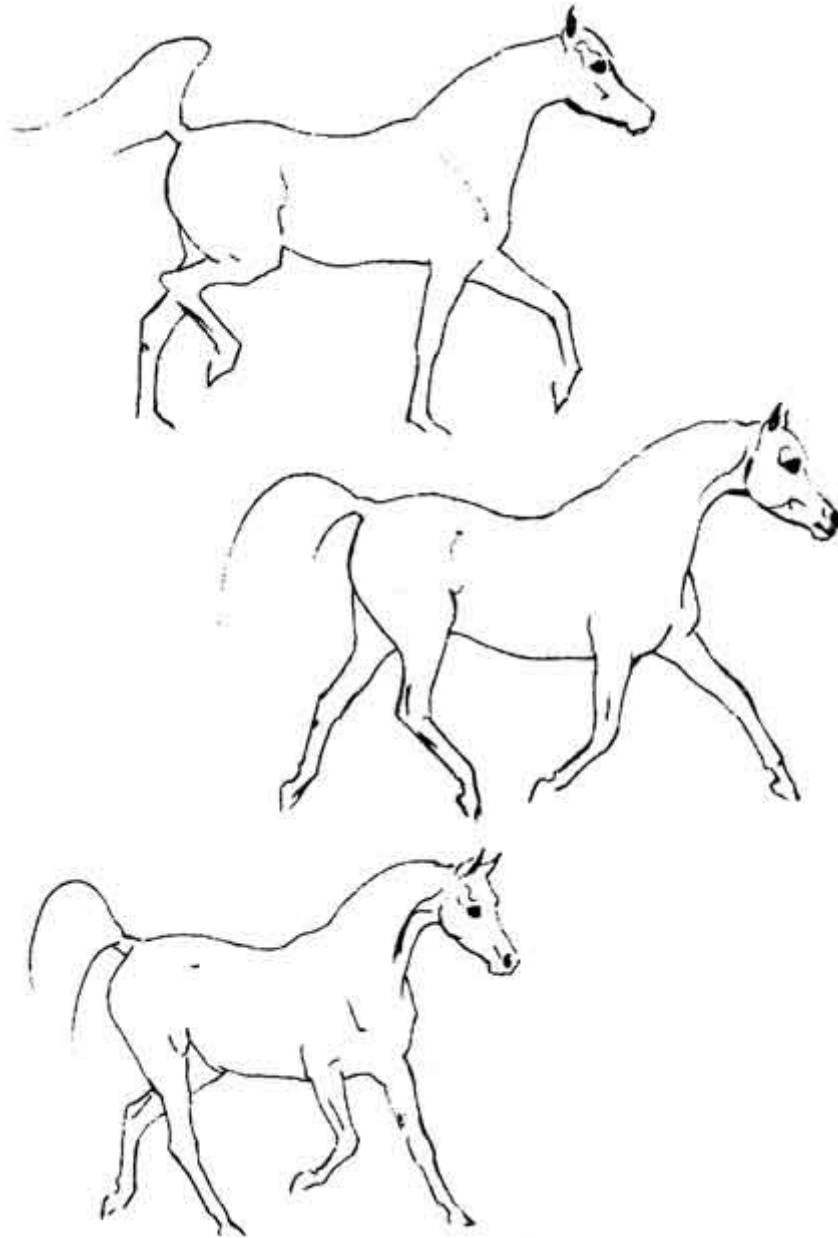


### **THE WALK**

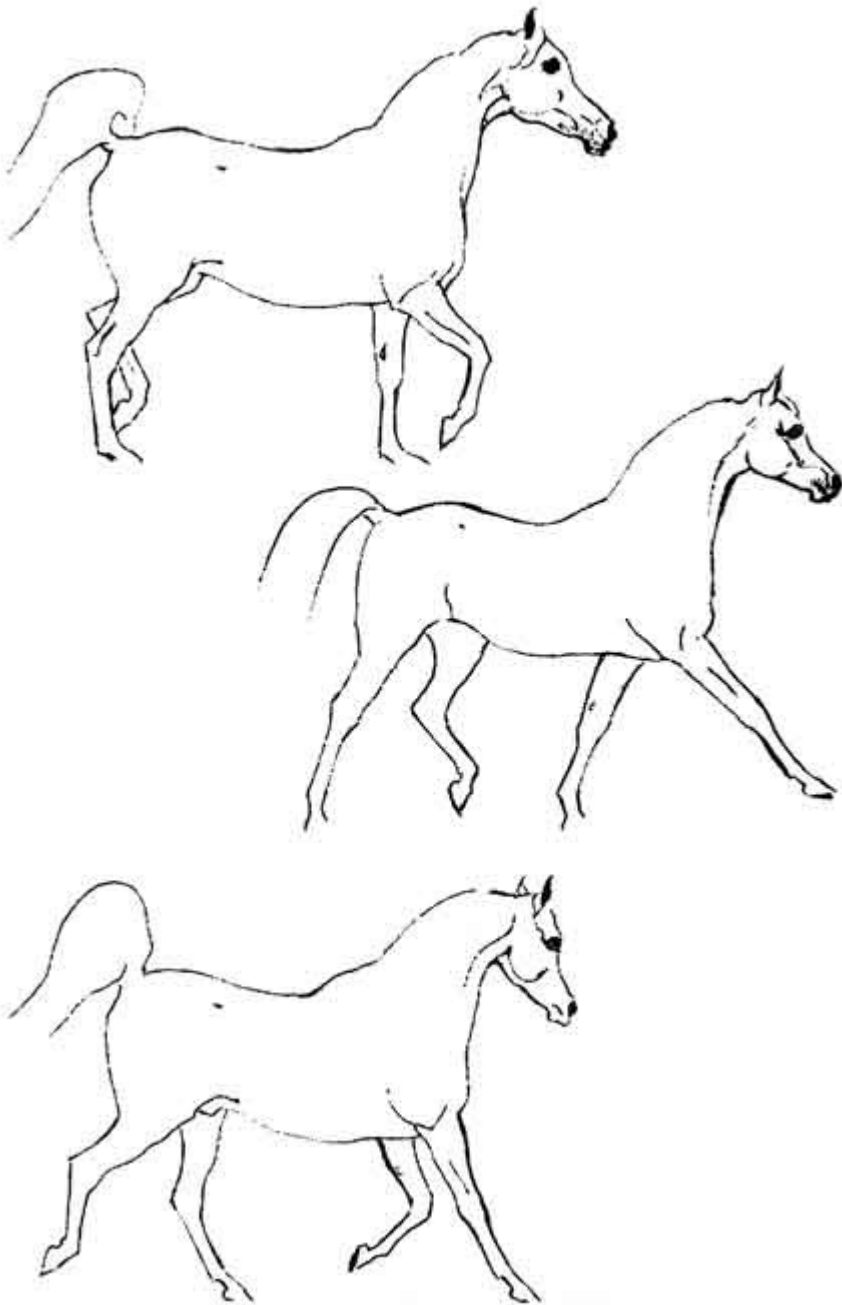
The walk is smart and free, with the hind feet overstepping the prints of the fore feet by up to 30cm.



