

Each horse is different in terms of conformation and character. The more we know about his background, the better we can understand the horse. While buying a horse, horses that are easy to care for, groom, shoe and transport are preferred. Knowing about any previous conditions and soundness issues will allow you to assess the risk of reencountering the problem. Therefore, it would help you to no end if the seller is closely acquainted with the horse and is able to convey important info on the horse's background.

The following list includes questions categorized by subjects. It is recommended to have these questions answered before deciding to buy a horse and have him vetted.

Temperament and care

(This information could also be shared with the new groom to be taking care of the horse)

- How the horse's temperament? (calm, excitable, spooky, nervous, aggressive etc.)
- Does the horse have any vices? (air sucking, cribbing, stable walking, manure eating etc.)
- Has the horse been living alone in a stable or in a herd with other horses? Has he been living out in a field?
- What kind of and how much feed has the horse been getting lately? Are there any special issues or recommendations regarding the horse's feeding?
- Are there any special issues or recommendations regarding the horse's care and feeding? What do you recommend as bedding? (straw, wood shavings or any bedding?)
- Does the horse react to being groomed, saddles or have the girth tightened? Does he put his ears back?
- Does the horse cause any problems when asked to lift his feet to clean his hooves with the hoof pick? In particular, does he show any sign of kicking out with his back legs?
- Does he react to the clipper?
- Has the horse been previously transported from one place to another? How many places may the horse probably been to? (competition venues excluded)
- Is the horse prone to get excited in new places? How many hours/days does it take for the horse to settle in competitions or when permanently transported from one place to another?
- Is the horse easy to load and unload? Has he experienced problems before?

Hoof care and shoeing

- Has the horse had his hooves regularly cared for/been shod until now?
- Who is his farrier? Has there been a change of farrier lately?
- Does the horse cause problems in lifting his feet etc. during shoeing?
- For how long the current type of shoes been used for the horse?
- Do you recommend any shoeing period other than normal practice (6-8 weeks)?

Healthcare

(You may discuss the answers with your vet)

- Any conditions suffered by the horse so far?
- Has the horse previously went through any surgical operations? (excluding castration for geldings! Surgical operations such as neurectomy, tie back surgery for roaring etc.)
- Has the horse previously fallen ill even transiently as a result of transport? (colic, fever, diarrhea etc. following transport)
- Are there any medications regularly administered or required to be administered to the horse up to now?
- Is the horse allergic? (Penicillin, woodshavings, straw etc.)
- Has the horse been regularly vaccinated and wormed and had his mouth and teeth checked?

Intended use and training

(You may discuss the answers with your trainer)

- Has the horse been previously used for any other purposes than his current use? For instance, if he is currently a showjumper, has he been used as a dressage horse before? Or vice versa? Or if it is a thoroughbred, has he been in any races?
- Do you have any recommendations as regards to the horse's weekly training program? Has the horse's training program interrupted lately due to him being put up for sale? If so, this break lasted for how many days/weeks?
- Do you have any recommendations on the type of surface on which the horse will be trained from now on?
- During training, are there instances when the horse cannot be collected and resists? Any recommendations?
- Is the horse's natural impulsiveness reduced sometimes? Any recommendations?
- Does the horse sometimes go disunited in canter?
- During training, did you ever observe the horse shaking his head, holding his tail crooked or swishing it vehemently?
- Does the horse tend to buck or play up during flat work or after jumping?
- If the horse is a showjumper, are there any considerations to be taken into account like the color or type of fences (combinations, Liverpool showjumps, cross country obstacles, log fences etc.)
- Does the horse rush up to fences?
- Is there a possibility that the horse may bolt during training or competitions?
- Does the horse suffer from separation anxiety (restlessness, panic, loud weeping, lack of concentration) when he is away from other horses? Is the horse liable to become uncontrollable or to lose his concentration when he is ridden or worked in the company of other horses (notably for stallions)?