

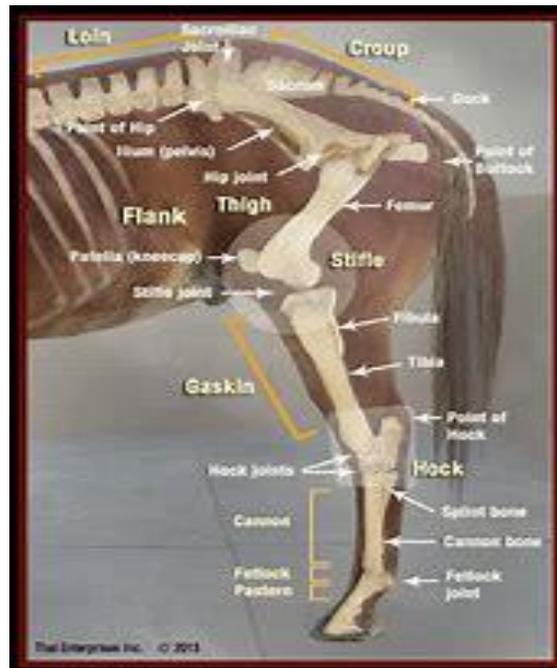
Sue's Snippet No. 15: Throughness

Throughness. What the heck does that mean? (A Frequently Asked Question)

First: Throughness comes first. Other desires can be achieved after the horse is “through”.

Second: What comes through? Energy. What Energy? The energy produced by the hindquarters of a horse.

The fancy explanation is that the articulation (bending) of the 6 joints of the back end of the horse provides muscular coiling and energy storing during the stance phase of one hindlimb. This allow the horse to uncoil, thrust again into the ground into the swing phase of that limb thus releasing that energy that propels him and you across the ground. That is the flow of energy mentioned above. Thus, energy comes “through”. It becomes visible because the horse moves forward. Throughness becomes visible too when the muscles under the skin look like jello and the limbs swing freely.



PS: The 6 joints in the hindquarters are the lumbo sacral, sacral iliac, hip, knee (stifle), hock and fetlock.

When this energy flows through the entire length of the horse and is received and recycled through the rider, that is connection. (Humm, another Snippet needed here!)

Here is another way to “see” throughness. The pelvis rotates side to side and from the top looks like the croup is going up and down. From behind the “tasseling” of the tail is the clue, because the pelvic rotation swings the tail bones.

More places to look to learn to “see” throughness. Question: Can a person really see energy flowing? A good question to ponder.

At the flank/loin area there is jiggling of the skin, and just underneath that is where the muscles look like jello jiggling under the skin. The femur bone with knee joint at the forward part looks like a piston driving. The hock bends as much as the horse is able, and the fetlocks “bounce” up and down. Over the ribs, muscles and skin look slightly jiggly or at least not stuck.

The front limbs swing like pendulums and help to pull the horse across the ground. Care must be taken that the horse waits for the back limbs, so all 4 legs are taking steps of equal length. This is necessary for correct back to front balance of the horizontal body of any horse.

Seen from the side, the muscle starting behind the horses' ears bulges out like an inflated inner tube ALL the way from the ears to the front of the shoulder blade. Then the horse is “through” at the base of the neck. That is where the neck plugs into the front of the horses' body. Seen from the rider's view on top, the neck is as wide behind the ears as it is all the way back to the base of the neck.

The poll needs to be the highest point from the withers forward, but how high it needs to be is dependent on the horses' training level and/or the task at hand. The ideal for a training level horse is to maintain the levelness of the poll, withers and top of croup with the earth.

The poll needs to be the highest point because then the atlanto-occipital joint is bent enough that the horses face is almost perpendicular to the ground. The back of the nostrils can be seen to be on a vertical line with the front corner of the eye.

Recap: Throughness means that the energy produced by the articulation and resulting thrust of the hindquarters is flowing unrestricted at any point through the body of the horse and is received and recycled back to the horse by the rider.