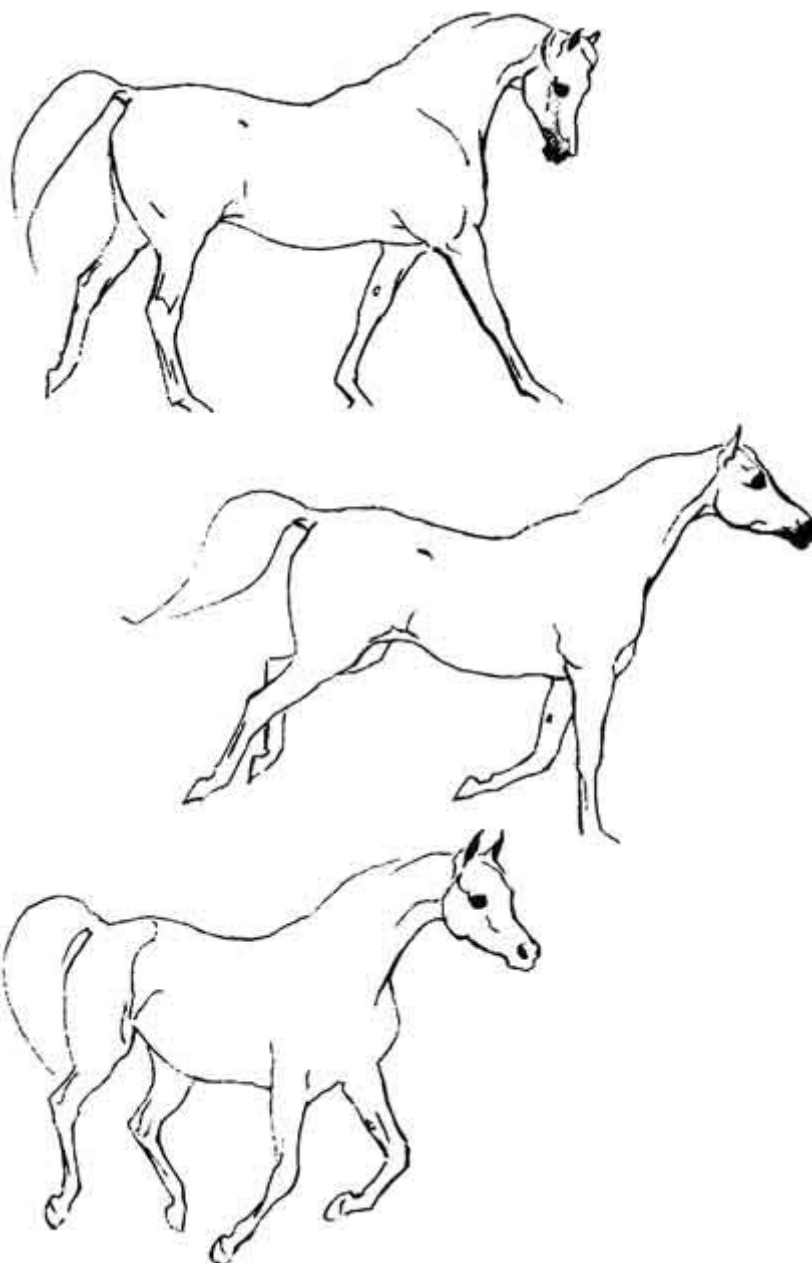
## THE TROT



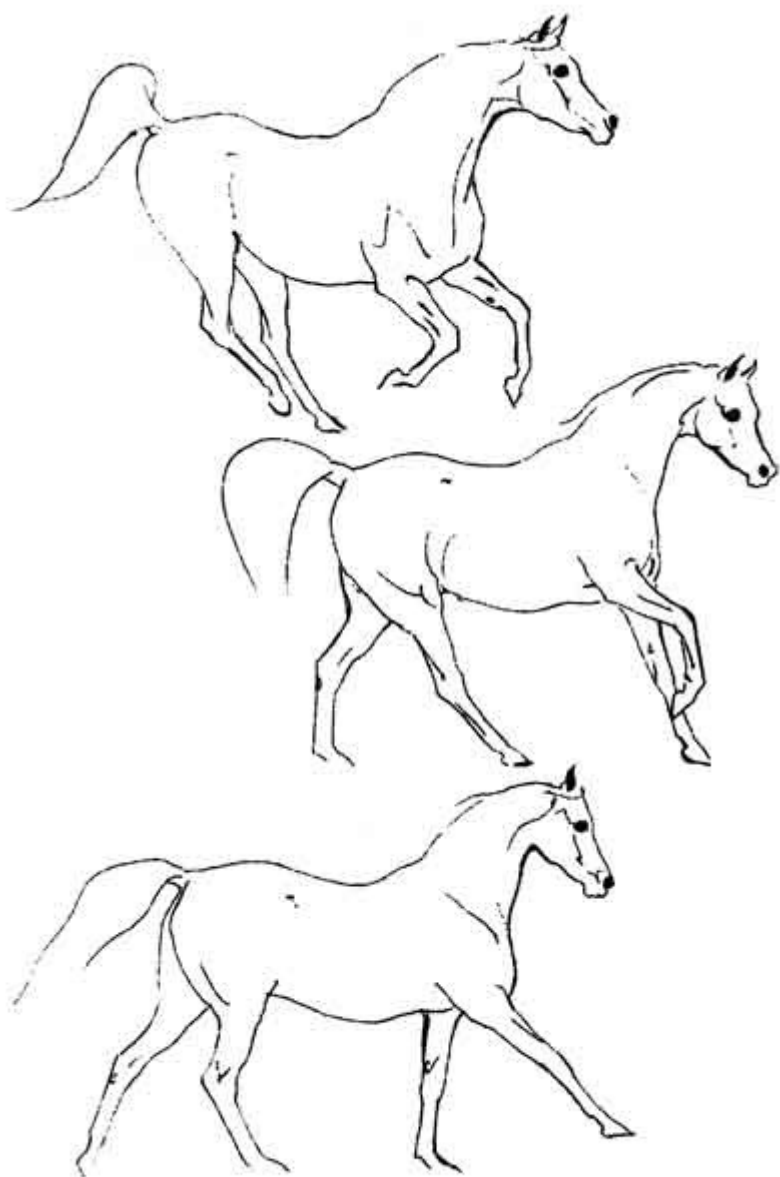
The Trot is free swinging with the forelegs thrown well forward from the shoulder; the feet dwell a moment at full stretch before coming to the ground, giving the characteristic floating action. There should be a matching free forward swing of the limbs from the shoulders and the stifles, with the knees and hocks being well flexed and the hind legs brought well forward under the body.



