

## Equine Movement Performance Instrument (EMPI)

### Purpose

This screening instrument was developed by Jan Spink and designed to help screen potential therapy horses more objectively. It may also be used for periodic re-assessment of therapy horses as their movement or behaviors may change over time. To use the instrument effectively, the screener must completely understand the information about movement quality and performance requirements outlined in the preceding sections of this chapter. This screening device cannot be used independently of that information. The horse is rated from a variety of perspectives to assess its potential suitability regarding movement performance.

The scoresheet provides a permanent record. Copies may be made for use with several horses at the same time. It is helpful if one person reads the instructions from this manual to those who are working from the scoresheets on clipboards as they test the horses.

### Entry-Level Movement Qualifications for the Novice Therapy Horse

A horse must receive a score of 3 or 4 on every test item, for a qualitative point range from 117 to 156, to be considered suitable for entry-level status as a novice therapy horse.

### Eligibility for Structured Training and Development Prior to Rescreening for Entry-Level Novice Status

When the horse receives a score of 2 on any test item, that test item becomes a training objective. A horse that receives a minimum of 78 qualitative points by scoring at least 2 points on each item or any qualitative point range from 78 to 116 points is eligible to enter a structured training and development program. The program should be one month to one year in length. Once the horse demonstrates favorable improvement in an objective area, it may be resubmitted for testing with a goal of achieving a rating of 3 or 4 that qualifies it for entry-level novice status.

### Disqualification for Training or Use as a Therapy Horse

A horse that receives a score of 0 or 1 on any test item or a qualitative point range from 0 to 77 is not recommended for training and development and is probably not suitable for future use as a therapy horse. Future rescreening of a low-scoring horse is appropriate in exceptional cases such as when a very talented horse was determined to have moved poorly during the screening due to an unknown injury. This injury would have to be of the variety that has a clinical prognosis for full and complete recovery. Any horse that is physically unfit, grossly overweight, or in need of attention to shoeing may be considered for future retesting after these problems have been properly addressed.

All tests emphasize balanced, working gaits except items 9, 10 and 11 (Part II), which ask for a lengthening at the walk and trot and then for one example of the free walk.

## Part I - Observations from the Ground

### A. Horse on Lead Line

#### Rating Scale

0 = unacceptable

1 = poor

2 = fair

3 = good

4 = excellent

#### Test Items

1. Standing conformation (anterior, posterior, lateral, and dorsal).
2. Straight line: Walk; halt at 20 meters; perform small turn and reverse and walk back; halt at 20 meters.
3. Straight line: Trot; halt at 20 meters; perform small turn and reverse and trot back; halt at 20 meters.

The point range for Part IA is 0-12

### B. Horse on Lunge Line

Use the lunge line only if the horse knows how to lunge properly. Otherwise, have an assistant ride the horse.

#### Rating Scale

0 = Totally inflexible, extremely unbalanced; soundness or injury problem

1 = Excessive rehabilitation required to become usable

2 = Shows potential; pure gaits but lacks fitness, flexibility, balance, or symmetry in gaits.

3 = Tracks symmetrically; has good impulsion and regulated paces but is not consistently balanced or flexible in both directions.

4 = Tracks symmetrically with a solidly balanced walk, trot, and canter; elastic quality to gaits; steady, consistent impulsion; fit.

#### Test Items

1. Working Walk: Walk in a 20 meter circle right three times; reverse and walk in a circle left three times; transition upward to a working trot.
2. Working Trot: Trot in a 20 meter circle left four times; reverse and trot in a circle four times transition upward to a working canter.
3. Working Canter: Canter in a 20 meter circle right two times; reverse and canter in a circle left two times; transition downward to a working trot.
4. Working Trot: Trot in a 20 meter circle left one time; transition downward to a working walk.
5. Working Walk: Walk in a 20 meter circle left one time; halt.

The point range for Parts 1A and 1B is 0-32.

## Part II - Mounted Performance: Observations from the Ground

The screener moves in a radius around the horse to gain all vantage points but not so close as to interfere with the safety or concentration of the rider and horse.

