



A joint project
between
Back Country
Horsemen
and HCBC

“Approaching, Catching and Haltering a Horse”

About Horse Council BC



- Horse Council BC is a non-profit organization, governed by an independent Board of Directors, committed to representing the interests of our members and the equine industry. As one of the most successful multi-breed, multi-discipline provincial equine organizations in Canada we represent the equine community in BC, by collaborating with individuals, businesses and industry professionals to strengthen communication, education, and safety.

For this lesson you will need - a halter and lead rope in good repair that fits well and a quiet horse to practice on.

Rope, Leather and Nylon halters
come in various sizes

Lead ropes made of various materials,
with or without clips. *If you use a
lead rope with out a clip you need to
learn to tie a bowline knot



Parts of the Halter and lead

1. Crown piece
2. cheek piece
3. buckle
4. noseband
5. throatlatch
6. ring for attaching lead rope
7. clip or snap on lead rope
8. lead rope



Safety: Your Main Concern

- When working around equines it is wise to remember to move slowly and talk quietly.
- Always make sure the horse is aware of where you are and what you are doing. They don't like surprises! Let's find out why?.....



His ears and eyes can tell you where his attention is focused



Understanding Horse Behaviour

The “Flight or Fight” Instinct in Equines

Horses and mules are prey animals. Their first instinct to perceived danger is to **RUN!**

If restrained or cornered and then threatened their next instinct is to **fight** which includes biting and kicking out. Loud noises and sudden motion can mean danger to a horse.

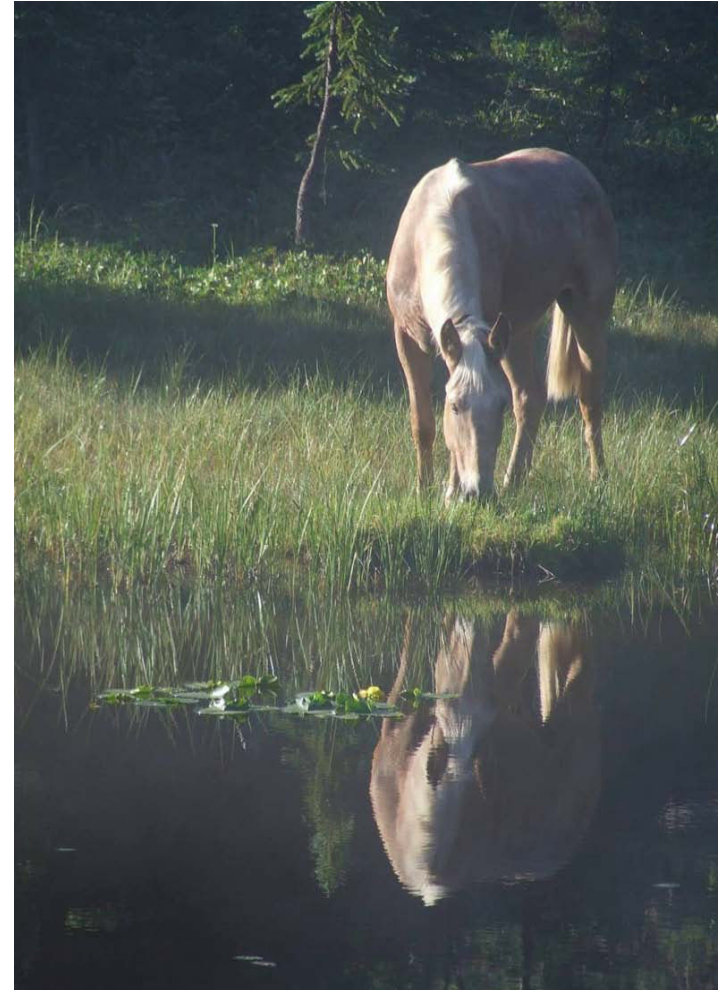


This horse has perceived a danger and is preparing to flee



More on Horse Behaviour

- How you approach a horse or mule can be the difference whether you catch him or not.
- Remember that horses are large animals with a mind of their own. They don't think or act like a human so it is up to us to understand how and why they react like they do.



