

Conformation Quick Tips

THE JUMPER

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What is conformation?

A horse's conformation defines not only how it is built, but how it moves and performs.

Having a horse with conformation suited to their intended discipline can have a drastic impact on a horse's performance level and overall ability to excel. Functional conformation studies the horse's build from a skeletal perspective, and its impact on performance.

How does conformation affect the jumper?

A horse who jumps must be able to clear great heights, an ability that derives from proper joint angles that lead to increased scope. When considering jumper conformation, it's essential to consider the composition of the foreleg.

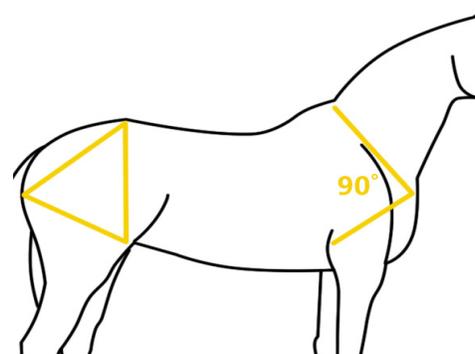
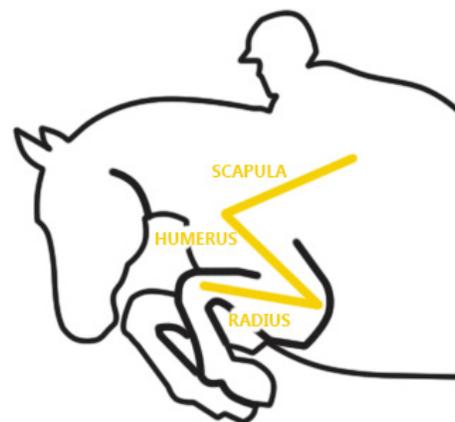
The three points to consider are the:

- shoulder (scapula)
- humerus
- radius

The conformation of these three parts will affect the horse's ability to lift his knees up and out of the way.

Some points to consider:

- An open or steep angle between the humerus and scapula (90 degrees or greater) is ideal
- The point of shoulder should be higher up, towards the neck
- A horse with a long shoulder and upright angle will have a greater range of motion because the scapula can rotate further back - making it easier for the horse to snap their legs up over fences
- A Jumper with a long humerus will have a greater scope as a result of a greater ability to move the legs away from the ribcage (longer stride)
- An equilateral triangle should be formed between the point of hip, point of buttock, and stifle - this gives more power to the hindquarters
- A low stifle (below the level of the sheath) will help to increase stride length, as well as the height and width a horse can jump
- A good jumper should have a high set and long neck to help balance over fences.



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