### Rating Scale

- 0 = Totally inflexible and extremely unbalanced; soundness or injury problem
- 1 = Excessive rehabilitation required to become usable
- 2 = Shows potential; pure gaits but lacks fitness, flexibility, balance or symmetry in gaits
- 3 = Tracks symmetrically; has good impulsion and regulated paces but is not consistently balanced or flexible in both directions.
- 4 = Tracks symmetrically; has a solidly balanced walk, trot, and canter; elastic quality to gaits; steady, consistent impulsion; fit.

### Test Items (see diagram on page 34 for arena markings)

1. Halt, then walk a straight line to a square halt three times. Dressage letters HEK, MBF, or DXG may be used as reference points.
2. Walk-trot (upward transition) and trot-walk (downward transition). Perform two times on a straight line, HEK and MBF. (Using the center line, DXG, is the best indicator of a higher degree of skill.)
3. Trot in a straight line (HEK); canter in a straight line (MBF).
4. Start a sitting trot at E, then canter (upward transition) at C to B. At B, downward transition to a working walk. Perform three times.
5. From a walk at A, canter at letter K, then downward transition to a walk at H. Perform three times, reversing directions and reference points each time.
6. Trot in a 20-meter circle four times continuously, first to the left, then to the right.
7. Canter in a 20 meter circle three times continuously, first to the left then to the right.
8. Trot (sitting) through serpentines, two equal loops for an arena 20 x 40 meters or three equal loops for an arena 20 x 60 meters. Perform two times A-C and C-A.
9. Lengthen the stride through the walk across the diagonal two times, demonstrating at least four to six increasingly longer strides. Return to a balanced working walk after each lengthening.
10. Lengthen the stride through the rising trot across the diagonal two times, demonstrating at least four increasingly longer strides. Return to a balanced working rising trot after each lengthening.
11. Demonstrate a free walk on a loose rein showing relaxation and over tracking of hoof prints; demonstrate at HEK or MBF.

The point range for Part II is 0-96

## Part III – Overall Impression

### Rating Scale

- 0 = unacceptable
- 1 = poor
- 2 = fair, shows potential
- 3 = good
- 4 = excellent

### Test Items:

1. Freedom and regularity of gaits.
2. Desire to move forward, relaxation of the back, elasticity of steps
3. Attention, confidence, bit acceptance.

Point Range for Part III is 0-12

## Part IV – Bilateral Neck Flexibility Test

### Rating Scale

0 = Inflexible

1 = 25% flexibility; possible injury, fixation, subluxation

2 = 50% flexibility; potential with training

3 = 75% flexibility, very little strain

4 = 100% flexibility, no strain; excellent

### Test Items

1. Horse voluntarily follows food.
  - a. To the right.
  - b. To the left.
  
2. Horse flexes neck in bridle. (If the horse exhibits serious distress in the bridle, omit this task and adjust the score to reflect only the food-following test.)
  - a. To the right.
  - b. To the left.

Reprinted with permission by Jan Spinks from *The Therapy Horse*, Chapter 6, Pages 131 -134

# Equine Movement Performance Instrument (EMPI)

Horse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

Retest Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Test Items (point range 0-4)		Test	Retest
		Score	
<b>PART I. Observations from the Ground</b>			
A. Horse on Lead Line			
<b>Rating Scale</b> 0 = Unacceptable 1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Excellent	1. Standing conformation (anterior, posterior, lateral, dorsal)		
	2. Straight line: Walk; halt at 20 meters; perform small turn, and reverse, walk back; halt at 20 meters		
	3. Straight line: Trot; halt at 20 meters, perform small turn, and reverse, trot back; halt at 20 meters		
	<b>Subtotal for Part IA</b> <i>Point range for Part IA is 0-12.</i>		

