



Handling

Equine Guelph Horse Behaviour & Safety Workshop

The Horse at Home



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Approaching a Horse

- Evaluate him! He's talking to you with his body
- Walk slowly, casually and relaxed
- Don't stare – it's rude
- Approach at his shoulder if you can
- If approaching from the rear, make sure he knows you're there -- talk to him

Pecking Order

- Not just for chickens!
- Herd animals have strict rules of social structure
- Assert your dominance in a group of horses
 - Make the “top horse” move around using aggressive body language
 - Staring is considered rude and aggressive

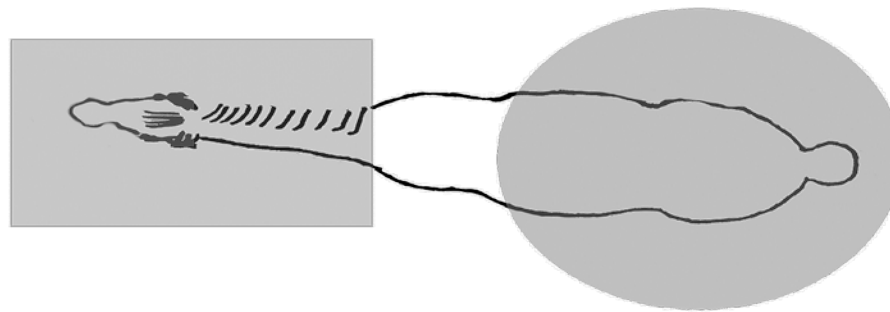
Charging

If you are being charged by a horse or group of horses, make yourself bigger by:

- Standing tall
- Waving your arms over your head and to the side
- Yelling

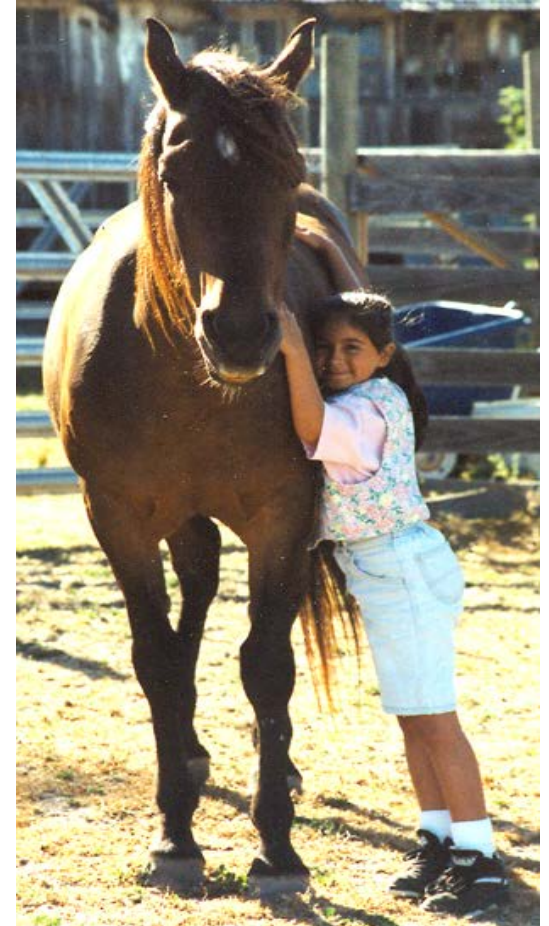
The “Danger Zone”

- They can see almost all the way around their bodies
- They can **NOT** see right in front of their noses and directly behind themselves for about six feet
- Shaded areas are the “**danger zone**”



Safest Spot

- The safest place to stand is at the horse's shoulder
- Approach a horse there, and when moving away from that position, make sure the horse is aware of your location and intentions



