

WHAT IS, A SCALED DOWN VERSION OF A FULL SIZED HORSE?

The old saying of “close your eyes and imagine a pony and then imagine a horse”, to see the difference in type, is a good starting point but there are many different types of pony and horse breeds.

The Shetland and the English Riding Pony are both pony breeds but they are very different in type. The Thoroughbred and the Clydesdale are both horse breeds but, they too, are very different in type.

So, how do you know if you have a scaled down version of a full sized horse?

While Arabians, Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds and Clydesdales are all different in type and there are slight individual breed characteristics, eg Arabians generally have a shorter back; overall the dimensions of all horse breeds are basically the same.

The length of the head and hip are used as units of measurement to determine the correct dimensions of a well-balanced, mature horse.

The height of the horse (top of the wither to the ground) should equal the length of the horse (chest to point of rump) making a balanced horse square. The horse’s body should fit in a box with just the head and neck protruding.

These dimensions don’t change irrespective of whether the horse is in show condition or paddock condition. A grass belly, pregnancy, long coat, or obesity can alter the appearance of a horse but the dimensions of a mature horse don’t change.

To determine if you have true horse type, take a photo of your mature horse (at least four years of age) on a level, hard surface with the horse standing square and the camera pointing at roughly the girth area angled neither up nor down (you will probably have to squat down). Trace an outline of your horse from the photo and measure the dimensions.

These measurements can then be utilised in your breeding program to breed true horse type. If you determine that your horse is too long you would then breed it to a horse with a short back and so on. Knowing what faults your horse has is the first step in breeding a better type of foal.