

Stifle Joint.—This joint is formed above by the lower end of the femur, or hip bone, and the upper end of the tibia, or thigh bone. These two bones in front form a pulley-like surface on which the patella, or stifle bone is situated. This bone, when the joint is in motion, glides up and down over the pulley-like surface. It sometimes becomes displaced, and this is termed dislocation of the stifle bone. This is an important point to notice about this joint. It has a capsular and lateral, or binding ligaments; also three very important ligaments, called the straight ligaments, which holds the stifle bone to its place as it plays upon the pulley-like process of this joint. The motion is backwards and forwards, same as elbow joint.

Hock or Tarsus Joint.—This joint contains six bones. The two upper bones, one of which is a pulley-like bone placed in front, and the other one placed behind, forms that part of the hock which is called the point of the hock to which the muscles of the gamb are attached, which can be easily seen or felt. The upper surface of these two bones articulate with the lower extremity of the tibia, or thigh bone, and forms a true articulation of the hock joint. This part is what gives most of the motion to the joint. Below those we find three other small, flat bones, placed one upon the other, having articular surfaces between each one. These are called the cuneiform bones of the hock. Immediately behind these three small bones we have what is termed the cuboid bone. This bone also articulates with the cuneiform bones, helping to form the articular surface of the hock. The lower articular surfaces help to give a small amount of motion to the joint. This joint is the seat of the disease termed spavin.

Petlock, Pastern and Coffin Joints are similar to those in front leg.

In speaking of ligaments, there is another very important one to mention which is called the ligamentum nucha, which supports the head when the muscles are at rest. This extends from the pole of the head backwards under the mane and is attached to the spine of the dorsal vertebræ or, commonly called, the withers of the horse. This ligament is chiefly made up of fibro elastic tissue, and will stretch much the same as a piece of elastic.