Working with Others

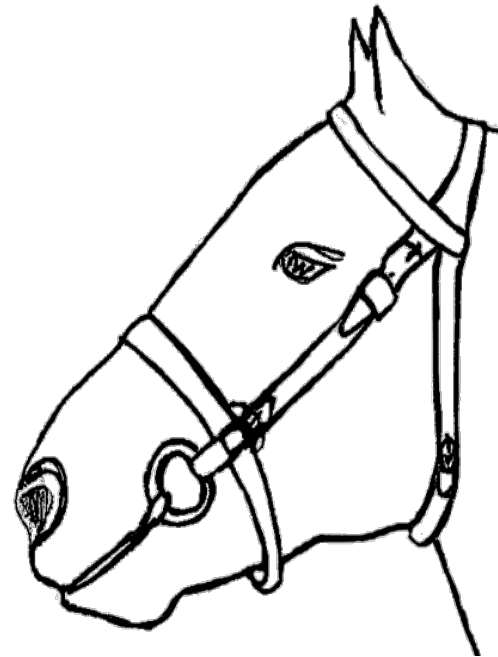
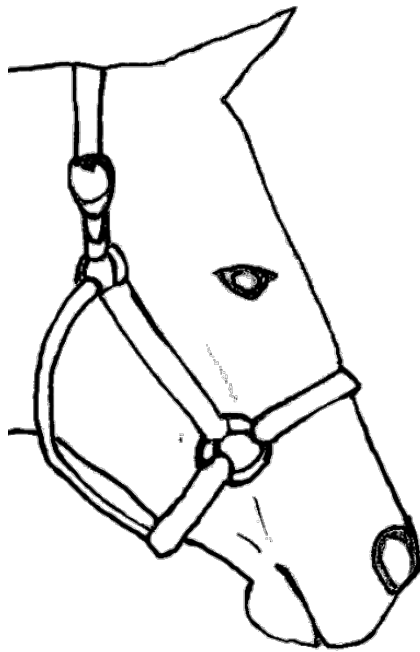
- If there is another person working with the horse, stand on the same side
- If you pull the horse's head toward you, his back end moves away
- If you push the horse's head away from you, his back end swings toward you

Talk to the Horse

- A soothing tone will help to calm an anxious horse
- A growl will often stop him in his tracks!
- Most horses are familiar with some human terms such as:
 - Walk or walk on
 - Whoa or “ho”
 - Quit
 - Back or back up

Halter Versus Bridle

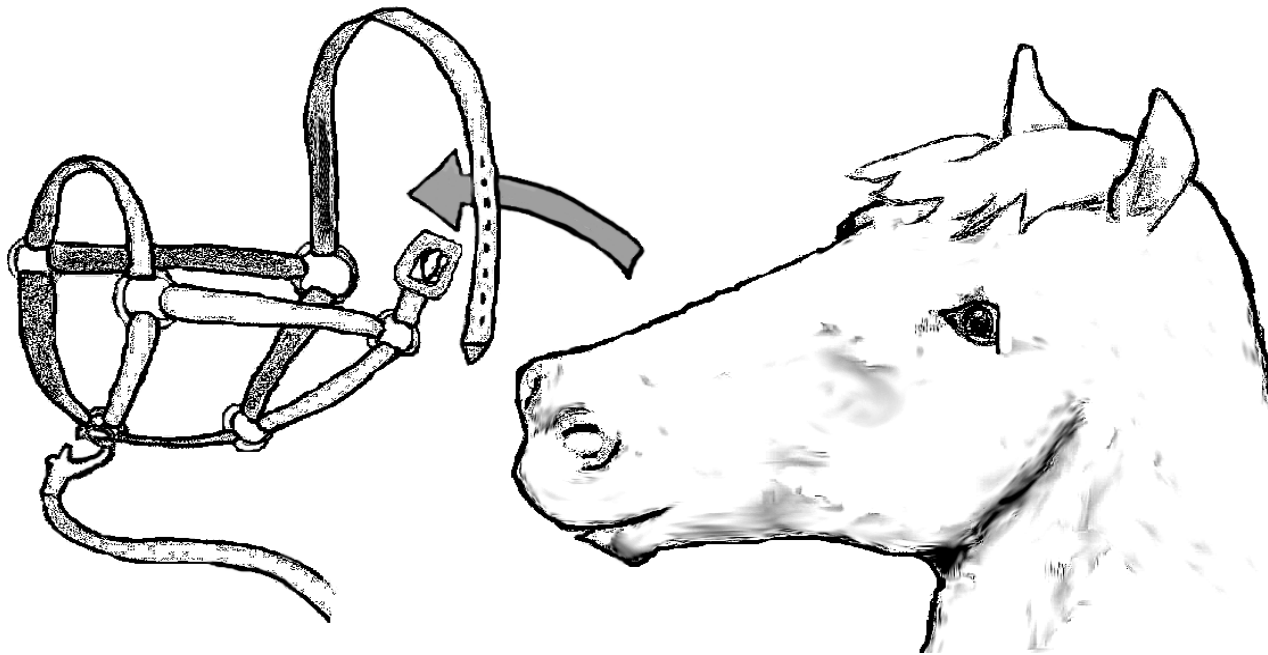
A **halter** does not have a **BIT** – a piece of metal/rubber that goes in the horse's mouth