B. Horse on Longe Line			
<b>Rating Scale</b> 0 = Totally inflexible, extremely unbalanced; soundness or injury problem 1 = Excessive rehabilitation required to become usable 2 = Shows potential; pure gaits but lacks fitness, flexibility, balance, or symmetry in gaits 3 = Tracks symmetrically; good impulsion and regulated paces but not consistently balanced or flexible in both directions 4 = Tracks symmetrically with solidly balanced walk, trot, canter; elastic quality to gaits; steady, consistent impulsion; fit	1. Working Walk: Walk in a 20-meter circle right 3 times; reverse, circle left 3 times; transition upward to a working trot.		
	2. Working Trot: Trot in a 20-meter circle left 4 times; reverse, circle right 4 times; transition upward to a working canter.		
	3. Working Canter: Canter in a 20-meter circle right 2 times; reverse; circle left 2 times; transition downward to a working trot.		
	4. Working Trot: Trot in a 20-meter circle left 1 time; transition downward to a working walk.		
	5. Working Walk: Walk in a 20-meter circle left 1 time; halt.		
	<b>Subtotal for Part IB</b>  <b>Total for Part IA and IB</b> <i>Point range for A and B is 0-32.</i>		

Copyright © 1993 by Jan Spink / All rights reserved.  
Published by Therapy Skill Builders / 1-800-228-0752 / ISBN 0761647406

		Test	Retest
		Score	
<b>Test Items (point range 0-4)</b>			
<b>PART II. Mounted Performance: Observations from the Ground</b>			
The screener moves in a radius around the horse to gain all vantage points, but not so close as to interfere with the safety or concentration of the rider and horse.			
<p><b>Rating Scale</b></p> <p>0 = Totally inflexible and extremely unbalanced; soundness or injury problem</p> <p>1 = Excessive rehabilitation required to become usable</p> <p>2 = Shows potential; pure gaits but lacks fitness, flexibility, balance, or symmetry in gaits</p> <p>3 = Tracks symmetrically; good impulsion and regulated paces but not consistently balanced or flexible in both directions</p> <p>4 = Tracks symmetrically; solidly balanced walk, trot, canter; elastic quality to gaits; steady, consistent impulsion; fit</p> <p><b>Note: For the following movements, see chapter 5, figures 5.2-5.4, for reference points.</b></p>	1. Halt; walk straight line to square halt 3 times (HEK, MBF, or DXG).	a.	
		b.	
		c.	
	2. Walk-trot (upward transition) and trot-walk (downward transition). Perform each movement sequence 2 times on straight line (HEK and MBF). (Center line, DXG, is best indicator of higher degree of skill.)	a.	
		b.	
	3. Straight line rising trot (HEK) Straight line canter (MBF)	a.	
		b.	
	4. Trot/Canter/Walk: Sitting trot from E, canter at C, working walk at B. Perform sequence 3 times.	a.	
		b.	
		c.	
	5. Walk/Canter/Walk: Walk at A, canter at K, walk at H. Perform sequence 3 times, reversing directions and points.	a.	
		b.	
	c.		
6. Circle Trot: Trot in 20-meter circle 4 times continuously, first left, then right.	a. Left		
	b. Right		
7. Circle Canter: Canter in 20-meter circle 3 times continuously, first left, then right.	a. Left		
	b. Right		
8. Serpentine/Sitting trot: 2 equal loops (20m x 40m arena) or 3 equal loops (20m x 60m arena). Perform sequence 2 times: A-C and C-A.	a. A-C		
	b. C-A		
9. Lengthen Stride/Walk across diagonal. Demonstrate 4 to 6 increasingly longer strides. Return to balanced working walk after each lengthening.	a. First diagonal		
	b. Second diagonal		
10. Lengthen Stride/Rising Trot across diagonal. Demonstrate 4 increasingly longer strides. Return to balanced working rising trot after each lengthening.	a. First diagonal		
	b. Second diagonal		
11. Free Walk with loose rein showing relaxation and overtracking of hoofprints. Demonstrate at HEK or MBF.			
<b>Subtotal for Part II</b>			
<i>Point range for Part II is 0-96.</i>			

Copyright © 1993 by Jan Spink / All rights reserved.  
Published by Therapy Skill Builders / 1-900-228-0752 / ISBN 0761647406

Test Items (point range 0-4)		Test	Retest
		Score	
<b>PART III. Overall Impressions</b>			
<b>Rating Scale</b> 0 = Unacceptable 1 = Poor 2 = Fair; shows potential 3 = Good 4 = Excellent	1. Freedom and regularity of gaits		
	2. Desire to move forward, back relaxation, step elasticity		
	3. Attention, confidence, bit acceptance		
	<b>Subtotal for Part III</b> <i>Point range for Part III is 0-12.</i>		

