

Horse Care Level 1 119 Principles of catching and moving horses under direction

1.1 Describe the correct method of handling horses

Routine care

Make sure the halter and lead rope are in good condition and fit properly: not too tight or too loose. The nose piece of the halter should lay across the bridge of the nose and roughly two fingers width below the cheekbone, and it should not be tight around the nose. Move slowly and be confident when approaching the horse. Stand to the left side between your horse's head and shoulder. Reassure them by talking to them as you put the halter on. Slide the halter over the horse's muzzle, or nose. If the halter fastens with a crown piece, place it behind the right ear and slide across behind the left ear, and buckle. Do not flop this piece over the horse's neck as it may spook the horse or hit its eye and cause damage. Adjust if needed. If the halter fastens from the throat latch slide the crown piece over both ears and then fasten. Putting on a rope halter is very similar to flat halters (i.e.. Nylon halters, web halters), the main difference is that you tie a rope halter to fasten it instead of buckling. Bring the crown piece of the rope halter under and through the loop in the cheek piece. Pass the crown piece to the right and under the eye, to make the tail point to the left. Pull it back to the right, going through the loop you made to tie the knot. Pull snug. When finished the tail end should point away from your horse's eye, meaning to the right. As the handler you must control your horse's movement and create a safe environment for you, the horse, and people nearby. Never stand directly in front of your horse when leading or backing. Horses cannot see directly in front of them or behind them. Stand to the "near side" (left side) of the horse, between the head and shoulder, ideally at the throat latch. Standing behind a horse is also unsafe, as they have a blind spot there as well. When standing close to the horse, standing next to the horse's body is the safest. When standing still with the horse, point your feet toward the horse's neck or shoulder. This allows the handler to maintain eye contact. Facing away from the horse is unsafe. The horse may react to movement before you are aware. Standing close allows you to act immediately if you feel your horse become tense or frightened.

<https://extension.psu.edu/safe-horse-handling>

1.2 Describe how to identify horses including basic external points of the horse, colours and markings

Identification

Horses can be identified by lots of different ways as they are all unique and have slight differences.

Chestnuts—Chestnuts, or night eyes, are horny, irregular growths on the inside of the horse's legs. On the front legs, they are just above the knee. On the rear legs, they are toward the back of the hock. **Cowlicks**—Cowlicks are permanent hair whorls which cannot be brushed or clipped out. They are located mainly on the forehead and neck. **Dimples**—Dimples are permanent indentations in the muscle under the skin. They are usually located at the point of the shoulder or in the neck muscles. **Others**—White or black patches on the body, scars, and firing marks on the legs are also useful for identifying horses.

Star—A solid white mark on the fore-

head. The shape may range from oval- to diamond-shaped to a narrow vertical, diagonal, or horizontal star.

Stripe—A white mark starting at eye level or below and ending on or above the upper lip.

The size and shape of a stripe may vary widely and must be described in detail as to width, length, and whether it is connected or unconnected to a star. **Snip**—A white or beige mark over the muzzle between the nostrils.

Blaze—A wide patch of white extending down the face and covering the full width of the nasal bones.

Bald face—A wide white marking which extends beyond both eyes and nostrils.

Coronet—A white marking covering the coronary band.

Pastern—A white marking from the coronet to the pastern.

Ankle—A white marking from the coronet to the fetlock.

Half-stocking—A white marking from the coronet to the middle of the cannon. Stocking—A white marking from the coronet to the knee.

Stocking plus—A white marking like the stocking, but the white extends onto the knee or hock.

White on knee or hock—A separate white mark on the knee or hock.

White spots—White spots on the front of the coronet band or on the heel.

Distal spots—Dark spots on a white coronet band.

Freeze branding uses copper stamps or marking rods cooled in liquid nitrogen or dry ice to identify the horse.

Bay—Body colour ranging from tan through red to reddish brown; mane and tail black; usually black legs. Black—Body colour true black without light areas; mane and tail black.

Chestnut—Body colour dark red or brown- ish red; mane and tail usually dark red or brownish red, but may be flaxen.

Palomino—Body colour golden yellow; mane and tail white. Palomino colour is the result of one cream dilution gene on a chestnut horse. Palominos do not have a dorsal stripe.

Cremello—The body colour is white or light cream with white mane and tail. The skin is pink, and the eyes are pale blue.

Grey—Mixture of white with any coloured hairs; often born solid-coloured or almost solid-coloured and becomes whiter lighter with age. The skin is dark. Grey horses' heads are lighter coloured than the rest of the body.

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/asc/asc146/asc146.pdf>

1.3 State the importance of approaching horses in a calm, safe manner which promotes confidence

Body language and horse sense

Having good communication through body language with your horse can lead to a stronger relationship, heightened safety, and better training and performance.

Always approach a horse from the left and from the front, if possible. Speak softly when approaching, especially from behind, to let it know of your presence. Always approach at an angle, never directly from the rear. Horses have monocular vision which leaves them with a blind spot in front of their nose, under their head and directly behind them. Sudden sounds or movements, particularly within these spots, tend to frighten horses. When you are within reach, touch the horse first by gently stroking the shoulder or rump (if approaching from the rear) and moving calmly to the head.