Other Senses to consider when approaching

- hearing – watch his ears. Make sure the horse hears you approach. Normally we approach on the left side because that is the side the buckle of the halter is on. But you should be able to catch a horse from either side.
- sight - consider how an equine sees: eyes placed on the sides of their heads: so up close they can only see with one eye at a time and cannot see directly in front or behind themselves. For this reason we like to approach from the side, walking diagonally towards the horses shoulder



➤ smell – wait a moment and see if the horse wants to reach out and smell you. Perhaps slowly and evenly extend your hand. Remember : sudden movements can startle a horse and cause him to flee.

➤ touch - again, slowly and evenly reach out to stroke the horse's shoulder or neck. If the horse has remained calm this is a good opportunity to gently put the lead rope over his neck so that you have enough control to begin the haltering process.....



Haltering Safely

If the horse is in a stall it is best not to approach from the rear.

- Stand at the stall door.
- Make a soft kissing or clucking sound to encourage the horse to turn his head towards you and his hindquarters away.
- When he does then walk to his left shoulder and prepare to catch him.
- If he is already wearing a halter then all you have to do is clip or tie on the lead rope.



If he is not wearing a halter.....

- standing on his left side between his shoulder and his head, put the end of the lead rope around his neck, nearer the poll than the withers.
- hold that to maintain control and make the horse think he is caught
- take the crown piece of the halter in your right hand and bring it over the poll like the picture indicates. Your right hand will be holding the buckle for now.

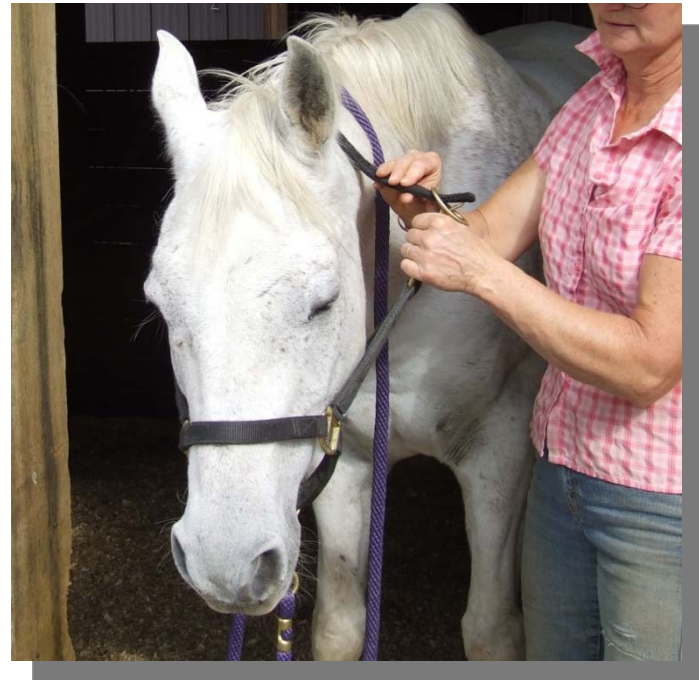


Next.....

Take the noseband over the horse's muzzle and position it just below the projecting cheekbone



Buckle or tie the throatlatch snug enough that the halter can't be pulled over the horses ears.