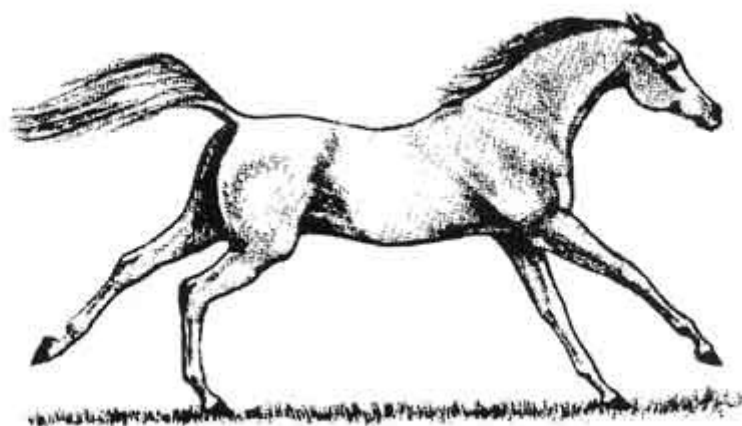
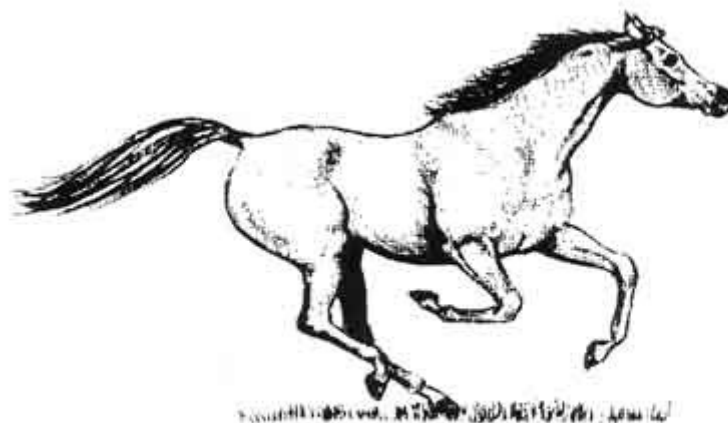
## THE CANTER



The Canter is very smooth and elastic, well balanced with outstanding agility and sure footedness.