It is important to approach horses in this way as they will be able to feel more at ease and confident with you. The idea is to build a bond with the horse so that they will trust you.

<https://nasdonline.org/1039/d000837/approaching-catching-and-haltering-horses-safely.html>

1.4 Describe how to move horses safely and correctly

Handling and moving

Always lead from the horses left shoulder with your right hand about 15 inches away from the head of the horse and with your left hand holding the lead neatly coiled or folded. Don't let the lead drag on the ground where it can be stepped on. Holding the lead in this manner allows you to quickly release your right hand and keep you on the ground, while preventing the left hand from getting tangled, and still maintaining control if the horse suddenly rears. Never wrap the lead strap around yo r fingers, hand, wrist, or any part of your body. A knot at the end of the lead can help you keep a grip on the lead if the horse pulls back.

Walk with the horse, at its shoulder, not ahead or behind. Slightly extend your right elbow towards the horse so that if making contact with you, its shoulder will strike your elbow and move you away but not knock you over. If necessary, the elbow can be used on the horses neck to keep its head and neck straight for more control, as well as prevention from crowding. Always turn a horse to the right and walk around it. One exerts more control when turning the horse clockwise and pressing against it.

The horse that refuses to move or starts to pull back while being led, can be made to move by sharply turning the horse to one side or the other and pulling forward. This throws the horse off balance and it will take a step to regain its balance.

When leading, always prepare yourself for sudden movements from the horse by noticing the horse's reaction to the environment. If the horse is frightened and attempts to run, turn it in a circle and tighten the circle until it stops. If a horse is scared by a new element in its environment, do not punish it. Give the horse time to investigate and become familiar with the obstacle, then lead the horse by it. Don't look directly at the horse because a horse becomes unsure of your intentions when you turn and face it.

When leading through narrow openings, step through first and let the horse follow. Be sure the horse is calm and straight as it goes through to prevent it from bolting past you. In the case of a horse trying to pass you; turn to face the horse's shoulder while continuing to stand at its side. Push against the horse's shoulder with your weight while continuing to restrain it with the halter and lead shank.

When leading into a box stall or pasture, turn the horse so it faces the direction from which it came and make it stand facing you as the lead is released or the halter or bridle is removed. Do not let it bolt away from you until you are ready for it to go.

It is up to the judgment of the horse owner, but it is recommended that one should not run a horse into a pasture with a halter on. The halter can become tangled in objects as well as the horse itself, and if the halter is strong enough the horse can strangle itself. However, with a hard-to-catch horse or in an emergency situation, a haltered horse is easier to catch. Breakaway halters should be used if a halter must be left on. Always unsnap the lead rope before removing the halter. This will prevent the horse from pulling back and becoming a halter puller.

Remember, horses are stronger than you are, so don't try and out pull them. If a horse acts up while you are leading it, a quick snap down on the lead will usually get its attention.

When moving horses a short distance or just out of your way, hold the underside of the noseband, not the cheekpiece or the throatlatch. The nosepiece gives you more control over the horse, as well as keeping the halter properly positioned on the horse's head.

While halters and lead ropes are important and useful for leading, they are also necessary for safely *tying horses* to solid objects.

<https://nasdonline.org/1040/d000838/leading-horses-safely.html>

1.5 Describe how to establish horses in the new location

It's essential to transition horses to their new home with care and forethought to avoid injury and sickness. Horses are prey animals and are inherently nervous, so their new home must be free of safety hazards. They are also susceptible to disease and severe medical conditions such as colic. Bringing a horse home for the first time is exciting; however, it's critical to have a plan for your new animal's arrival and transition to its new home. Safety is the most crucial consideration when planning a horse's arrival at a new home.

Make sure all horses are up to date on their vaccinations.

Also, ensure that both the newcomer and residents have been on an appropriate de-worming program.

Ensure you have safe paddock and pasture fencing before bringing your horse to its new home.

Ensure you have all the supplies you need before bringing your new horse home.

Give your horse a chance to adapt to his new home.

When you unload a new horse, take him on a slow walk around the barn and let him see the horses in the pasture and let him drink some clean and fresh-water. Try not to bother him too much but rather allow him to take in the new surroundings as much as possible.

Before you lead him into his new stall, check him for injuries and pick his feet and give him a proper brushing and rub down with particular attention to his feet and legs feeling for heat.

If the horse traveled a long distance, put him in a paddock by himself so he can stretch and move around freely before going in his stall. Keep an eye on him and watch him move to ensure he doesn't display signs of lameness that require veterinarian attention.

<https://horseracingsense.com/how-move-horse-to-new-home-complete-guide/>

1.6 Describe how to check that the area is safe and secure

Safe and secure fencing is essential, to prevent injury to horses and to minimise the risk of straying. Hedging alone (even where well-maintained) is rarely sufficient protection from straying, so a secondary fence line is usually required. Various types of fencing are available, ranging from wooden post and rail to plastic rails, electric tape, plain wire and mesh.

