

Taking Line Drawings and Pictures of a Horse's Back

1.) Have the horse stand as squarely as possible on as flat a surface as possible, with his head straight forward and at its normal working height when the measurements are taken. Standing with a hip cocked or a turned, raised or lowered head can change your results.

2.) Make three lines across the horse with chalk or tape to mark where the measurements are taken and to help reference those places to the topline. Line A should be taken just behind the back of the shoulder blade. Make sure you can feel the back of the shoulder blade and that your drawing is *behind*, and not over top, the shoulder blade. Line B should be placed at the lowest point of the horse's back and Line C should be placed 8 inches behind Line B.



3.) Use a flexible curve or any other piece of malleable wire to mould to the shape of the horse in these three places and then transfer those shapes onto paper or cardboard. Label them A, B or C. Newsprint works well as you need a fairly large sheet of paper to get the full picture. Please double check all shapes since it is very easy for the wires to move between horse and paper. It is also helpful to make a cardboard template and try it back on the horse. This is a good test to see how accurate your back drawing really is.



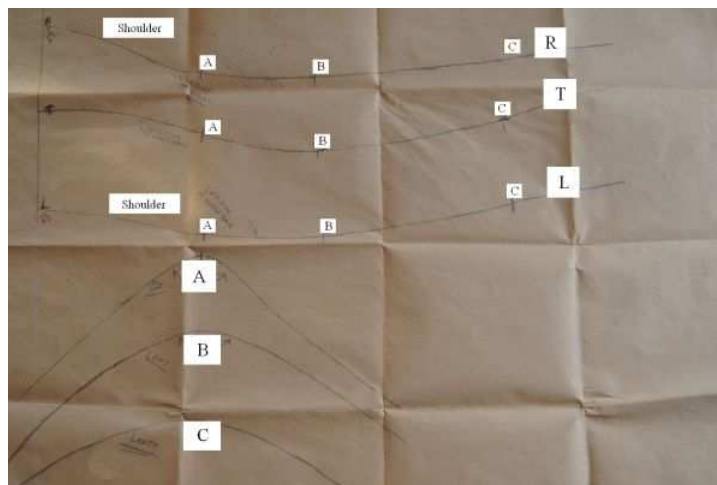
4.) Use the wire along the top line of the horse's back from wither to loin. Label this line T for Topline. Mark where drawings A, B, and C cross line T.



5.) Measure 4" out from the midline at positions B and C and mark those points. Then place your wire along the side of the horse connecting these points, *continuing straight forward* over the shoulder blade and back almost to the hip. Do not try to stay 4" away from the spine ahead of position B as that will mean your measurement is too high up and not under the middle of the bar any more. **With the horse's head in its normal working position** (this is crucial), take a drawing along this line. Do this on both sides, marking them L and R for Left and Right. Mark on these tracings where lines A, B and C cross and where the back of the shoulder blade is.



6.) This is an example of a well done set of back drawings.



5.) We also ask for a couple of measurements. First, measure the distance along the rock line (not along the top line) between line A and line B. This tells us how far back his shoulder blades come relative to the low point on his back. This measurement is usually between 6 ½ and 8 inches. Second, measure from the back of the shoulder blade to the point of the hip. This gives us an idea of the comparative length of his back.

Taking Pictures

1.) Pictures with the lines or tape in place are extremely helpful. Tape or chalk lines especially allow us to see the curves much better than just a picture of the horse does, plus it lets us see where you took the line drawings from.

2.) Take a picture straight on from the side, preferably with a person or something in it to help us judge the size of the horse. This picture gives the best information about wither height, the relative positions of the withers and the shoulder, and whether the horse is built downhill or more level.



3.) Take a picture from directly behind and above the horse. Since you can have the same shape on a small, round horse as you do on a big round horse, this lets us see the width of the body as well as the twist along the sides. It also lets us see if there is substantial asymmetry between the sides. Try to keep the mane as far forward as possible to allow us to see the shoulders better.



Rod Nikkel Saddle Trees

4.) Take a picture angled from the front on each side. This gives the best information about rock.



5.) Take a picture angled from the back on each side. This shows the prominence (or lack of prominence) of the shoulder blades the best.

