

The parts of a donkey

Eyes

Like a horse, donkeys' eyes are situated at the side of their heads. This means that donkeys can't see well to the front. If you go up to a donkey you should walk up from the side, then the donkey can see you and won't get a fright. Donkeys aren't as nervous as horses, but in the wild their means of defence is kicking out when they are frightened.

Ears

Donkeys' ears are longer than horses' ears.

Mouth

Donkeys' mouths are large and soft. Their teeth are important and you can tell the age of the donkey by looking at the teeth.



Withers

The withers is the highest point on the back of the donkey on the ridge between their shoulder blades. Some donkeys have a cross that runs down the length of their back and down their withers.

Legs

Donkeys' legs are very strong and enable the donkey to undertake very long journeys. They can travel much further than horses, but far more slowly.

Hooves

Equines (horses, donkeys and mules) are **single-hoofed** animals. Their hooves are different from **cloven** hoofed animals (e.g. pigs, buck, sheep, goats and cattle) whose hooves are split into two toes. A donkey's hooves are much smaller than those of a horse. They are very strong and can be compared to finger nails. If they aren't cut regularly by a **farrier** (donkey foot doctor) they grow and twist and can break and make the donkey lame. Donkeys feel no pain when their hooves are being trimmed correctly.

Coat

Many donkeys grow long, shaggy coats to keep them warm in winter. Healthy donkeys usually shed this coat in summer and then have smoother coats like horses.

Tail

Donkeys' tails are long and thin and are their only protection against flies and insects.

Mane

A donkey's mane is usually short and runs from the top of their head to their withers. There are some donkeys with long manes, but on the whole their manes are much shorter than those of horses.