Haltering a Horse

- Approach from left side
- Reach your right arm over the horse's neck
- Move the halter under his head with your left hand
- Grab the top piece of the halter with your right hand and move it up to the top of his neck behind his ears
- Open the halter toward you and slide it over his nose

Slide Over His Nose



Emergency Halter

- Tie a loop at the end of a long, soft rope
- Put the loop end over the horse's head
- Taking the standing section of the rope, put it through the loop to form another loop
- Put this loop over the horse's nose and **GENTLY** tighten so the first loop is centered under the face and the second loop is below the cheekbones

Be Gentle!

The emergency halter can be severe and damaging if used improperly. Please be very **gentle** when using it.



Catching a Horse

DO NOT USE A BRIDLE FOR CATCHING A HORSE

- This can cause severe damage to the horse's mouth and face.
- The straps of a bridle are easily broken.
- A “bosal” or “hackamore” is a bridle without a bit. It sometimes has a knot under the horse's chin. It can also cause damage to his face.

Creative Catching

- Use another horse to lead him
 - Horses are herd animals
- Bribe him with food
- Use fencing, ropes, hose, vehicles or people to form a barrier, surrounding him on three sides

Leading a Horse

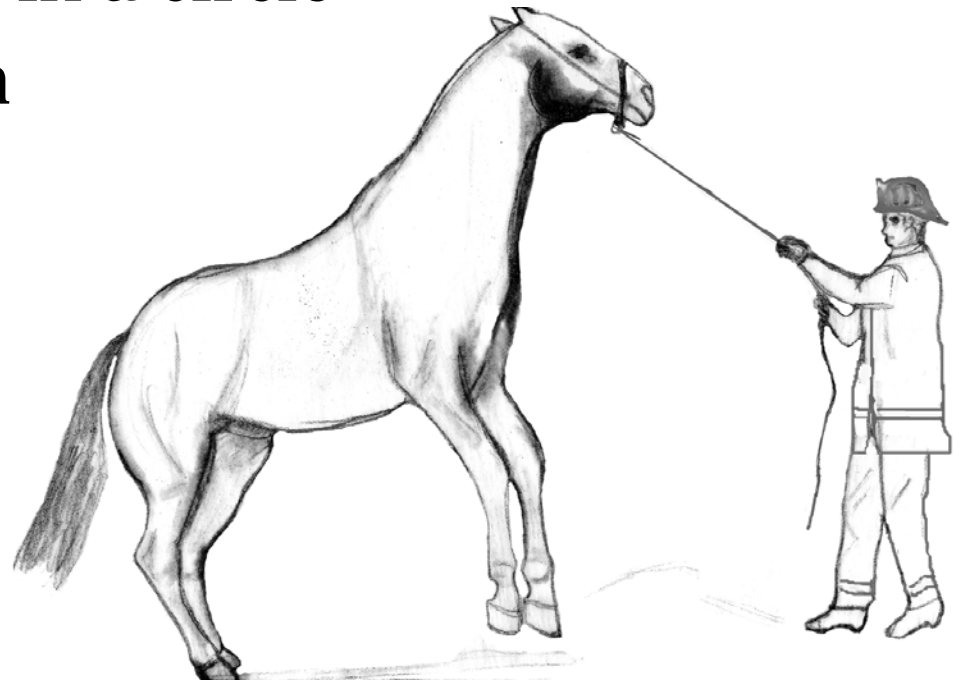
- Lead from the left side, if possible
- Hold the rope with your right hand, just under the horse's chin
- Keep your right arm straight
- Hold the rope in both hands, one hand on either side of your body
- Hold the excess rope bunched in your left hand so you don't trip over it.
Don't loop it around your hand.

