

# **Muscle Symmetry and Straightness**

## **Assessment of and exercises for straightness.**

Most horses will have times when they don't travel straight. Straightness assists the horse to direct power through his limbs and to create true forwardness and straightness in each movement.

Certain factors will contribute to or impede equine straightness; rider position, rider straightness, incorrectly fitted tack, equine conformation, past injury and range of motion in the equine limbs.

During this article we will look at how to assess symmetry of the equine body and then discuss the more common problems which affect the eventing horse. I shall also include exercises which will direct the horse into a more symmetrical form and therefore improve movement.

It is common knowledge that the engine of the horse is in the hindquarter not withstanding this we will start by assessing that symmetry.

Initial assessment & evaluation process:

I like to start by asking the horse to stand squarely; squareness in itself will tell if the horse is symmetrical. And horse with a pelvic issue will have difficulty in standing and remaining square. If placed square they will often fidget to get back to a more comfortable position.



Horse had uneven development of the gluteals (right hind compared to left hind quarter)  
Horse has right hind leg turned out when compared to left hind leg.  
Sacral tuberosity on right is higher than left.  
Hamstrings of right leg are more defined and tighter in appearance than left.  
Tail hangs to right which would indicate that lumbar vertebrae may not to be aligned.  
Gluteals in right hind larger than left  
Biceps femoris of left larger than right.

Next issue we will discuss the front limb straightness and static balance of the stationary horse. Front limb, shoulder and thoracic stretches and alignment.

Initial visual appearance may not show much until you use a grid line approach.

Check hip levels, sacral tuberosities, muscle definition, hock levels, leg angles, tail hang, and gluteal and gaskin muscle area for development.

Left picture shows horse standing squarely.

Right picture: using a grid we see much more.

How many items of asymmetry do you see? Answers, at tend of article

### **Sacral Tuberosity**

