

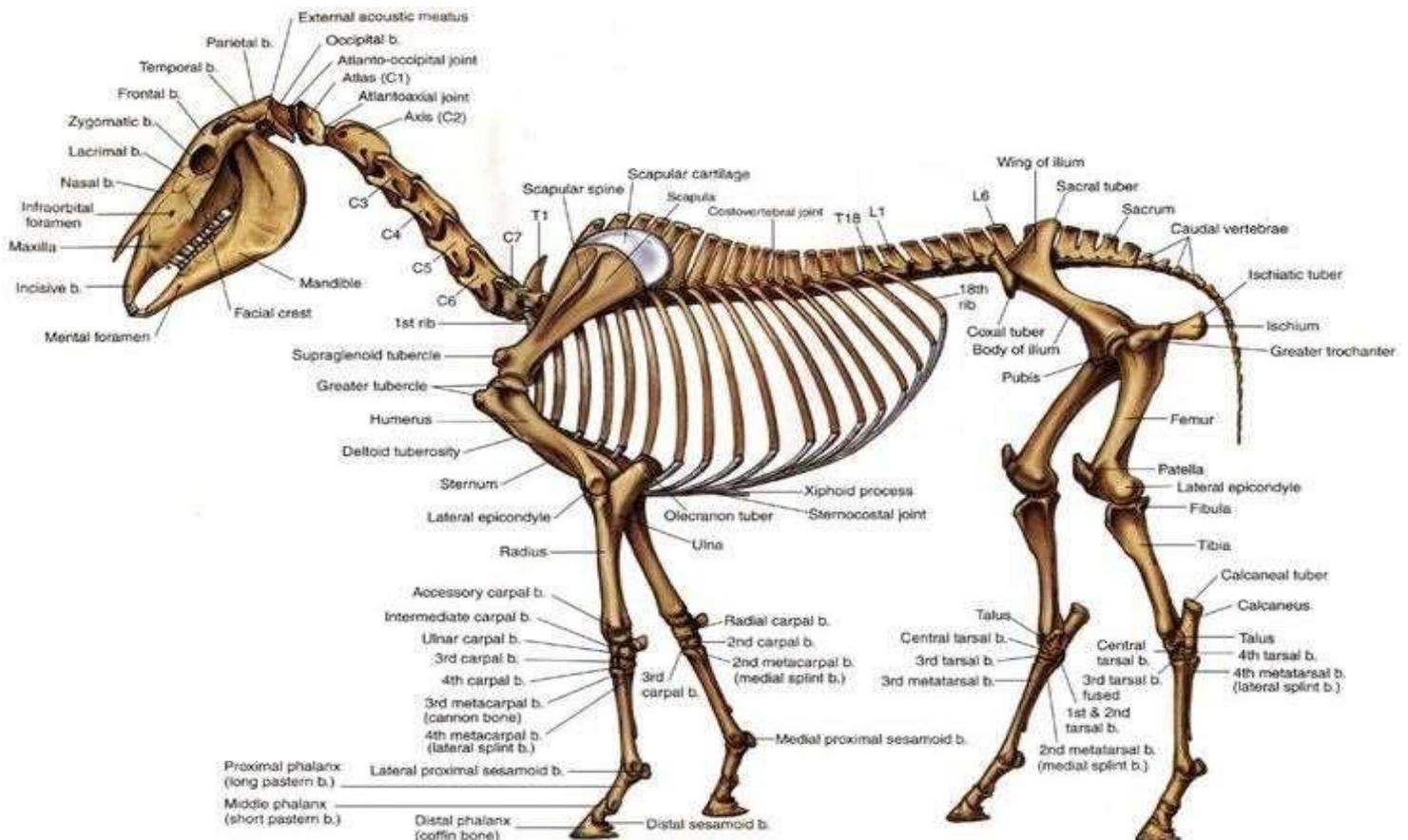
Snippet 5: When Spines Meet

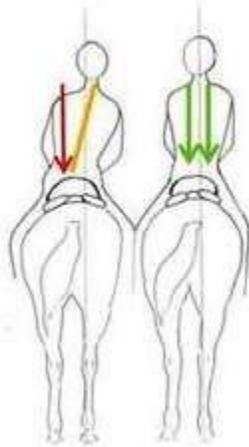
One of the miracles of the interaction between the two species – equine and human – is how the horizontally oriented equine spine and the vertically oriented human spine meet so harmoniously.

The tops of the vertebrae of the equine spine all face towards the rear of its body until the 13th thoracic, the costovertebral joint. That is like a keystone in that it is vertical. From there back, the tops of the equine spine all face forward until meeting the support of vertical No 13. And it is here, at T13, that the vertically oriented human spine marvelously meets the horizontal equine spine.



Natural balance and harmony should result from this grand plan. Who is most to blame when the plan has glitches? My opinion is that almost all humans have a scoliosis or lateral unwanted curvature. These curves can be anywhere from between the shoulder blades, to the mid back or the low back. Our first job is to admit they are there, find out approximately where they are and then begin the probably lifelong work to smooth them out so we can bring ourselves to our horses' spines in the most compatible way. That means that our seat bones should straddle the horse's spine, so they are equidistant from side to side. Probably we can get them balanced laterally while standing still. An effective way to keep them there is to learn to connect an imaginary line diagonally through our torso from the right seat bone to the left shoulder point, and then the left seat bone to the right shoulder point. Usually one comes easily and the other makes us wiggle and twist and tighten and loosen until we can accomplish this. That can be done while the horse is in motion as well. Stay with one until your body acknowledges the connection before going to the other.





The drawing of the two stick riders shows only the collapse of the rib cage on the right side of the rider on the left. However, the lean probably is connected to a scoliosis. Often the description of the illustrated rib cage collapse is deemed to be a “collapsed pelvis”. For me, since the “fix” does not involve the pelvis, that description is wrong.