

Ten top tips for managing your horse's weight

With so many different factors affecting your horse's weight it's difficult to know what you are aiming for. Here are ten easy tips to help.

1. Find out if your horse is overweight

It is impossible to tell by eye how much fat a horse is carrying and this can be surprisingly deceptive. Feel for fat in specific areas to check your horse's condition. Contact us for a free DVD that will show you how to correctly fat score your horse. In addition, a podcast is available at the Right Weight web address below.

2. Check your feed

Ask an expert whether you are feeding your horse appropriately. This can be very confusing, which makes it easy to feed your horse more calories than they really need. Also, try to make titbits and treats the exception rather than the rule.

3. Don't crash diet

Horses must have a steady supply of food to keep them healthy, so you need to find ways to reduce the calories without cutting down the quantity.

4. Control grass intake

Most leisure horses get more calories than they need from grass alone. In many cases it may be necessary to restrict their grass intake in some way, although additional vitamins and minerals will still be required. Find ways to cut down the amount of grass they get without stopping them from eating completely.

5. Don't be tempted to feed for more 'oomph'

A high energy feed is also high in calories. Feeding an overweight horse more calories won't give it more energy for work, but it will create more fat. Think about reducing their calorie intake so they lose weight and build up fitness to give them more energy.

6. Walk more

A brisk walk or steady trot will burn more fat than faster work such as canter. Find ways to build more walking into your horse's day.



7. Consider if your horse really does need a rug

Remember that horses already have waterproof coats and their own central heating systems - digesting fibre generates heat and this helps to keep the horse warm from the inside out. If your horse is overweight consider whether it could go without a rug or if a lighter weight one would be more suitable.

8. Remember that every horse is different

Don't be tempted to feed or rug your horse just because everyone else does. Consider what your horse needs and remember that it might be different to what other horses need, even if they're of a similar type.

9. Monitor your horse

Horses can put on weight very quickly so fat scoring and weighttaping your horse fortnightly will help you spot any changes more quickly than you could by eye.

10. Log on

For more handy tips watch the DVD or log on to the Right Weight website at the address below.

www.worldhorsewelfare.org/rightweight

Registered charity no: 206658 and SC038384

World Horse Welfare receives no government funding and relies entirely on public donations. Please help in any way you can.

t: +44 (0)1953 498682
e: info@worldhorsewelfare.org
www.worldhorsewelfare.org



WorldHorseWelfare