

EMA

Equine Massage Academy Ltd

Therapy Education Research

Why Are Horses So Different? (Even When They're the Same Breed)



When horses behave, move, or perform differently, the common assumption is:

“They just need different training.”

So we:

- Adjust the workload
- Change the routine

- Try new things
- Compare them to other horses

But what if the difference isn't in the training at all?

The Myth

The biggest myth is that horses of the same breed should be broadly the same.

But even within one breed, horses can differ dramatically in:

- Movement
- Temperament
- Strength
- Learning ability
- Soundness

Because no two horses are built the same—*genetically*.

What Actually Matters

1. Genetic Blueprint

Every horse is an individual long before training begins.

Genetics influence:

- Muscle fibre type (power vs endurance)
- Conformation tendencies
- Joint structure
- Tissue strength
- Behaviour and sensitivity

So two horses doing the same job may not have the same physical or mental capacity to do it.

2. Why “One Size Fits All” Doesn't Work

If you have more than one horse, you've probably noticed:

- One thrives in work, another struggles
- One stays sound, another breaks down
- One is calm, another reactive

This isn't random.

It's not stubbornness.

It's not naughtiness.

It's individuality—driven by genetics.

3. Training Without Understanding the Horse

When we ignore genetic differences, we risk:

- Asking the wrong things of the horse
- Misreading behaviour

- Creating physical strain
- Limiting potential

The horse isn't failing the training.
The training may not suit the horse.

⚠️ **The Risk of Getting It Wrong**

If you treat every horse the same, you may see:

- Inconsistent performance
- Repeated issues or injuries
- Behaviour labelled as "difficult"
- Frustration for both horse and rider

✅ **A Smarter Approach**

Instead of asking:

👉 "Why isn't this horse responding like the others?"

Ask:

👉 "What is this horse naturally built and wired to do?"

Want to Understand Your Horse on a Deeper Level?

Inside our no work required very informative course that will transform your horse care **Applied Equine Genetics course** [LINK](#)

you'll learn:

- Why horses of the same breed can be completely different
- How genetics influence movement, behaviour, and performance
- How a horse's environment and experiences influence how their genes are *expressed*—without changing the genes themselves (epigenetics).
- How to work *with* your horse's natural strengths—not against them
- How better understanding reduces injury risk, frustration, and wasted time and much more!

Because when you understand the horse in front of you...your decisions become clearer, and your management and training becomes more effective.

Our courses are approved by:

