



Joints

Without joints the skeleton would be rigid and not moveable.

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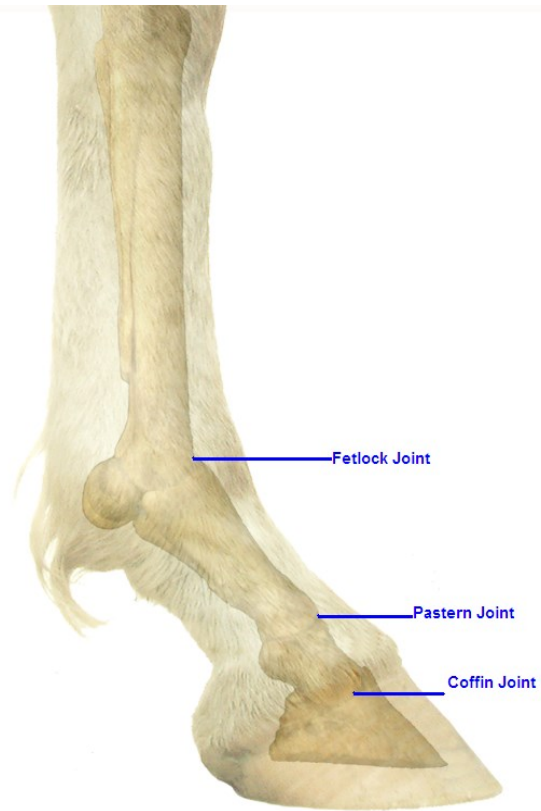
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Below: Most of the joints in the horse's hoof are "saddle or hinge" joints, which means they only move forward and back.





The coffin joint (connection between the coffin bone and the short pastern bone) can only move in two directions (back and forth). The same is true for the pastern joint (connection between short pastern and long pastern), and the fetlock joint (connection between long pastern and cannon bone).



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Each joint is surrounded by a thick, fibrous (collagenous) capsule that encloses the space between the component bones. This joint capsule is lined on the inside by a synovial membrane, which secretes synovial fluid into the joint space, thus lubricating the cartilage surfaces of the bones.

