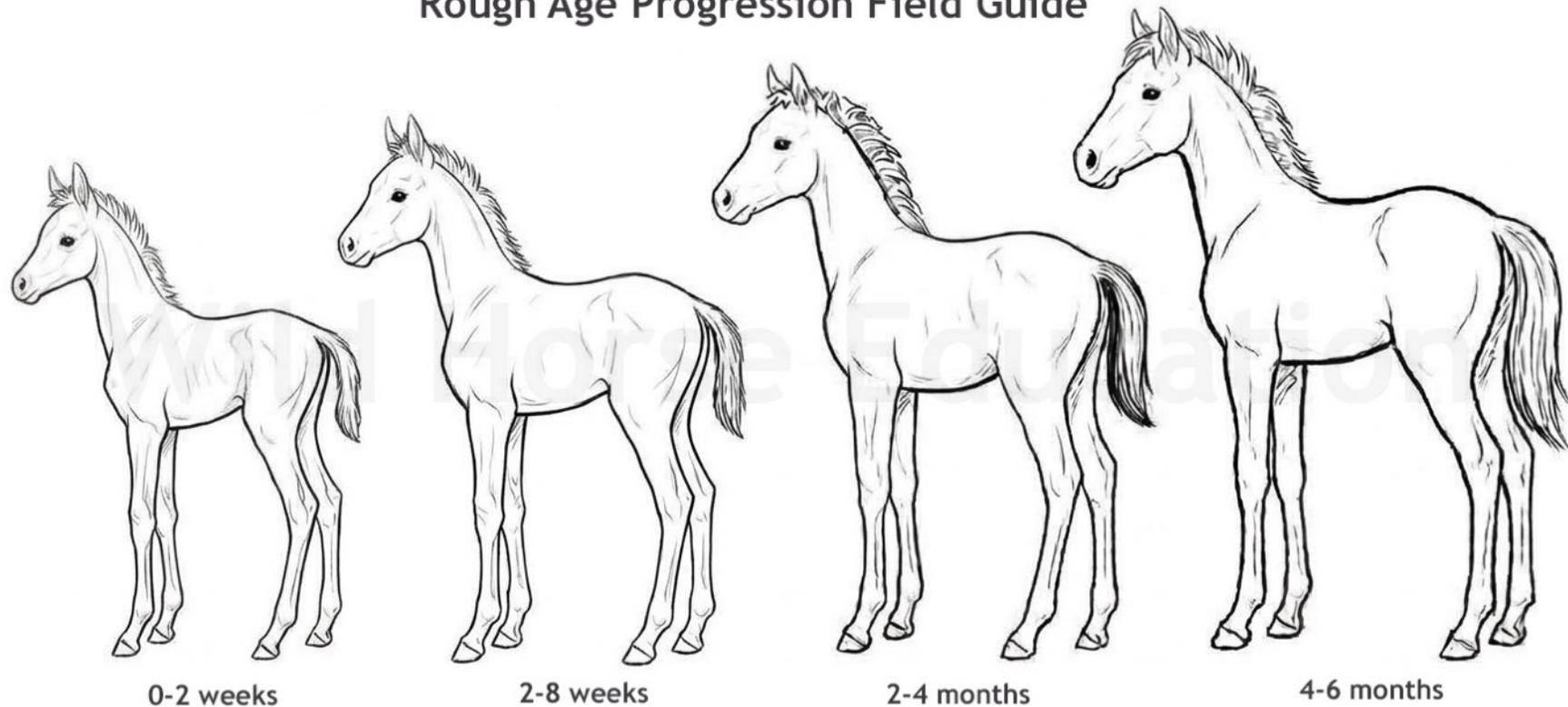


## Rough Age Progression Field Guide



A guide to aging foals in the field.

Wild Horse Education

Using both visual and behavioral observations it is possible to create a relatively accurate age.

Before you head into the field, take a moment to look up the known genotype and history of the herd you're observing—whether it's more Thoroughbred-type, ranch-horse type, or old-world Spanish/'dun'—because those genetics strongly influence body type and can change how old a foal looks at first glance.

Breed type can make visual aging tricky because it changes the **baseline** body and head you're comparing against. A taller, more Thoroughbred-type foal (like many at Twin Peaks) may look younger than it is, while a compact, old-world Spanish/dun-type foal (like Sulphur) can look older or more mature at the same age.

**Remember:** Size alone isn't a reliable age clue—always read head shape, tail length, body proportions, and behavior together.

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### Foal 1 – 1–2 weeks

- Strong **baby bump**, very short brush tail, “all legs” body.
- Stays glued to the mare, nurses frequently, wobbly short play.
- In the first week, a foal may **nurse up to 20 times per hour**, or roughly every 3-5 minutes. A foal nursing very often for a short period of time is a clear behavioral indicator of age,

### Foal 2 – 2–8 weeks

- Baby bump still obvious but softer; face a bit longer.
- Tail fuzzier and slightly longer; body starting to fill out but still leggy.
- More playful trips away from the mare.
- Nursing occurs roughly every 15–20 minutes, or 3-4 times per hour for a minute to two minutes in duration. (That is why orphans need to be fed often. You can't match the constant presence of a mare, but longer feedings every 3 hours are generally advised.)

### Foal 3 – 2–4 months

- Forehead curve flattening; head looks more like a young horse.
- Body catching up with legs, muscles appearing; tail down the gaskin and swatting flies.
- Lots of play with other foals and increasing time spent grazing.
- At 2 months, 3-4 times per hour. By 4 months old nursing still occurs every hour but provides about 50% of nutritional needs as they transition to forage.

### Foal 4 – 4–6 months

- Forehead mostly flat, baby bump nearly gone; deeper jaw for grazing.
- Body and legs more balanced, fuller tail near or below the hock.
- Grazes much of the day, more independent as weaning approaches.
- 4-6 month-old foals still nurse regularly throughout the day usually approaching mom to nurse at least once per hour.

NOTE: In wild bands, most foals are gradually weaned somewhere around 8–10 months of age. Monitoring frequency can help determine age.

NOTES: