



**THE DONKEY  
SANCTUARY**

## Monitoring your Donkeys Weight & Condition

Keeping a regular record of your donkey's condition scores and estimated weight measurements can be very useful for monitoring their health and management.

For donkeys over 2 years of age their weight can be estimated using The Donkey Sanctuary's weight estimator. In order to estimate your donkey's weight you will need to know their height and heart girth measurements (in centimetres).

To measure your donkey's height, stand him/her on a hard level surface and measure from the ground up to the highest point of their withers. Once a donkey is over four years of age this measurement will only be required once and the same measurement can be used in future weight estimations. A height measuring stick is ideal but a broom handle marked at the height of the donkey's withers can be measured to give an accurate reading.

The heart girth measurement can be taken using an ordinary tailor's tape measure. The tape measure should pass around the bottom of the donkey's chest as far forward as possible and as close to the front legs as possible. The tape measure should cross the top of the donkeys back approximately 10 centimetres (a hands width) back from the withers. The front of the cross can be quite a good guide to the position of the withers. The tape should be pulled firmly but carefully around the donkey and the reading taken in centimetres.



Height (cm)



Heart Girth (cm)

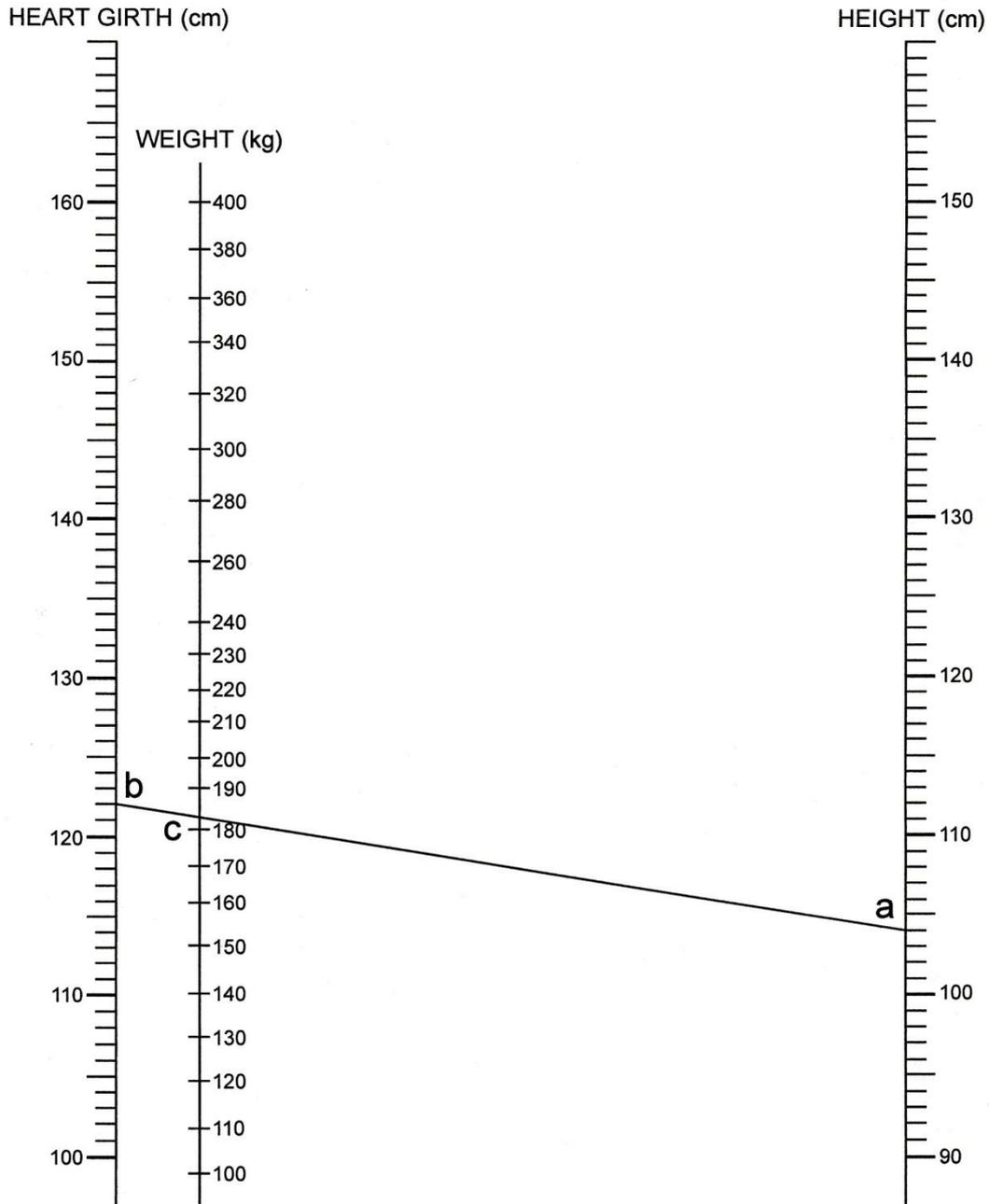
The heart girth measurement should always be taken in the same location preferably by the same person to ensure a continuity of the measurements taken. Both height and heart girth measurements can then be marked on the weight estimation chart and the donkey's weight read off the centre scale by drawing a line between the two measurements.