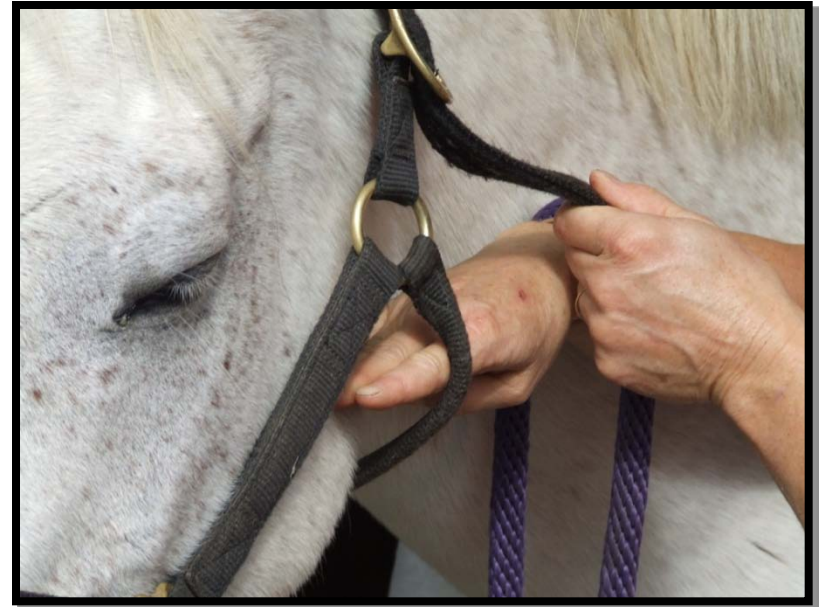
Guidelines - Checking for proper fit

- A space of two fingers between the projecting cheekbone and the noseband



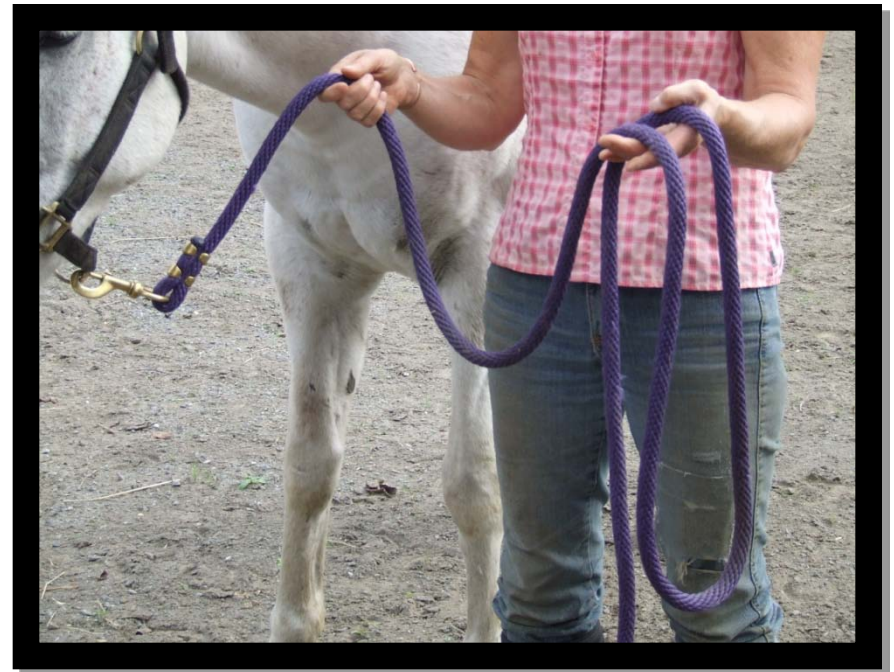
*Also - check that the nose band is not so tight it restricts the horse's ability to open and close his jaw

- A space of two to three fingers between the throatlatch and horses' cheek



Lastly...prepare to lead the horse safely

- If you are on the horse's left side, take the lead rope in your right hand about an arm's length away from the snap
- The remainder of the rope should be held in your left hand
- Use the “**Fold and Hold**” method shown in the diagram. This is a safe method to use when holding rope



A close up of the Fold and Hold method for the lead rope



- Fold and Hold avoids coils in the rope that can trap your hands and arms and cause an accident.
- You are now ready to learn to safely lead a horse!



Review

- Your safety, then your horse's safety are most important
- Learn to understand how and why horse's react the way they do
- Learn to use a horse's senses to let him know you are approaching
- halter your horse from the left side
- make sure the halter fits properly: it will give you more control and help to keep you safe
- use the fold and hold method to carry your lead rope
- Learn to tie some useful knots
- Happy Trails!



Thank you to the Back Country Horsemen of BC

For providing the information and photographs contained in this course. For more information about the Back Country Horsemen of BC go to <http://www.bchorsemen.org/>

For more information about Horse Council BC go to www.hcbc.ca