<b>PART IV. Bilateral Neck Flexibility Test</b>					
<b>Rating Scale</b> 0 = Inflexible 1 = 25% flexibility; possible injury, fixation, subluxation 2 = 50% flexibility; potential with training 3 = 75% flexibility, very little strain 4 = 100% flexibility, no strain; excellent	1. Voluntarily follows food	a. To right			
			b. To left		
	2. Flexes neck in bridle. (If horse shows serious distress, omit and adjust score to reflect only food-following.)	a. To right			
		b. To left			
	<b>Subtotal for Part IV</b> <i>Point range for Part IV is 0-16</i>				

Total Scores		Test	Retest
Combined totals for Parts IA and IB			
Subtotal for Part II			
Subtotal for Part III			
Subtotal for Part IV			
<b>Total score—Parts I-IV</b> <i>Highest possible score = 156</i>			

Check  Status

**Entry-Level Movement Qualifications for the Novice Therapy Horse:** 117-156 qualitative point range, derived from a score of 3 or 4 points per test item

**Eligibility for Structured Training and Development Prior to Rescreening for Entry-Level Novice Status:** 78-116 qualitative point range, derived from a score of a minimum of 2 points per test item. A score of 2 points on any test item identifies that test item as a training objective.

**Disqualification for Therapy Use:** 0-77 qualitative point range (or a score of 0 or 1 on any test item)

**Note: Check any item with a score of 2 as a training objective. Circle in red any score of 0 or 1 as a disqualification.**

# Equine Behavioral Profile System

## Profile I: Object Screening Instrument

Horse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Retest Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

A = Presentation  
 B = Re-presentation  
 C = Contact: forehand  
 D = Contact: back, midline, hindquarters, legs  
 E = Use

	Objects (point range 0-4)																									
	Test										Subtotal	Retest					Subtotal									
	Standing					Walking						Standing						Walking								
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E		
1.																										
2.																										
3.																										
4.																										
5.																										
6.																										
7.																										
8.																										
9.																										
10.																										
11.																										
12.																										
<i>Point range for each object: 0-40</i>										<b>Total Score</b>																
<i>Point range for total score: 0-480</i>																										
<i>Highest possible total score: 480</i>																										

- Examples:**
- sponges/balls
  - beanbags
  - toys w/bells
  - hula-hoops
  - toy basketballs
  - bubbles
  - rhythm instruments
  - rubber rings
  - plastic horseshoes
  - stuffed animals/dolls
  - ribbons
  - wheelchair ramps

**Behavioral Rating Scale**

Type 0 = Performs task with high, star-gazing head and tense neck; exhibits distractible attention; spooky, fearful, aggressive; snorts with wide eyes; expectant attitude; shys/bolts/kicks; cannot be reliably reassured

Type 1a = Remains under control only with exceptionally talented handler; exhibits stressful responses

Type 1b = Has a characteristic pattern of vacillating between very scattered attention and a shutdown, nonattending mode

Type 1c = Begins task in a coma-like, extremely dull mode and remains coma-like throughout performance

Type 2 = Begins task with an acceptably secure, alert attitude but requires frequent handler reassurance and an extremely slow pace when proceeding through task

Type 3 = Begins task secure and alert; maintains attunement during most of the task but needs occasional light support from handler

Type 4 = Begins task ready to work; displays trust, security, and alertness; is confident, responsive, and unflappable; needs no external assurance

**Note: For detailed descriptions and illustrations, see pages 154-157 in the text.**

Check  Status

**Entry-Level Status for a Novice Therapy Horse: 270-480**  
*qualitative point range, derived from a score of 3 or 4 points per object, with a minimum of 3 points per object, on each test for 9 of 12 objects*

**Eligibility for a Structured Training and Desensitization Program Prior to Rescreening for Entry-Level Status: 180-269**  
*qualitative point range, derived from a score of a minimum of 2 points per object on each test for 9 of 12 objects. A score of 2 points on any test item identifies that test item as a training objective.*

