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# The Pre Purchase Examination



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We always recommend to any prospective purchaser that a horse should be vetted prior to purchase and that if possible, the purchaser should be present at the vetting itself. This is so any findings or opinions can be related directly.

The vet undertaking the pre purchase examination follows a guide protocol for the examination set out by BEVA (The British Equine Veterinary Association). There are two pre purchase examinations – the ‘limited or two stage vetting’ and the ‘full or five stage vetting’.

## THE LIMITED PRE PURCHASE EXAMINATION

This, as the name suggest, is a restricted vetting, incorporating only two out of the possible five stages. It is more cost efficient than the full five stage vetting, but the horse is not subjected to such a thorough clinical examination. We would ideally advise a full five stage vetting, but are happy to perform a limited one, as long as the purchaser has understood the restrictions associated with it and signed a letter agreeing to them.

### *Prior to starting*

The horse should have been stabled for at least 2 hours before the vetting begins and should not have been exercised that day at all. The horse’s passport will need to be with the horse and the horse should have had the farrier in the last 3 weeks. The horse should not be on any medication at the time of vetting.

### *Stage One – Exam at rest*

The vet present will assess the horse in it’s stable, observing behavioural characteristics, temperament, and general management before going on to conduct a thorough clinical exam of the horse. This includes auscultation of the heart and lungs at rest using a stethoscope, examination of the eyes using an ophthalmoscope and careful palpation all over. Afterwards the horse is led outside and stood up square on a level surface, before being examined again.

### *Stage two – Trot up on a hard, level surface*

The horse is walked and trotted up in a straight line, in hand. Confirmation and movement, as well as any signs of lameness will be scrutinised. Flexion tests will be carried out on all the limbs to assess joint mobility and whether any lameness is exasperated after prolonged flexion. Following this, the horse will be asked to reverse backwards and also turned in tight circles on both reins. The vet may decide to lunge the horse on hard or soft ground to further look for gait changes or evaluate any problems picked up on the earlier stages.

## THE FULL OR FIVE STAGE EXAMINATION

The full pre purchase examination incorporates the first two stages from the limited vetting, before progressing onto the latter three.

### *Stage Three - Strenuous exercise*

In this part of the exam, the horse is required to undertake strenuous exercise. This should ideally be ridden exercise, to assess behaviour under saddle and the varying gaits. However if the horse is unbroken, or unable to be ridden on that day, then the horse can be lunged instead. Respiratory noise during exercise and on recovery is checked along with the heart for any abnormalities and gait movements.

### Stage four - Rest

Stage four is a period of rest back in the stable, usually lasting 20 – 30 minutes. This is to allow the horse to recover fully and cool down after the exercise. Standing in allows the horse's recovery time to be assessed and could show up any signs of stiffness or tying up, following work.

### *Stage five - Final walk and trot up*

The final part of the vetting, is a repeat walk and trot up in hand, with possible flexion tests. The vet may also decide to lunge the horse again on both reins. This last part is to ensure that exercise and the following rest period have not brought to light any signs of lameness or stiffness. The feet and shoes are examined one final time, before blood samples are taken. The blood sample is sent to a lab for storage for 6 months should a problem arise in the future, or alternatively the blood can be tested immediately on arrival for medication such as sedatives or anti-inflammatories such as Bute (Phenylbutazone).

## FURTHER TESTS

We also provide further diagnostic tests, should you wish or if Insurance companies specifically ask for them. These can include radiography of feet and limbs, ultrasonography scans of tendons or of broodmares and endoscopy in the competition horse. If you would like any of these procedures carried out at the pre purchase examination, then please inform us prior to the visit.