Whichever type of fencing is used this must be constructed soundly and well-maintained to ensure that it remains safe and secure. The choice of fencing is influenced by the lie of the land, the type of horses being kept and any existing fencing. When choosing fencing, take into account how permanent it will be. If the field structure is going to be changed, or if strip grazing is going to be implemented, it is easier to use electric tape and temporary posts.

Gates and gateways

Gates need to be at least 3.6m wide and should open inwards for safety. Metal is better for maintenance and is also lighter to handle. Metal gates with a mesh lower half are preferable, as the mesh prevents horses from putting their legs through the rungs.

Hinges and latches should be secure and safe. They should not protrude into the field, where they could cause injury. Gates should open easily, but steadily, being fixed in such a manner as to give complete control to the operator without risk of either slamming against a horse or swinging beyond the reach of the handler.

Where several horses are turned out together, or where gateways open on or close to a highway, a double-gate enclosure system should be used, to reduce the risk of horses escaping.

Ideally, gates should be located away from water troughs, shelters and corners of the field where horses may congregate. The ground in these areas rapidly becomes poached during the winter months, and this may affect safe access into and out of the field.

Check stable door is fitted correctly and that bolts are fastened correctly.

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/advice/horse/the-field-kept-horse?amp>

2.1 Describe the equipment which will be required for the activity

Head collars are used to lead the horse to and from the stable and field. They come in many different types and can be used in different ways to control the horse and allow the handler to lead them in a safe way.

In the long-term, horses need specialist fencing in paddocks to keep them within bounds and guard them against injury. Barbed wire and sheep mesh are dangerous; hedges have tempting gaps, and dry stone walls tend to fall apart. Electrified tape, which is more visible than a simple wire, can keep horses away from chewable wooden rails, barbed wire, shaky walls and weak hedges. It is never very good-looking, but it is quite effective — as long as you remember to charge the battery or organise a link for a mains fencer unit.

Safety and suitability govern the choice of fencing, which should be always be of a suitable height: 3ft 6in-4ft 6in (1.08m-1.38m) in the case of horses, and 3ft 3in-4ft 3in (1m-1.3m) for ponies. The lower rail should be 1ft 6in (0.5m) above ground level.

The barrier must be high enough to discourage jumping and also prevent horses from fighting with their neighbours. If this is a persistent problem, a double guard fence of electric wire along the top may be the solution. Fencing in horse paddocks must also be close enough to the ground to prevent foals and small ponies from rolling or scrambling under.

<https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/horse-care/horse-care-tips/finding-your-ideal-fencing-60682>

2.2 Describe the methods of maintaining the range of equipment in a fit state for use

Cleaning maintenance and putting away

Store equipment in a dry, room temperature space, like a heated, well ventilated tack room or in your house. Fully cover the equipment in order to protect from light, dust, and bugs. Use a bridle bag and saddle cover if available, but covering with a towel, blanket, or closable bag works perfectly, too. Putting equipment in a plastic bin with a close fitting lid is also a great technique. Covering or storing equipment in plastic bags is not recommended, as this prevents the leather from breathing and can actually trap unwanted moisture.

Keep equipment clean and always clean after use as this will keep the equipment in good working order.

<https://www.sterling-essentials.com/blog/2018/2/5/tips-for-worry-free-tack-storage?format=amp>

3.1 Outline the current health and safety legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements

PPE, footwear, leg and body wear, gloves, hat as required, hair, jewellery

Routine awareness of working with horses in and out of the stable, securing horses, tying up, leading in hand

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Sensible clothes should always be worn when dealing with horses. A protective riding hat is essential when riding, and a body protector is highly advisable. These should also be worn when in any risk situation, such as when loading a horse, schooling from the ground or handling an excitable animal. Sturdy boots and gloves should be worn when handling horses and when turning out or bringing in from the pasture. Protective clothing should be fitted correctly and purchased new from a reputable retailer which has up to date product knowledge and fitting skills. When working around horses, the wearing of jewellery should be avoided. Earrings, other piercings and finger rings are easily caught and can either break or cause injury.

A horse's behaviour should never be taken for granted – even the oldest and quietest horse can behave unpredictably at times. A horse's natural instinct dictates either "fight or flight" as a defence reaction if feeling threatened.

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 15 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006

It is your responsibility to fully understand your horse's welfare needs and what the law requires you to do to meet those needs. Breach of a provision of the Code is not an offence in itself, but if proceedings are brought against you for a welfare offence the Court will look at whether or not you have complied with the Code in deciding whether you have committed an offence. You should not cause any unnecessary suffering to your or any other animal; this could constitute a serious offence under the Act.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 is applicable. Section 2 of the Act states, 'it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees' Where it is clear that there are employees, this requirement is absolute.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 ("the Act") requires you to ensure that any horse or pony for which you are responsible, whether on a permanent or a temporary basis, has...

- a suitable environment to live in
- a healthy diet (including fresh clean water)
- the ability to behave normally
- appropriate company
- protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

<https://www.cieh.org/media/1247/health-and-safety-in-horse-riding-establishments-and-livery-yards-what-you-should-know.pdf>