Use Caution!!

- **DO NOT** LOOP THE ROPE AROUND YOUR HANDS!
- **DO NOT** STICK YOUR FINGERS THROUGH THE HALTER OR ANY RINGS OR LATCHES!

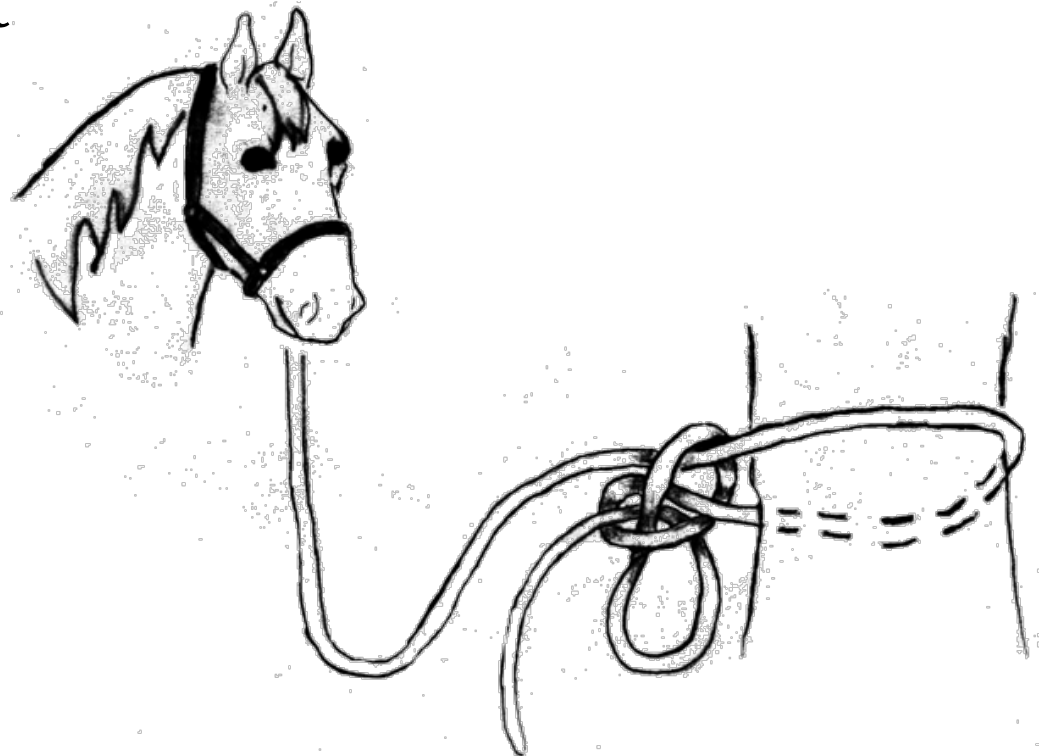
Spooking Horse

- If the horse feels he needs to escape, allow him to move around you in a circle
- You should face him by turning your whole body toward him



Tying a Horse

- **DO NOT** use a “permanent” knot
- Use a quick release knot



End of Section