**Disqualification for Therapy Use: 0-179 qualitative point range**  
*(or a score of 0 or 1 on any test item)*

**Note: Check any item with a score of 2 as a training objective. Circle in red any score of 0 or 1 as a disqualification.**

Copyright © 1993 by Jan Spink / All rights reserved.  
 Published by Therapy Skill Builders / 1-800-228-0752 / ISBN 0761647406

**Equine Behavioral Profile System**  
**Profile II: Position Change Screening Instrument**

Horse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Retest Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Tasks	Test	Retest
	Standing	Standing
<b>1. Mounting Options</b>		
1A: Mounting from: <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Mounting block	
	b. Ramp	
1B: Sack-of-Potatoes or Prone Mount <b>(point range = 0-4)</b>		
1C: Seat-First Mount from: <b>(point range = 0-12)</b>	a. Mounting block	
	b. Wheelchair on ramp	
	c. Wheelchair on ground	
<b>Subtotal</b> <i>Point range: 0-24</i>		

Tasks	Test	Retest
	Standing	Standing
<b>2. Position Change Options</b>		
2A: Forward Flexion and Backward Extension (w/o Leg Movement or Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2B: Forward Flexion (with Graded Leg Movement and Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2C: Around the World (w/o Additional Leg Movement or Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2D: Around the World (with Graded Leg Movement and Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2E: Prone Prop (w/o Additional Leg Movement or Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2F: Prone Prop (with Additional Leg Movement and Flank Pressure) <b>(point range = 0-8)</b>	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
2G: Quadruped Position <b>(point range = 0-4)</b>	Walking	
2H: Kneel <b>(point range = 0-4)</b>	Walking	
2I: Half-Stand to Full Stand <b>(point range = 0-4)</b>	Walking	
<b>Subtotal for Position Change Options</b> <i>Point range: 0-60</i>		

Copyright © 1993 by Jan Spink / All rights reserved.  
 Published by Therapy Skill Builders / 1-800-228-0752 / ISBN 0761647406

Equine Behavioral Profile System  
Profile II: Position Change Screening Instrument (page 2)

Tasks	Test	Retest
	Standing	Standing
<b>3. Dismounting Options</b>		
3A. Reverse Sack-of-Potatoes (Prone) Mount — Stationary (point range = 0-4)		
3B: Reverse Seat-First Mount — Stationary (point range = 0-4)		
3C: Modified Flank-Off (point range = 0-8)	a. Stationary	
	b. Walking	
<b>Subtotal for Dismounting Options</b> (point range = 0-16)		
<b>Total</b> (Mounting Options, Position Change, and Dismounting Options) (point range = 0-100)		

Check  Status

**Behavioral Rating Scale**

Type 0 = Performs task with high, star-gazing head and tense neck; exhibits distractible attention; spooky, fearful, aggressive; snorts with wide eyes; expectant attitude; shys/bolts/kicks; cannot be reliably reassured

Type 1a = Remains under control only with exceptionally talented handler; exhibits stressful responses

Type 1b = Has a characteristic pattern of vacillating between very scattered attention and a shutdown, nonattending mode

Type 1c = Begins task in a coma-like, extremely dull mode and remains coma-like throughout performance

Type 2 = Begins task with an acceptably secure, alert attitude but requires frequent handler reassurance and an extremely slow pace when proceeding through task

Type 3 = Begins task secure and alert; maintains attunement during most of the task but needs occasional light support from handler

Type 4 = Begins task ready to work; displays trust, security, and alertness; is confident, responsive, and unflappable; needs no external assurance

**Note: For detailed descriptions and illustrations, see pages 160-163 in the text.**

- Entry-Level Status for a Novice Therapy Horse:** 75-100 qualitative point range, derived from a score of 3 or 4 points per test item.
- Eligibility for a Structured Desensitization Training Program Prior to Rescreening for Entry-Level Status:** 50-74 qualitative point range derived from a score of a minimum of 2 points per test item. A score of 2 points on any test item identifies that test item as a training objective.
- Disqualification for Therapy Use:** 0-49 qualitative point range (or a score of 0 or 1 on any test item).

**Note: Check any item with a score of 2 as a training objective. Circle in red any score of 0 or 1 as a disqualification.**