

Body language

Your horse cannot communicate with words, but you can tell a great deal about what he's feeling by observing his stance and his most expressive body parts.

Physical clues to your horse's moods.

EMOTIONAL STATE	HEAD & NECK	EARS	EYES	NOSTRILS	MUZZLE	LEGS/ FEET	TAIL	OVERALL STANCE
angry/ annoyed	neck outstretched, "snaky"	pinned	closed to slits		pursed	stomping, striking, kicking	swishing	
bored/ at rest	head down	held at "half mast"	droopy		slack	inactive, disengaged	low, still	slack
challenging	head and neck stretched up and out, may move slowly back and forth	extremely active	focused	flared, active	active: lipping, chewing	prancing	held high, swishing	tense, collected
content/ satisfied	head held steady, neither high nor low	neutral	open, unfocused			casual, one foot may be cocked	relaxed with some casual movement	relaxed but engaged
curious	head and neck extended toward object of curiosity	intently pricked forward	intently focused	sniffing, blowing	pursed	squarely planted	held up	moving stiffly
expectant	head shakes, neck "snakes"	darting	dilated, attentive	quivering	lip smacking, vocalizing	restless, pawing	switching	restless
fearful	head turned toward source of fear, neck pulled in	fixed on source or flicking if source has not been identified	wide open with whites showing, fixed on source	alternately flared and snorting		stands frozen or flees	clamped	crouches, backs up or wheels away and presents hind end defensively
submissive	head held low and averted	held at "half mast"	averted		low, clamped with lip smacking or chewing in foals and yearlings			placid
uncertain	head up, neck tense	flicking rapidly back and forth	darting, focus unfixed	quivering		may be frozen in place or moving around gingerly		tense, alert, possibly sweating