For donkeys less than 2 years of age, height cannot be used to help estimate the donkey's weight but the table at the bottom of the following page can be used instead.

To body condition score your donkey you can use the 'Body Condition Score Chart'. To best manage your donkey's weight we recommend that they are weighed and condition scored at least once a month.

# DONKEY WEIGHT ESTIMATOR

A donkey 104cm tall (a) and with a heart girth 122cm (b) should weigh 181kg (c).  
The weight estimator is accurate to within 10 kilograms.



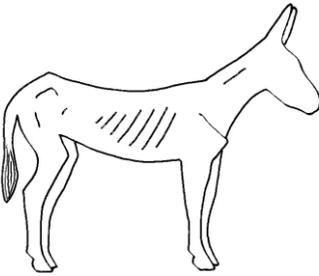
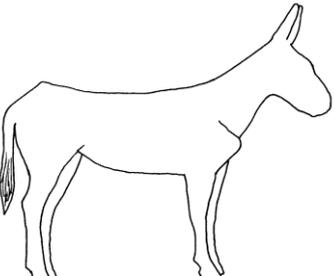
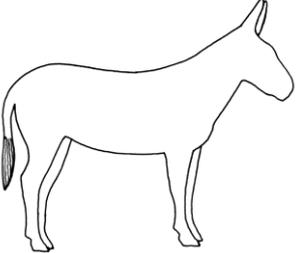
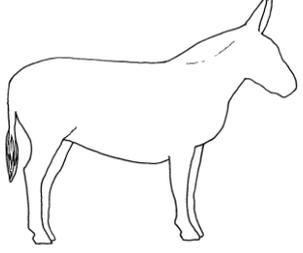
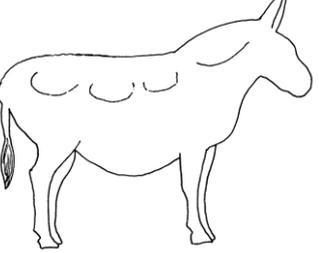
Weight Estimation Table for Donkeys under 2 years																										
Heart Girth (cm)	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Weight (Kg)	46	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63	65	67	69	71	74	76	78	81	83	86	88	91	94	96	99	102

**THE DONKEY SANCTUARY** Slade House Farm, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NU  
**T** 01395 578222 **F** 01395 579266 **E** enquiries@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk

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**WORKING WORLDWIDE**

# DONKEY BODY CONDITION SCORE CHART

1. POOR		
2. MODERATE		
3. IDEAL		
4. FAT		
5. OBESE		

Fat deposits may be unevenly distributed especially over the neck and hindquarters. Some resistant fat deposits may be retained in the event of weight loss and/or may calcify (harden). Careful assessment of all areas should be made and combined to give an overall score.

## **DONKEY BODY CONDITION SCORE CHART UK**

<b>C/S</b>	<b>NECK AND SHOULDERS</b>	<b>WITHERS</b>	<b>RIBS AND BELLY</b>	<b>BACK AND LOINS</b>	<b>HINDQUARTERS</b>
1. POOR	Neck thin, all bones easily felt. Neck meets shoulder abruptly, shoulder bones felt easily, angular.	Dorsal spine of withers prominent and easily felt.	Ribs can be seen from a distance and felt with ease. Belly tucked up.	Backbone prominent, can feel dorsal and transverse processes easily.	Hip bones visible and felt easily (hock and pin bones). Little muscle cover. May be cavity under tail.
2. MODERATE	Some muscle development overlying bones. Slight step where neck meets shoulders.	Some cover over dorsal withers, spinous processes felt but not prominent.	Ribs not visible but can be felt with ease.	Dorsal and transverse processes felt with light pressure. Poor muscle development either side of midline.	Poor muscle cover on hindquarters, hip bones felt with ease.
3. IDEAL	Good muscle development, bones felt under light cover of muscle/fat. Neck flows smoothly into shoulder, which is rounded.	Good cover of muscle/fat over dorsal spinous processes withers flow smoothly into back.	Ribs just covered by light layer of fat/muscle, ribs can be felt with light pressure. Belly firm with good muscle tone and flattish outline.	Cannot feel individual spinous or transverse processes. Muscle development either side of midline is good.	Good muscle cover in hindquarters, hip bones rounded in appearance, can be felt with light pressure.
4. FAT	Neck thick, crest hard, shoulder covered in even fat layer.	Withers broad, bones felt with firm pressure.	Ribs dorsally only felt with firm pressure, ventral ribs may be felt more easily. Belly overdeveloped.	Can only feel dorsal and transverse processes with firm pressure. Slight crease along midline.	Hindquarters rounded, bones felt only with firm pressure. Fat deposits evenly placed.
5. OBESE	Neck thick, crest bulging with fat and may fall to one side. Shoulder rounded and bulging with fat.	Withers broad, unable to feel bones.	Large, often uneven fat deposits covering dorsal and possibly ventral aspect of ribs. Ribs not palpable. Belly pendulous in depth and width.	Back broad, unable to feel spinous or transverse processes. Deep crease along midline bulging fat either side.	Cannot feel hip bones, fat may overhang either side of tail head, fat often uneven and bulging.

Half scores can be assigned where donkeys fall between scores. Aged donkeys can be hard to condition score due to lack of muscle bulk and tone giving thin appearance dorsally with dropped belly ventrally, while overall condition may be reasonable.