DEFINITIONS OF COMMON EQUINE LEG PROBLEMS
AND CONVENTIONALLY AGREED UPON CAUSES

**Stocking Up:** Fluid retention in the lower limbs.
**Caused by:** poor circulation due to lack of exercise and overfeeding of grain. Some horses' legs will fill if confined to a stall or trailer after strenuous exercise. May or may not indicate initial kidney problems. Some horses are predisposed to stock up.

**Splints:** Bony enlargements (sometimes up to the size of a half golf ball) usually on the inside of the front legs just below the knee. Sometimes multiple smaller bumps running down between the Splint and Cannon bones. Most often on forelegs but can occur on hind legs.
**Caused by:** poor conformation, rapid growth, trauma or striking the leg with the other hoof.

**Speedy Cut:** Injury due to striking the inner and lower side of the knee with the inside toe of the opposite hoof.
**Caused by:** poor conformation, occasional erratic movement of limbs during turnout or exercise.

**Wind Puffs or Wind Galls** are soft "spongy" swellings around the back, front and or side of the fetlock joint. The inflamed joint capsule distends with additional synovial fluid in an effort to protect against injury.
**Caused by:** joint concussion, excessive work while horse is young & joints are still developing, stress & fatigue due to intense work load on the joints.

**Green Osselets**
Inflammation of the joint capsule in the front of the fetlock joint is referred to as "green" osselets.
**Caused by:** Excessive racing of young horses while joints are still developing.

**True Osselets:** Bony growth at the front of the fetlock joint.
**Caused by:** late stage development of "green osselets" that were not allowed to heal.

**Sprained Ankle:** affecting one or more of the ligaments the support the fetlock joint.
**Caused by:** stress to the ligaments of the joint from over extension.

**Sesamoiditis:** Inflammation of the bone above and at the back of the fetlock joint.
**Caused by:** Blow, Bang or trauma to the back of the fetlock joint.

**Bruised or "Capped" Knees:** acute inflammation (bursal enlargement) of knee joint (carpitis) and/or the tendon that runs over the front of the knee.
**Caused By:** Blows to the knee joint from a fall or from animal banging its knees on a feed manger. Stress on the joint from over work and poor confirmation. Poor conformation.
* Damage to the joint capsule: If caused by a fall the joint capsule could be damaged allowing synovial fluid to leak out into the surrounding tissues. Open knees wounds may need veterinary attention.
**Knee spavin:** bony growth at back of knee on inner side. Not very common.  
**Caused by:** Joint stress, trauma from a blow.

**Capped Hocks:** Bursal Enlargement - up to the size of a tennis ball on the point of the hock.  
**Caused by:** a blow or bang to the point of the hock - usually from horse kicking a wall or from lying down on a hard concrete surface.

**Thoroughpin:** Bursal enlargement of the deep digital flexor tendon sheath in hollow area between the back of the hock joint and the point of the hock.  
**Caused by:** stress to the tendon from over exertion, over extension and trauma to the tendons and joint. Poor conformation of the hock joint.

**Bog Spavin:** Soft spongy Bursal enlargement of the hock joint capsule. Located towards the front inside of the hock joint.  
**Caused by:** bang or blow to the joint, wear and tear from work on hard surfaces. Poor confirmation and possible vitamin & mineral imbalance while horse is young.

**Bone Spavin:** Inflammation of one or more bones located between on the inside of the hock joint. Can lead to arthritis. Early stages will be extremely painful - late stages less so as the joint surfaces fuse together.  
**Caused by:** joint stress from concussion on hard surfaces, quick & sliding stops such as those which occur during roping and reining. Mineral deficiencies Poor confirmation.

**Jack Spavin:** A bony growth that can irritate tendon that lies over the inside hock. Can be very painful when the hock is flexed or bent.  
**Caused by:** a bang or blow to the joint. Stress or trauma. Poor conformation.

**Curbs:** Inflammation on the upper rear of the cannon area just below the point of the hock  
**Caused by:** Bang or blow the back of the leg - possibly from kicking the wall. Stress and trauma from a violent extension of the Plantar Ligament.

**Shin Splints or Bucked Shins:** Inflammation of the membrane that covers the Shin bone (cannon bone).  
**Caused by:** Concussion - especially in young horses.

**Bowed Tendons:** Inflammation and in severe cases even rupture of the sheath encasing the tendon from the knee to the fetlock. One or both the deep flexor tendon and superficial flexor tendons on one and/or both front legs may be affected.  
**Caused by:** severe trauma and over extension of the one of more of the tendons. Insufficient conditioning, fatigue and possibly blow to the leg.

**Sprained Suspensory:** Inflammation and strain of the suspensory ligament the runs down from the knee and wraps around the fetlock joint.  
**Caused by:** stress and trauma to the ligament from over extension and fatigue.
Various forms of limb contact:

1. **Brushing**: light striking, especially as in forging or interfering

2. **Cross-firing**: contact on the inside of the diagonal fore- and hind feet; common with pacers

3. **Elbow hitting**: horse hits elbow with the shoe of the same limb; fairly rare

4. **Forging**: toe of the hind foot hits the sole of the forefoot on the same side

5. **Knee hitting**: case of high interference; generally seen in Standardbreds

6. **Interfering**: striking, in either fore or hind limbs, anywhere between the coronary band and the cannon by the opposite foot

7. **Overreaching**: toe of the hind foot catches the forefoot on the same side, usually on the heel; the hind foot advances more quickly than in forging

8. **Scalping**: toe of the front foot hits the hairline at the coronary band or above on the hind foot of the same side