



BODY WEIGHT ESTIMATION

Background

The only truly accurate way of estimating your horse's body weight is through the use of a scale. For most people this is not an option. However, it may be possible to take your horse in a trailer to a commercial weigh station to weigh the truck/trailer/horse and then return without the horse to get a weight on just the truck and trailer. This can then be subtracted to get the weight of the horse. If this is not possible, a weight tape can be used which, when placed around the horse's heart girth area gives an estimation of that horse's weight. However, this does not take into account the horse's body type, breed etc. A more accurate method involves measuring the horse's height, length and heart girth. These measurements are then entered into an equation which gives a more accurate estimation of weight.

Materials Needed

You will need a weight tape that can also measure height or a weight tape and a cloth quilting tape.

Technique

For all these measurements, have your horse stand squarely on level ground such as a barn aisle. It is best to have help for this process.

Height: Using either a commercial weight/height tape or a dress maker's tape measure the horse's height in hands or inches at the withers. Be sure that if the tape you use is a height tape and it has a line for you to place your toe on that you measure from that point of the tape and not from the end. It may say something like "place toe/foot here" this secures the end of the tape at the ground and makes it easier to get an accurate reading.

You may also use a height stick however, be aware that a lot of horses are afraid of measuring sticks.

Have your assistant check that the vertical part of the tape is inf act vertical and the horizontal part horizontal.



Image showing approximate vertical positioning of the tape.



Clair Thunes, PhD ~ Phone: 916-248-8987
~ Email: support@clarityequine.com



Weight Estimation With Tape:

Using a commercially available weight tape determine your horse's estimated weight. Stand horse square on level ground and place the tape around the horse's barrel tight to the elbows passing tape just below the highest point of the withers.



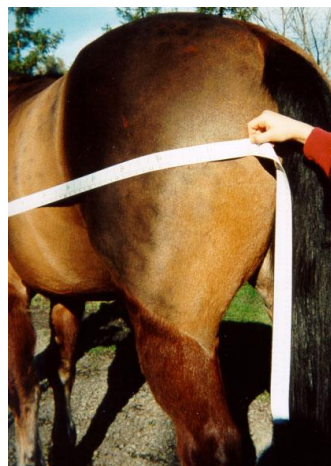
Bring the end of the tape around and read off the predicted weight.



Make sure to check the far side of the horse to make sure that the tape is not twisted and is tight behind the elbow.



Heart Girth: Using the same technique as measuring the weight with a weight tape, use either a commercial weight/height tape or a dress maker's tape to measure the horse's girth circumference (**all the way around the horse's barrel**) in inches from just behind the elbow and about an inch below the highest point of the of wither around its barrel. Measure as the horse exhales. Be sure that if the tape you use is a height tape and it has a line for you to place your toe on that you measure from that point of the tape and not from that end. If measuring in hands you will need to convert to inches. There are 4 inches in a hand so if the horse's length says 16.3hh its girth is 67 inches. The photo below shows how the heart girth tape placement can be angled slightly backwards for a horse with very high withers. Note that the horse should be standing square. The same placement should be used in this case for the weight estimation.



Length: Using either a commercial weight/height tape or a dress maker's tape to measure the horse's length in inches from the point of shoulder to the point of buttock. The point of buttock is the boney protrusion down and slightly out from the top of the tail. **Do not go all the way around to the tail** (see picture). Be sure that if the tape you use is a height tape (i.e. you are using the height side to measure inches) and it has a line for you to place your toe on that you measure from that point of the tape and not from that end. If measuring in hands you will need to convert to inches. There are 4 inches in a hand so if the horse's length says 14.2hh its length is 58 inches.

The above photo shows the point of shoulder and the point of buttock where the two white lines come together in each case. The yellow circle shows the point of hip. This is not the correct measurement location.

Results

Weight using weight tape estimate = _____

Height: _____ inches Length: _____ inches Heart Girth: _____ inches

Transfer the results for each measurement in to the online intake form.



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