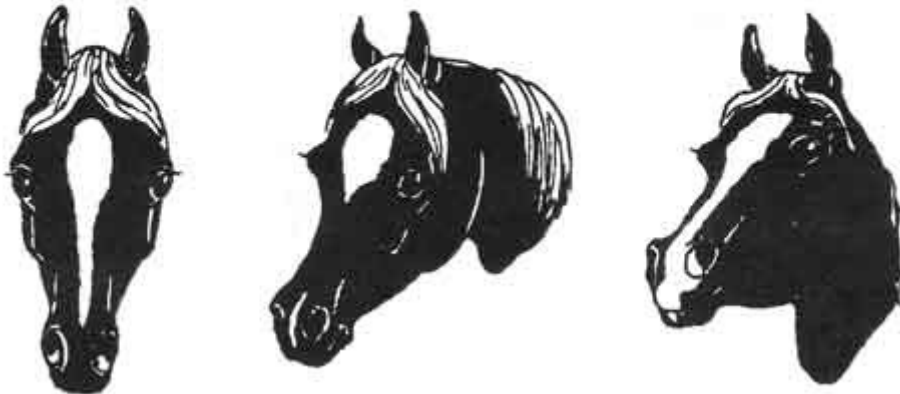
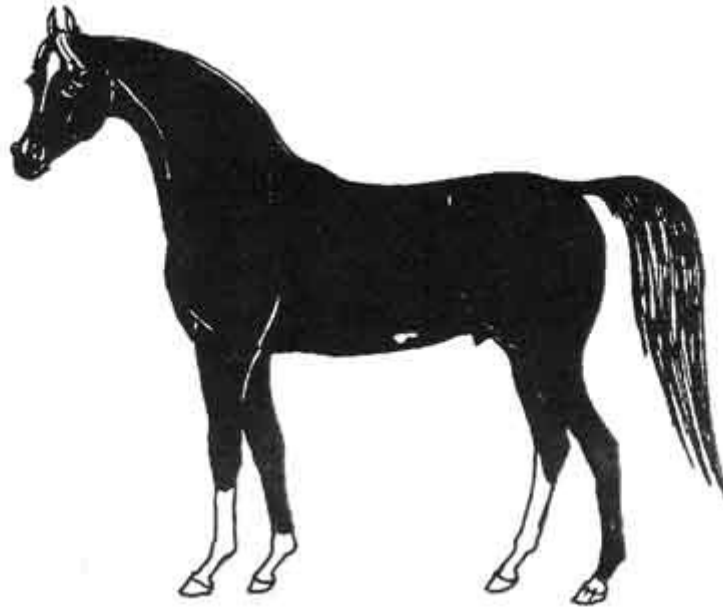
## THE GALLOP



The Gallop is very free and light, with a long ground covering stride.



## COLOURS AND MARKINGS



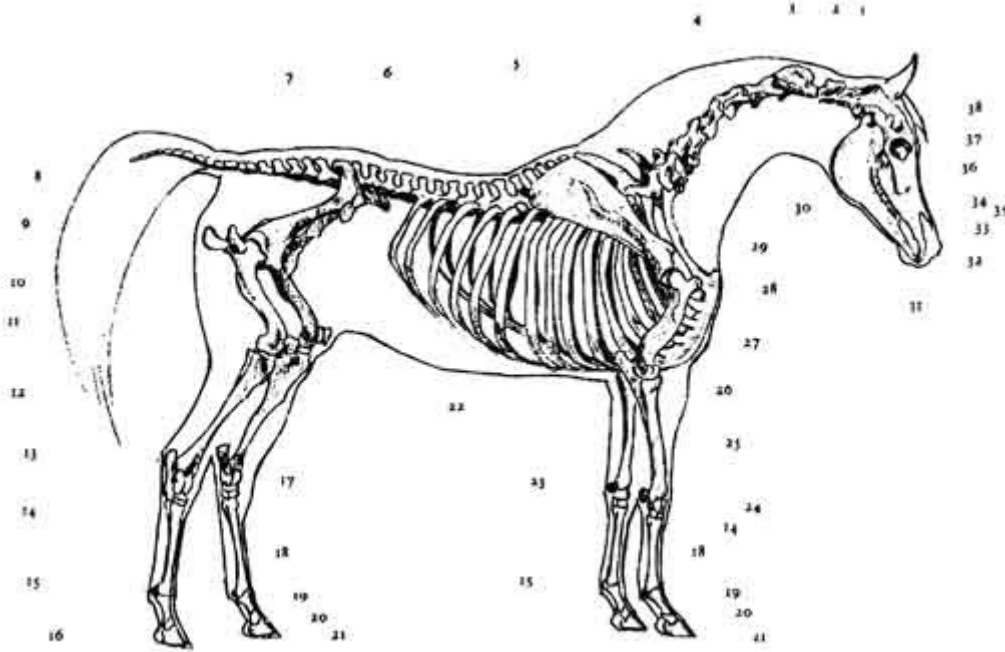
Colours may be chestnut, grey, bay, brown and black. White facial and leg markings are common. Patches, spots, flecks and ticking also occur. (Ticking is commonly mistaken for roan - a colour which does not occur in Arabians).

