

Catching a Horse

One of the most frustrating things in life is the horse that does not want to be caught. When approaching a horse, speak to it and approach it from the side and preferably at the shoulder. By nature, horses will scratch each other at the withers. For that tough-to-catch horse, walking at the shoulder and scratching it on the withers can make a world of difference in its perception of being caught. In contrast, a pat on the nose may become irritating. Furthermore, a horse cannot see directly behind itself without turning its head from side to side. If approached from the rear, a horse will most likely run off or even kick. If approached from the shoulder, the handler can either move forward to stop the horse, or more toward the hip to drive it forward.



You can get your equipment ready by doing the following:

1. Attach the lead shank to the ring that sits below the jaw and gather the lead rope in a figure eight, so that it is not wrapped around your hand.
2. Unbuckle the crown piece (or top strap) of the halter and place the nose piece over your arm.

Horses will move in response to changes in a person's body position. When you want the horse to stop, step calmly and quietly toward its left shoulder.

1. Once the horse has stopped, approach it at the shoulder. You may calmly place your hand on the horse's neck or shoulder or scratch its withers. Horses' withers are sensitive and they may enjoy being rubbed there.
2. If the horse moves away when you approach, stop. Do not try again to enter the horse's flight zone until the horse stops and accepts your presence. Do not chase the horse.

Haltering Your Horse

There are several methods of haltering your horse, which depend on factors such as level of training of the horse and rider, tradition, and sometimes geographical area. The key is to keep the horse and handler safe at all times.



Placing the halter on:

- When placing the halter on the horse, slide your right arm over the horse's neck as if you were going to hug it and grab the crown piece from the right.
- Use your left hand to place the horse's nose in the halter as you bring the crown piece over with your right hand.
- Buckle the halter with both hands.

Haltering a horse in this manner allows you to maintain control at all times. Be sure not to place your head above the horse's poll or head when haltering. The horse may react suddenly and quickly raise its head. This forceful movement could result in serious injury to the handler.

Well trained horses are often haltered by a similar method except the crown piece is already buckled and is pulled over the front of the horse's face. The right hand reaches under the jaw and guides the halter over the right ear first. The left hand is used to pull the halter over the left ear, sometimes with help from the right hand. The halter is then buckled at the left cheek.