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PET OWNER VERSION

Ear Structure and Function in Horses

By [Manuals Staff](#)

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The ear is an organ of hearing and an organ of balance. It consists of the outer, middle, and inner ear.

The **outer ear** includes the pinna (the part you see that is made of cartilage and covered by skin, fur, or hair) and the ear canal. The pinna is shaped to capture sound waves and funnel them through the ear canal to the eardrum. The pinnae are mobile and can move independently of each other, allowing horses to locate multiple sounds at the same time. In general, horses hear slightly better than people and are able to hear sounds at both higher and lower frequencies. Horses are good at hearing the high-pitched squeaks or cracks associated with the stealthy approach of a predator.

Inside a horse's ear