Note: The term 'Bloody Shoulder', which is used at the end of this document, is correct. When this mark occurs on the neck or other parts of the body it is often described as a 'blood stain'.

## SKELETAL FEATURES

All bones are of great density and devoid of coarseness.

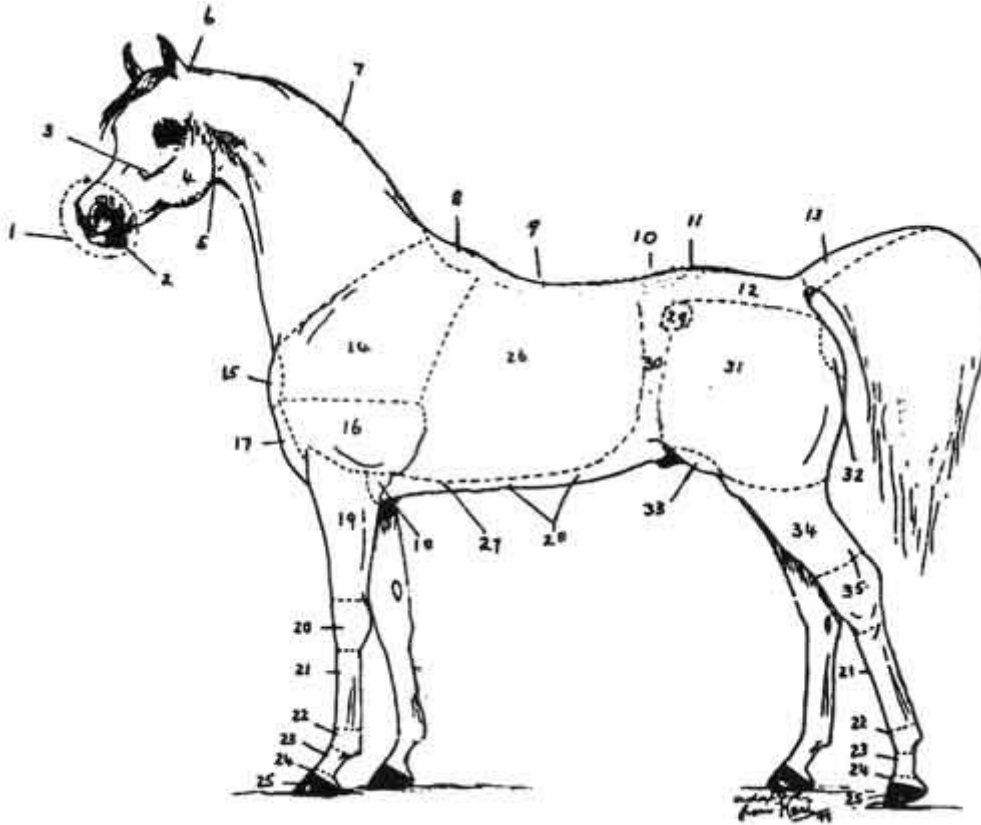
The bars of the mouth arc comparatively long. Usually there are only sixteen instead of eighteen vertebrae in the tail, while occasional individuals are found which have five instead of six lumbar vertebrae and seventeen instead of eighteen pairs of ribs.



