

Section 1.2.2 – Donkey

Table 1. Description of the body condition scores for donkeys on a scale from 1 to 9.

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
1. Very thin (Emaciated)	Animal markedly emaciated; bone structure easily seen over body; little muscle present; animal weak, lethargic.
2. Thin	Animal emaciated; individual spinous processes, ribs, hooks (tuber coxae), pins (tuber ischii), shoulder blades and spine all prominent, sharply defined; some muscle development; neck thin; prominent withers; shoulders sharply angular.
3. Less thin	Vertebral column prominent and individual spinous processes can be felt; little fat, but superspinous muscle over spinous processes apparent; ribs, pins, (tuber ischii) and hooks (tuber coxae) prominent; loin area and rump concave; little muscle or fat covering over withers and shoulders.
4. Less than moderate	Vertebral column visible; pins (tuber ischii) can be felt but not visible; hooks (tuber coxae) rounded but visible; rump flat rather than concave; ribs can be felt but not obvious; withers, shoulders and neck have some muscle and fat cover; shoulder blades less clearly defined.
5. Moderate	Superspinous muscles developed and readily apparent; vertebral column can be felt; hooks (tuber coxae) rounded; rump rounded, convex; pins (tuber ischii) not visible; some fat can be felt in shoulder area region and at base of neck; can feel ribs, but not visible.
6. More than moderate	Cannot feel spinous processes easily; back becoming flat well covered; rump convex and well muscled; some fat can be felt on neck, base of neck and shoulder area; neck filled into shoulder; hooks (tuber coxae) just visible.
7. Less fat	Back flat; cannot feel spinous processes; hooks (tuber coxae) just visible; fat on neck and shoulder area beginning to expand over ribs; flanks filling, neck thickening.
8. Fat	Animal appears well covered with body rounded with fat and bones not discernible; flanks filled, broad back.
9. Very fat (obese)	Bones buried in fat; back broad or flat, in some cases crease along the backbone; large accumulations of fat on neck, over shoulder area and ribs; flank filled with fat.

Notes: 1-3 frame obvious. 4-6 frame and covering balanced. 7-9 frame not as obvious as covering.

The spinous processes are the bony points rising from the spine or backbone. The superspinous muscle is the muscle along each side of the backbone. Individual donkeys can deposit their body fat in different areas of the body, so the individual neck, shoulders, ribs, rump, and flank condition should be assessed and combined to give an overall condition score.

Very thin (Emaciated)



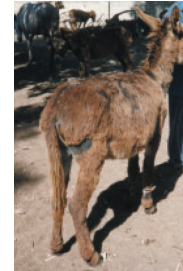
Thin



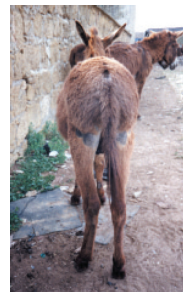
Less thin



Less than moderate



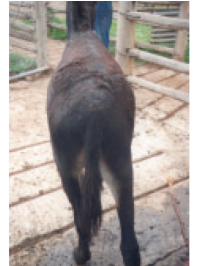
Moderate



More than moderate



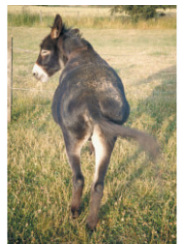
Less Fat



Fat



Very Fat (Obese)



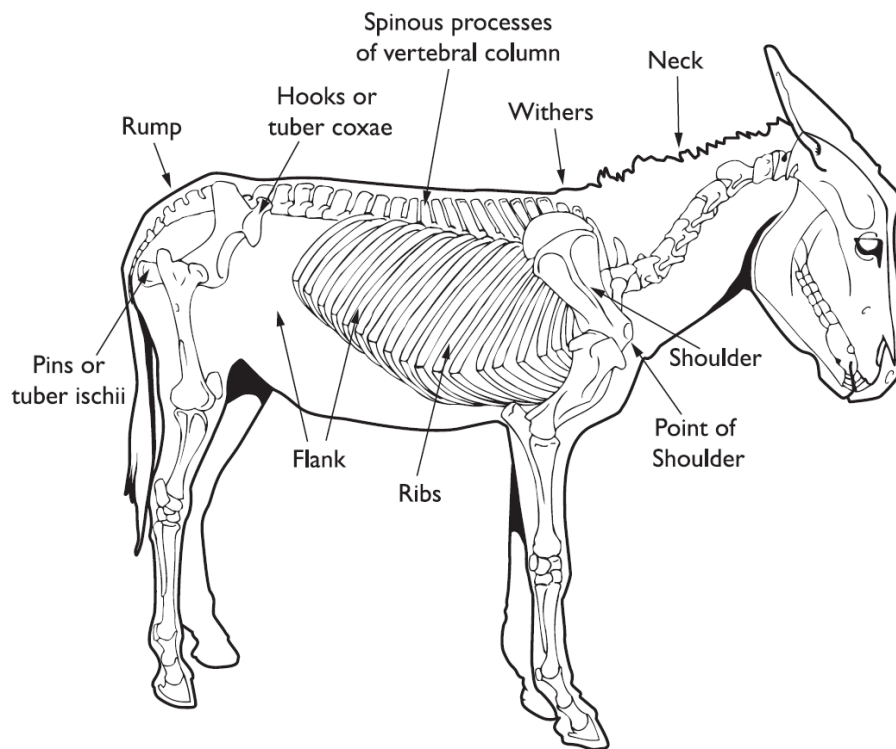


Figure 1.0: The main anatomical points to check visibly and by feel in the assessment of body condition of a donkey

Pearson, R. A. and Ouassat, M. (2000) *A guide to live weight estimation and body condition scoring of donkeys*, Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh, Easter Bush, Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9RG, Scotland.