

## How Lamé is Lamé?

The horse industry uses this standard for evaluating lameness.

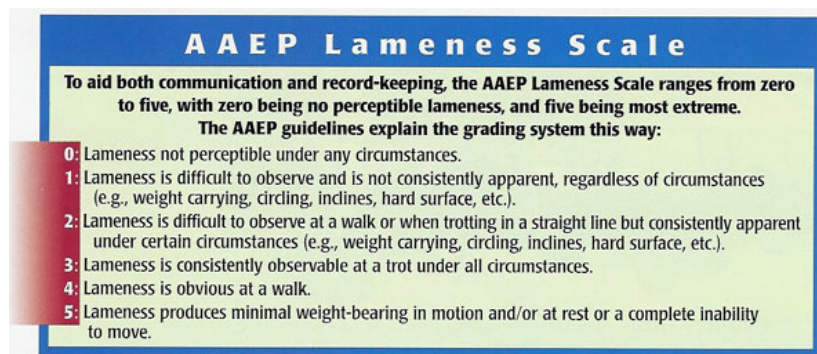
Six days ago, your horse was “off” but not truly limping. Two days ago, he was kind of limping, but not really three-legged, so you thought you’d give him a little more time to heal himself. Today, it’s bad. The poor guy is hobbling around, obviously in serious pain, and there’s no obvious reason why. You’ve got to get some relief for him.

So how will you explain these observations to your veterinarian in one quick phone call?

Refer to the chart below, developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Your veterinarian will be familiar with the AAEP Lameness Scale, and should be able to better understand the problem. The sooner your horse is diagnosed, the sooner you can help him get back to normal function.

### lameness scale

\*Note: Lameness is a complicated condition, with many possible causes. Be a conscientious observer. If you suspect a problem, discontinue riding your horse and seek advice from your veterinarian promptly. By identifying even a minor lameness and acting swiftly to correct it, you will minimize the risk of injury to the horse and yourself, and you will be rewarded by better performance and a longer useful life from your horse.



**AAEP Lameness Scale**

To aid both communication and record-keeping, the AAEP Lameness Scale ranges from zero to five, with zero being no perceptible lameness, and five being most extreme. The AAEP guidelines explain the grading system this way:

- 0: Lameness not perceptible under any circumstances.
- 1: Lameness is difficult to observe and is not consistently apparent, regardless of circumstances (e.g., weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface, etc.).
- 2: Lameness is difficult to observe at a walk or when trotting in a straight line but consistently apparent under certain circumstances (e.g., weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface, etc.).
- 3: Lameness is consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances.
- 4: Lameness is obvious at a walk.
- 5: Lameness produces minimal weight-bearing in motion and/or at rest or a complete inability to move.