

HORSE HANDLING GUIDELINES

This is an outline that depicts catching your horse at home to go trail riding, using good everyday working equipment and using methods considered to be safe.

APPROACHING THE HORSE

Approach the horse diagonally toward the head, neck and shoulder with the halter opened in the far hand and the lead rope in the near hand. The halter and rope should be held in a manner that will insure that they will not become entangled or wrapped around the hands or arms of the handler.

Be certain that the horse knows you are approaching. Be cautious but not hesitant. Speak in a firm, positive voice. Ears will usually give away the horse's attitude. We recommend that a nylon halter with at least a good 3/8ths rope lead and a heavy duty bull snap be used.

HALTERING THE HORSE

Slip the lead rope over the neck so that the horse can be restrained if needed. Facing the same direction as the horse, with open halter held in the left hand by the base of the crown piece, reach over the neck of the horse and grasp the end of the crown piece in right hand. Move the left hand to hold the buckle side of the halter, now slip halter over the horse's nose without dragging it over the nose.

If the crown piece is thrown over from the far side and startles the horse, you are apt to be hit in the face by the horse's head. This continued method creates a very bad habit and a bruised body.

ADJUSTING THE HALTER

The halter should be brought up sufficiently on the horse's nose so that it cannot be slipped off. It should be buckled in order to get the best possible fit with the halter being used.

LEADING THE HORSE

Right hand is placed 10 to 12 inches from snap with remainder of lead rope in left hand--held always in a manner so that you will not become entangled.

The handler should walk in the mid-neck area. Use a bump-release movement the instant before you step off in a positive manner. Never attempt to drag or continually pull as this will only serve to make your horse resist.

Use your heavy snap on the lead rope as a useful weight in teaching your horse to rate himself to his handler's speed. To slow or stop your horse, keep your hand in the same position on the rope and use a hard, quick snap down on the halter.

When turning, always push and turn the horse away from you, or, to the right.

TYING THE HORSE

Regardless of permanent cross or center ties, everyone should know the proper tie and length of lead rope that is safe to use.

The aforementioned nylon halter with at least a 3/8ths rope and a good bull snap are important to your horse's safety when the horse is tied up. A horse that becomes frightened enough to pull back can be seriously hurt by a snap, rope or halter that breaks and allows him to fall over backward.

A quick release tie should be used and should be practiced until tying it is second nature. The lead rope should be adjusted so that the horse cannot get hung in the rope with head or feet. A length of 18 to 24 inches should be adequate from halter to knot. The knot should be adjusted and tightened so that it cannot slip across a smooth hitch rail. The end of the lead-rope should be passed through the loop of the quick release tie so that a horse cannot use his mouth to gain his freedom.

When a hitching rail is not available, two things are important. First that the rope is tied at least at wither height or higher and second that you tie to a sturdy object.

CLEANING FRONT FEET

Facing the rear of the horse, place near hand on shoulder and indicate by leaning or pushing on the horse that you wish the body weight put on the other front foot. At the same time run the other hand down the horse's cannon to the fetlock and pick up the foot. Holding the foot up with the near hand, use the hoof pick to clean the commissures and cleft, using heel to toe movement. To simply clean a front foot it can be held in the hand rather than placed between the knees as would be done to shoe the horse. Be careful to keep your own feet facing the rear of the horse so that you will not be stepped on. Release the clean foot and guide it part way to the ground.

CLEANING HIND FEET

Facing the rear of the horse, place near hand and lower arm on the hip. Your hand and arm in this position will push you away if the horse jumps or kicks. Run the other hand down leg under fetlock, raising foot up and under the horse first. Handler then moves under and takes one step forward, then a half step sideways, extending the foot back so that it can be cradled over near leg onto the thigh. Clean foot thoroughly using heel to toe procedure.

Step back to step one position holding foot in hand under horse and then allow the horse to put the foot down.

BRIDLING THE HORSE - WESTERN

Take the bridle over left arm. Untie the horse and place lead around neck then, unbuckle the halter and slip it off the head and move it back securing it around the horse's neck. These are at easy access if the horse tries to move away. Facing the same general direction as the horse, take the crown piece of bridle in right hand and bit in left hand. Cradle the bit in center fingers with thumb and little finger being used to hold back the curb strap or chain.

Hold bridle crown piece at forehead with right hand and left hand with bit just at horse's mouth, thumb and little finger holding the curb strap back behind the lower lip. **DO NOT** bump the horse in the teeth with the bit, this causes a horse to resist bridling. If necessary, now that the curb chain is behind the lip, use the thumb to insert on the left side of the mouth in toward the intradermal space, using pressure of the lip on the gum and the horse will generally open its mouth so the bit can be inserted by pulling up on the crown piece with the right hand. Put right ear under the crown piece first and then the left ear. Adjust the bridle properly--the bit should rest well up in the corners of the mouth with a little wrinkle at the corners, the curb strap should pull right only when the shanks of the bit are pulled back a couple of inches. The throat latch should be buckled so that the horse can flex at the poll and not be restricted in his breathing.

UNBRIDLING THE HORSE - WESTERN

Leading the horse to the hitch rail, place the halter around the horse's neck with the lead rope over the neck. Unbuckle the throat latch and with the right hand remove the crown piece over the right and then the left ear and drop it slowly down, allowing the horse to 'spit out' the bit. It will take some horses several seconds to release the bit from their mouth, **NEVER** try to pull it out. If necessary, use your thumb again to ask the horse to open his mouth, thus releasing the bit. Rehalter the horse as previously explained and tie securely with a quick release tie.

PRACTICE - BE QUIET, SMOOTH, CONFIDENT & SAFE!!

DB/GWO/vac
12/90

Name: _____
Club: _____

HORSE HANDLING - JR.

Max Pts.	(5)	Approach the horse from left front (as if in a stall)	_____
	(10)	Pick up hind foot	_____
	(5)	Simulate cleaning the hoof with pick	_____
	(5)	Tie the rope around horse's neck	_____
	(10)	Remove and replace halter	_____
	(5)	Pose the horse	_____
	(5)	Rete the halter lead rope to the rail	_____
	(15)	Confidence, courtesy and skill of contestant	_____
	(20)	Boots	_____
	(80 POSSIBLE PTS.)		_____
DB/GWO/vac	12/90		

Name: _____
Club: _____

HORSE HANDLING - SR.

Max Pts.	(5)	Approach the horse from left side (as if in a stall)	_____
	(10)	Pick up hind foot	_____
	(5)	Simulate cleaning the hoof with pick	_____
	(5)	Tie the rope around horse's neck	_____
	(5)	Remove halter	_____
	(5)	Put on bridal	_____
	(5)	Pose the horse	_____
	(10)	Remove bridal and replace halter	_____
	(5)	Rete the halter lead rope to the rail	_____
	(15)	Confidence, courtesy and skill of contestant	_____
	(20)	Boots	_____
	(90 PTS. POSSIBLE)		_____
DB/GWO/vac	12/90		