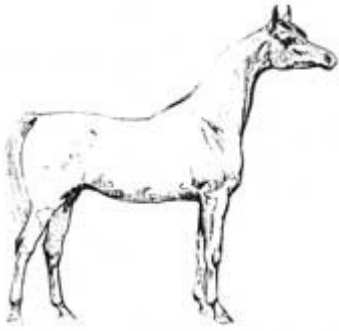
### SKELETON OF THE HORSE

1	Occipital	11	Stifle	21	OsPedis	31	Incisors	
2	Atlas	12	Tibia	22	Ribs	32	Canines	
3	Axis	13	OsCalcis	23	Pisiform	33	The bars	
4	Cervical	Vertebrae	14	Splint bone	24	Knee joint	34	Molars
5	Dorsal	Vertebrae	15	Sesamoids	25	Radius	35	Nasal bone
6	Lumbar	Vertebrae	16	Heel	26	Ulna	36	Malar bone
7	Sacral	Vertebrae	17	Astralagus	27	Humerus	37	Eye socket
8		Trochanter	18	Cannon	28	Point of Shoulder	38	Parietal
9		Ischium	19	Large pastern	29	Scapula		
10	Femur		20	Small pastern				
			30	Lower Jaw				

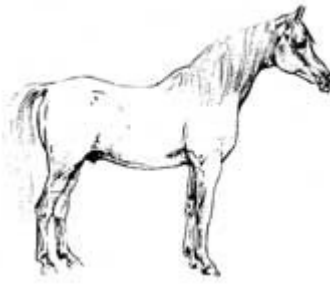
## POINTS OF THE HORSE



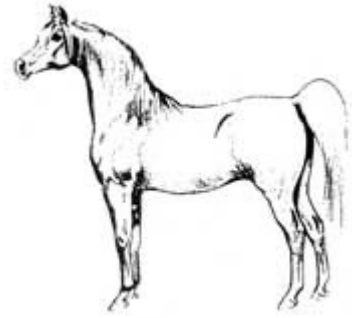
- |                       |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Muzzle             | 13. Dock              | 25. Hoof             |
| 2. Chin               | 14. Shoulder          | 26. Barrel           |
| 3. Cheekbone          | 15. Point of Shoulder | 27. Brisket          |
| 4. Jowl/Jaw           | 16. Arm               | 28. Belly            |
| 5. Throatlatch/Gullet | 17. Breast            | 29. Point of hip     |
| 6. Poll               | 18. Elbow             | 30. Flank            |
| 7. Crest              | 19. Forearm           | 31. Thigh            |
| 8. Withers            | 20. Knee              | 32. Point of Buttock |
| 9. Back               | 21. Cannon            | 33. Stifle           |
| 10. Loin              | 22. Fetlock           | 34. Gaskin           |
| 11. Point of croup    | 23. Pastern           | 35. Hock             |
| 12. Croup             | 24. Coronet           |                      |



**Yearling**



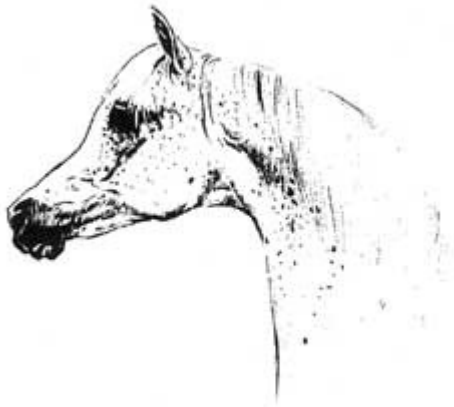
**A 30 year old stallion - looking well but showing signs of age**



**Standing over a lot of ground**

Although the back is short in the third illustration above, the well laid shoulder gives a long underline so that the horse stands over a lot of ground.

***The characteristics of the Arabian have been firmly established for centuries and the modern Arabian retains and is valued for the same attributes which characterised the breed in ancient times. His exceptional versatility as a performance horse, quality and soundness, together with his unique temperament and affinity for humans, ensures the continuation of his pre-eminence in the equine world.***



**Fleabitten grey**



**Unusual face markings**



**A 'bloody shoulder' mark**